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Original Article

### Parental Volunteering Activities and Pre-Primary School Learners' Acquisition of CBC Core Competencies in Kisii County

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**Keywords:**

Parental,  
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Pre-primary school,  
Core competencies,  
Competence-based  
curriculum.

This paper presents findings of a study that sought to analyse how parental volunteering activities relates to pre-primary school learners' acquisition of CBC's core competencies in pre-primary institutions. Pre-primary school education forms a solid foundation for the acquisition of core competencies in other subsequent levels of schooling. Studies conducted worldwide have found that the majority of learners are not able to satisfactorily accomplish competencies Based Competencies (cbc's) expected at various school levels. The CBSs include communication and collaboration, critical thinking and problem-solving, creativity and imagination, citizenship, digital literacy, learning to learn and self-efficacy. In Kenya and more specifically in Kisii County, studies done have not adequately explored the influence of parental involvement on pre-primary learners' acquisition of core competencies at pre-primary learners' acquisition of competencies yet adequate acquisition of competence at pre-primary school enables learners to be good performers at this stage, and other succeeding educational levels. Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore the influence of parental involvement on pre-primary 2 (PP2) school pupils' acquisition of core competencies. Specifically, the study was to establish the cause-effect associations between the independent variable (volunteering) and the dependent variable (acquisition) of the Competency-Based Curriculum's (CBC's) core competencies. Epstein's (2005) theory of parental involvement and ex post facto research design were utilized alongside a mixed methods approach. A population of 702 public PP2 schools and teachers as well as 25,105 parents of PP2 pupils was targeted. Purposive, cluster and stratified sampling techniques were employed to select a main sample or Set 1 comprising 248 teachers and 378 parents from whom quantitative data were sourced using questionnaires. Additionally, a second set or sub-sample of 30 parents (divided into 6 groups of 5 participants each) was selected, from whom qualitative data were sourced, for use with Focus Group Interviews in a total of six sessions. Data collection tools were pre-tested in seven PP2 schools. To determine the accuracy and consistency of the research instruments, content validity and split-half techniques were utilised, where a reliability correlation coefficient of 0.8 was established. For data

analysis, qualitative information was analysed thematically in verbatim form. On the other hand, using IBM SPSS Statistics 20, quantitative data were computed using descriptive statistics namely, frequencies to summarise as well as organise data, while for testing of the hypothesis, inferential statistics namely, Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient and multiple regression were used to assess the association as well as strength of the relationships between the independent and dependent variables, respectively. The findings of the hypothesis revealed a positive and significant correlation between Volunteering ( $r = .204$ ,  $n = 369$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and learners' acquisition of core competencies. It was therefore concluded that volunteering influenced PP2 learners' acquisition of CBC's core competencies. Hence, the study recommended that key stakeholders should create opportunities where parents can be involved in Volunteering processes. Workshops could also be conducted to sensitize parents on ways they can be involved in school activities, which may hopefully enhance PP2 learners' acquisition of CBC's core competencies.

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## 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. These competencies (Communication and collaboration (CC), Critical thinking and problem-solving (CTPS), Creativity and imagination (CI), Citizenship (C), Digital literacy (DL), Learning to learn (LL) and Self-efficacy (SE) enable a learner to demonstrate proficiency in a particular area resulting from possessing a given amount of information that can be evaluated (Haddouchane et al., 2017). In this connection, Zulu (2015) argues

that possession of these competencies is necessary for the 21<sup>st</sup> century as they help to produce lifelong learners who are confident, holistic, independent, high-yielding and self-motivated with the values, skills and knowledge which permit them to be successful not only in school but also in life and workplace in future. Moreover, since the core competencies are capacities essential to coping with multifaceted disparities in life (Zulu, 2015), it was, therefore, necessary to find out how different countries implemented CBC and the degree to which preschool learners acquired these basic competencies.

Alkandari (2023) conducted a quantitative study on the transition from an objective-based curriculum to CBC in Kuwait, focussing on the readiness and self-efficacy of female Islamic studies teachers. Findings showed that the novelty of the CBC and inadequate training were the main setbacks of its implementation. The study was however purely qualitative even though relevant with regard to its focus on CBC's self-efficacy competency of female Islamic studies teachers in Kuwait. The present study on the other hand used both qualitative and quantitative research methodology to solicit more detailed information pertaining to parents' involvement in pre-primary school children's acquisition of Kenya's CBC's core competencies namely; Communication and collaboration, Critical thinking and problem-solving, Creativity and imagination, Citizenship (C), Digital literacy, Learning to learn and Self-efficacy.

In a study in Morocco, Northern Africa, Smare and Elfatihi (2022), focused on, "Developing the core competency creative thinking skills in language classes". Results showed that creative thinking was poorly acquired in Morocco. However, the present study investigated not only the above competency but also six others, alongside creative thinking. In Rwanda, Nsengimana et al. (2023) observed that some teachers showed a negative perception, understanding and knowledge of CBC which led to low learner acquisition of CBC's competencies. With poor acquisition of CBC competencies across Africa, it was apparent that the prospects of employability of future citizens was at risk and hence it was necessary to find out how well or not parents partnered with schools to reverse the situation.

In the USA, Smokoska (2020) affirms that parental involvement is one of the most important practices influencing learning outcomes. Thus, parents have an obligation to take responsibility for their children's learning process (Bhamani et al., 2020), apart from supporting their children's extracurricular activities. For example, they may be

involved in volunteering in school learning activities (Faizefu, 2022).

However, Ikhlas and Mokhtar (2022) in their study in Malaysia, did not provide accurate outcome of whether parental participation contributes to educational outcomes. In addition, 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 Kituu et al. (2022) who focused on the influence of core competencies on the acquisition of learning skills. Others focused on unspecified school levels like Cheptoo & Ramdas (2020) in their critique of CBC and Akala (2021); Ngeno, Mweru, & Mwoma (2021); Ngeno, Mwoma, & Mweru, (2021) focused on teachers' attitudes as well as the availability of physical infrastructural factors on the implementation of CBC. Ngeno (2022) focused on challenges hindering the implementation of CBC, Murithi and Yoo (2021) examined teachers' use of ICT in CBC, Mwita et al. (2022) centred on teachers' Competency Based Curriculum Training, while Otieno and Machani (2022) on teachers' competencies in assessment of CBC. Hence there was a need for a study to investigate the influence of parental volunteering activities on pre-primary school learners' acquisition of CBC core competencies.

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 acquire the various competencies to enable them to meet human resource needs countrywide (KICD, 2017). 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 has shifted from the 8-4-4 or 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 (Cheptoo & Ramdas, 2020; Ngeno, 2022), and inability of teachers to incorporate technology in their lessons (Murithi & Yoo, 2021). In addition, there were issues to do with scarcity of materials, human resources, use of inappropriate teaching-learning approaches, as well as poor public participation, and teachers lacking sufficient understanding to apply formative assessment techniques, leading to the conclusion that, CBC was haphazardly implemented (Akala, 2021; Otieno & Machani, 2022). These concerns, therefore, necessitated the need for the present study, to address them.

Furthermore, 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 the government's efforts to improve its implementation.

As recommended by Mwita et al. (2022), the government has increased the number of CBC in-service training sessions for teachers. In addition, there have been efforts to develop and provide tailored educational and training programmes for college students, apart from providing guidelines on the content (Cheptoo & Ramdas, 2020) and

infrastructural development (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 current study.

There was therefore a need to unearth the influence of parental volunteering on pre-primary two (PP2) learners' acquisition of core competencies in Kenya. The hypothesis for the study was; "**H<sub>0</sub>** There no statistically significant relationship between parental volunteering activities and pre-primary learners' acquisition of CBC core-competencies in pre-primary schools." Therefore, the study sought to establish the extent to which parental volunteering activities 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) volunteering plays a role towards a child's learning and development, in a kind of family-like connection. Volunteering, which has to do with building means through which parents or families could be engaged in freely proposing helpful suggestions/advice to the school when required; parents/families offering themselves in their children's school/class during special activities, tasks, or even outings; parents/families rendering themselves as resource persons at school and also their involvement through volunteering in parent/teacher association (PTA) leadership. 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 volunteering strategies that bind the home and school together.

### Synthesis of Literature on Volunteering

Volunteering refers to behaviours and actions parents or families could be involved in, as a means to build or develop the school through various activities (Epstein, 1987, 1995, 2005). Parents may voluntarily participate in school meetings and fundraising, attend organized sporting activities and functions such as speech-giving and prize-giving days as well as giving financial support or school fees. They may also voluntarily involve themselves in various tasks if requested by their child's school. Lastly, parents may also voluntarily go to school to make a follow-up about their child's educational progress or well-being (Epstein, 1987, 1995, 1996, 2005), which is also a point of investigation in the present study.

Pelemo (2022) in a qualitative study in the United States of America (USA), investigated the strategies, barriers and roles for successful teacher-parent relationships in middle school mathematics using a case study. The study established that in recent years, schools had not created opportunities for parents to volunteer in school and mathematics classroom activities. This study was, however, purely qualitative in approach, and conducted in middle schools in the USA. The present research, however, concentrated on pre-primary schools, using mixed research approaches leading to appropriate generalization of findings. Additionally, the reviewed study lacked the capacity to predict possible effects that had already occurred, while the current research was able to do so using ex post facto research design. Lastly, the reviewed study did not concern itself with parental involvement in volunteering activities that may enhance pre-primary school learners' acquisition of CBC core competencies, which the present study did.

In Cameroon, Africa, Faizefu (2022) investigated the effect of parental volunteerism on the education of children with dyslexia. The findings indicated that the majority of them agreed that parental

volunteering influenced the learning of their children. Also, Malatji et al. (2023) in South Africa, explored strategies for improving learners' academic performance through home school and reported that parental volunteering in sports and fundraising among other factors contributed to pre-primary school learners' academic performance. Similarly, Mugumya et al. (2022) in a study in a higher education centre in Uganda found positive significant relationships between academic performance and parents' volunteering ( $r = 0.519^{**}$ ), as well as support in learning at home ( $r = 0.378^{**}$ ). On the contrary, Tabaro and Uwamahoro (2022) investigated parental involvement in children's education in Rwanda and reported that involvement in volunteering was lower than the mean score. However, although, the above studies are relevant, they were unrelated to the attainment of CBC core competencies, which the present investigation focussed on. The studies were also confined to the wider African regional context, as opposed to the current investigation, which was conducted in Kenya.

In Kenya, Oranga et al. (2022) explored parental engagement in the learning of learners with intellectual disabilities using Joyce Epstein's parental involvement theory and found that parents did not volunteer in the education of the above learners. These findings reflected those of Kwendo and Areba (2022) in a study in Emuhaya Sub-County, Vihiga County, on the influence of home parental support and volunteering in school activities on the Mathematical performance level of public pre-primary school learners. They reported that a high proportion of parents did not help their children with intellectual disabilities in learning at home and neither volunteered in school activities. Conversely, the present study focused on the influence of parental involvement in volunteering on learners' acquisition of CBC's core competencies in regular pre-primary schools, to bridge the gap.

## 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, and anonymity of the sampled learners was assured by collecting 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 and multiple regressions utilising SPSS Version 20. Quantitative data was analysed thematically.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study reviewed parents’ views on Volunteering. 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: Parents’ Views on Volunteering in their Child’s Learning Activities**

Statement		SD	D	UD	A	SA	N
		%	%	%	%	%	
i.	I voluntarily avail myself for parents’ meetings	23.8	15.2	6.5	36.0	18.4	369
ii.	I voluntarily attend my child’s school sports day	29.8	20.9	13.0	20.6	15.7	369
iii.	I voluntarily grace/honour the invite to my child’s school prize-giving day	42.5	22.2	8.4	11.4	15.4	369
iv.	I voluntarily play a part in any work when requested by my child’s school	39.6	25.2	7.0	11.4	16.8	369

	Statement	SD	D	UD	A	SA	N
v.	I freely go to school to make a follow-up on my child's educational progress	14.6	19.8	5.1	21.7	38.8	369
vi.	I promptly pay fees for my child's educational trips and other motivational activities	30.4	21.4	8.7	18.2	21.4	369
vii.	I actively take part in activities concerning teachers as well as parents in school	23.8	17.6	10.0	22.8	24.7	369
viii.	I make donations during school prize award day	16.0	10.8	4.6	18.2	50.4	369
ix.	I freely offer my services to the school when asked to	25.2	15.4	11.9	30.1	17.3	369
	<b>Total</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>24.4</b>	

The first item sought to establish the extent to which parents participated in parents' meetings. In exploring the extent to which parents participated in parent's meetings, results in Table 1 revealed that almost a quarter (23.8%) strongly disagreed that they voluntarily availed themselves for parents' meetings, almost a fifth (15.2%) disagreed, slightly more than one in twenty (6.5%) were undecided, slightly more than a third (36.0%) agreed and almost a fifth (18.4%) strongly agreed. In summary, this means that almost more than half (54.4%) of the parents agreed that they voluntarily availed themselves for parents' meetings. Almost two-fifths (39.0%) of the parents disagreed that they voluntarily availed themselves for parents' meetings and slightly more than one in twenty (6.5%) were undecided. The majority of the parents voluntarily availed themselves for parents' meetings. This indicates that the practice of parents voluntarily availing themselves for parents' meetings enhances learning.

The second item sought to establish the extent to which parents voluntarily attended their child's school sports day. In exploring the extent to which parents voluntarily attended their child's school sports day, results in Table 1 revealed that almost a third (29.8%) strongly disagreed that they voluntarily attended sports day at their child's school, slightly more than a fifth (20.9%) disagreed about more than one in ten (13.0%) were undecided, moderately more than a fifth (20.6%) agreed and almost a fifth (15.7%) strongly agreed. In summary, slightly more than a third (36.3%) of parents agreed

that they voluntarily attended their children's school sports day, approximately more than a half (50.7%) of the parents disagreed and slightly more than one in ten (13.0%) were undecided, while majority of the parents disagreed. This indicates that low parental participation in their children's sporting activities is not a good habit, since learners lack parental support and motivation during such activities.

The third item sought to establish the extent to which parents voluntarily graced/honoured the invite to their child's school prize-giving days. In exploring the extent to which parents voluntarily graced/honoured the invite to their child's school prize-giving days, results in Table 1 revealed that slightly more than two-fifths (42.5%) strongly disagreed, slightly more than a fifth (22.2%) disagreed that they voluntarily graced/honoured the invite to their child's school's prize giving day, almost one in ten (8.4%) were undecided, about more than one in ten (11.4%) agreed and almost a fifth (15.4%) strongly agreed. In summary, slightly more than a quarter (26.8%) of parents agreed that they voluntarily graced/honoured the invite to their child's school prize-giving day, almost two-thirds (64.7%) of the parents disagreed and about one in twenty (8.4%) were undecided. Thus, the majority of the parents did grace/honour the invite to their child's school prize-giving days. This indicates low levels of parental free association with their child's teacher at such an opportune time like school prize-giving day. In addition, it points to low motivation for learners, and the practice was likely to

demotivate teachers and learners, thus hindering enthusiasm for learning activities.

The fourth item sought to establish the extent to which parents voluntarily played a part in work when requested by their child's school. Results in Table 1 revealed that almost two-fifths (39.6%) of the parents, strongly disagreed that they voluntarily played a part in any work when requested by their child's school, slightly more than a quarter (25.2%) disagreed, approximately one in twenty (7.0%) were undecided, about one in ten (11.4%) agreed and almost a fifth (16.8%) strongly agreed. Precisely, almost a third (28.2%) of them agreed that they always voluntarily played a part in work when requested by their child's school, almost about two-thirds (64.8%) of the parents disagreed, and almost one in twenty (7.0%) were undecided. Conversely, the majority of the parents did not always voluntarily play a part in work when requested by their child's school. This being the case, it means that many activities in the schools remained undone and were likely to affect the smooth running of learning activities.

Item number five in Table 1 sought to assess the extent to which parents always went to school to make follow-ups about their children's educational progress. The item was "*I freely go to school to make follow-up about my child's educational progress.*" The results are presented in Table 1. Essentially, the majority of the parents (60.5%) agreed that they freely went to school to make follow-ups about their children's educational progress. About half (34.4%) of the parents disagreed while a minimal number (5.1%) were undecided. This implies that children whose parents went to school to check on their progress were likely to perform better academically.

The sixth item in Table 1 sought to establish the extent to which parents promptly paid school fees and other levies. The item was "*I promptly pay for motivational activities like educational trips, of my own volition (see Table 1).*" In brief, about a half (51.8%) of the parents disagreed that they promptly

paid for motivational activities like educational trips, of their own volition, over a quarter of them (39.6%) agreed that they promptly paid while the least number (8.7%), was undecided. Thus, the majority of the parents disagreed that they promptly paid for motivational activities. This implies that some children may sadly miss out on some important motivational activities or maybe frequently sent home for non-payment. It could also mean that schools could be experiencing a lack of essential learning resources that needed purchasing, a practice that is likely to compromise the quality of education.

The seventh item attempted to find out the extent to which parents took part in activities concerning teachers as well as parents in school by choice. Results in Table 1 revealed that almost a quarter (23.8%) strongly disagreed, almost a fifth (17.6%) disagreed, one in ten (10.0%) were undecided, almost a quarter (22.8%) agreed and also almost a quarter (24.7%) strongly agreed. In summary, almost half (47.5%) of parents agreed that they actively took part in activities concerning teachers as well as parents in school. Slightly more than two-fifths (41.4%) of the parents disagreed that they actively took part in activities concerning teachers as well as parents in school and one in ten (10.0%) were undecided. The majority of the parents actively took part in activities concerning teachers and parents in school. This implies that schools where parents actively took part in activities concerning teachers and parents in school cultivated and enjoyed a good learning environment which in turn leads to a higher level of acquisition of learning competencies.

The eighth item sought to establish the extent to which parents made donations during school prize award day. "*I make donations during school prize award day, of my own free will.*" The results are presented in Table 1. Concisely, more than half, (68.6%) of the parents agreed that they made donations during school prize award day by choice. Slightly more than a quarter (26.8%) of them

disagreed that they made donations during school prize award day while a minority (4.6%) were undecided. Consequently, the majority of the parents made donations during school prize award day freely. This means that the school acquired the necessary gift items with relative ease since parents donated resources which in turn enhanced the school's prize-giving day, thereby motivating learners to do even better.

The ninth item sought to establish the extent to which parents freely offered their services to the school when asked to. The item was "*I freely offer my services to the school when asked to.*" The results are presented in Table 1. In short, a greater number of parents (47.4%) agreed that they freely offered their services to the school when asked to,

and almost a similar number (40.6%) of them, disagreed while just a negligible number (11.9%) were undecided. Therefore, the majority of parents freely offered their services to the school when asked to. This implies that schools get services from parents which in turn go a long way in improving the learning of their children.

Nonetheless, in order to find out whether there was any significant relationship between parental volunteering and learners' acquisition of CBC core competencies, the hypothesis was tested "*H<sub>0</sub> There no statistically significant relationship between parental volunteering activities and pre-primary learners' acquisition of CBC core competencies in pre-primary schools.*"

**Table 2: Statistical Relationship between Parental Volunteering and Learners' Acquisition of CBC Core Competencies**

Correlations			Overall Core Competencies	Volunteering
Overall Competencies	Core	Pearson Correlation	1	.204**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	369	369
Volunteering	Core	Pearson Correlation	.204**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	369	369

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

Table 2 shows the coefficient correlation between parental volunteering and learners' acquisition of CBC core competencies. The findings of the study indicate that there was a weak positive statistically significant association ( $r = .204$ ,  $n = 369$ ,  $p < .01$ ) between parental volunteering and learners' acquisition of CBC core competencies. Given that the correlation was statistically significant, the null hypothesis was rejected. It was therefore concluded that parental volunteering significantly correlated to the overall acquisition of core competencies among pre-primary school learners and that it enhances learners' acquisition of CBC's core competencies. This indicates that parental involvement in volunteering as a practice is necessary for

improving learners' acquisition of CBC's core competencies.

Some of the findings of this study resonate to a certain degree with a number of scholars, while on the other side, it does not. For example, the study by Bacolod and Tantiado (2022) which is in harmony with the present research, found that there was a positive association between parental engagement and learning outcomes. However, the finding of this study differs from that of Faizefu (2022) who conducted a study to investigate the effect of parental engagement in the education of children. The findings of the study showed that approximately 70.5% of parents strongly agreed that parental volunteerism influenced the learning of

children while 29.5% of parents disagreed that parental volunteerism had no influence on the learning of their children.

Additionally, qualitative findings on the correlation between parental volunteering 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 parents, it was established that parental volunteering plays a central role in children's learning, a theme that emerged from parental volunteering and acquisition of CBC core competencies was volunteerism. When parents volunteer to perform actions aimed at building a channel that families could use to be engaged in school activities. Thus, parents work as volunteers to create a conducive learning environment for their children (Mxhasi, 2016). Parents also act as volunteers by participating in school meetings, organising sporting activities, paying for motivational activities, organising school functions such as speech and prize-giving days as well as freely donating to the school with different forms of resources. Parents may also voluntarily involve themselves in work if requested by their child's school and lastly, they may make a follow-up at the school, about their child's educational progress. As a whole, parents volunteered in their children's education in various forms. One of the parents testified that:

*"...I promptly pay motivational fees and other monies when asked by the school." (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 1)*

The above excerpt demonstrates that parents volunteer to pay school levies. Prompt payment of school levies, enhances learners' acquisition of learning competencies thus, improving their academic performance. This finding concurs with that of Noor (2021) whose findings of the study established that parents participated in their children's education by paying fees. Additionally, Asimwe (2022) emphasized the importance of monitoring or following up on students, as it

enhances their academic performance something that was observed in the present study as per the extract below;

One of the parents testified;

*"...I visit the school to make follow-up about my daughter's learning progress." (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 6)*

The quote above demonstrates that parents volunteer to go to their children's schools to make follow-ups about their educational progress. Continuous monitoring of children's learning progress by visiting schools, enhances learners' acquisition of learning competencies thus, improving their academic performance.

Some other parents reported that they participated in parent meetings. One of the parents testified that:

*"...I don't miss parent meetings. In these meetings I get firsthand information." (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 6)*

From the excerpt above, it can be noted that parents participated in parents' meetings. This finding concurs with that of Kwendo and Areba (2022) who established that 26.4% of the parents strongly disagreed that they participated in parents' meetings. 48.7% disagreed, 3.6% were undecided, 13.0% agreed and 8.3% strongly agreed. Further, the finding of this study was supported by Noor (2021) who found that only 18.8% of parents participated in parent meetings.

Some parents reported that they did not show up at school's sporting activities. One of the parents testified that:

*"...I can't go to school to see how children are competing in sporting activities. I have a lot of work at home." (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 4)*

The above excerpt demonstrates that parents did not show up at school sporting activities. It can therefore be noted that some parents did not show

up at school's sporting activities so that they could motivate them in sporting activities. This finding concurs with that of Faizefu (2022) who found that 65% of the parents showed up at school sporting activities while 35% disagreed. Also, this study is supported by a finding by Kwendo and Areba (2022) who found that 14.5% strongly disagreed with the parents agreed to show up at school sporting activities while 36.8% disagreed, 11.4% were undecided, 25.9% agreed and 11.4% strongly agreed.

Some parents reported that they showed up at school's prize-giving days. One of the parents testified that:

*"...I only attend prize-giving days when I am free. I don't attend when I am busy with my work." (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 6)*

From the excerpt above, it can be noted that parents showed up at the school's prize-giving days in order to provide the funds required to run educational programs. This finding concurs with that of Pek and Mee (2020), who found that 40% of parents showed up at school's prize-giving days always, while 60% sometimes. Additionally, this finding was supported by Kwendo and Areba (2022), who found that 19.7% strongly disagreed with showing up at school's prize-giving days while 44.0% disagreed, 9.3% were undecided, 18.1% agreed, and 8.8% strongly agreed.

Some parents reported that they always voluntarily played a part in the work requested by their children's school. One of the parents testified that:

*"...last term we were asked by the school headteacher to do landscaping on the school playground. We worked the whole day and then planted grass and trees for shades." (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 3)*

From the excerpt above, it can be noted parents always voluntarily played a part in work requested by their children's school in order to improve the learning environment. This finding concurs with

that of Dickens and Teopista (2023) who found that parents always voluntarily played a part in work requested by their children's school.

Some parents reported that they always went to school to make a follow-up on their children's educational progress. One of the parents testified that:

*"...I am very much concerned with my child than ever. I always go to school to know how she is faring on." (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 1)*

From the excerpt above, it can be noted that parents always went to school to follow up on their children's educational progress in order to boost their children's academic performance. This finding concurs with that of Kwendo and Areba (2022) who found that 22.8% of the parents strongly disagreed that always went to school to make a follow-up about their children's educational progress while 42.0% disagreed, 7.8% were undecided, 20.2% agreed and 7.3% strongly agreed.

Some parents reported that they promptly paid school fees and other levies. One of the parents testified that:

*".... I am aware that the responsibility of paying school fees and other levies lies on me." (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 3)*

From the excerpt above, it can be noted parents promptly paid school fees and other levies in order to reduce the chances of their children being sent home and thus missing school, which in turn will lead to decreased learning outcomes. This finding concurs with that of Kahunzire et al., (2023) who found that parents promptly paid school fees and other levies.

Some parents reported that they did not usually actively take part in activities concerning teachers as well as parents in school. One of the parents testified that:

*“...we call them personal issues because parents' and teachers' issues do not directly affect us although they affect the smooth running of the school.” (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 4)*

From the excerpt above, it can be noted that parents did not usually actively take part in activities concerning teachers as well as parents in school, and this was likely to affect learning. This finding concurs with that of Gedfie and Negassa (2019) who found that parents did not usually actively take part in activities concerning teachers as well as parents in school.

Some parents reported that they made donations during school prize award day. One of the parents testified that:

*“...since money for prize giving is included in the school fees, there is no way one can avoid paying it.” (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 4)*

The above excerpt demonstrates that parents made donations during school prize award day thereby making funds available for purchasing teaching and learning resources. This finding concurs with that of Niyotwiringira and Sikubwabo (2022) and Bacolod et al., (2022) who found that parents made donations during school prize award day.

Some parents reported that they freely offered services to the school when asked to. One of the parents testified that:

*“...The school asked us to come and construct a kitchen. We decided to do it ourselves as parents because we didn't have money to hire people to do it.” (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 2)*

From the excerpts above, it can be noted that parents freely offered services to the school when asked to in order to boost their children's learning outcomes. This finding concurs with that of Dickens and Teopista (2023) who found that parents usually freely offered services to the school when asked to.

Nevertheless, some parents reported that they seldom offered voluntary services in their children's schools to support any learning process. One of the parents testified that:

*“...I don't usually go to my child's school during closing days. This is because I am expected to carry something to buy presents for the children who have excelled and yet I don't have money.” (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 6)*

The above quotation demonstrates that parents rarely volunteered in prize-giving functions which motivate learners to acquire learning competencies thus, hindering learners' academic performance. It can further be noted that parents rarely volunteered in prize-giving functions. This finding concurs with that of Syamsudduha and Ginanto (2017) who revealed that parental participation in volunteering was low.

Additionally, some parents reported that they never offered volunteering services in their children's school, either to support school or the classroom learning process. One of the parents testified that:

*“...The school has never asked us to volunteer in any language or school activity. To me it means that there is no language activity I am supposed to offer voluntary services for.” (One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 2)*

The above saying demonstrates that parents never volunteer in school activities for enhancement of learners' acquisition of learning competencies thus, hindering learners' academic performance. Moreover, it can be noted that limited parental volunteerism is caused by schools' failure to create opportunities to enable them to offer help in whatever ways they could do so. This finding concurs with that of Pelemo (2022) who established that schools do not create opportunities for parents to volunteer in school and classroom activities. Similarly, Oranga et al. (2022) revealed that parents did not volunteer in the education of their children.

Some parents reported that parental involvement in volunteering activities contributed to pre-primary children's acquisition of CBC core competencies. One of the parents testified that:

*"...Indeed our participation helps children acquire digital literacy by voluntarily giving our children our mobile phones to play games."*  
(One Pre-Primary Parent in FGI 6)

The above excerpt demonstrates that parental involvement in volunteering activities contributed to pre-primary children's acquisition of CBC core competencies.

Furthermore, the study made an effort to establish the correlation between parental volunteerism and the individual aspects of CBC core competencies.

**Table 3: Correlation between Parental Volunteering Activities and Individual Aspects of Learners' Acquisition of CBC Core Competencies**

		CC	SE	CTPS	CI	C	DL	LL
Volunteering	N	369	369	369	369	369	369	369
	Pearson	.533**	-	.395**	.401**	-.122*	.598**	-
	Correlation		.184**					.310**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.019	.000	.000
	N	369	369	369	369	369	369	369

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

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Note:** The CBC core competencies: Communication and collaboration (CC), Critical thinking and problem-solving (CTPS), Creativity and imagination (CI), Citizenship (C), Digital literacy (DL), Learning to learn (LL) and Self-efficacy (SE).

The findings of the study show that there was a statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) relationship between parental volunteering and all the seven aspects of CBC core competencies. However, some were positive and others negative. On positive correlations, digital literacy reflected the highest correlation ( $r = .598$ , while Critical Thinking and Problem Solving had the least correlation ( $r = .395$ ) to parental volunteering.

On the side of negative correlations, learning to learn reflected the highest correlation ( $r = -.310$ ), while Citizenship had the least correlation ( $r = -.122$ ) to parental volunteering.

In summary, digital literacy reflected the highest correlation ( $r = .598$ ) on the positive and learning to learn ( $r = -.310$ ) reflected the highest correlation on the negative. This finding concurs with that of Mugumya et al. (2022) who also found a positive significant relationship between parenting, learning at home and volunteering. Also, the finding concurs with a study by Faizefu (2022) who showed that approximately 70.5% of parents strongly agreed that parental volunteerism influenced the learning of children while 29.5% of parents disagreed.

Besides, in order to estimate the degree of contribution of parental volunteering on learners' overall acquisition of CBC core competencies, a coefficient of determination was computed using a regression analysis in Table 4.

**Table 4: Regression Analysis on the Influence of Parental Volunteering Activities on Learners' Overall Acquisition of Core Competencies**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.204 <sup>a</sup>	.042	.039	33.914

a. Predictors: (Constant), Volunteering

The model shows that parental volunteering alone accounted for 4.2% (Coefficient  $R^2 = .039$ ) of the variation in the overall acquisition of CBC core

competencies among pre-primary school learners and 95.8 of the variations can be explained by other factors.

**Table 5: Coefficient of Parental Volunteering and Learners' Overall Core Competencies**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	187.850	7.412		25.343	.000
	Volunteering	1.078	.270	.204	3.997	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Core Competencies

Regression equation:  $Y = 187.850 + 1.078X_1 + \epsilon$

Where Y is the overall CBC core competencies and  $X_1$  is parental volunteering.

It is evident from Table 5 that if volunteering as a parental involvement aspect was improved by one standard deviation, then perceived scores in the level of acquisition of core competencies in children would improve by .204 standard deviation units. On the same note, if parental volunteering increases by one unit then the level of overall acquisition of core competencies would improve by 1.078 units; which 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 parental volunteering on the overall acquisition of CBC core competencies among pre-primary school children.

## CONCLUSION

Findings revealed a weak association between volunteering and pre-primary learners' acquisition of CBC core competencies in activities. The volunteering activities ranged from voluntarily availing oneself to parents' meetings, attending to child's school sports day, gracing or honouring invitations to the child's school prize-giving day, playing a part in any work when requested by my child's school, freely going to school to make a follow-up about own child's educational programme, promptly paying fees for my own child's educational trips and other motivational activities, actively taking part in activities concerning teacher as well as parents in school,

making donations during school prize award days and freely offering services to the school when asked.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is therefore recommended that parents encourage themselves to have a positive outlook on the importance of being involved in volunteering and in making decisions regarding learning particularly, in the acquisition of CBC core competencies. School Administration to create opportunities where parents can be involved in volunteering and the decision-making process. Finally, policymakers in the Ministry of Education to conduct workshops with parents to sensitization meetings for parents on the importance and also the effects of parental non-involvement in their children's acquisition of CBC core competencies and learning in general.

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