

Research Article

Parental Involvement in Decision-Making on the Implementation of the Competency Based Curriculum in Public Pre-Primary Schools in Likuyani Sub-County, Kakamega County

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Article History	Abstract
Received: September 07, 2026 Accepted: September 29, 2026 Published: October 05, 2026	<p>Despite the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) being aligned with Kenya's Vision 2030 of producing skilled and industrialization-ready citizens, its implementation in public pre-primary schools in Likuyani Sub-County, Kakamega County faces persistent challenges such as teacher shortages, inadequate infrastructure, and limited training. Guided by Epstein's Theory of Parental Involvement, which emphasizes six dimensions of parental engagement including decision-making, the study evaluated how parents influence CBC outcomes. The objectives were to assess the effect of parental involvement in decision-making, examine parental roles in resource provision and communication, and test government support as a moderating factor. The study is significant as it highlights the independent role of parents in driving curriculum success, filling a knowledge gap where most literature focused on general parental involvement without contextualizing rural challenges. Anchored in a pragmatist philosophy, the study adopted a mixed-methods approach and explanatory design, with the unit of analysis being public pre-primary schools, the unit of observation being head teachers, class teachers, and parents, and a population of 340 respondents. Using Yamane's formula, a sample of 170 was selected through stratified random and purposive sampling. Data were collected via structured questionnaires and focus group discussions, validated through expert review and pilot testing, and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, multiple regression, and thematic analysis. Findings revealed that parental involvement in decision-making significantly enhances CBC implementation, underscoring the need to strengthen parental roles in governance, resource mobilization, and collaboration to overcome systemic hurdles.</p> <p>Keywords: Parental Involvement, Decision-Making, Competency-Based Curriculum, Pre-Primary Education, Curriculum Implementation.</p>

Introduction

Education remains the cornerstone of social and economic transformation worldwide. According to UNESCO (2020), at the peak of the COVID-19 crisis in April 2020, national closures affected over 91% of the world's student population, highlighting vulnerabilities in education systems and the urgent need for resilience and inclusivity. Nations with robust education structures continue to record remarkable technological and economic progress, underscoring the direct link between curriculum reforms and sustainable development. Globally, competency-based curriculum reforms have been adopted to align learning with 21st-century skills. The OECD (2020) in Education at a Glance 2020 notes a global shift from knowledge-based to competency-based curricula to foster adaptability and applied knowledge. However, challenges persist, as UNESCO Institute for Statistics data showed that millions of children and youth were excluded from education even before the pandemic, with inequalities exacerbated by digital divides. Kenya introduced CBC in 2017 to replace the 8-4-4 system, aiming to align education with learners' career interests and aptitudes. According to the Ministry of

Education (2020), primary school enrolment stood at 10,076,828 learners, with CBC rolled out up to Grade 4 by 2020. The Ministry's taskforce reports and subsequent reviews highlighted challenges including inadequate infrastructure, teacher shortages, and parental resistance.

Nyamwange (2020), in a review of the implementation of Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) between 2018 and 2020, observed that the curriculum faced significant implementation challenges arising from inadequate teacher preparedness, insufficient training on CBC content and pedagogical approaches, limited stakeholder engagement, and inadequate instructional resources. The review further noted that many teachers were not sufficiently equipped to implement the curriculum effectively, contributing to concerns regarding the readiness of schools for CBC implementation.

Amunga *et al.*, (2020) found that parental involvement was a critical component in the successful implementation of CBC in Kenya. Their study revealed that parents were expected to collaborate with teachers as co-educators and provide learning materials for practical learning activities; however, many parents were reluctant or inadequately involved due to challenges associated with parental support and communication. The study also established that teachers appreciated the increased learner engagement promoted by CBC but identified inadequate learning materials, limited parental support, time constraints, and large class sizes as major obstacles to effective implementation.

Objective of the Study

To evaluate the effect of parental involvement in decision making on implementation of CBC in public pre-primary schools in Likuyani Sub-County, Kakamega County.

Theoretical Review

The study was anchored on Epstein's Theory of Parental Involvement (1995) fitted to the study on parental involvement in decision-making and CBC implementation in Likuyani Sub-County. Epstein (1995) developed the framework of parental involvement, identifying six key types: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. The theory proposes that effective parental involvement across these six dimensions enhances educational outcomes by fostering collaboration between schools, families, and communities. Specifically, decision-making empowers parents to influence school governance, resource allocation, and curriculum implementation, thereby improving learner motivation and school performance. Supporters argue that Epstein's framework is comprehensive, adaptable across contexts, and highlights the multidimensional role of parents in education. However, critiques note that it may overlook socio-economic disparities, cultural differences, and systemic barriers (such as teacher shortages or infrastructure gaps) that limit parental participation, especially in rural or resource-constrained settings. The theory is highly relevant to the Likuyani Sub-County study because it emphasizes decision-making as a critical dimension of parental involvement. The findings showed that parental participation significantly improved CBC implementation by enhancing learner motivation, infrastructure development, and accountability. Epstein's framework thus provides a theoretical lens to explain why empowering parents in governance and curriculum-related decisions leads to stronger educational outcomes, even when government support is limited.

Literature Review

Sempeles and Cui (2024), in Parent and Family Involvement in Education: 2023 (NCES 2024-113), reported findings from the Parent and Family Involvement in Education (PFI) Survey conducted through the National Household Education Surveys Program. The nationally representative survey of K-12 parents found that schools with active PTA/PTO structures experienced higher levels of parental participation in decision-making, volunteering, fundraising for educational resources and infrastructure, and attendance at school activities. Increased parental engagement was associated with stronger school-community partnerships and greater support for educational initiatives and reforms. The authors concluded that strengthening formal parent involvement structures and embedding parental engagement within school policies can enhance sustained support for educational programs and recommended systematic mechanisms for communication, collaborative decision-making, and resource mobilization (Sempeles and Cui, 2024).

Willis and Exley (2022) in the EPIC 2022 Final Report Pedagogies, practices and processes for engaging parents and communities in children's learning and wellbeing investigated how 22 teachers and school leaders from three schools affiliated with Independent Schools Queensland collaborated to embed parent engagement in everyday practice. The study found that teachers shifted from practices of involving parents in school through volunteerism and events to practices of engaging parents in their child's learning and wellbeing

through the formal curriculum. This was achieved through three pedagogical pillars: inquiry curriculum, affinity spaces, and cogenerative dialogues. The research concluded that small, intentional changes in parent engagement practice were quickly rewarded with noticeably enhanced student learning and engagement, teaching effectiveness and teacher satisfaction, and collective and community wellbeing.

Jungreithmeier (2022) investigated primary child education and care in Austria under the social investment approach, using the cases of after school care centres and whole-day schools in Linz and nationally. Using qualitative semi-structured expert interviews and analysis of provincial legislations and secondary descriptive data, the study revealed that despite positive developments in supply, Austria faces insufficient investment in family and education policy, with fragmented organization between the federal republic and subnational units leading to major dissimilarities in legislative and institutional design. The conclusion was that the Austrian social investment approach did not improve the quality of services for primary school children to a sufficient degree, and substantial and sustainable financing is needed to fully exploit the potential of social investment.

Ghosh and Steinberg (2022) examined how parents' attitudes influence unequal opportunities in early childhood development in Eastern India. The study found that negative or indifferent parental attitudes significantly predict lower access to preschools, with parental education being responsible for variations in attitudes toward early education and care. The authors conclude that early childhood development is crucial for sustainable development but parental roles remain underexplored in developing contexts like India, and recommend a two-prong policy measure of educating parents and involving them in the implementation process of childhood development programs.

Muyabi *et al.*, (2022) investigated parental involvement in reducing learner absenteeism in selected primary schools of Kazungula District in Southern Province, Zambia, using a qualitative descriptive design with 15 learners, 15 parents, 3 grade teachers and 3 head teachers from three schools. Findings revealed that parental involvement existed through participation in PTA meetings, helping children with homework, paying school fees, attending open days, volunteering at school and providing school requirements and food provision. The study concluded that parental involvement is a significant ingredient in reducing absenteeism and improving quality of education but is limited by socio-economic and relational challenges.

Syomwene (2022) examined parental involvement strategies and challenges in the development of pupils' literacy skills during the implementation of Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in early years education in Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey design targeting parents and teachers in public pre-primary schools. The findings established that parental involvement significantly enhanced pupils' literacy skills, particularly through reading with children at home and providing home-based literacy support. The study concluded by recommending government intervention through provision of learning materials and sensitization programs to strengthen parental roles in decision-making. This study is relevant to the current study as it underscores both the strategic value of parental involvement in literacy development and the systemic challenges that continue to affect CBC implementation in early years education in Kenya.

Simiyu (2025) examined parental preparedness and participation in the implementation of Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Bungoma North and Ruiru Sub-Counties, emphasizing the critical role of parents in supporting learner achievement under the CBC framework. Using a descriptive survey design involving 126 parents and 21 lower primary teachers from 20 primary schools, the study found that although parents generally held positive perceptions towards CBC, most were inadequately prepared to effectively support its implementation due to limited understanding of their roles, financial constraints, time limitations, and insufficient communication from schools. The findings further revealed that inadequate parental awareness and engagement posed significant challenges to the successful implementation of the curriculum, highlighting the need for continuous parental sensitization, capacity building, and strengthened school-parent collaboration. The study concluded that effective parental participation is essential for enhancing curriculum implementation outcomes and recommended sustained monitoring, evaluation, and stakeholder feedback mechanisms to improve parental involvement in CBC implementation (Simiyu, 2025).

Materials and Methods

This study adopted a mixed research approach with an explanatory design to examine the effect of parental involvement in decision-making on CBC implementation in public pre-primary schools in Likuyani Sub-County, Kakamega County. The target population comprised 68 public pre-primary schools, including 68 head teachers, 136 class teachers, and 136 parents (total 340 respondents), from which a sample of 34 schools and 170 respondents was selected using stratified random sampling and purposive techniques. Data were

collected through structured questionnaires and five focus group discussions (FGDs), each conducted at ward level, with instruments validated by expert review and pilot testing in four schools outside the study area. Reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients above 0.7, with parental involvement in decision-making recording 0.878. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS, employing descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) and inferential techniques including Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis, while qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis. Ethical clearance was obtained from Moi University and NACOSTI, with informed consent sought from all participants. The study initially targeted 170 respondents; however, only 115 valid responses were obtained and included in the final analysis. Therefore, the results presented in Table 1 are based on the 115 valid responses.

Results and Discussion

The table presents descriptive statistics (N, Mean, and Standard Deviation) on various dimensions of parental involvement in decision-making within public pre-primary schools. The items measured include PTA inclusivity, learner motivation, infrastructure improvement, staffing decisions, and discipline management. With a sample size of 115 respondents, the data provides insight into how parents perceive and participate in CBC implementation processes. The analysis results on parental involvement in decision making are depicted in Table 1.

Table 1. Parental involvement in decision making.

Statement	N	Mean	SD
PTA has included parents from all levels (pre-school)	115	2.82	1.189
Parents are involved in motivating learners to fulfil their potential	115	2.96	1.294
Parents are involved in improving dilapidated status of some essential infrastructures via public fund raising	115	3.15	1.223
Parents make decisions with regard to the employment of support staff to curb understaffing	115	2.85	1.397
Parents are included in deciding the discipline at school	115	2.94	1.326

PTA Inclusivity: The mean score of 2.82 (SD = 1.189) suggests that parents are moderately included in PTA structures at the pre-school level. The relatively high standard deviation indicates variability in responses, implying that while some schools actively involve parents, others remain less inclusive. Learner Motivation: With a mean of 2.96 (SD = 1.294), parental involvement in motivating learners is slightly above average. This shows that parents play a role in encouraging learners to fulfil their potential, though the variation in responses suggests inconsistency across schools. Infrastructure Improvement: The highest mean score of 3.15 (SD = 1.223) indicates that parents are more actively engaged in improving dilapidated infrastructure through fundraising. This reflects a stronger commitment to resource mobilization, highlighting infrastructure as a priority area for parental decision-making. Staffing Decisions: The mean of 2.85 (SD = 1.397) shows moderate parental involvement in decisions regarding employment of support staff. The high standard deviation suggests significant differences among schools, with some involving parents in staffing while others do not.

Correlation Analysis

The relationship between parental involvement in decision making and CBC implementation in public pre-primary schools in Likuyani Sub-County, Kakamega County was examined. The correlation analysis results are revealed in Table 2.

Table 2. Correlation analysis for parental involvement in decision making.

Variable	Statistic	Value
Parental involvement in decision-making	Pearson correlation (<i>r</i>)	0.301
	Sig. (2-tailed) (<i>p</i>)	0.001

It was found out that there is a positive and significant relationship PI in decision making and CBC implementation in public pre-primary schools in Likuyani Sub-County, Kakamega County ($r = 0.301$; $p < 0.05$). Therefore, enhanced parental involvement in decision making is associated with improved CBC implementation in public pre-primary schools in Likuyani Sub-County, Kakamega County and vice-versa. The finding on parental decision-making as a determinant of CBC implementation was consistent across global, regional and national contexts. Willis and Exley (2022) in Australia demonstrate that when schools shift from mere parental involvement through volunteerism/events to engagement through inquiry curriculum, affinity spaces and cogenerative dialogues, small intentional changes are quickly rewarded with enhanced learner engagement, teacher effectiveness and collective wellbeing; Syomwene (2022) in Kenya and Muyabi *et al*,

(2022) in Zambia converge on this by establishing that home-based literacy support, reading, homework assistance, PTA meetings, fee payment and provision of learning materials significantly improve literacy and reduce absenteeism, though both note it is constrained by limited resources, inconsistent commitment, poverty and poor school-parent relationships. Ghosh and Steinberg (2022) in India add the attitudinal dimension, showing that negative/indifferent parental attitudes, shaped by parental education, significantly predict lower preschool access, which explains variations in PTA participation and resource provision observed in Likuyani. Jungreithmeier (2022) in Austria provides the structural counterpoint, revealing that even with positive supply developments, fragmented legislation and insufficient, unsustainable financing and personnel shortages prevent quality child education and care—a finding that parallels infrastructure and staffing constraints in rural Kakamega. Similarly, Simiyu (2025) whose study was on parental preparedness and participation in the implementation of Kenya's competency-based curriculum: Evidence from Bungoma North and Ruiru Sub-Counties found a statistically significant effect between parental preparedness and implementation of competency-based curriculum in Kenya.

Conclusion

The conclusion drawn was that parental involvement in decision-making has a positive and significant impact on the successful implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in public pre-primary schools within Likuyani Sub-County, Kakamega County. This underscores the critical role of parents as active partners in shaping educational outcomes, where their participation enhances learner motivation, strengthens school infrastructure, and supports effective curriculum delivery.

Recommendations

Here are three tailored recommendations flowing from the conclusion:

Policy Recommendation to the Ministry of Education: Institutionalize structured frameworks that mandate parental participation in curriculum-related decision-making at the pre-primary level. This could include formal guidelines for PTA involvement, standardized consultation processes, and capacity-building programs to ensure parents are empowered to contribute meaningfully to CBC implementation.

Institutional Recommendation to Schools: Establish inclusive school governance structures such as active PTA committees and regular stakeholder forums. Schools should integrate parental input into planning for infrastructure, staffing, and learner support, while also fostering transparent communication channels to strengthen trust and collaboration.

Recommendation for Parents: Actively engage in school decision-making processes by attending meetings, contributing ideas, and supporting initiatives that enhance CBC delivery. Parents should also reinforce CBC principles at home by motivating learners, providing resources where possible, and collaborating with teachers to create a holistic learning environment.

Declarations

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