

**HOMEWORK PRACTICES AND ACHIEVEMENT OF SELECTED CORE COMPETENCIES AMONG LEARNERS IN PUBLIC PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN UASIN GISHU COUNTY, KENYA.**

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**Abstract**

Parental engagement in an education system is critical in enhancing children's learning for achievement of a holistic educational process. The objective of this study was to establish the influence of homework practices on achievement of selected core competencies among learners in pre-primary schools in Uasin Gishu County. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The target population was 2,853 respondents consisting of the County Education Director, 1,426 pre-school teachers and 1,426 Pre-school Parent Representatives. The sample size was 341 respondents selected using purposive sampling technique. Research instruments used to collect the data were questionnaires and interview schedule. Pilot study was done to ascertain the reliability of the research instruments. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data with the aid of Scientific Package for Social Sciences version 26.0. Quantitative data was analyzed descriptively and also inferentially using Chi-square to test the hypothesis at  $\alpha=0.05$  level of significance. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically along the objectives and presented in narrative forms. The results indicate that a majority of parents do not help their children to do homework and reported having difficulty helping children with challenging homework or school activities. Pre-school teachers appear to be more consistent in checking and noting down if learners did their homework. The null hypothesis was rejected and therefore there was a statistically significant influence of homework practices on achievement of selected core competencies among learners in pre-primary schools. The findings may assist curriculum developers and planners to develop framework for intervention measures to assist parents to effectively engage in children's learning.

**Key words:** Influence, homework practices, parental engagement, selected core competencies, early childhood education,

## **Background of the Study**

The guidelines on Parental Empowerment and Engagement (PEE) are designed as a tool that can aid learning institutions to strengthen parents' capacity in parenting and involvement in children's education (Marshall, Zaki, Duarte, Nicolas, Roan, Colby & Flores, 2019). Being the first educators, trainers and sources of authority that a child interacts with, engagement of parents in skillfully identifying a child's talent and potential abilities creates a competency platform for the school to build on. Competency-based curriculum provides opportunities for engaging and empowering parents to contribute in curriculum implementation process for achievement of children expected learning outcomes at all levels of basic education (Piliyesi, Ogada & Ochieng, 2020). Commitment to communication and collaboration between the school and the parents create awareness on the child's developmental progress and accountability.

Learners develop core competencies when they are engaged in the curricular competencies within a learning area and as an integral part of the curriculum. Examples of core competencies are digital literacy, creativity and imagination, communication and collaboration, learning to learn, self-reliance, critical thinking and problem solving skills (Kim, 2019). While competencies manifest uniquely in each area of learning, the core competencies are often interconnected and embedded in each other forming a foundation subsequent learning.

Global competence integrates knowledge of the world and the skill of application with the disposition to think and behave productively (Ortiz-Marcos, Breuker, Rodríguez-Rivero, Kjellgren, Dorel, Toffolon and Eccli, 2020). In addition to knowledge of the world, a globally competent citizen exhibits habits like critical thinking, rational optimism, innovation, empathy and awareness of the influences of culture on individual behavior and world events (Engel, Rutkowski & Thompson, 2019). Global competence is not restricted to knowing about other cultures and other perspectives but also on communication and collaboration for self-efficacy as addressed by the current study.

Competence-based curriculum (CBC) is a sequence of planned experiences that emphasizes the learning outcomes through acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values required to achieve competence standards by engaging learners with hands on activities and exposes learners to world experience (Ndiokubwayo, Uwamahoro & Ndayambaje, 2020). Regardless of family background parents should be empowered so as to possess efficient knowledge regarding how to implement the functions of child growth and development by recognizing the significance of early childhood education for effective socialization of the child into the society.

Competence-Based Curriculum is an approach guided by learners own pace of learning, demonstrate mastery of the competencies necessary for identified potential, talent and gifting related to identify learning pathway (Gruber, 2018). According to Jallow (2011) when learners exhibit competence the evidence is in the ability to do an activity independently, creatively and innovatively out of exposure to well thought, planned and unplanned learning experiences. One of the strongest expected learning outcomes of CBC is to increase learners' involvement as a result of learner's ownership of the learning process, embrace individualized learning and accommodate a variety of learning styles to realize personalized learning experience (Gruber, 2018). Learning

outcomes in CBC emphasize competencies that include the application and creation of knowledge, development of important skills, values and dispositions (Frost, Worthen & Gentz, 2015). Competence based curriculum empower learners with knowledge, attitudes and values for inclusivity in the society to become ethical, empowered and engaged future citizens of a nation for national development.

China's core competencies framework includes three "dimensions," six "modules," and 18 "items." To develop a whole person, there are three dimensions of autonomous development, civic participation, and cultural foundation, and six modules: learning to learn, healthy living, assuming responsibility, innovation and practice, humanistic understanding, and scientific spirit (Li & Shang, 2020). The module of humanistic understanding, for instance, consists of "human culture, human passions, and human aesthetics." The first class developed countries of the world from where undeveloped and developing countries benchmark from embeds core competencies in the development of the whole person for greater benefits to the nation as related in the current study.

### **Statement of the problem**

The underlying goal of education is to create a positive change in the learners' knowledge, achievement and behavior change. Schools provide various learning experiences that prepare children for future living; at the centre of these learning experiences is the curriculum. Through the curriculum, the citizens of a nation are made to ultimately develop an understanding and appreciation of knowledge, learning and interaction with education to be empowered and ethical. The place of curriculum in education makes it clear that combined efforts be made at all times to meet the divergent needs of the society. The Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya outlines parental engagement as one of its guiding principles. The emphasis and recommendations on the aspects of parental engagement in children learning does not seem to serve its function well as evidenced by low literacy skills in pre-primary school learning outcome. Low literacy levels among children could be because parents are keen on attending planned school activities with the hope of influencing their children performance at the expense of home-based learning environment as an extension of school learning. However, most pre-primary schools have been faced with challenges of engaging parents to ensure effective children's achievement of selected core competencies. The current study therefore sought to fill the existing research gap by investigating homework practices and achievement of selected core competencies among learners in pre-primary schools in Uasin Gishu County.

### **Objective of the study**

The objective of the study was to establish the influence of homework practices on achievement of selected core competencies among learners in pre-primary schools in Uasin Gishu County.

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

The hypothesis of the study was :

- H<sub>0</sub>: There is no statistically significant influence of homework practices on achievement of selected core competencies among learners in pre-primary schools in Uasin Gishu County.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Parental Engagement

Parental engagement entails parents initiating a secure environment, providing intellectual stimulation and conversation, modelling constructive social and educational values, shaping the concept of the child as a learner benefitting from education and training by fostering literacy and problem solving skills as well as encouraging high aspirations. According to Yamamoto, Holloway and Suzuki (2016) parental engagement is when families work with schools to support learning.

According to Guy-Evans (2020) the family is the most immediate system that influences child development. Children need avenues to show, try out and further develop talents and skills thus the home environment can be a good stage for unfolding the potential endowed in children. Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (2019) observes that parental empowerment and engagement in the learning process of a child results to improved learning outcomes and the general wellbeing of children. Communicating to parents creates a strong sense of community and team work necessary for the achievement of the expected learning outcomes as active participation in community outreach. Similarly, Dunst (2016) observed that encouraging parents to play an active role in the educational life of children and establishing effective home-school partnerships is very crucial in early years of learning.

Also, Bordalba and Bochaca (2019) found that parents should receive the communication clearly and often from the school by providing weekly and monthly reports, newsletters, report cards, parent conferences and meetings, academic clinics, school diaries, phone calls and messages as well as communication through social media platforms such as, WhatsApp, Facebook, twitter, Instagram, YouTube channels among others. According to Gonzalez-Mena (2011) parental engagement needs a combination of commitment and active participation on the part of the parent to the school and directly to the child. Strengthening the parents to handle and deal with children needs in and out of school premises is imperative for continuity and consistence in child education and development.

The education of a child under the Kenyan CBC is not wholly the dependent on the teachers but a triangulation of efforts from the Kenyan government, parents, teachers, community leaders, industries and the whole society (Omariba, 2022). This combined effort reflects both the teacher and the parent as facilitators of the learning process; the teacher at school and the parent at home, assisting the learner to carry out take-home activities and assignments as guided by the teacher. Parents felt that opportunities for engagement were not communicated timely and not in an organized manner (Muigai, 2018). Unpreparedness and the old culture do a lot of harm on how the competence-based curriculum is being implemented in Kenya because of the assumption that curriculum matters are the work of government through the teachers and not wholly the responsibility of the parents thus the need to demystify the assumption.

In an investigation on the interactions of parents with children in terms of the defectiveness of parents and the level of cognitive demand they required of their children during book reading, Gunduz (2018) found that parents were generally more directive and made fewer cognitive demands with younger children than with older ones, normally developing children as preschool learners

implying little support in early years' education. Nonetheless, Paradise (2022) identified that parents have been found to function as instructors in learning situations by supporting, valuing, extending and clarifying the writing initiatives of the children as well as providing the necessary materials and events that afford writing as a means of communication. In the current study, parental engagement in early childhood development and education is captured as homework practices.

### **Homework Practices and Achievement of Core Competencies**

Homework refers to practical school work or activity imparted to learners by teachers while at school and to be performed at home for revision and recall of what was learned (Davidovitch & Yavich, 2017). According to Silinskas and Kikas (2019) children are required to do homework and parents are often required to get involved in supporting learner's homework performance at home. Nunez, Suarez, Rosario, Vallejo, Valle and Epstein (2015) broadly realized that involving parents in homework done by children can help improve academic performance of pupils. The parental engagement in homework is essential for the learners to enhance levels of scholarship as learners who do homework are supposed to have better achievements.

According to Madjar, Shklar and Moshe (2016) school policy regarding homework must have clear expectations for teachers as to what constitutes good homework, which can serve to strengthen the benefits of homework for student learning while decreasing potential problems. Madjar et al. (2016) noted that while the policy might limit the role of homework in reading at different levels, homework should help young children develop good study habits, promote positive attitudes toward school, and communicate to learners that learning takes place outside and inside of the school. Furter, Tao, Lau and Yiu (2019) found that parents also appear to involve themselves in homework because of the perception that invitations from their child or teachers teaching the children suggest that their homework engagement is wanted and expected.

Similarly, Gilic (2016) found that parental participation in homework has more significant impact on children than parents' participation in school activities because parental participation in homework done by children has been found to be used by schools to enhance engagement in learners schooling. However, Balter, van Rhijn and Davies (2018) found that schools must be aware of the need to assist and support parents on homework practices by equipping them with appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes for effective involvement in the schooling process of the children so as to impact positively on educational achievement.

In Namibia, Makamani (2019) using a qualitative survey study on the extent of parental engagement in learners' academic performance found that all parents reported very high-levels of engagement in their children's education but the study was limited in design since the sample was too small to make generalization to a larger population. As pointed by Muhammad (2013) findings, majority of educators wish that families should get involved in children's education even though the hindrance is that very limited numbers of parents can manage to help households and participate in schooling of their children. Caena and Redecker (2019) also found that teachers' continuous professional development should also emphasize on communication skills needed by educators.

Tough communication is the base for good relationship and maintaining a sense of community between school and home tasking educators to develop and expand capabilities to maximize

successful interaction with families (Paramasivam & Ratnavadivel, 2018). In another study by Reimers Schleicher, Saavedra and Tuominen (2020) the findings were that as parents and teachers exchange information, learners learn a lot and families and educators feel more supported. Effective interaction between families and the school positively influences learners' learning as parents create shared home-school goals (Mukashev, 2022). Evidence from a study done by Mwenda (2017) showed that parents enforce and reinforce school values such as discipline, honesty, hard work, and obedience to enhance learners' outcomes as well as monitoring and taking charge of homework processes to improve learners' attitude towards homework.

Study findings by Gorski (2016) were that parents make follow-ups to check whether teachers have given homework to children so as to accord the necessary assistance as well as organizing and coordinating with resource persons to assist the learner in case of difficulties in understanding homework. Further, Silinskas and Kikas (2019) found that parental homework assistance has had mixed results on student outcomes as parents have been known to ensure that learners gain understanding of homework tasks, by reading to their children, interpreting tasks and explaining to them assignments in simple understandable language. Similarly, Szabo (2019) studied parental engagement for elementary school learners and found that by simply checking on learners' homework was not significantly correlated with academic achievement. Parent engagement might also have detrimental effects if parents engage in "inappropriate engagement behaviors," such as giving children the right answer or completing the assignment without engaging the child thus misplaced competence depicting conflict of interest.

Parents established suitable learning processes or strategies fitting for learners to follow in order to accomplish the given homework assignments (Pollock & Tolone, 2020). Parental engagement with homework can have positive indirect effects on achievement of core competencies by improving homework completion and performance, promoting a positive effect around schoolwork, facilitating parent-teacher communication and improving study skills. Further, Veerasamy, D'Souza, Linden and Laakso (2019) discussed learners' problem-solving strategies which help them to be more equipped with problem solving skill and ability to apply or transfer learning to real life experiences, encouraging learners to self-monitor, focus attention to the task at hand and encourage children to manage emotional responses to homework. Moreover, Flynn (2017) observed that families need information to be partners in children education to best support children learning. The study adds that parents need to be familiar with what the children are learning in school by maintaining brief regular conversation with teachers to be at better position to assist in homework, and also to maintain a healthy positive relationship between home and school.

Furthermore Moroni, Dumont, Trautwein, Niggli and Baeriswyl (2015) operationalized parental engagement as a multidimensional construct in terms of quantity and quality and also examined how the quantity and different qualities of homework engagement were associated with student achievement. Controlling for prior achievement and parental socioeconomic background, found that the frequency of help was negatively associated with the development of student achievement. Based on homework quality Ali and Razali (2019) found opposing effects depending on how homework quality was operationalized. Further, the study revealed that while supportive homework help had positive effects on learners' achievement, intrusive homework help was negatively related



with later achievement. The authors concluded that parents should provide a suitable learning environment for homework completion to foster self-regulated learning and the autonomy of the learner and also raised the question of how parents should help with homework.

Similarly, Gonida and Cortina (2014) investigated predictors and consequences of parental homework engagement whereby the structural equation models revealed that autonomy-supportive homework engagement was predicted by parent mastery goals while parent performance goals predicted controlling homework engagement. Moreover, the study conducted by Falanga, Gonida and Stamovlasis (2022) provided evidence that parental beliefs for self-efficacy of the children was negatively associated with parent control and interference, but positively related with parent encouragement for cognitive engagement as supplementary to homework.

The study findings of Liu, Zhao and Su (2022) indicated that low parent beliefs in children abilities to complete homework successfully may result in an inappropriate way of homework engagement in terms of control and interference. Furthermore, Davidovitch and Yavich (2017) found that parents see supervision of homework as the main parental responsibility with regard to instilling education and seeing that their children study. Homework keeps parents abreast of the curriculum and increases their engagement in the lives of the children as well as reinforcing parent-school communications. Additionally, Wilson and Gross (2018) found that some parents are of the opinion that when a teacher gives learners homework consistently it showed concern for learners learning and indicates an effort on the part of the teacher. Parents feel that they are not secure enough in their knowledge to help their children with homework, and that they need more direction from the teacher in order to help adequately.

On quality of homework Oribiana (2022) opined that some parents think that homework is given mainly to keep the children busy and has no real significance while a large proportion have doubts as to the quantity of homework children receive from school. Parents feelings of inadequacy leads to the conclusion that homework might generate negative feelings among parents and learners because of heavy load to the learner, as well as harming certain aspects of family life. In another study, Al Kandari and Al Qattan (2020) established that parents' engagement in children activities appear to influence learning outcomes through instructional interactions that range from simple queries to processes intended to develop strategic understanding and problem-solving capacity.

In collaborative learning Gonzalez-DeHass (2019) stated that parents share information and structure task-related processes in ways that enable the child to learn effectively and assume appropriate personal responsibility for learning. Such instructional activities may include directing child attention to task components, simplifying the task as needed, explaining new information, relating information to similar contexts, or responding to questions. According to Gessulat (2022) even when parents have less than comprehensive knowledge of content or pedagogical strategy, parents sometimes have advantages over teachers in instructional roles; for example, parents tend to respond to children unique learning preferences and styles and may thus offer help particularly appropriate to child abilities and understanding.

In a study on student homework behaviors by Fehrman (2015) parental engagement appears to benefit homework behaviors and performance of the learners through the links with student time on homework observed in student attention to homework, increased likelihood of homework completion and better homework performance. In a similar study on relationships between perceived parental involvement in homework, student homework behaviours and academic achievement Nunez, Regueiro, Suarez, Pineiro, Rodicio and Valle (2019) found that parental engagement in homework is linked to more positive student behavior at school, perhaps because engagement conveys high expectations about the importance of schooling and school effort. Better school behavior is logically linked to greater in-class attention to learning tasks, further supporting the likelihood of homework success.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by Epstein Model of Parental Engagement and The Five Core-Competences (5C) model. The Epstein Model of Parental engagement theory (Epstein, 2001) outlines six types of parental involvement in education through which teachers can build on. The Five Core-Competences model described by Hwang Huang, Baptista and Newell (2015) is based on the challenges created by twenty first century globalization, as pointed out by international organizations such as The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (Coughlan, 2015).

### **Methodology**

Descriptive survey research design was chosen because it allows researchers to study phenomena that do not allow for manipulation of variables (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Descriptive survey research design was appropriate for the study because it enabled the researcher to gather both qualitative and quantitative data on how the study variables such as home literacy practices, homework practices, use of ICT resources and parental disciplinary practices influence the selected core competencies as; digital literacy, creativity and imagination, communication, problem solving and critical thinking.

### **Target Population**

The study was done in 713 public pre-primary schools in Uasin Gishu County. The target population for the study consisted County Education Director, 1,426 pre-school teachers and 1426 parent representatives as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Target Population

<b>Category of Population</b>	<b>Target Population</b>
<b>County Education Director</b>	1
<b>Pre-school teachers</b>	1,426
<b>Pre-school parent representatives</b>	1,426
<b>Total</b>	2,853

Source: Uasin Gishu County Education Office (2022)

The information on Table 1 show the target population of 2853 comprising of one county education director, 1426 pre-school teachers and 1426 pre-school parents representatives.



### Sampling technique and sample size

A sample is part of large population which is thought to be representative of the larger population (Orodho, 2009). Sampling is a procedure where a fraction of the data is taken from a large set of data, and the inference drawn from the sample is extended to the whole group (Orodho, 2009). According to Kathuri and Pals (1993) shown in Appendix V, a sample of 341 is considered appropriate for a population of 2,853 subjects. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) the sample population should be 10-30% of the target population. The research used simple random sampling technique to select eighty-five pre-primary schools from county. Pieces of paper were put in a basket each with the names of schools, followed by thoroughly mixing to ensure that each school has an equal chance of being selected. After mixing, representative samples were selected by picking a piece of paper from the basket and recording the school's name. A total of 85 pre-primary schools were used for the study. From every pre-primary school selected, the pre-primary two (PP2) and pre-primary one (PP1) teachers were selected using purposive sampling technique hence 170 pre-primary teachers. Two Pre-school parent representatives from each selected pre-school was selected using purposive sampling technique giving a total of 170 respondents. County Education Director was selected using purposive sampling to be able to draw wide range of qualitative information. The sampling size is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Sample Size

Category of Population	Target Population	Sampling Procedure	Sample Size
County Education Director	1	Purposive	1
Pre-school Teachers	1,426	Purposive	170
Pre-school Parents Reps	1,426	Purposive	170
Total	2,853		341

Source: Uasin Gishu County Education Office (2022)

The information on Table 2 shows the target population and the sample size as; the county education director 1 and sample size is 1, the pre-school teachers targeted population is 1,426 and sample size is 170 while pre-school parents target population was 1426 and sample size was 170. The sampling procedure for the whole category of population was purposive.

### Descriptive Statistics for Homework Practices

Study findings investigated descriptive statistics on homework practices. The respondents were given a series of statements about homework practices and asked to respond. Table 16 showed that respondents either strongly disagreed (SD), disagreed (D), were neutral (N), agreed (A), or strongly agreed (SA) with the statement being made.

### Pre-School Teachers Responses

A total of 5 statements were used to determine the Pre-School Teachers responses on Homework Practices and responses elicited on a 5-point Likert scale as shown in Table 3.

Table3: Pre-School Teachers Responses on Homework Practices

Statement		SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Sd
I just check and note down if the learner did their homework	F	41	73	10	7	11	3.88	1.11
	%	28.9	51.4	7.0	4.9	7.7		
I just ask the learners if they did or did not understand their homework task	F	41	78	9	4	10	3.95	1.05
	%	28.9	54.9	6.3	2.8	7.0		
I usually check the homework task orally	F	35	72	4	17	14	3.68	1.24
	%	24.6	50.7	2.8	12.0	9.9		
I usually check the homework on the board because I want to see if learners understood the concept and my expectations	F	36	82	9	6	9	3.91	1.02
	%	25.4	57.7	6.3	4.2	6.3		
I collect learners' notebooks	F	4	2	7	83	46	1.83	0.81
	%	2.8	1.4	4.9	58.5	32.4		

Key: Mean (0-1.4) =Strongly Disagree, Mean (1.5-2.4) =Disagree, Mean (2.5-3.4) =Neutral, Mean (3.5-4.0) = strongly agree, Mean (4.5-5.0) = strongly agreed.

The information on Table 3 shows that 41(28.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they check and note down if the learner did homework while 73(51.4%) of the respondents agreed that they check and note down if the learner did homework. However, 7(4.9%) of the respondents disagree, 11(7.7%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that they check and note down if the learner did homework. Additionally, the study results revealed that the respondents strongly agree that they check and note down if the learner did homework with mean rating of 3.88 and a standard deviation of 1.11. A study conducted by Pabst (2021) on the purpose of exploratory qualitative study in gathering the experiences and perceptions of urban sixth to ninth grade level science teacher in Welden University found that teachers perceived this practice as essential for monitoring student progress and identifying any potential issues with homework completion.

At the same time, 78(54.9%) of the respondents agreed and 4(2.8%) disagreed that they just ask the learners if they did or did not understand their homework task. Further, the study results also showed that 41(28.9) of the respondents strongly agree while 10(7.0%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that they just ask the learners if they did or did not understand their homework task. Further, the study results also showed that the respondents strongly agreed and had a positive attitude towards the statement that they just ask the learners if they did or did not understand their homework task with mean rating of 3.95 and standard deviation of 1.05. A concurring study by Tish, Levy, Tal and Peleg (2023) parent-pre-school teacher relations during the COVID-19 pandemic–Promoters and undermining factors in Israel found that teacher believed this method facilitated effective communication with students, ensuring they comprehend the assignments given.

Further, 35(24.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they usually check the homework task orally while 72(50.7%) of the respondents agreed that they usually check the homework task orally. On the contrary 17(12.0%) of the respondents disagreed while 14(9.9%) of the respondents disagreed to the statement that they usually check the homework task orally. Further, the mean

rating of 3.68 and standard deviation of 1.24 indicates that the respondents strongly that they usually check the homework task orally. A study conducted by Dereli and Hatice (2022) about Pre-school teachers' knowledge and needs related to noticing gifted children and the enrichment model in turkey found that oral checking allowed for immediate feedback and helped teachers gauge student understanding more effectively.

The study nonetheless showed that, 82(57.7%) of the participants agreed that they usually check the homework on the board because they want to see if learners understood the concept while 36(25.4) strongly agreed. Additionally, 4.2(6%) of the respondents disagreed and 9(6.3%) strongly disagreed with the statement that they usually check the homework on the board because they want to see if learners understood the concept and my expectations. Further, the study results also revealed that the mean rating of 3.91 and a standard deviation of 1.02 indicate that the participants strongly agree and had a positive attitude towards the statement that they usually check the homework on the board because they want to see if learners understood the concept and my expectations. In a research carried out by Yildirim, Boyaci Yildirim and Limoncuoğlu (2021) found that teachers believed this method of usually checking homework on the board to assess learners' understanding of the concepts and their expectations provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of their teaching and allowed them to adjust their instructional strategies accordingly.

Finally, majority 83(58.5%) of the respondents disagreed that they collect learners' notebooks. Contrary to that, 46(32.4%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that they collect learners' notebooks. The study results also indicate that 2(1.4%) of the respondents agreed that they collect learners' notebooks while 4(2.8%) strongly disagreed. Further, the study results also indicated that the respondents disagree and had a negative attitude towards the statement that they collect learners' notebooks with mean rating of 1.83 and standard deviation of 0.81. A study conducted by Jackman and Sisson (2022) revealed that teachers cited reasons such as time constraints and concerns about students feeling anxious or pressured, leading them to avoid the practice of checking and collecting learners' notebooks.

### Parent Representatives Responses

A total of 7 statements were used to determine the Parent Representatives responses on the Homework Practices and responses elicited on a 5-point Likert scale as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Parent Representatives Responses on Homework Practices

Statement		SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Sd
There is some set place for my children to do homework at home	F	7	8	16	52	54	1.99	1.10
	%	5.1	7	11.7	38.0	39.4		
I always have enough time to check my child's homework	F	4	10	17	80	26	2.16	0.92
	%	2.9	7.3	12.4	58.4	19.0		
I do not have a problem in providing lighting in the house for homework purposes	F	2	1	7	81	46	1.77	0.70
	%	1.5	0.7	5.1	59.1	33.6		
I assist my child with challenging homework/school activities with no problem	F	9	27	9	40	52	2.27	1.32
	%	6.6	19.7	6.6	29.2	38.0		

Sometimes it's difficult to help my child with some homework	F	33	75	5	16	8	3.79	1.11
	%	24.1	54.7	3.6	11.7	5.8		
It is better when children finish homework at school	F	41	78	9	4	5	4.06	0.90
	%	29.9	56.9	6.6	2.9	3.6		
Sometimes my child is not able to finish homework in time	F	41	75	6	8	7	3.98	1.02
	%	29.9	54.7	4.4	5.8	5.1		

Key: Mean (0-1.4) =Strongly Disagree, Mean (1.5-2.4) =Disagree, Mean (2.5-3.4) =Neutral, Mean (3.5-4.0) = strongly agree, Mean (4.5-5.0) = strongly agreed.

Table 4 showed that of the respondents 15(5.8%) agreed that there is some set place for their children to do homework at home. However, 106 (77.4%) of the respondents disagreed that there is some set place for their children to do homework at home. Further, the study results revealed that the respondents disagree with the statement that there is some set place for their children to do homework at home with mean rating of 1.99 and standard deviation of 1.10. However, 14 (10.2%) of the respondents agreed and 106(77.4%) disagreed with the statement that they always have enough time to check their child's homework. Further, the study results reveals that the mean of 2.16 and a standard deviation of 1.92 indicate that the respondents disagree and had a negative attitude towards the statement that they always have enough time to check their child's homework. Furthermore, 3(2.2%) of the respondents agreed that they do not have a problem in providing lighting in the house for homework purposes. On the contrary, 127(92.7%) of the respondents disagreed that they do not have a problem in providing lighting in the house for homework purposes. The study results with mean rating of 1.77 and standard deviation of 0.70 indicate that the respondents disagree with the statement that they do not have a problem in providing lighting in the house for homework purposes. The study by Korzeniowski (2023) on the Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on the Development of Children's Executive Functions Implications for School-Based Interventions in Mendoza, Argentina found that children struggle to complete homework within the assigned time frame.

The study nonetheless showed that, 36(26.3%) of the participants agreed that they assist their child with challenging homework/school activities with no problem. On contrary to the statement 92(67.2%) of the respondents disagree that they assist their child with challenging homework/school activities with no problem. However, the study results with mean rating of 2.27 and standard deviation of 1.32 indicate that the respondent disagree with the statement that they assist their child with challenging homework/school activities with no problem. Study results of the study conducted by Bergman and Chan (2021) on leveraging parents through low-cost technology in Madison, University of Wisconsin show that parents frequently observed children face difficulties in completing homework within the given time constraints.

In the same vein, Table 4 revealed that majority, 108(78.8 %) of the respondents agreed that sometimes it's difficult to help children with some homework. However, 24 (17.5%) of the respondents disagreed that sometimes it is difficult to help their child with some homework. Further, the study results also show that the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that sometimes it's difficult to help their child with some homework having a mean rating of 3.79 and standard deviation of 1.11. The table also show that 119(86.8%) of the respondents agreed and

9(6.5%) disagreed that it is better when children finish homework at school. Similarly, the study results with mean rating of 4.06 and a standard deviation of 1.92 revealed that the respondents strongly agree and had a positive attitude with the statement that it is better when children finish homework at school. The by study Pek and Mee (2020) on parental involvement on child's education at home during school lockdown Selangor, Malaysia revealed that parents acknowledged their children's difficulty in finishing homework on time.

Lastly, the information from Table 4 show that, majority 116(84.6%) of the respondents agreed that sometimes their children are not able to finish homework in time. On contrary to that, 15(10.9%) of the respondents disagreed that sometimes their children are not able to finish homework in time. Further, the study results reveal that mean and standard deviation of 3.98 and 1.02 respectively indicates that the respondents strongly agree and had a positive attitude towards the statement that sometimes their children are not able to finish homework in time. The study by Holland, Courtney, Vergara, McIntyre, Nix, Marion and Shergill (2021) found a high prevalence of parents found that their children struggle to complete homework within the assigned time frame.

### **Inferential Statistics Findings for Home Work practices**

The study used Chi-Square to test the association between homework practices and achievement of selected core competencies among learners in pre-primary schools in Uasin Gishu County. The study results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Chi-Square Tests for Homework Practices

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	54.052 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	59.445	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	42.414	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	279		

Table 5 showed Chi –Square analysis for the second hypothesis and results indicated that Chi-Square  $\chi^2$  (4,  $N = 279$ ) = 54.052 with  $p$ -value of 0.000 which was significant at confidence level of 95% ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ) therefore the null hypothesis which states that; there is no statistically significant influence of homework practices on achievement of selected core competencies among learners was rejected. The study findings in Table 16 reveal that there was a statistically significant influence of home literacy practices on achievement of selected core competencies among learners.

The study findings concur with the findings by Wang, Zhang and Yuan (2019) who investigated the impact of teacher feedback on student homework completion and performance in mathematics. The authors found that teachers who regularly checked and recorded homework completion had a positive impact on student homework completion rates and overall academic performance. Specifically, they found that teachers who checked and recorded homework regularly were more likely to identify and address areas of weakness in their learners' understanding of the material, leading to improved performance on homework assignments and exams.

Another study that supports the findings of this research is by Huang, Li and Shi (2019) that explored the role of teacher feedback on student motivation and engagement in English language

learning. The authors found that teachers who regularly checked and provided feedback on student homework assignments were more likely to promote student motivation and engagement in the learning process. Specifically, they found that learners who received regular feedback on their homework assignments were more likely to feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for their own learning, leading to improved motivation and engagement in the classroom.

A study by Ampofo, Opoku and Opoku-Manu (2022) examined the impact of teacher feedback on student homework completion and academic achievement in science education. The researchers found that teachers who checked and noted down homework completion regularly had a positive effect on students' completion rates and academic performance. The study highlighted that consistent monitoring and feedback helped students develop a sense of accountability and responsibility for their homework tasks, leading to improved learning outcomes.

In a study conducted by Kim and Lee (2021), the researchers investigated the influence of teacher feedback on student homework completion and self-regulated learning in social studies. The findings revealed that teachers who checked and recorded homework completion had a significant impact on students' completion rates and their ability to regulate their learning. The study emphasized that teacher feedback and monitoring played a crucial role in fostering students' self-regulation skills and promoting a sense of autonomy in their homework tasks.

Similarly, Coe (2019) conducted a study to examine the relationship between teacher feedback on homework completion and student engagement in language arts. The results indicated that teachers who regularly checked and provided feedback on homework assignments positively influenced students' engagement levels. The study emphasized that constructive feedback from teachers enhanced students' understanding of the material, encouraged active participation and motivated them to invest more effort in their homework tasks.

The findings of this study are supported by a study conducted by Adelin, Suminar and Rahmawati (2019) which aimed to explore parental involvement in their children's homework in Indonesia. The study found that parents faced several challenges in assisting their children with homework, such as lack of time, inadequate knowledge, and difficulty in understanding the homework instructions. Additionally, the study found that parents preferred their children to finish homework at school to avoid the burden of homework at home. These findings are consistent with the current study's results, which revealed that the majority of the respondents agreed that it is better when children finish homework at school and that sometimes it is difficult for parents to help their children with homework. The study by Adelin Suminar and Rahmawati (2019) highlights the importance of providing parents with the necessary support and resources to facilitate their involvement in their children's homework.

### **Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Findings for Homework Practices**

The study findings from interviews revealed that homework can be an effective tool for building skills, perseverance, and responsibility. In pre-primary schools, it is essential to consider the professional standards and competencies required of early childhood educators working with young learners. Therefore, when designing homework practices for pre-primary learners, it is crucial to



consider these predictors and tailor the homework assignments to meet the needs of each child. Additionally, involving parents in homework practices can be an effective way to support children learning and build family literacy practices. County Education Director indicated that:

"As a learning strategy, pre-primary school teachers give school homework to help children practice what they learn in class. This type of homework is designed to encourage learners to think ... homework practices enhance achievement of learning outcome implying sound homework policies should be set".

It is important for teachers and parents to carefully consider the type and amount of homework given to pre-primary school learners to ensure that it is developmentally appropriate and supports their learning goals with and without the assistance of the parent. As Tam and Chan (2016) argued that homework practices play a crucial role in the development of critical thinking skills among preprimary learners. The effectiveness of these practices cannot be underestimated. According to Tam and Chan (2016) it is evident that the learning process goes beyond the classroom walls. Therefore, through homework assignments that require learners to apply learned concepts independently or collaboratively with their peers, they can develop their problem-solving abilities and creativity. Incorporating homework into early childhood education sets a foundation for future academic success by fostering self-discipline and responsibility while also allowing time for practice which strengthens retention and mastery of teaching and learning content. Furthermore, it allows educators to assess individual student progress outside of class hours which provides them with valuable insight on how best to tailor classroom instruction towards specific needs.

By establishing a routine of consistent homework assignments that are appropriate for their level of understanding and ability, young learners can improve their language skills and vocabulary acquisition. Moreover, this type of practice helps them develop good study habits early on which will serve them well throughout their academic career. By providing learners with age-appropriate tasks such as reading aloud or practicing letter recognition exercises at home regularly; educators may help build stronger foundations for future learning opportunities. It is important for teachers to set clear expectations regarding what types of activities they expect from parents/caregivers when it comes to supporting student progress outside of school hours while also ensuring that these tasks are achievable within the family daily schedule.

### **Findings**

The study findings indicate that there are differences in homework practices between pre-school teachers and pre-primary school parent representatives. Pre-school teachers appear to be more consistent in checking and noting down if learners did homework, checked homework tasks orally and collected learners' notebooks. Further, pre-primary school parent representatives reported having difficulty helping children with challenging homework or school activities and sometimes finding it difficult to help children with homework. The majority of pre-primary school parent representatives also disagreed with the statement that there is a set place for the children to do homework at home and that they always have enough time to check the children homework. The null hypothesis was rejected and therefore there was a statistically significant influence homework practices on achievement of selected core competencies among learners in pre-primary schools.

## Recommendations

Based on research findings the researcher made a recommendation that Pre-school teachers should provide guidance to parents on how to help children with homework and school activities. Pre-primary school parents should create a set place for children to do homework at home and ensure that they have enough time to check children homework.

## Conclusions

Differences were found in homework practices between pre-school teachers and pre-primary school parents. Pre-school teachers appeared to be more consistent in checking and collecting homework notebooks, while pre-primary school parent representatives reported challenges in helping their children with homework, particularly with challenging tasks

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