



East African Journal of Education Studies

eajes.eanso.org

Volume 8, Issue 2, 2025

Print ISSN: 2707-3939 | Online ISSN: 2707-3947

Title DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37284/2707-3947>



Original Article

Home-School Communications and Pre-Primary School Learners' Acquisition of Core CBC Competencies in Kisii County

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Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3097>

Date Published: ABSTRACT

05 June 2025

Keywords:

Parental,
Home-School
Communication,
Pre-Primary
School,
Core
Competencies,
Competence-
Based
Curriculum.

This paper presents findings from a study conducted in Kisii County, Kenya, aimed at examining the relationship between home-school communication and the acquisition of core competencies among pre-primary school learners. Acquiring these competencies in the early years is essential, as it lays a solid foundation for continued learning at higher levels of education. Despite global evidence indicating that many learners struggle to meet expected competencies at various educational levels. Limited research in the Kenyan context and particularly in Kisii County has focused on the role of parental involvement in supporting the acquisition of core competencies at the pre-primary level. Yet, effective acquisition of competencies during this stage is critical for learners' academic success in both current and future educational levels. The study specifically sought to explore how home-school communication influences the acquisition of core competencies among learners in Pre-Primary two (PP2). Epstein's (2005) theory of parental involvement provided the theoretical framework for the study. An ex post facto research design was adopted and implemented through a mixed methods approach. The study targeted a population of 702 public PP2 schools and along with 25,105 parents of PP2 learners. Through purposive, cluster, and stratified sampling techniques, the researcher selected a main sample referred as Set 1 comprising 248 teachers and 378 parents from whom quantitative data were sourced using questionnaires. Additionally, a sub-sample of 30 parents was drawn and organized into six focus groups of five participants each, providing qualitative data through Focus Group Discussions. The data collection instruments were pre-tested in two PP2 schools to ensure reliability and validity. Content validity and the split-half method were applied, resulting in a reliability correlation coefficient of 0.8. Qualitative data were analysed thematically using verbatim transcripts, while quantitative data were summarized and organized using descriptive statistics such as frequencies.

To test the study's hypothesis, inferential statistics including Pearson Moment Correlation and multiple regression analysis were employed to examine both the relationship and its strength between the independent and dependent variables. The results revealed a positive and statistically significant correlation between parental home-school communication and learners' acquisition of core competencies ($r = .639$, $n = 369$, $p < .01$). Based on these findings, the study concluded that effective home-school communication significantly contributes to the development of CBC core competencies among PP2 learners. Consequently, the study recommends that key stakeholders in the education sector should create more opportunities for parental involvement in home-school communication. Furthermore, workshops should be organized to sensitize parents on how to effectively engage with school activities, thereby supporting improved acquisition of core competencies among young learners.

APA CITATION

Obunga, E. O., Mwoma, T. B. & Mugo, J. W. (2025). Home-School Communications and Pre-Primary School Learners' Acquisition of Core CBC Competencies in Kisii County. *East African Journal of Education Studies*, 8(2), 610-626. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3097>

CHICAGO CITATION

Obunga, Elijah Orangi, Teresa Bitengo Mwoma and Juliet W. Mugo. 2025. "Home-School Communications and Pre-Primary School Learners' Acquisition of Core CBC Competencies in Kisii County". *East African Journal of Education Studies* 8 (2), 610-626. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3097>

HARVARD CITATION

Obunga, E. O., Mwoma, T. B. & Mugo, J. W. (2025) "Home-School Communications and Pre-Primary School Learners' Acquisition of Core CBC Competencies in Kisii County", *East African Journal of Education Studies*, 8(2), pp. 610-626. doi: 10.37284/eajes.8.2.3097

IEEE CITATION

E. O. Obunga, T. B. Mwoma & J. W. Mugo "Home-School Communications and Pre-Primary School Learners' Acquisition of Core CBC Competencies in Kisii County" *EAJES*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 610-626, Jun. 2025. doi: 10.37284/eajes.8.2.3097

MLA CITATION

Obunga, Elijah Orangi, Teresa Bitengo Mwoma & Juliet W. Mugo. "Home-School Communications and Pre-Primary School Learners' Acquisition of Core CBC Competencies in Kisii County". *East African Journal of Education Studies*, Vol. 8, no. 2, Jun. 2025, pp. 610-626, doi:10.37284/eajes.8.2.3097

INTRODUCTION

The Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) is a system of education that nurtures specific central key abilities in learners, as explained by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) in 2017. The seven competencies identified in Kenya's CBC are self-efficacy, learning to learn, digital literacy, critical thinking and problem-solving, creativity and imagination, communication and collaboration and citizenship. These abilities are embedded in education which plays a significant role in ecological protection, financial, societal and

technological development as well as employability (Bichi et al., 2019). These abilities are necessary for the growing job market in the 21st century, as Mulenga and Kabombwe (2019) rightfully affirm. Therefore, it was important to investigate how different counties implemented CBC and the extent to which pre-primary school learners acquired these basic competencies. Alajmi (2021) explored challenges facing the implementation of National Competency Based Curriculum in public schools in Kuwait using descriptive-analytical method. The study found that CBC faced challenges such as financial supplies, professional development and

training, teacher guides, the assessment process and use of instructional technology. However, the study focused on challenges facing implementation of CBC even though relevant with regard to its focus on CBC's competencies in Kuwait. The present study on the other hand was conducted to obtain information on pertaining to parents' involvement in pre-primary school children's acquisition of Kenya's CBC's core competencies namely; Self-efficacy (SE), Learning to learn (LL), Digital literacy (DL), Critical thinking, and problem-solving (CTPS), Creativity and imagination (CI), Communication and collaboration (CC), Citizenship (C). In Zimbabwe, Manokore (2021) conducted a study to unpack the Competence-Based Curriculum Framework (2015-2022) for Sustainable Development among graduate students using the quantitative approach. Results showed that majority of the students had average practical assessment competencies. The study was however purely quantitative even though relevant with regard to its focus on CBC's competencies in Zimbabwe. Akinrinola, et al. (2020) in their study on teachers' knowledge and integration of competency-based Education practices in Nigerian, Rwandan and South African secondary schools using qualitative approach observed that although teachers had positive view of CBC, it was poorly implemented. With the poor acquisition of CBC competencies across Africa, it was apparent that the prospects of preparing learners for the changing world of work were at risk.

Erdem and Kaya (2020) in a study conducted a meta-analysis affirms that parental involvement is one of the most important practices influencing learning outcomes. Thus, parents have a rigid routine in taking responsibility for the learning process of their children (Bhamani et al., 2020), apart from supporting their children's extracurricular activities (Amponsah, et al., 2018). For instance, they may be involved in home-school communication (Levy (2023).

Ikhlas and Mokhtar (2022) in their study in Malaysia, did not provide accurate outcome of whether parental participation contributes to educational outcomes. Additionally, Albarico et al (2023) show that there is no influence of parental involvement on academic performance. The present study was therefore crucial, in order to harmonize the above inconsistencies observed. A number of recent studies have been conducted on CBC learning outcomes in Kenyan primary schools including Mutai et al. (2024) who focused on the teacher preparedness in the implementation of CBC found out that majority of the teachers were not well prepared. Others focused on unspecified school levels like Alkandari (2023) who explored teachers' views transitioning from objective based curriculum to competence-based curriculum found out that teachers were the main cause of failure in the implementation of CBC, Cheptoo & Ramdas (2020) in their critique of CBC and Ngeno (2022) focused on challenges hindering the implementation of CBC, and Otieno and Machani (2022) on teachers' competencies in assessment of CBC.

In Kenya, the government developed the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF) to provide a comprehensive conceptualization of CBC to actualize the curriculum reforms and Kenya's Vision 2030, thereby ensuring that learners at all levels gain the various competencies to enable them to meet human resource needs countrywide (KICD, 2017b). Furthermore, the government recognised the significance of pre-primary education as a foundation for learning. Thus, a collective effort was needed to strengthen the implementation of CBC at pre-preschool, which therefore made the present study necessary

Although the system of education in Kenya shifted from the content /subject-oriented curriculum to one which is skill or competency-based, its implementation has to some extent faced challenges attributable to school and teacher factors such as inadequate resources, lack of specialized teacher training, large classes sizes, poorly printed books,

unclear assessments rubric guidelines. Ngeno, Mweru, & Mwoma (2021); Ngeno, Mwoma, & Mweru, (2021) in their study focused on teacher attitude and availability of physical infrastructure factors on the implementation of CBC. On the other hand, Ngeno (2022) focused on challenges hindering implementation of CBC, and inability of teachers to incorporate technology in their lessons. The challenges highlighted include financial constraints, lack of infrastructure, acute shortage of teachers, inadequate teacher professional training leading to the conclusion that, CBC was haphazardly implemented (Ogembo, 2025; Otieno & Machani, 2022). FLANA (2023) reports that 6 in 10 parents in CBC rated the curriculum very poorly and only 9 in 100 rated the curriculum very highly. These concerns, therefore, necessitated the need for the present study to investigate the implementation of CBC.

Karogo et al (2020) revealed that the National Assessment System for Monitoring Learner Achievement (NASMLA) survey results of 2020 on CBC subjects, showed that the majority of grade 3 learners in Kisii County, performed poorly. In English for example, 4.5% were at level one, 48.6% at level two, and 32.2% at level three while 26.9% were at level four. This poor performance by grade 3 learners, points to the fact that teachers may not have smoothly adjusted to CBC which is learner-centred. The present study was therefore necessary, to complement government efforts to improve its implementation.

There was therefore a need to unearth the influence of parental home-school communication on pre-primary two (PP2) learners' acquisition of core competencies in Kenya. The hypothesis for the study was; "H₀ There no statistically significant relationship between home-to-school communications and pre-primary learners' acquisition of CBC core-competencies in pre-primary schools."

As recommended by Kwon (20202), the Government of Kenya is developing and providing tailored educational and training programmes for college students, providing guidelines on the content (Cheptoo & Ramdas, 2020), increasing the number of CBC in-service training sessions for teachers (Mwita et al., 2022) and developing infrastructure for CBC (Ngeno, 2022). However, since CBC in Kenya is not yet fully established, it was still unclear to what extent parental involvement influences their children's acquisition of CBC's core competencies, hence the need for the present study.

There was therefore a need to unearth the influence of parental home-school communication on pre-primary two (PP2) learners' acquisition of core competencies in Kenya. The hypothesis for the study was; "H₀ There no statistically significant relationship between home-to-school communications and pre-primary learners' acquisition of CBC core competencies in pre-primary schools."

LITERATURE REVIEW

Joyce Epstein's Theory of Parental Involvement

Epstein (1987, 1995, 1996, 2005) home- that school communication plays a role in a child's learning and development, in a kind of family-like connection. Communicating entails increasing interactive operatives between home and school. This theory provides a more specific approach to pre-primary school learners' acquisition of CBC core competencies. Specifically, as Epstein accentuates, the school, family, and community are an important influence on children's learning as well as development. Thus, Epstein provides a more holistic approach towards the acquisition of CBC core competencies, if the framework is applied by incorporating the elements in the theoretical model. These constitute an environment that fosters communication strategies that bind the home and school together.

Synthesis of Literature on Home-School Communication

Home-school communication entails developing open lines of communication on students' learning progress as well as in the making of educational plans between schools and parents (Olivar & Naparan, 2023). However, communication according to Hummel (2024) refers to talking to others, and in this case, amongst parents, teachers, and children on matters related to both academic and non-academic issues as well as exhibition of a clear concern in a child's learning and general welfare. Thus, when teachers and parents share information, children gain more knowledge and skills leading to improved learners' educational outcomes.

Global studies in the USA, by Kelley (2022), Levy (2023), Haisraeli and Fogiel-Bijaoui (2023), Brinia et al. (2022), Odchigue et al. (2023), and Ates (2021) concur that parents' presence, school support, and two-way communication built on trust, were pillars of a successful school-parent partnership during the Corona pandemic. In fact, they noted that the correlation between parental participation and academic performance was positive. For example, it was evident that parents highly participated in distributing, answering, and submitting modules or work needed for their children.

Although these findings were promising, Pek and Mee (2020) in their study in Malaysia on the contrary, revealed that many parents were not involved effectively in their child's education at home with as many as 70% engaging inconsistently / at times going to school to discuss with teachers about their child's academic achievement while 20% never did so at all. Furthermore, the duo reported that with regard to teachers communicating to parents about their child's conduct, 50% of them sometimes talked to them, while 30% completely failed to do so. In relation to parents liking communicating with teachers about activities their

children loved to do at home, 40% inconsistently reported doing so while a similar number totally failed to do so. Besides, 40% of them were in contact with the school during prize-giving day as well as guiding their children with homework at home always but a large number, (60%) only did so at times. With respect to parents doing creative and imaginative things with their children, as high as 50% did so sometimes while 30% completely failed to do so. As far as parents being able to keep their children's schedules for learning, 30% inconsistently/ sometimes did so while as high as 50% totally failed to do so. Although parents were involved in planning education days in their child's school, Pek and Mee (2020) on the contrary, reveal that to a large extent communication between parents and their child's school was low.

The above studies were, however, conducted in developed countries and among high school and primary school learners, leaving out pre-primary schools. Thus, the present study investigated the involvement of parents in terms of home-school communication and its influence on pre-primary school learners' acquisition of CBC core competencies, to close down the gap.

In Indonesia, Sipayung and Cheng (2023) investigated parents' degrees of belief and communication toward teachers in pre-primary schools using a survey research method. The findings of the study revealed low communication scores between parents and teachers. On the contrary, Syuraini et al. (2022) still in Indonesia, affirm that parent-teacher communication was positively related to early childhood learning outcomes and that teacher-parent communication, also positively influenced their cooperation. There was therefore need to conduct the present study to give a more accurate account.

In Rwanda, Karangwa and Ndagijimana (2022), explored perceptions of parental participation in teaching-learning and students' academic achievement among secondary school learners. The duo found that there was a significant and positive

correlation between parental participation and learners' academic achievement. However, a slight departure from the results reported by Karangwa and Ndagijimana (2022) did not find any significant effect between combined parental involvement and learners' academic achievement. Although the reviewed study was related to the current one it focussed on secondary school, while the current one was done in Kenyan preschools. Lastly, the reviewed investigation focused on the association between parental involvement and learners' academic performance as opposed to the current one which centred on the association between parental involvement and learners' acquisition of CBC core competencies.

Narrowing down the focus to Kenya, Osabinyi and Ouko (2023) explored parental involvement practices influencing learners' acquisition of early reading literacy skills in Kiambaa Sub-County, Kiambu County, Kenya. Sandler and Hoover-Dempsey's Parental theoretical model was used as the study's lens in the descriptive survey design research. The findings of the study showed that the majority of the parents assisted their children develop reading literacy skills. Also, good practices like parent-teacher communication enhanced children's reading progress. The above-reviewed study was conducted in Kiambaa Sub-County, Kenya, which is a small rural geographical and administrative setting in the suburbs of Nairobi City County, unlike the current investigation which was conducted in Kisii County, a larger geographical and administrative area in the greater Western region. Moreover, the reviewed study employed the Sandler and Hoover-Dempsey Parental Model that categorises parents' involvement through; encouragement, modelling, reinforcement, and instruction while in the current research, Epstein's theory of parental involvement while utilising four out of its six distinct levels of engagement.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Ex post facto research design was used because it is useful for investigating cause-effect associations

between independent variable - the parental involvement aspect of volunteering which already existed prior to the study, thus, it could not be controlled or manipulated as Kumatongo and Muzata (2021) state and capable of affecting the dependent variable, which is "Pre-primary school pupil's acquisition of CBC core competencies". The design was thus, suitable since the influence of parental factors on the acquisition of the CBC core competencies was already in existence and were therefore observed and utilized as found in their natural state without treatment or manipulation of the respondents.

The use of parents' questionnaires enabled the parents to report their extent of involvement in their children's learning while teachers' questionnaires enabled teachers to provide data on the extent to learners' acquired CBC core competencies. Also, Parents' interviews allowed parents to provide their views about their role in volunteering in order to enhance pre-primary 2 learners' acquisition of core-competencies. Conformity to appropriate standards and confidentiality was ensured by making available the data collected to only those directly involved in the study. Respondents' anonymity was assured by using codes or pseudo names. The anonymity of the sampled learners was assured by collecting the acquisition of the core competencies as a group rather than individually. Lastly, consent of the respondents to participate in the study was also sought.

The study employed a mixed methods approach that involved collecting, analysing and integrating both qualitative and quantitative research methods within a single research study so as to provide a multifaceted understanding of a phenomenon that would otherwise not have been accessed using a single approach only. Face and content validity were used to test the validity of the research instruments whereas the split-half method was used to determine the reliability.

The study was conducted in Kisii County. The target population included 702 pre-primaries two

(PP 2) teachers (1 per school), and 25,105 parents of 25,105 PP2 children from 702 pre-primary schools attached to public primary schools in Kisii County. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) Sampling Table, with a 95% confidence level and 5% margin error, a sample of 248 PP2 teachers and 378 parents of PP 2 learners was obtained.

Quantitative data was summarised and presented in the form of percentages and tables and analysed using Pearson moment correlation coefficient to establish the degree and direction of relationship between home-school-communication learners' acquisition of CBC's core competencies. Also, multiple regressions were utilised to allow the researcher to assess how well a home-school

communication predicted learners' acquisition of CBC's core competencies by determining the relative contribution of each predictor variable utilising SPSS Version 20. Quantitative data was analysed thematically.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study reviewed parents' views on Parental Home-School Communication. Descriptive statistics involving percentages were used to summarize the data obtained. Parents had to rate their involvement in their children's education using the rating scale SA=Strongly Agree, D=Disagree, UD=Undecided, A=Agree, and SD=Strongly Disagree.

Table 1: Parental Views on Home-School Communication Activities

SN	Description	SD	D	UD	A	SA	N
		%	%	%	%	%	
i.	I participate in school parents' meetings & air my views	20.3	3.0	3.5	24.7	48.5	369
ii.	I discuss with the teachers, my child's school achievements	12.2	15.7	4.3	24.7	43.1	369
iii.	The teacher tells me about my child's conduct	12.5	12.2	5.1	21.4	48.8	369
iv.	I talk with the teacher regarding the child's feelings at school	13.3	15.7	8.9	21.7	40.4	369
v.	I call the teacher directly to communicate my child's problems	24.4	8.4	5.7	27.4	34.1	369
vi.	I discuss with the teacher my child's strengths and weaknesses in various activity areas	20.9	3.0	4.1	19.8	52.3	369
vii.	I deliberate with the teacher concerning my child's learning progress	21.7	7.0	5.4	24.9	40.9	369
viii.	I tell the teacher about activities my child likes at home	19.0	1.6	2.2	17.1	60.2	369
Total		18.1	8.3	4.9	22.7	46.0	

The first indicator sought to establish the extent to which parents participated in school parents' meetings & aired their views. It was revealed that almost three-quarters (73.2%) of parents agreed that they participated in school parents' meetings, almost a quarter (23.3%) disagreed almost one in twenty (3.5%) were undecided. The majority of the parents participated in school a parent meeting which is a good practice for enhancing learning. This implies that parent meetings are significant in enhancing learning.

The second item sought to establish the extent to which parents discussed with the teachers, their child's school achievement. It was revealed that slightly more than one in ten (12.2%) strongly agreed that they discussed with teachers, the child's school achievements, almost a fifth (15.7%) disagreed, almost one in twenty (4.3%) were undecided, almost a quarter (24.7%) agreed and slightly more than two-fifths (43.1%) strongly agreed. In brief, almost seven in ten (67.8%) of the parents agreed that they discussed with the teachers

their children's school achievement. A round a quarter (27.9%) of the parents disagreed that they discussed with teachers their children's school achievement and almost one in twenty (4.3%) were undecided. The majority of the parents, therefore, discussed with teachers, their children's school achievement. This means that discussing with teachers regarding children's school achievement was an important exercise that helps both the teacher and parents to understand learners well thus improving their acquisition of CBC's core competencies.

Item number three sought to establish the extent to which the child's teacher told parents about their children's conduct. It was revealed that marginally, more than one in ten (12.5%) strongly agreed that the teacher tells me about their child's conduct, slightly more than one in ten (12.2%) disagreed, to some degree more than one in twenty (5.1%) were undecided, moderately more than a fifth (21.4%) agreed and almost a half (48.8%) strongly agreed. In summary, slightly more than seven in ten (70.2%) of the parents agreed that teachers told them about their children's conduct. Almost a quarter (24.7%) of the parents disagreed that their children's teachers told them about their children's conduct and slightly more than one in twenty (5.1%) were undecided. The majority of the teachers told parents about their children's conduct which suggests it is an operation that helps to check children's behaviours thus enhancing learning.

The next item which is number iv in Table 1, sought to establish the extent to which the child's parent talked with the teacher regarding the child's feelings at school. It was revealed that slightly more than one in ten (13.3%) strongly disagreed that they talked with the teacher regarding the child's feelings at school, almost a fifth (15.7%) disagreed, about one in ten (8.9%) were undecided, slightly more than a fifth (21.7%) agreed and slightly more than two-fifths (40.4%) strongly agreed. In a nutshell, slightly more than three-fifths (62.1%) of parents agreed that they talked with teachers regarding their

children's feelings at school, slightly more than two-fifths (42.3%) of the parents disagreed, and almost one in ten (8.9%) were undecided. This is a connotation that a parent talking with teachers regarding their children's emotions at school is a helpful procedure to teachers in identifying what learners like or fear at school in which case, appropriate steps can be taken to enhance learning.

The fifth item sought to establish the extent to which the child's parent calls directly to inform the teacher about the child's problems. It was revealed that slightly more than a quarter (24.4%) strongly disagreed that they called the teacher directly to communicate the child's problems, almost one in ten (8.4%) disagreed, slightly more than one in twenty (5.7%) were undecided, slightly more than a quarter (27.4%) agreed and slightly more than a third (34.1%) strongly agreed. In short, slightly more than three-fifths (61.5%) of parents agreed that they called teachers directly to inform them about their children's problems. However, almost a third (32.8%) of the parents disagreed that they called teachers directly to inform them about their children's problems and almost one in ten (5.7%) were undecided. Hence, the majority of the parents called teachers directly informing them about the learner's problems. This indicates that this action, helps teachers to handle learners' problems professionally thus improving learning.

Item number 6, sought to establish the extent to which the child's parent discusses with the teacher about the child's strengths and weaknesses in various activity areas. It was revealed that slightly more than a fifth (20.9%) strongly disagreed they discussed with the teacher concerning their child's strengths and weaknesses in various activity areas, about one in twenty (3.0%) disagreed, approximately one in twenty (4.1%) were undecided, almost a fifth (19.8%) agreed and slightly more than a half (52.3%) strongly agreed. In summary, slightly more than seven in ten (72.1%) of parents agreed that they discussed with the teachers their children's strengths and weaknesses

in various activity areas. Almost a quarter (23.9%) disagreed that they discussed with the teachers about their children's weaknesses and strengths in various activity areas and almost one in twenty (4.1%) were undecided. The majority of the parents discussed with teachers about their children's weaknesses and strengths in various activity areas. This inferred that the teacher knew what the children were good or weak at so that the parents and teachers could know where and how to assist the learners.

The seventh item sought to establish the extent to which the child's parent deliberated with the teacher concerning the child's schooling progress. It was revealed that slightly more than a fifth (21.7%) strongly disagreed that they deliberated with teachers about their child's learning progress, slightly more than one in twenty (7.0%) disagreed, slightly more than one in twenty (5.4%) were undecided, almost a quarter (24.9%) agreed and slightly more than two-fifths (40.9%) strongly agreed. Essentially, slightly more than two-thirds (65.8%) of parents agreed that they deliberated with the teachers concerning their children's schooling progress. Almost less than a third (28.7%) disagreed that they deliberated with the teachers concerning their children's learning progress and more than one in twenty (5.4%) were undecided. The majority of the parents deliberated with teachers concerning their children's schooling progress. This implied that this created an opportunity for parents to encourage their children and at the same time have

an opportunity to ask teachers to provide remedial teaching with the sole aim of improving learning outcomes.

The last item in this section sought to establish the extent to which parents told the teacher about activities the child liked at home. It was revealed that almost a fifth (19.0%) strongly disagreed that they told the teacher about activities their child likes at home, less than one in twenty (1.6%) disagreed, less than one in twenty (2.2%) were undecided, almost a fifth (17.1%) agreed and slightly more than three-fifths (60.2%) strongly agreed. Precisely, slightly more than three-quarters (77.3%) of parents agreed that they told their children's teachers about activities they liked at home. Moderately more than a fifth (20.6%) disagreed that they told the teachers about activities their children liked at home and less than one in twenty (2.2%) were undecided. The majority of the parents agreed that they told the teachers about activities their children liked at home. This implies that it is important for parents to tell teachers what activities children like at home. This for example helps the teacher when grouping learners with the aim of enhancing learning through group work.

The study further sought to establish whether there is a relationship between variables by testing the hypothesis that stated; H_0 *There no statistically significant relationship between home-school communication and pre-primary school learners' acquisition of CBC core-competencies.*

Table 2: Statistical Relationship between Parental Home-School Communications and Learners' Acquisition of CBC Core-Competencies

Communication	Pearson Correlation	.639**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	369
Overall Core Competencies	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	369

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 indicates the coefficient correlation between learners' acquisition of CBC core competencies. The findings show that there was a positive

statistically significant association ($r=.639$, $n=369$, $p<.01$) between parental home-school communications and learners' acquisition of CBC core competencies. Given that the correlation was statistically significant, the null hypothesis was rejected. It was therefore concluded that home-school communication significantly correlated to the overall acquisition of CBC core competencies among pre-primary school learners. This connotes that parental home-to-school communications influence learners' acquisition of core competencies, a practice that enhances learning.

The finding of this study is supported by Kelley (2022) who found out that two-way communication built on trust is a pillar of a successful school-parent partnership. This is also supported by Syuraini et al. (2022) who revealed that home-school communication influenced parent-teacher cooperation which in turn enhanced learners' education outcomes. Similarly, Karangwa and Ndagijimana (2022) showed that there was a significant and positive correlation between parental participation and learners' academic achievement.

However, the finding of this study conflicted with that of Ikhlas and Mokhtar (2022) who showed contradicting findings on the influence of parental involvement on learners' academic performance. These contradictions are likely due to differences in geographical, socioeconomic status, societal, and cultural beliefs.

Additionally, qualitative findings on the correlation between home-school communications and the acquisition of CBC core competencies among pre-primary school learners were also obtained from in-depth interviews. From interviews with pre-primary school teachers, it was established that parental home-school communication plays a central role in children's learning. A theme that emerged on home-school communication and acquisition of CBC core competencies was two-way communication (home-school communication and vice versa). Home-school communication entails developing open

lines of communication on learners' learning progress as well as making educational plans between schools and parents (Olivar & Naparan, 2023). Home-school communication apart from parents' presence and school support built on trust, are pillars of a successful school-parent partnership (Odchigue et al., 2023; Ates, 2021). In particular, parents participated in their children's education in various forms. One of the parents testified that:

"...I usually work hand in hand with my child's teacher. In some occasions, she calls me inquiring about one or two issues. I formed a very close relationship with her so that she can assist my child." (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 3)

From the excerpt above, it can be noted that through cooperation and ultimately home-school communication, the parent's child has acquired various CBC core competencies. This finding concurs with that of Syuraini et al. (2022) who found that home school-communication influenced parent-teacher cooperation which in turn enhanced learning outcomes.

Parents try as much as possible to reach teachers in order to enhance their children's performance. Some go to school to meet teachers physically to discuss their children's behaviours. One of the parents testified that:

"... I just walk to school to meet my child's teacher. Last month I went there because I wanted to inquire about my child's progress and misbehavior both at home and school. (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 5)

From the excerpt above, it can be noted that because of low academic achievement and misbehaviour, parents go to school to discuss such children with bad behaviours as well as low academic performance. This finding concurs with that of Abraha (2022) who indicated that many parents only went to school to discuss their children's

dismal learning outcomes or misbehaviour problems.

However, some parents reported that they did not frequently communicate with their children's teachers. This is due to the reason that some of them are ignorant, unaware, or even inexperienced about school matters which may stem from the low level of education and poverty for others, which therefore makes them passive. One of the parents testified that:

"...I have never gone to my son's school because I have to wake up early in the morning to work as a casual labourer in sugar plantations in the nearby Trans mara Sugar Company till late hours." (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 4)

The above excerpt demonstrates that parents rarely communicate with their children's teachers thus, hindering learners' academic performance. In addition, from this extract, it can be noted that because of parental ignorance, low level of education and poverty among others may have hindered home-school communication. This finding concurs with that of Ntawugashira and Ndagijimana, (2022) who revealed that some parents did not or moderately participated in their children's education because they were illiterate, lacked confidence, adequate family basic needs or resources, time and low level of education. This is further supported by Chemaget (2022) who revealed that parents did not visit schools thereby hindering learners' academic performance.

Some parents reported that they discussed with teachers about children's school achievements. One of the parents testified that:

"...when I learnt that my child was not doing well, I went to school to know why. We had a healthy discussion with the teacher and discovered why my daughter was performing dismally." (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 2)

Also in one of the questionnaires, a teacher reported that:

"...majority of the parents come to school especially during closing day to know how their kids have performed and forge their way forward." (Pre-Primary II Teacher Number 43)

The above excerpt demonstrates that parents discussed with teachers about children's school achievements. Low parental involvement in their children's education hinders academic performance. This finding concurs with that of Pek and Mee, 2020 who found that 90% of parents, were not committed to going to school to discuss with teachers about their children's academic achievement.

Some parents, however, reported that teachers told them about their child's conduct. One of the parents testified that:

"...my son's teacher called me to inform me about my child's recent behaviour. She told me that he has started bullying other learners. I learned that he learned the behaviours from boxing and wrestling television programmes." (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 5)

From the excerpt above, it can be noted that teachers monitored learners' behaviours and reported to the parents promptly. Again this finding concurs with that of Pek and Mee (2020) who found that 20% of teachers always told parents about their children's conduct. However, 50% of them did so at times while 30% never did at all.

Some parents reported that they talked with teachers regarding their child's feelings at school. One of the parents testified that:

"...I learned the child was not feeling uncomfortable with my school. I decided to talk to the teacher to find out what the problem was. Finally, the teacher realized that the deskmate used to pinch her." (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 1)

From the excerpt above, it can be noted that parents talked with teachers regarding their children's feelings at school so that they could solve problems hindering their children's academic performance. This finding concurs with that of Kuboja (2019) who found that parents went to schools to solve their children's problems.

Some parents reported that they did not call their children's teachers directly to inform them about their children's problems. One of the parents testified that:

"...No. I have never called my child's teacher because I don't have his phone contact. I have not taken my time to get his number. Maybe I will ask my child to tell him to write his number in the exercise book so that I can get it." (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 2)

From the excerpt above, it can be noted that the lack of inaccessibility of teachers' phone contacts by parents hindered them from calling teachers and this is likely to limit parents from informing teachers about their children's problems. This finding concurs with that of Faizefu (2022) who found that 50% of parents did not regularly call teachers, to inform them about their children's problems.

Some other parents reported that they discussed with teachers about their children's weaknesses and strengths in various activity areas. One of them testified that:

"...My daughter's teacher called to school to know how to assist my daughter in language activities. She told me that she was good in mathematics activities. The only problem was language activities." (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 2)

From the excerpt above, it can be noted that parents discussed with teachers about children's weaknesses and strengths in various activity areas in order to improve their children's academic performance. This finding concurs with that of Pek and Mee (2020) who found that at least 20% of

parents always discussed with teachers about children's weaknesses and strengths in various activity areas. However, 60% sometimes did so while another 20% never did.

Some parents reported that they deliberated with teachers concerning their children's schooling progress. One of the parents testified that:

"...I am now happy that my child is improving. My child's teacher said that my child has really improved. It is true that my child used to be almost last in class but now he is usually top 10. And sometimes top 5." (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 3)

From the excerpt above, it can be noted that parents deliberated with teachers concerning their child's schooling progress in order to improve academic performance. This finding concurs with that of Kuboja (2019) who found that parents deliberated on their children's schooling progress. This except was further supported by Syamsudduha, and Ginanto (2017) who established that parents deliberated on their children's schooling progress at the end of each term.

Some parents reported that they told teachers about activities their children liked at home. One of the parents testified that:

"...I told my child's teacher that while at home, my child likes singing, playing hide and seek games, drawing, and modelling." (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 2)

From the excerpt above, it can be noted that parents told teachers about activities their children loved to do at home in order to help teachers know the kind of activities to give learners so as to improve their learning competencies. This finding concurs with that of Pek and Mee (2020) who found that 20% of parents always liked telling teachers about activities their children loved doing at home while 40% sometimes did so, though 40% never did so.

Some parents reported that they did not have any problems communicating with schools about their children's fears which could hinder learning. One of the parents testified that:

"...I have no problem calling the head teacher or my child's teacher to inform them about what my child dislikes or fears in school which is likely to affect performance." (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 5)

From the excerpt above, it can be noted parents did not have any problems communicating with schools about their children's fears which could hinder learning so as to boost their children's academic performance. This finding concurs with that of Dickens and Teopista (2023) who found that parents usually discussed with teachers regarding issues related to children's fears which could be an obstacle to academic achievement.

Some parents reported that parental involvement in home-school communication contributed to

children's acquisition of CBC core competencies. One of the parents testified:

"...we help our children develop digital literacy by giving them our mobile and smartphones as asked from school." (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 3)

The above excerpt demonstrates that parental engagement activities indeed influenced learners' acquisition of various CBC core competencies.

Some teachers reported that some parents deliberated with the teachers concerning their child's learning progress. One of the teachers testified:

"...though not so often, some serious parents do come to school to discuss about their children's educational progress." (One Pre-Primary Teacher 32)

The above excerpt demonstrates that some parents discussed with their children's teachers about their children's learning progress.

Table 3: Correlation between Home-school Communication and Individual Aspects of Learners' Acquisition of CBC Core Competencies

		CC	SE	CTPS	CI	C	DL	LL
Communication	Pearson Correlation	.385**	.907**	-.466**	-.464**	.777**	.195**	.995**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	369	369	369	369	369	369	369

Findings in Table 3 show that there was a statistically significant ($p < .05$) relationship between parental home-school communication and all the seven aspects of CBC core competencies. However, some were positive and others negative. On positive correlations, learning to learn reflected the highest correlation ($r = .995$), while digital literacy had the least correlation ($r = .195$) to parental home-school communication. On the side of negative correlations, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving reflected the highest correlation (r

$= -.466$), while Creativity and Imagination had the least correlation ($r = -.464$) on parental home-school communication. In summary, learning to learn reflected the highest correlation ($r = .995$) on the positive, and Critical Thinking and Problem Solving ($r = -.466$) reflected the highest correlation on the negative. This finding concurs with that of Ikhlas and Mokhtar (2022) who showed contradicting findings on the influence of parental involvement on learners' academic performance.

Table 4: Home-school Communications and Learners' Acquisition of CBC Core-Competencies' Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.639 ^a	.408	.406	26.657

a. Predictors: (Constant), Communication

The model in Table 4 shows that parental home-school communication alone accounted for 40.8% (Coefficient $R^2 = .406$) of the variation in overall acquisition of CBC core competencies among pre-primary school learners and 59.2% of the variations

can be explained by other factors. In addition, a coefficient of parental home-school communication and learners' overall core competencies (Table 5) was further computed.

Table 5: Coefficient of Parental Home-school Communication and Learners' Overall CBC Core Competencies

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	154.668	4.136		37.397	.000
	Communication	2.091	.131	.639	15.901	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Core Competencies
Regression equation: $Y = 154.668 + 2.091X_1 + \epsilon$

Where Y is the overall CBC core competencies and X_1 is parental home school communication.

It is evident from Table 5 that if parental home-school communication as a parental involvement aspect was improved by one standard deviation, then perceived scores in the level of acquisition of CBC core competencies in children would improve by .639 standard deviation units. On the same note, if home-school communication increases by one unit then the level of overall acquisition of core-competencies would improve by 2.091 units; this is a substantial effect from a single dependent variable. Additionally, the p-value was 0.000 which is less than .05, confirming a statistically significant influence of home-school communication on an overall acquisition of CBC core competencies among pre-primary school children.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Findings revealed that home-school communication influenced the acquisition of CBC core-competencies among pre-primary school learners. Findings revealed that a high percentage of parental engagement in home-school communication

activities led to a high and positive acquisition of CBC core competencies. This is shown in a positive statistically significant association between parental home-school communications and learners' acquisition of CBC core competencies. It was recommended that parents create more time to be engaged in home-school activities so that children can optimally acquire the much-needed CBC's core competencies. Policy Makers in the Ministry of Education to conduct workshops with parents and teachers to enlighten them on the significance of home school communication on enhancing the acquisition of core competencies.

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