

Parental Involvement Influence on Education Participation for Learners with Hearing Impairments in Special Public Primary Schools in Meru and Isiolo Counties- Kenya

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Abstract

Globally need for education, as a measure of one's ability to function fully in today's society, is an important motivator for efforts to achieve the highest level of education in the world. The persistent under achievement of deaf students in Kenyan schools is of great concern as evidenced by final average scores in their formative and summative scores in their assessments. This study aimed to find out how parental involvement influences education participation for learners with hearing impairment. The study was guided by Maslows theory of motivation in learning. A phenomenological research design was utilized. The study targeted three primary schools handling learners with hearing impairments in Meru and Isiolo counties that is Kaaga, Njia, and Isiolo school for learners with hearing impairment. A thematic approach was used to analyze the qualitative data. The study revealed that parental involvement was minimal. Based on the study findings, collective effort should be made to sensitize the parents on their roles in the education of their children. Employers of parents of students with hearing impairments should be given days off with pay when going to attend to their children's issues in school like closing days, opening days, and clinic days for their children. The school should provide some incentives to parents like meals during the school meetings to help reduce parents’ expenses. The government should ensure tax waivers for parents of students with hearing impairments. The stakeholders should help change parental attitudes that their children will not make it.

Keywords: *Parental involvement, education participation, learners with hearing impairments*

1.0 Introduction

Since 1948, when the United Nations proclaimed education to be a fundamental right for all people, there has been a strong emphasis on deaf students' educational involvement around the world. WHO (2020) estimates that 250 million individuals worldwide suffer from hearing loss. Children who are deaf have access to education in some manner in less than 1% of cases. Hearing-impaired learners are considered to be a linguistic and cultural minority who use signs or imagery as their primary form of communication and require trained and experienced professionals to do so. According to the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child, every child has the right to attend school. According to Elizabeth (2020). The deaf youngsters are subject to this universal truth. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

underlines the need to respect the right of people with disabilities to education and specifically prohibits excluding pupils with hearing impairments from participation in the educational system on the grounds of their disability (WHO, 2021).

Deaf in this study refers to students with hearing loss (Knoor, 2019). In the last years of the 18th century, after the American and French revolutions, effective methods were developed for teaching deaf children (Livingston, 2019). Most societies only protected students with hearing loss. But as ideas of democracy and individual freedom gripped America and France, attitudes changed. Political reformers and leaders in the fields of medicine and education began to advocate for deaf children, arguing that these people should be taught the skills that will enable them to become independent and productive citizens. This sense of humanity goes beyond the desire to protect and defend deaf learners (National Association for the Deaf, 2020)

However, there was a decline in this advocacy which was attributed to the following factors as stated by Graham (2019). Disagreements among professionals and the public's reluctance to pay bills, especially during times of inflation and recession. These factors hindered early education participation for learners with hearing impairment. It was not until after World War II that special education for the deaf began to reverse the nearly century-long dynamic of neglect and decline (Beaver, 2021).

1.1 Problem Statement

The government of Kenya has made strides in promoting equity in ensuring equal participation of learners in education including learners with hearing impairment. Various legal frameworks and policies to support education for learners with hearing impairments have been put in place. Such policies in place include the Disability Act of 2008, The Integrated Quality Act of 1999, and the Special National Needs Educational Policy of 2010(MOE, 2010) Through the Ministry of education, teachers have been trained in the universities and colleges like the Kenya Institute of Special Education. The government has also included the capitation for learners with hearing impairment in the budgetary allocation with Ksh 2500 for each learner which is higher compared with the allocation for hearing learners. Teachers handling learners with hearing impairments receive an additional Ksh 10000 per month above the salary of a teacher handling hearing learners' all these initiatives are aimed at promoting education participation for learners with hearing impairment so that they can reap equal benefits with their hearing counterparts out of education.

However, despite the mentioned effort, the education participation for a learner with hearing impairment has been dismal as indicated by academic performance through both summative and formative assessments where they rank last with the mean score ranging between 100-150 marks (Ministry of Education, 2014) Report from the ministry of education 2009 attributed this to the inadequacy of assessment where they rank the last with the mean score ranging between 100-150 marks (Ministry of Education, 2014) Report from the ministry of education 2009 attributed this to the inadequacy of assessment where they rank the last with the mean score ranging between 100-150 marks (Ministry of Education, 2014). A report from the Ministry of Education 2009 attributed this to the inadequacy of trained teachers, communication barriers, and inadequate knowledge on how to handle learners with hearing impairment. The gap exists in that there could be other factor that could be influencing education participation for learners with hearing impairment. This study sought to investigate parental involvement influence on education participation of learners with hearing impairments in special public primary schools in Meru and Isiolo counties.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

The study was grounded in Maslow's theory of learning motivation. It is a popular motivational theory that is widely referred to in educational circles. For effective educational participation of learners with hearing impairment Maslow suggests that the needs of learners need to be met which are in hierarchical order. It is usually through the active involvement of the head teacher that these needs are availed to learners. As stated by Mathew and Lopez (2020), the most crucial educational objective, according to Maslow's theory, is for students with hearing impairment to learn and participate fully in learning.

2.2 Empirical Review

According to Simweteba and Serpell (2020), parental involvement in education for a learner with hearing impairment has been seen as a parent visiting school to attend meetings, communicate with school personnel, attend meetings of parents' teacher associations, help children in academic activities at home, attending school-initiated functions, having high aspirations towards the learner, showing positive attitudes and regard towards the children's education.

The research on special education demonstrates that in the United States and England in the early 20th century, the process of parental involvement in the formal education of their children was formally included in public schools (Sarah, 2018). Each individual is traced back to the family and therefore parental involvement in all aspects of child development cannot be separated, (Asseff, 2019). In America, according to Stephanie (2019), the influence of parental involvement on educational success is very important. Educational leaders require schools to develop and implement parent involvement plans that can be used to promote parental involvement. This study established that parental background especially the level of education had an influence on educational participation for learners with hearing impairments.

For years, U.S. legislators have encouraged parental involvement in all of their policies, some of which required schools to include an objective to encourage parental involvement. However, as Latonya (2018) notes, despite the fact that parental involvement is permitted by the government, some schools in the United States still face difficulties in the area of parental involvement in terms of implementing effective partnerships.

In South Africa, as stated by Hamlin (2017) there are established governing bodies in which parents have to play an active role. They believe that parental involvement and interest in their children's formal education leads to better exam results, higher levels of educational qualification, and more development in school and life. Many classrooms in the South African country are full of students with different needs and teachers face different challenges and demands arising from what requires parental intervention. The influence of parents on the development and learning process of children is documented in Educational Psychology: the first educators of students are parents, whose role is to facilitate the assimilation of children's values and identities (Ahmad, 2020). In addition, children need guidance, support, and encouragement from parents. Parental involvement sends a message to children that their parents care about their development (Asseff, 2019). This study revealed that parents who demonstrated some level of involvement with the education affairs of their children had their children participate well in education.

Williams (2021) stated that in developed countries there is widespread interest in parental inclusion in education. In South Africa parents are obliged to bring their children to school from the first day of the year till the learner reaches the age of four and a half years.

Schools should initiate and implement context-sensitive strategies that take into account the challenges parents face. In this regard, empowering teachers in relation to the parent-school relationship is an important part of providing a strategy to initiate and implement continued parental involvement. Additional research from Sebastian and Moon (2020) revealed that educators' evaluations of parental non-engagement do not account for the contextual realities that restrict participation, which further alienates parents. Schueler (2020) believes that collaboration between teachers and parents is important for the success of school programs. The role of parents must support and complement the pedagogical function of the teacher. A functioning or dysfunctional parent-teacher partnership is often measured by student participation in education.

3.0 Methodology

The study was guided by Maslows theory of motivation in learning. A phenomenological research design was utilized. The study targeted three primary schools handling learners with hearing impairments in Meru and Isiolo counties that is Kaaga, Njia, and Isiolo school for learners with hearing impairment. The target population comprised 3 headteachers, 45 teachers, 254 parents, 254 learners, and 6 house parents. The sample size comprised 3 headteachers' 3 parents .3 teachers .6 learners and 9 support staff. The head teachers, teachers parents, and support staff were purposefully sampled while simple random sampling was utilized in sampling learners. Data collection tools utilized were open-ended questionnaires for head teachers, interview schedules for learners, parents, and class teachers document analysis, observation, and focus group discussion. A thematic approach was used to analyze the qualitative data. The presentation of the data was through description.

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Findings on parental involvement influence on education participation for learners with hearing impairments

Parental involvement in this study involves activities done by parents towards their children with hearing impairments to help them participate in education such as picking learners on opening and closing days, buying basic needs, and paying school fees. Parental involvement as a factor influencing education participation for learners with hearing impairments was put across to help identify factors within parents that -influenced education participation for learners with hearing impairments. The four categories of respondents were requested through the research tools to put across their views. That is headteachers, teachers, parents, and learners. The headteachers responded to a questionnaire on parental involvement while the teachers, parents, and pupils participated through interview sessions to respond to the same topic. The responses were consolidated, analyzed, and discussed and themes were generated.

The first question on parental involvement was put in the headteachers' questionnaire. The question sought to find out from call headteachers some of the ways through which parents participated in the education of their children. The three headteachers listed the following as some of the ways through which parents participated: buying basic personal items for children, paying school fees, bringing children back to school, picking children from school on closing day, and attending parents meetings.

The same question was put across to teachers during the interview on the same topic to find out the ways through which parents participate in the education of their children. Teachers had the following statements.

Teacher A: *They buy their children soaps, and toothbrushes (personal items) However very few are keen to purchase all the items. A few who buy items for their children purchase them based on the cost. They mostly leave out the expensive items* Teacher B: *Parents provided their children with some writing materials, and bought some uniforms and some bedding. They buy them a few pens, and books 'School uniforms are usually purchased by the parents during the first day of reporting to school no replacement uniforms by the same parent. Sometimes I have spent my own money to replace a child worn-out uniform. parents usually make promises on replacement which are never fulfilled. I pity these learners.* Teacher C: *Parents accompany their children during reporting back to school and picking them up when school closed though the majority bring them back being so late. None of the days I have been in this school have I received two learners in my class during the first day of opening. Those who report mostly the first day are the ones that parents term as being problematic. So I think to them a school is a place of refuge.*

Learners interviewed had the following.

Pupil A: PARENTS MINEBUY ME SCHOOL UNIFORM/ PAYMENT FEES// PICK ME FROM SCHOOL ON OPENING DAYS/ /ME BACK TO SCHOOL// MUM GOOD ME LOVE// HOME EARLY ME GO// SCHOOL ME EARLY COME// PUPIL B: FATHER ME PICK FROM SCHOOL// BUY ME HOME CLOTHES PAY ME SCHOOL FEES// ME HAPPY FATHER MINE ME PICK// SCHOOL MONEY DAD GIVE// ME LOVE //RICH WE PUPIL// C: MINE MOM BUY ME SCHOOL UNIFORM// BUY ME SHOES/ UNIFORM ME NEW LOVE/ SHOES NEW HAPPY HAPPY ME LOVE//PUPIL D: ME DAD GIVE TISSUE PAPER/ TOOTHBRUSH AND TOOTHPASTE// ME FRIENDS BORROW NO//HAPPY HAPPY ME //PUPIL E: MINE MOTHER BUYS ME SMALL ITEMS / SHOE POLISH/ BAR SOAP AND BATHING SOAP//ME FRIENDS BORROW//BAD ME FEEL//PUPIL F: ME AUNTIE BUY SOAP/ SOCKS/RUBBERS AND TISSUE PAPER// AUNT BAD SOAP FEW /PENS FEW /ME LOVE THIS NO//

The same question was presented to parents during the interview session to elicit their responses on how they participated in the education of their children. Their responses were as follows.

Parent A: *As a parent, I participate in taking my child to school on closing day and buying basic items. During opening days, I suspend all my work to ensure that I pick up my son from school. I also buy items that I can only afford, When I get to school I make a promise that I will bring the rest of the items understand this is not right as my son will need to bathe in the morning brush his teeth, and shoes. But I have no alternative. sometimes I may meet the promise and sometimes I do not make it but I still feel they it is not right am not the only one doing this have heard of other parents with similar experiences.* Parent B: *I usually buy what I am asked by the teachers to buy. However financial inability limits me from buying everything. I would love to see my child having everything requested for as this translates to the comfort of my child but I have no alternative but to use short cut, My child joined school at a very early stage from preschool. The peers from the rich families join boarding schools when in grade five. They pay for boarding school expenses at a shorter period compared to me* Parent C: *Whenever I am called upon on matters concerning*

my daughter I do attend. However, I feel regular meetings are expensive for us as parents. Some of the parents in this school are in the far interiors of this country. They have to travel for around five hundred kilometers to this place.

The above responses indicate that three headteachers agreed that parents participated in the education of their children. This is also supported by the three parents, three teachers, and six pupils. From the above sentiments, it is clear that parents to some extent got involved in matters of education for their children. One of the focus group members also supported the statement that parents to some point provided for their children though the provisions were not adequate. From the observation made learners had some items which they were bought for by their parents. From the records accessed on what the child was bought by the parents during reporting back to school after the holiday, parents had brought items like soaps, oils, and shoe polish though gaps existed for some items which were not brought. Also, the records on reporting of learners indicated that some learners were brought back in the company of their parents. The findings were in agreement with the findings by Sebastian et al (2022) that parents support their children with hearing impairments to get an education. Wilder (2019) was of the opinion that learners who had supportive parents were more conscious of their educational accomplishments.

The response by parents, teachers, parents learners, and support staff indicated that parents provided basics like personal items, pens, and books and paid some school fees. The provision of such items serves as a source of encouragement for learners to get involved in education matters. When parents pick up their children from school on opening days and take them back on closing days becomes a source of encouragement to learners. Such a level of responsibility corresponds to. Williams (2021) findings that in South Africa parents are required to pick their children to and from school up to the age of four and a half years Epstein (2021) States that the family should play the first role in their children's upkeep, especially in the purchasing of basic personal items that are needed in school. For safety purposes of children, parents should pick up their children from and to school.

To find out the degree of involvement by parents, the questions were posed in the questionnaire to the headteachers, interview schedule for teachers, parents learners, and discussion questions for a focus group. The report from the three headteachers indicated that though parents were engaged in the support of their children, the support was mostly minimal. The headteachers indicated that most parents did not report enough fees for learners. Many had accumulated debts for school.

The interview report from teachers had the following.

Teacher A: Most parents brought their children back to school with incomplete items. Some came with a soap which is half. Half a bar of soap could not sustain a child in school for a whole term. When the soap is finished the child becomes uncomfortable. Sometimes I had to make my arrangement on how these children get personal items. I have to chip in from my pocket and sometimes solicit from friends. Other learners are bought items of poor quality which do not last long. Especially the school uniform we have had experiences where learners have school uniforms that can only last for a month. Teacher B: I once witnessed a child brought back to school with just one piece of bar soap, and no toothpaste. I wondered how the child was going to survive in school for the whole term. Mostly parents make a promise of bringing the items later within the term but the majority never keep to the promise. That has always been the routine in this school that immediately after the child is welcomed into school, they just leave and forget

the whole story. They mostly give us the wrong phone numbers such that in case of any follow up they are always mteja. Teacher C: When I inspect items brought by my learners during opening day, I am always surprised to find a kid with dismally few items such as the smallest toothpaste, one bathing soap no shoe polish no replacement for worn-out uniform. I have witnessed a case where they even bring some items that they have been using at home like used soaps, used toothpaste, and old toothbrushes. The items brought cannot take them through the term further insistence to the parents that they provide all the necessities is met with threat of withdrawing the child from school. Out of the empathy we have towards the child, we choose to remain with the child around rather than having the child remain at home and fail to get through the education system. I think our parents are taking advantage of our leniency. Further inquiry from the learners on why parents are so unresponsive the children genuinely the parents argues that they have other children in regular school who are doing better than them. After all, where is my future success through education me as a teacher I feel these parents do not

Interview report from pupils.

PUPIL A: MINE MOM BUY ME ITEMS IN SMALL SMALL. // TERM FINISH ZERO//
PUPIL B: ME NEVER EVERYTHING BOUGHT// ME REPORT BACK LITTLE
ITEMS FRIENDS MINE POOR ME SAY/ HAPPY CLASS ME NO// WAIT WAIT
WAIT BUT MUM BRING NO//PUPIL C: ITEMS BOUGHT, SOME
NOTHING//PUPIL E: ME NEW UNIFORM NO BOUGHT. //SHOES/ SOCKS BUY
NO//PUPIL F: MINE BROTHERS PLUS SISTERSMUM BUY MANY MANY// ME
ITEMS FEW FEW// ME NOTHING// ME HAPPY NO/ LOVE ME NO//

Parents during the interview had the following statements.

Parent A: *Sometimes I am not able to buy all that is needed since I have other children in other schools. I have four children, two in secondary school and two in neighboring primary school. Their demands are too high. At least I do see their results and hear them read but for my hearing-impaired son, I cannot exactly tell what is going on in the school. This demotivates me. I am motivated by others through their performance. The reason that they are not sent home by the headteacher makes me assume that everything is going well unlike those in the regular school who are sent home when they have some items missing. For fear of embarrassment, I respond very first to those who are sent home.*

Parent B: *Sometimes we get tired of buying these items considering that these children join boarding school at a very tender age. Their peers may join the boarding facility at grade five. According to my understanding, only children from rich family can attend boarding schools and yet I do not belong to that rich class. My child started boarding at a baby class. Think of providing boarding facilities for more than twelve years. It is expensive feel like dropping the whole programme unless we get some intervention done. Taking this child to secondary school will also be a nightmare for me and the family. These are not my feelings alone; they are issues affecting every other parent in this institution. I bet every other parent even in other special schools could be undergoing the same experiences as we are In the same country with similar challenges.*

Parent C: *Transport costs and payment of fee make me buy a few personal items for my child. Am also not able to pay all the levies requested. Our -to-school home is too far spend a lot of money in terms of fare together with my child. Sometimes I had to spend four thousand together with the accommodation. I feel pained especially when my other children join*

the neighboring school at no cost. It's a heavy burden to me and other parents. Hope we get some remedy soon before the situation goes out of hand

The findings above are an indication that although the parents got involved in their children's education matters, still the participants felt that it was not adequate. The sentiments from the headteachers, teachers, parents, and pupils were an indication that still learners with hearing impairments did not receive much parental involvement towards them especially in the provision of basic personal items. One focus discussion group member lamented how dismally the parents chipped when called upon to offer support to the children. One member cited a case where a parent brought a child back to school without any shopping with the promise to bring them later after a week only to disappear from that time and the phone was completely switched off. The records on items bought by parents indicated that some basic items were missing from the record. From the observation made, some learners had clothes that were torn and needed some immediate repair. Personal items relating to education participation. This is because a provision of these basic items makes the learner to enjoy learning in a relaxed atmosphere. Girl who may lack adequate sanitary materials may miss classes for fear of menses messing their clothes. Some girls may even fake sickness so that they can be away from the classroom. This reduces the number of contact hours with teachers which are very crucial in promoting learning. Learners who fail to report all the items in school tend to steal from their peers so that they can also get engaged in those activities that require those items like brushing their teeth and shoes. Stealing of items causes distress to the child whose items were taken from. A distressed child may not concentrate well on education matters. Learners who usually come to school with inadequate items develop low self-esteem. Low self-esteem in learners makes them lack confidence in-class work. They are usually withdrawn and may not usually interact with others, especially during games and group discussions for fear of embarrassment Lara and Saracosti (2019) cite several effects of poor parental involvement in the education participation of their children as low self-esteem in a child, withdrawal of a learner in the class activities and labeling of learners as poor by their peers. Failure to report with adequate items makes learners waste time moving from one room to another seeking a friend to lend. Sometimes they are lent or not. In some situations, where they are lent, their owners may repossess their items without notice. Learners who have found themselves in such a scenario are always insecure. Psychological insecurity with learners' concentration on a task. Psychological torture leads to poor performance even in the academic aspect as put across by Wilder (2019), Targa and Reyes (2017) were of the view that home-based involvement of family Sebastian (2020) posited that parents should encourage their children to remain in school through the provision of basic items that make them feel comfortable and therefore able to participate effectively in school activities. Ferreira (2021) pointed out that children who feel excluded due to a lack of basic items lack motivation to learn because they develop poor perceptions of themselves and the school. Most of them end up dropping out of school.

The current research sought to find out if there is any relationship between parental education background and involvement in education participation for learners with hearing impairments. The questionnaire report from the headteacher indicated that parents who had acquired some level of education specially from four and above supported their children. Two headteachers indicated that educated parents had a positive attitude towards the education of their children with hearing impairments, provided their children with learning resources, took their children for further treatment to correct the disability, and even supported the school programs.

The interview conducted with teachers on the same aspect of parental involvement and educational level had the following to say:

Teacher A; *Parents in my class who have a post-primary education are usually resourceful in the day-to-day running of the class programs. They bring the items needed promptly, and bring their children back to school on the exact opening date. I also realized that they are aware of some of the current trends and development in the area of special needs especially about the use of KSL instead of Kiswahili. They are aware that their children have a potential to proceed to the next level of education like joining secondary schools and potential employment after completion of their education system. I think this forms the greatest motivational factor to their immense devotion to the education of their children. They also inquire about their children's progress in all aspects.* Teacher B; *Most parents who are not up in the education ladder do not contribute any point during the meeting. They think what they say will not be taken seriously find most of them shying away even simple question. I think they do not take the education of their children seriously. Even during academic clinic days for their children, they have nothing to inquire about their children progress. None of these parents have made a call from me to inquire about the progress of their children. Most of the parents we have around are grandparents. the real parents ran away especially after realizing the child was deaf as many fear identifying self with a child with hearing impairment. So sometimes I do not blame these parents. I do appreciate the little effort they make even giving us an opportunity to serve their children.* Teacher C; *My parents confess that they don't know matters in education I cannot help my child with homework because I don't understand sign language. Some of my parents argue that they only understand the natural sign language. How can they help a child with homework which is written in English? They do not understand the sign language used in school. They assume that we the teachers should bear the entire responsibility of helping them with homework even when they report back from home*

Parents interviewed on the same topic had the following comments.

Parent *Almost all of my colleague's parents fear contributing points during the meeting complaining that they have never gone to school and therefore may not contribute good points. My colleague's Parents complain that they are from the interior part of this country practicing pastoralism. They have never had a chance to join the school at any point in life what do I contribute in a meeting? Let the learned have a say in the meeting. We will agree on what they put across.* Parent B; *Many say they cannot help their children in Academic work because they cannot read and understand. They complain that they do not know sign language. I think for me to help a learner academically I need to know how to do it. But I lack knowledge. I am facing a communication barrier with my child. Nobody is around to help me interpret what they are saying. I am left stranded. Sometimes ananiita kichwa ngumu when I fail to understand what saying.* Parent C; *Many parents only understand the natural sign language as opposed to KSL which is the official language for the deaf community. We parents we are not trained on the use of signs in a school setup. Our communication with our children is limited. We can only share a few words and experiences. We are usually stuck in the process and sometimes we agree on distorted information. For me to understand my child, I have to be always around face to face but such time is not available. Being together all the time means I should not engage in any other economic activity. I may end up being poor.*

Pupils interviewed on the same topic relating to parental education and participation said the following.

PUPIL A; PARENTS MINE HELP HOMEWORK NO//KNOW NOTHING// PUPIL B;
PARENTS MINE KSL KNOW ZERO// COMMUNICATION GOOD NO PUPIL C;
MINE PARENT READ NOTHING//COMMUNICATION KSL NO //PUPIL D;
MOTHER MINE READ KNOW// HOMEWORK HELP ME HAPPY//PUPIL E; DAD
KSL KNOW SMALL SMALL /COMMUNICATION GOO//

The findings above are an indication that there is a correlation between the educational background of the parent and consequent involvement in the education of their children. Findings by Schueler, (2017) indicated that parents who had a minimal educational level to some extent resisted attending school meetings and if they attended, they usually kept quiet. In such a situation only those who were viewed to be learned are the only ones who aired their views. Where parental engagement is minimal due to the level of education, the child suffers because what they go through even from family background is not brought into light to be addressed in an open gathering. Parents are supposed to act as models to their children on education matters like helping in doing homework. Children tend to value what their parents identify with. A low level of education makes the parent have little knowledge of various medical services that are available for their children to help reduce the effect of disability (Miedes, 2019).

The research sought to find out the attitude of parents towards picking up their children from school on opening and closing days.

A question featured on the head teacher questionnaire. The response was as follows.

Headteacher 1: Parents picked up their children late even after one week. Headteacher 2: Parents brought their children back to school almost after one month. Headteacher 3: Some parents never bothered to bring them back we had to do follow-up.

The teachers interviewed had the following to say.

Teacher A: Parents give us the wrong phone numbers so when we call them to pick up their children they are nowhere to respond. We stay in school even for four days before they are picked. I even request phone numbers from neighbors but they always give the wrong numbers. Sometimes I had to make a personal effort to ensure the child is taken back home. I have severally taken children home after they have overstayed in school. Continuous stay in school after closing translates to us not also going home for our holiday. Children remaining in school are to be fed; their rooms are to be kept clean. This calls for an extra cost which increases financial burden on this institution. Learners get bored since no learning is going on. Some swear never to get back to school again in case they get an opportunity to get back to their home. I feel the parents pay more attention to their hearing children as opposed the those with hearing impairment because I believe the same parents have children in regular schools and they are very keen concerning their closing days. Teacher B; Learners are usually picked late and also report back late even after one month. Some never report we usually have to follow-ups. I have to make several calls. Sometimes the administration has to engage the area chief for intervention to have children back to school. We have to ask for several contacts in case of such an unforeseen scenario. These have been recurring issues since I joined a school for learners with hearing impairments. It is like these learners are treated like lesser people in society without mercy. Sometimes during short holidays like half term, we prefer retaining learners in school because to them going home is equivalent to closing school forever and no turning back. Teacher C; In most cases, children report

late. Mostly an average of two learners per day for almost a month. We mostly have to make several calls. we even take children to their homes. This has always been the case throughout the year. Some parents give us the wrong contact for fear of such follow up Even their response after contacting them is very poor. Sometimes our communication with them ends up with some form of sharp disagreement. Many Parents argue that it is too expensive only the rich can afford to be picking their children from school on a daily basis.

Interviewed learners also had their sentiments.

PUPIL A; ME HOME LATE GO// FRIENDS SAY POOR WE// PUPIL B; MINE FRIENDS LATE COME. HAPPY NO//PUPIL C; MANY DAYS FRIENDS HOME STAY// NOTHING LEARN//

Interviewed parents had sentiments such as:

Parent A; *I am never late in picking my child up from school on both opening and closing days but any time we have parents meetings the headteacher has it always as an agenda. Even the class teachers have emphasized to parents that they need to pick up their children from school and to school at the right time. I have heard of cases where children in this school have spent even a month before being picked to go home while others report late almost after a month while other can skip the whole term. Some even drop out of school for a whole year only to resurface later after coercion by government officers* Parent B: *I always try my best to do well on the two occasions. I understand what it means to have a child left behind in school while others have gone home. I also understand the discomfort the child goes through seeing other children get back to school. However, as a parent representative, I am aware that majority of learners are never picked to go home at the right time neither do they report back on the exact date of opening.* Parent C. *Sometimes due to financial constraint and distance my child report back after 2-3 days. We come from far away. We travel many kilometers to t reach this school and have to pay fare for my child I also have to pay mine unlike in other institutions where we only release the child to get to school alone. We have several stops before we reach this place. Money is not enough to purchase needed items. Sometimes getting money to help me report to school the exact date is a big tussle. Remember I became a parent in this school several years back because my child reported to this school at a very tender age while in preschool. It has been a long journey. We as parents of children with hearing impairments are being treated harshly by nature. Everything taught on us is very expensive. We may wish to have our children get same treatment like others even academically but our hands are tied no matter how much we try.*

The above responses display some mixed reactions. Some parents observed punctuality in picking their children from school to home and home to school. The headteachers, teachers parents and learners to some extent are in agreement that learners are picked late or never picked from School on closing day. The same is reported about reporting on opening day that most report late after their peers have reported. A member from the focus group expressed her sentiment with lots of hunger on how sometimes they spend almost half of their holiday session in school as they wait for parents to pick their children. *We are to remain around for almost two weeks waiting for children to be picked. They have to be cooked for; the house parent has to take care of them at night. It is like I have to remain in school throughout the year.* From the accessed class register, only four grade seven learners out of twelve had reported had reported by the start of the second week in school A, school B had three out of nine learners while in school C four out of nine learners had reported. From the observation made, learners were still

reporting to school though it was the third week of the term These findings are in line with sentiments by Saracostti (2019) in his research findings in Malawi Embagweni primary school for the students with hearing impairments which revealed that parents and relatives of learners with hearing impairments used school as a place to drop off their learners with hearing impairments. The cited scenario creates psychological torture for a learner who views school as a prison. Such learners may associate school with punishment. Some may even drop out of school due to such a kind of mistreatment. Extending the stay of learners in school after closing brings in other activities unbudgeted like feeding. Spending on such deprives school money that could otherwise be used in purchasing teaching learning materials which would help promote education participation for learners.

The current study sought from respondents on any relationship between parental occupation and parental involvement in the education of their children.

The questionnaire for headteachers had a question on what they viewed about the occupation of parents in relation to involvement in the education of their children. The three headteachers reported that parental occupation influenced their involvement on the education of their children. They posited that parents who were in the formal employment were much available for their children compared to those who worked in an informal employment.

Teachers interviewed had the following responses.

Teacher A: *The parents of learners in my class especially those who worked in the formal sectors appeared to be more responsive on education matters of their children. In fact, they brought almost all the items required in school. They attended meetings on time and support the school programmes. They can also the dates for serious events in school. They also make some calls to the office to inquire about the progress of their children. They take every sentiment from teachers with lots of seriousness. I think the type of parental occupation relates to education level.* Teacher B; *Parents of learners in my class who works especially in the informal sectors like vibarua in people's farms mostly show minimal involvement in their children's education matters Many of them are not available for meetings as they complain of inadequate time available. Due to their irregular availability of funds, they also delay in clearing fees. Most of them pick up their children late from school with an excuse that they were looking for vibarua to get funds as fare.* TeacherC; *I think the kind of employment is highly related to the education status of the parents. Children from parents in the informal sectors suffer from inadequate parental support, especially in doing homework. They also experience communication barriers since they only understand the natural sign language. Natural sign language is not the language of instruction in school. Parents who spend long hours in their work stations lack time to interact with their children.*

The learners interviewed had their views also;

PUPIL A: I SEE PARENTS MINE NO/ NOT HAPPY//PUPIL B; MINE MOM WORK MANY MANY//VISIT ME SCHOOL NO// PUPIL C FAR FATHER WORK// ME SEE FATHER NO//PUPIL D. MINE DAD SEE. //HAPPY HAPPY//PUPIL E. MOTHER DAD ME SEE NO// ME BRO SIS HOME// ME HAPPY NO// PUPIF; L ME GO SCHOOL LATE. MOTHER WORK WORK. //

The parents interviewed had the following to say.

Parent A; *The nature of my Job does not me a chance even a single day to be out. Being absent from work, no pay from my employer is very tough. At one point when I asked for permission*

to attend to an issue concerning my child she made a very rude response that t why should not take your child to the school near home? It was so painful to me bearing in mind that I had no other alternative on where to take my child for schooling. I only wished she knew the struggle that we go through to have a child see the gate of a school. I am always worried about a day missed in a job translates to us missing a meal for that night. Parent B; I am paid very little and can only cater for food. I have no extra coin remaining to buy items for school. What I am paid a day caters to the expenses of the and sometimes not even enough so saving a coin for spending the following day is very difficult for me. The vibarua I do are not regular so it's try and error. I would love to make my child happy and comfortable in school but my hands are tied. When I request for increased pay the boss talks of the poor economic situation in the entire world. Parent C; I work in vibarua. Any time am not at work I cannot get paid. The economy is not doing fine. I never have any savings for spending on school matters. I think parents with better formal employment are doing well for they are assured of pay whether they report to work or not.

Based on the above responses it is clear that parents' career type influenced their engagement with their children on education issues. The findings of the study were in agreement with the findings by Julius (2022) that parents' social socioeconomic conditions including occupation affiliation had an influence on how parents get involved in the education matters of their children. Guyo (2022) was of the view that parental occupation contributed significantly to parental involvement in education. Parents need to have stable careers that will give them continuous supply of income so that they can purchase basic requirements for their children which would make them remain in school this participate well in education. Days off could be a welcome idea especially when parents are to pick their children from school especially closing days and also taking them back to school after the holiday. Late reporting to school hamper with timely resuming of school routines including teaching. Late commencement of teaching lends to late coverage of the syllabus. Inadequate coverage of the syllabus leads to poor performance in both summative and formative assessments.

The current study sought to inquire from the respondents on what they felt could be the challenges facing parents in their endeavor to get involved in the education of their children. Questions were put across in the headteachers' questionnaire to explore this aspect as well as the interview schedule for teachers, parents, and pupils.

The three headteachers highlighted challenges such as lack of adequate funds, lack of understanding of sign language, distance from the school, inadequate engagement by the school administration, and discouragement about the future of their child future success from the Academic point of view.

Teachers responded to the interview schedule as follows.

Teacher A; *It is not the wish of many parents not to get fully involved in their children's issues in education. Some are faced with challenges of lacking adequate finances to meet the basic needs of their children, inadequate knowledge on how to handle a child with hearing impairments, distance from home to school communication barriers due to lack of understanding of KSL, stigma from the community and family members, expensive materials.* Teacher B; *Based on my experience, most parents lack interest in education for their children with hearing impairments because of the stigma posed on both of them by the community, and early admission to boarding school which is expensive. Low parental expectations towards children with hearing impairments have made many parents neglect their children. I have heard many of my parents make sentiments like.....what is all the energy for? How is the*

future, of my child? where will my child qualify for employment like others? Their brothers and sisters have aspirations on what they want to become in society but my deaf child is not aware of the next move even after graduating from here. Have never seen a doctor neither have I heard of a pilot who is deafness Teacher C; Most of the lack knowledge on daily needs of their children. Others are still in denial on having a child with hearing impairments. Most lacks support from the family members especially women who to some extent are even divorced by their husbands for giving birth to a child with hearing loss. Some learners are left in the hands of grandparents who are not knowledgeable about raising children.

Parents were also requested to air their views. Their responses through interviews were as follows.

Parent A; I wish to help my children but I face a financial lack. My child joined boarding school at a very early age am almost drained the journey is long. I would love to see my child smartly dressed and well fed but I have tried but it's not working. But I hope one day may come on our way to make everything appear better. Parent B; My occupation cannot guarantee me enough money to engage myself in all the demands. Am paid very little. We lack adequate food. Our shelter is not the best. Parent C; I experience a communication barrier with my child so I may not understand exactly what they need. I mostly do guesswork. I only understand the natural signs within our local environment where we interact with the child. When they come from school, they use a different language which I do not understand. When we are I am unable to understand they say Dad ni kichwa ngumu. What then do I do. In most cases, I do guess work. Other times I end up doing the opposite of their expectations. This has brought a lot of misunderstanding understanding and conflicts between us and the entire family members who interact with the child. For my child to understand the information I am sharing I have to be available all the time. I face challenges on matters of time because I have to work so that we can get our daily bread.

Learners interviewed had the following to say Pupil A; MOM MONEY LITTLE // PUPIL B; DAD KNOW KSL LITTLE //PUPIL C; COMMUNICATION HARD// PUPIL D; SCHOOL FAR FAR //PUPIL E; DAD MONEY LITTLE // PUPIL F; MUM /DAD COMMUNICATION UNDERSTAND ME NO//

The responses above indicate that parents are facing a myriad of challenges that become a hindrance to getting full involvement in the education welfare of their children. One member of the focus group added to the mentioned sentiment that most of the learners in the school are under the care of grandparents who are elderly and are not aware of the expectations of a child with hearing impairments. *I take a lot of time to explain to the parents about the needs of these children but they seem not to understand. They always complain that they do not have adequate funds, others say that this is not my work. I will wait until her mother comes during the Christmas season for she only visits us once a year.* The perused document especially the assessment report from the EARC indicated that these learners had come from counties that were far from the school. The hindrance ranges from inadequate funds, boarding for young children at a very early age expensive, communication barriers, and distance from school which is usually far. The findings are in agreement with the findings by Josephine (2022) on barriers to parental involvement in the education of learners with intellectual disabilities where she cited challenges such as economic challenges of the parents, lack of parental support, and low level of education for parents. Morowi et al (2019) suggested that parents were the first teachers and therefore their vigorous participation would help promote their children's level of participation in education. Parental involvement should go beyond and incorporate interpersonal relationships with the child, nurturing responsibility, and emotional support. A

study in Malaysia by Natasha (2022) stated that to help motivate children in education participation, parents should appreciate and praise their children for work well done. Children are also happy when their parents give a hand in homework. Parental willingness to get involved in child education matters helps improve morale, and the right attitude and promotes behavior and social adaptation which is necessary in education participation.

The current study sought to seek views from the study participants on what they felt could be the effect of inadequate level of parental involvement on education participation for their children with hearing impairments.

The headteachers' questionnaire had an item to elicit reactions on the topic. The three headteachers responded to the question as follows. A low level of parental participation affects learners' psychological well-being, learners may drop out of school, and management of resources by headteachers is made difficult and widens the child-parent relationship.

The teachers interviewed highlighted the following facts.

Teacher A; *Feel time for learning is wasted especially when learners report to school late. Syllabus coverage is compromised. Children develop negative attitudes towards their parents. Such a situation will always make us lag compared to hearing learners who pick up their learning process early enough. To us, implementation of routines on the timetable pick up after three weeks. If we count losing three weeks every term multiplied by three terms in a year it translates to a lot of time being wasted. Learners who have hearing impairment need to be present when a new concept is being introduced because they cannot rely on their classmates to introduce them to what they have been introduced as it is a common case for hearing learners. So we find ourselves buying time waiting at least for a quorum.* Teacher B; *Learners develop low self-esteem. Poor relationship between teachers and learners is developed. When learners are not well provided for, they develop low self-esteem as even their peers call them poor. Their relationships with parents get poor as they feel their parents are not concerned with them especially when parents prefer helping their siblings who are hearing. They also dislike us we as teachers when we make frequent inquiries on why their parents are not being supportive of them. Out of that, they keep their distance from children who do not interact well with teachers and finally get isolated* Teacher C; *Learners develop hatred for their siblings as they feel that their parents favor their hearing. They dislike sharing about their siblings. They throw hands when you mention their children. They take them to have a negative completion. They develop a dislike for home. They feel neglected*

Parents had the following to say on the same topic.

Parent A; *From my own experience parents who fail to show total involvement in education for their children contribute to the failure of their children. Some children end up dropping out of school. In fact, dropping out of school is mostly related to the family background.* Parent B; *A Low level of parental involvement will lead to child neglect. Uneducated child becomes a burden to the family. How I feel it is always good to cater to the child when young. A child who is neglected may also neglect others and their own in the future. Our parents committed to helping us when we were young, they instilled these values in us. I have seen those parents who did not educate their children go through tough moments in the future taking care of their grown-up children who should otherwise be self-reliant. It is not good to neglect our children. As parents, we should go the extra mile to ensure the comfort of our children.* Parent C; *A Parent who fails to get involved in the education of a child brings the country backward. When a deaf learner fails to secure a source of income, they become beggars which interferes with the country's development both socially and economically in the parents' meetings we have*

attended in various sets the speakers have always emphasized on role of education in bringing change to the society. Education breaks the poverty cycle in the family and society context. Beggars in society are really welcomed and consulted.

Learners had the following sentiments.

PUPIL A; ME FEEL SHY//PUPIL B; ME HAPPY SCHOOL NO//PUPIL C; FRIENDS SAY ME POOR// PUPIL D; SCHOOL LOVE ME NO//

The above responses from the headteachers, teachers' parents, and pupils were incorporated and discussed. It is indisputable that where parental involvement is inadequate learners with hearing impairments face some impoundments in their endeavor to participate in education. The four respondents had a common feeling that learners are affected in that they develop low self-esteem, some learners drop out of school based on parental factors, and syllabus coverage is not adequately done. In support of these sentiments, one of the focus group members added that, out of harsh conditions that learners faced from a feeling of neglect, the majority practiced truancy aiming at getting back home to check whether the parents would buy them what they were promised, other learners had to fake sickness with the hope of being picked home for treatment while others steal from others, especially girls. Sanithan, Yin, Mustafa & Abdullah (2020) were of the opinion that where parents were fully involved in education matters of their children helped promote creativity, and understanding and acted as a source of encouragement. Such kind of a gesture helps in instilling a sense of belonging in a child hence a learner feels that their parents care. Parents should be the primary motivators for their children. Plaindanen & Sha (2019) added a sentiment that parental involvement help reduce the teachers' burden in handling matters of a child in school. Parents should share the experiences their children go through because the problems they face at home are the same problems they project to school. Garbacz (2019) supported this argument by stating that increased parental involvement increased the opportunity for teachers and administrators in school ability to help a learner participate better in education. Physical motivation, social development, and intellectual stimulation in a learner with hearing impairments can highly be developed by early and timely parental involvement. They can also act as a source of information for learners. Parents who get engaged in learners' activities help them develop resilience in life and the development of coping skills. Parents should act as a change agent.

The current study sought from the participants how to help improve parental involvement in education for learners with hearing impairments. The questionnaire for headteachers had a question aimed at soliciting remarks from the headteachers. The interview schedule for teachers, parents, and pupils also had the same questions to help get the view on how to improve parental involvement in education for learners with hearing impairments.

The headteacher had the following responses from the questionnaire;

School should come up with a policy on the involvement of parents in the affairs of the institution, communication between the school administration and parents be improved, parents who displayed some extra level of commitment be congratulated especially in a parent meeting, and WhatsApp group to be formed where interaction between the school and the parents can take place. The school participate in some social matters related to parents.

The interview session with teachers generated the following reaction to the topic.

Teacher A; *Teacher and parents should perfect their mode of communication. Respect in either party is upheld. WhatsApp can be a good forum for keeping in touch. Timely communication be done by dispatching a calendar of events for the whole year.* Teacher B; Parents who have

portrayed a high level of commitment to be recognized as they will serve as models to others. Everybody would love being recognized for good work done. The school management can also think of some of the incentives like a percentage fee waiver for parents who comply with the school's demands. Teacher C; Get together sessions if well-organized can be a good source of socialization and in the process, parents can be enlightened on the joy of helping their children to pursue education. I think this can be done by organizing AGM. guest speakers can also be invited to share some knowledge on the importance of education to the entire school fraternity.

The views of the parents were also captured as follows.

Parent A; Promotion of mutual respect between the stakeholders can help improve parental involvement. Parent. Some parents felt that some personnel in the school showed little respect to parents. We are usually regarded as a bother when you inquire about some clarification on some issues. Experiences with the institutions handling learners with hearing impairment is an emerging issue within our society and therefore most of us as parents we may not be familiar with the culture of such institutions need tender handling Sometimes, we may look confused. We need kind guidance and I believe with time we will get used. ParentB; It is not the wish of parents that we sometimes fail to get involved. One of the major with us is the lack of required resources like money to facilitate the buying of basic needs. If we to have a good source of income, it would not be a big problem for us providing for all that is needed in school for the upkeep of our children. Parent C; Sometimes language barriers interfere with our interaction with our children who are hearing impaired. Kenyan sign language should be trained by parents to help ease communication. The government should provide us with jobs to help us get a steady income and also jobs which are predictable in terms of time.

Learners also had some views captured as follows; PUPIL A;MUM GOOD JOB GET //
PUPIL B; SCHOOL NEAR HOME PARENTS MINE SEE. ME HAPPY//

Based on the above responses from respondents, it was of great concern that parents improve their level of commitment as they are key to education participation for their children with hearing impairments. The respondents agreed that action should be taken to promote parental involvement. From one of the documents accessed the school had a record of all parents' contacts which would serve as a channel for effective communication between parents and teachers. Some members of the focus group discussion had gone to the extent of creating a WhatsApp link which would provide an avenue for sharing relevant information between the members about the welfare of their children. The respondents agreed that there should be an enhanced mode of communication governed by respect, parents should be encouraged to participate, especially by setting meetings on the days when they are not working like on Saturday, and parents should be provided meals when they are invited for meetings to help reduce the cost, parents portraying some level of commitment should be appreciated. Home visits by teachers can also help parents see the need to help their children as such a gesture helps in providing a link between the school and the family. Teachers can also send learners home with activities that they should do together with Parents and then bring feedback to teachers about the experience.

Where barriers to parental participation are overcome, parents change their attitude toward learners with hearing impairments. Change of attitude helps the parents get more engaged in their children's affairs Qunghua et al. (2022) were of the feeling that parents need to be helped in helping obstacles that detail their involvement in their children's education affairs. They also help in developing and providing a suitable learning environment both at home and school. An involved parent will have a say in decision-making on matters concerning their children. They

will give a firsthand information about the concerns of their children which can later be implemented promoting education participation for their children. When a parent is involved in decision-making, they also get incorporated in PTA and BOM committees which are crucial in ensuring the institutional goals are well set, planned, and implemented. According to Cotton & Wikelund (2019), an involved parent can volunteer in helping learners with hearing impairments. They can lend a hand during training of music festivals, drama and positive cultural events that takes place within the community. They can also act as guest speakers in their areas of specialization. Their presences in the school compound during a school event provide a rich experience for interaction between learners and adults. Interaction promotes cognitive development and also future aspiration as such adults may act as a model for future careers to learners.

5.0 Conclusion

The study found that the level of parental involvement in the three sampled schools was very low. This factor contributed negatively to the education participation of learners with hearing impairments in all aspects of learning.

6.0 Recommendations

Parents are key in the education of a child. Charity begins at home and therefore effective parental involvement would help in the early nurturing of a learner towards education. Based on the study findings, collective effort should be made to sensitize the parents on their roles in the education of their children. Employers of parents of students with hearing impairments should be given days off with pay when going to attend to their children's issues in school like on closing days, opening days, and clinic days for their children. The school should provide some incentives to parents like meals during the school meetings to help reduce parents' expenses. The government should ensure tax waivers for parents of students with hearing impairments. The stakeholders should help change parental attitudes that their children will not make it. The slogan "Disability is not inability" should be emphasized. The stigma associated with disabilities should be demystified in parents by creating an environment of self-disclosure through the formation of self-help groups incorporating the affected and those not affected by the disability. The transport sector should reduce charge reduced fares for a child with a disability when reporting back to school and also on closing day. This will serve as a source of motivation to parents to take their children back to school in time due to financial reprieve. The school administration should develop a policy on how parents would be involved in the affairs of the school. Parents portraying some level of commitment should be rewarded by the school. Above all respect in both schools administration and parents should be upheld. When parents are involved, learners will participate effectively in education.

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