

**INFLUENCE OF HOME ENVIRONMENT ON ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY  
SCHOOLS IN KITUI WEST SUB COUNTY,  
KITUI COUNTY, KENYA**

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**A Research project submitted to the Department of Educational  
Administration and Planning for the award of the degree of Masters  
of Educational Administration of South Eastern Kenya University**

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## ***DECLARATION***

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for award of any degree in any other university.

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## ***RECOMMENDATION***

This research project has been submitted with our approval as University Supervisors.

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## ***DEDICATION***

This study is in respect of my parents, Alexander Kamuti Nzoka and Jostina Kavithe Kamuti because of your good admirable qualities .You are my inspiration ,my vigor ,my mentor and guide and my source of strength .I dedicate this study to you my dear parents may good God give you peaceful long life.

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May the Almighty grant you peace always.

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## ***ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS***

<b>BOM</b>	Board of Management
<b>CLT</b>	Classical Liberty Theory
<b>ESDP</b>	Education Sector Development Programme
<b>ETP</b>	Education Training Policy
<b>FDSE</b>	Free Day Secondary Education
<b>FSE</b>	Free Secondary Education
<b>GER</b>	Gross Enrollment Rate
<b>GPA</b>	Grade Point Average
<b>GOK</b>	Government of Kenya
<b>KCSE</b>	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
<b>KNEC</b>	Kenya National Examination Council
<b>KIE</b>	Kenya Institute of Education
<b>KSSHA</b>	Kenya Secondary School Heads Association
<b>QASO</b>	Quality Assurance Standards Officer
<b>QASD</b>	Quality Assurance Standards of Directorate
<b>SES</b>	Social Economic Status

## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of home environment on student's academic performance in public schools in Kitui west sub- county, Kitui County, Kenya. The study sought to determine the influence of parents' economic status on students' academic performance, to establish the influence of Parent/Family Involvement on students' academic performance and to investigate the effect of parenting style on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kitui west sub county, Kitui county. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Simple random sampling was used to select the sample included in the study. The researcher studied a sample of 8 principals in 8 schools out of 28 public secondary schools, 8 PTA chairpersons in the 8 selected schools out of 28 and 144 students out of population 1440 students. Target population for the study was all the principals ,students and parents of the 28 secondary schools in Kitui West Sub County Kitui County. Questionnaires were used for data collection. The collected data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics using the Statistical Package for Social Scientist (SPSS) version 20. The findings of this study were that the parent's economic status influences students' academic performance ( $r =0.8$ ), Parent/Family Involvement influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools ( $r =0.45$ ) and the parenting styles affects students' academic performance in public secondary schools ( $r =0.049$ ) Kitui west sub county, Kitui county to a great extent. Thus authoritative parenting was positively associated with academic performance and authoritarian and permissive parenting was negatively associated with good performance. The ANOVA results shows that there is significance between mean responses between parents' economic status and students academic performance  $F(df_B,df_W) =F(159,1) =7.197$ ,  $p<0.05$ , Parent/Family Involvement and students' academic performance  $F(df_B,df_W) = F(159,1) = 19.75$ ,  $p<0.05$  and also that there is a significant difference in mean responses between parenting styles and students' performance  $F(df_B,df_W) =F(93,3) =13.0$ ,  $p<0.05$ . The multiple regression results shows that the dependent variables are significant at 0.05% significant level ( $p=0.003$ ,  $p= 0.001$  and  $p=0.006$ ) respectively) and that the parenting styles predicted students' performance significantly at 7.234. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson's correlations, multiple regression and analysis of variance (ANOVA). From the findings of this study, the researcher recommended that the Government need to increase the bursary allocation to the students from poor families so as to retain them in school to enhance their performance. The school administration should increase the number of education days for parents so that parents can be more involved with their student's academic performance. Parents should improve on their family leadership style since this can affect their children performance.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **1.1 Background of the study**

Education is the process of instructions aimed at the all-round development of the individual, facilitating realization of self-potential and latent talents of an individual (Anderman, 1999). Education makes man a right thinker and a correct decision-maker. It is through education that knowledge and information is received and spread throughout the world. Without education, man is as though in a closed room and with education he finds himself in a room with all its windows open towards outside world (Anderman, 1999).

In the current scenario, education has a pivotal role to play in the economic and social development of any nation. Bearing in mind the importance of education, it is the need of the hour to promote the academic achievement of students, who form the concrete foundation for the country's progress. Academic achievement is directly related to students' growth and development of knowledge in an educational situation where teaching and learning process takes place. Academic achievement is defined as the performance of the students in the subject they study in the school (Clark, 1983). Academic achievement determines the student's status in the class. It gives children an opportunity to develop their talents, improve their grades and prepare for the future academic challenges.

The primary environment of a student is the home and it stands to exert tremendous impact on the students' achievements (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Moreover, the home is the primary agent of education in the child. Thus, the way the child lives, the

food he/she eats and his/her life style is influenced by the home. The type of family system the child is exposed to could influence his academic achievement in school (Keith, 1993). Academic success of a child depends on what parents do at home. Also, Aremu (2000) found in his study that undergraduates that received democratic type of parenting performed better than their counterparts from autocratic homes.

According to Education News Colorado on 18th June 2012, many parents in United States of America are now living in poverty than in 2000. According to Hacker(2008) 58.5 percent, of all Americans will spend at least one year beneath the poverty line which is one dollar a day, at some point between ages 25 and 75. This social economic status of the parents translates into parents' inability to adequately finance their children's education. According to Eze, (2002) homes vary markedly in socioeconomic status and academic level, not in amounts of wealth but in the ways in which the family income is obtained.

Many authors (Harris & Gibbon, 1996; Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001; Jameson, 1997; Wallis & Cole, 1998) discuss factors in a home environment that provide children with educational tools needed to achieve academic success. Jameson (1997) specifies the importance of a quiet time and place for homework. There was also a discussion on the negative impact of television, but the positive impact of praise. Harris & Gibbon (1996) state communication is a vital component for school success. Parents who prepare their children talk about setbacks, possible stressors and coping skills. Wallis (1998) wrote a parent's guide on the importance of encouraging, praising and involvement.

Individual differences in children's achievement were studied by Baharudin & Luster (1998) relative to differences in the home environment. They found the quality of the children's home environment to be positively related with achievement. Children with higher test scores came from more supportive homes. The parents of preschool children were asked about conveying positive feelings, answering child's questions, taking trips to the museum, eating meals as a family, requiring the child to keep play area clean, conversing with the child, and encouraging the child to develop and sustain hobbies.

The literature suggests home environment factors affect school achievement, and home environment factors may be influenced if the family culture follows the current trend. The essence of a 'traditional American family' has deteriorated with the stress in many of today's families because of poverty, single parenting styles and working mothers. Stress in the home deteriorates the environment and these stressors affect school achievement. Hopefully, this study will help to examine home environment factors that may impact children's academic achievement. Even though Hacker (2008) suggests that you cannot purchase a child's success or wish it into existence, poverty affects a child's academic success in many ways. According to Mead, (1992) a U.S. Department of Education study cites the length of time a child spends in disadvantaged conditions, coupled with the degree of poverty of the local school district he or she is enrolled in, as often bearing a direct impact on a child's ability to maintain an expected grade level.

Methods and results of an empirical study by Kohl, (2000) show divorce is the most common but only one way a traditional family might develop into a single-parent family. Registered marriages are declining in the United States, but separations and divorces remain very high. Half of all marriages are expected to end in divorce. Then again, not all people who separate actually file for divorce. A more representative statistic might be, approximately 64% of the marriages will be disrupted. Whether the reason is divorce or something else Kohl, (2000) reminds us that 50% of the country's children will live in a single-parent home by the year 2001. He further argued that Children from divorced families are more likely to have difficulties with school performance, delinquency, and disruptions in peer relationships, precocious sexual behavior and substance abuse.

Financial challenges is a prevailing feature amongst many developing countries around the world with ever increasing severe effects of social and economic backdrop felt in countries within sub-Saharan Africa (Hill, 2008). It is arguably a multidimensional challenge found in different forms both in urban and rural areas only possibly differing in its intensity with the effect felt most in day secondary schools depending on the school size.

In a study conducted on the effects of family structure and parenthood on the academic performance of Nigerian University students, Uwaifo (2008) found significant difference between the academic performance of students from single-parent family and those from two-parent family structure. Indeed, parental involvement and individuals' experiences at home play tremendous roles in building the personality of the child and making the child what he is. Furthermore, many

children have been hindered from reaching their optimum level in academic pursuit due to some negative factors arisen from home. These include lack of parental encouragement, lack of conductive environment, poor finance and housing, poor feeding, ill-health and lack of interest on the part of the students. Children whose school needs (physical and emotional) are not provided for at home may forever remain underachievers and this could affect the general development (physical and human resources) of the country. Effects of poor academic performance during the school years often carry over to the adulthood, with a higher proportion of school dropouts, behavioral problems and even delinquency among this population.

## **1.2 Problem Statement of the Study**

For many years in Kenya, examinations have been accepted as an important aspect of the educational system. Examinations have always been used as the main basis for judging a student's ability and also as a means of selection for educational advancement and employment.

Every year, thousands of Kenyan students sit for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination. This examination is done at the end of the fourth year of secondary education. Over the years, discrepancies have been observed in the performance of students in internal examinations as well as in KCSE exams in Kitui west sub county, Kitui County.

Although students may be of comparable abilities, learn in the same environment and follow the same syllabus, their academic performance still vary. Despite the fact that the Government of Kenya has been funding both primary and secondary schools, there is still poor performance among the students. In Kitui west Sub County there are

students who may be bright but perform poorly despite the good learning facilities in their schools.

In Kitui west Sub County, 80% of secondary schools have had a mean score of less than 5 for the last three years (DEOs office report, 2013). This is a C minus and it indicates that majority of the students do not have the minimum university admission qualification of C plus and above. This performance has raised concern from the parents and stakeholders. Among the factors that are blamed for the students' poor academic performance, the home environment is hardly mentioned.

Many factors such as lack of facilities in school, lack of teachers, indiscipline, low intelligence, anxiety, pupils' need to achieve and so on have been found to cause poor academic performance. While, these factors have been identified as possible factors that contribute to the variations in academic performance not much has been done in Kitui west Sub County, Kitui County, Kenya to show the role played by the students' home environment on his/her academic achievement. This study therefore attempted to find out whether the differences in academic achievement can be attributed to differences in their home environments.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of home environment on student's academic performance in secondary education in public schools in Kitui west Sub County, Kitui County, Kenya.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

- i) To determine the influence of parents' economic status on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kitui West Sub County.
- ii) To establish the influence of Parent/Family Involvement on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kitui West Sub county.
- iii) To investigate the effect of parenting style on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kitui West Sub county.

#### **1.5 The hypothesis for the Study**

This study was guided by the following null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) hypothesis.

- i) There is no significant relationship between Parents' economic status and the students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kitui West Sub County.
- ii) There is no significant relationship between parent/family involvement and students' performance in public secondary schools in Kitui West Sub County.
- iii) There is no significant relationship between parenting and students' performance in public secondary schools in Kitui West Sub County.

#### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Hopefully, the study will assist the Principals in public secondary schools to understand how home environment affects students' academic performance and assist the students to perform better. Also the students will be able to intervene in the case of poor performance to offset the negative effects of changing dynamics of the family. This study will also help the parents to understand the effect of the home environment on academic performance of student's hence improving their home environment so as to improve student's academic performance.

### **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

A number of limitations were anticipated during the study. One of the aspects of this study was to determine parental financial status. As such, some respondents hesitated to provide useful information for the study due to embarrassment of exposing their poverty level. The researcher overcame this by assuring the respondents that the findings of this study would be used for academic purposes only. Also some parents were not willing to give their family details for fear of exposing their private life.

### **1.8 Delimitations of the study**

There are many factors affecting the academic performance of students in, but this study only investigated the home environment. Besides, this study investigated only the secondary schools in Kitui west Sub County, Kitui County.

### **1.9 Assumptions of the study**

This study was undertaken based on the following assumptions; that economic status of the parents, parents' involvement, and family type affected academic performance of students in public secondary schools and that the respondents gave honest answers to the researcher.

### **1.10 Definition of significant terms**

**Home Environment:** In this study refers to the family where the students are brought up.

**Intrinsic motivation:** Refers to doing an activity for itself and the pleasure and satisfaction derived from participating.

**Extrinsic motivation:** Refers to performing an activity as a means to an end, to satisfy an external demand, or reward

**Motivation:** Refers to being neither intrinsically nor extrinsically motivated to perform an activity.

**Social economic status:** Refers to financial status of the family.

**Performance :** Refers to the grades both per subject and overall that the pupil obtained in examination.

**Upper class.** In this study refers to the highest social class in the society. (The rich).

**Middle class.** refers to the social class with average income.

**Poor.** Refers to the class in the society lacking money or material possessions

**Poor results:** Refers to the examination outcomes in which the mean grade or individual subject performance curtails the learner from higher education or further training.

### **1.11 Organization of the study**

The study is organized into chapters. chapter one consists of the: background of the study; statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, hypothesis of the study; significance of the study, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study, basic assumptions of the study, definition of significant term and organization of the study. Chapter two presents the literature review which comprises of the past studies or documented information about the influence of home environment on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kenya. The chapter is organized according to the objectives of the study: the influence of parents' economic status, the influence of parents'/family involvement, effects of parenting styles, on students' academic performance in public secondary schools. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks are given at the end of this section. Chapter three presents; research design, target population, sampling procedure and sample size, research instruments, validity and reliability of research

instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis, ethical consideration of issues .

Chapter four deals with results and discussions. Chapter five deals with conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Chapter two consists of the literature review that supports the study and comprises of introduction of the chapter's content; then the literature review presented according to the objectives of the study and the theoretical and conceptual framework presented at the end of this chapter.

#### **2.2 Parents' economic status and secondary school students' academic performance**

Significant studies have suggested that economic status is one of the best predictors of student achievement (Bryk, & Smith, 1993). Hill and O'Neil (1994) found that, increasing family income in USA by \$10,000 per year is associated with an increase in student achievement of 2.4 percentile points. Grissmer, Kirby, Berends, and Williamson (1994) had similar findings on the relationships between income and mathematics as well as income and reading achievement.

Parent educational status is considered one of the most stable aspects of Socio Economic Status (SES) because it is typically established at an early age and tends to remain the same over time (Sirin, 2005). To date, many studies have established the effect of parent's socioeconomic status on parental involvement. One consistent finding is that parents from the higher economic status are more involved in their child's education. In this case, the higher the parent's education level, occupation status, income and their household income, the higher would be the parent's involvement in their child's education. As a result, the strength of parental

involvement enables the children to achieve education success at school (Katsilis & Rubinson's 1990).

Lueptow (1975) in his study found that students who achieve high performance in education at school were from urban areas, who had educated parents with a higher occupation status and a higher income home. Consistent to Lueptow (1975), and Sui-Chu & Willms's (1996) study indicated that the parent's socioeconomic status has a significant and positive relationship with parent's involvement in their child's education. These studies found that the parent's from higher socioeconomic status exert greater parental involvement in their child's education.

In addition to the studies discussed above, many other studies (Balli et al., 1998; Baker & Stevenson, 1986; Poston and Falbo, 1990) have acknowledged parent's education level as one of the important indicators that determines parental involvement. As stated by Lockheed et al. (1989), the higher the standard of the parents' education level, the higher would be the parent's academic aspirations for their child.

Shaver & Wall (1998) and Desimone (1999) went a bit further to investigate the impact of parental involvement on children's educational achievement. According to Shaver & Wall's (1998) study on reading and mathematics achievements of eighth-grade students, they found that the children from the higher socioeconomic background achieved academic success in reading and mathematics due to effective parental involvement. On the other hand, Desimone's (1999) study on eighth-grade students indicated a positive and significant relationship between student's

socioeconomic status, parental involvement and student's achievement. The higher the parent's family income, the higher would be the parental involvement. Hence, the students gain high achievement in reading and mathematics. Lockheed et al. (1989) who carried out a study on grade eight students in Thailand also reported that a child whose mother is highly educated and father is a professional obtained high scores in Mathematics. Another study carried out by Lockheed et al. (1989) on grade eight students in Thailand also reported that a child whose mother who is highly educated and father is a professional obtained high scores in Mathematics.

There were also studies that have been focused on parent's social class rather than socioeconomic status. For example, Lareau (1987) in her studies on first grade classrooms in a working class community and a middle class community found that parents in the middle class community tend to help their child more due to the better skills, the occupation status, income and time compared to the working class parents. Reay (2004) in one of her studies found that mothers from the middle class have a good educational background that enables them to inculcate academic values in their child, thereby promoting self-confidence and participation which are transformed by the child into a more positive attitude and behavior of learning towards academic success. In Sewell and Hauser's (1980) study, a better financial resource among the middle class parents enhances the motivational support to their children; thereby encouraging the children to have high aspirations in education. Although the above studies ascribe parent's social class to parental involvement, it shares the same indicators as parent's socioeconomic status.

Using historical and cross-cultural data, several researchers have found that, although parents love their children, their willingness to invest in children's education (and other aspects of their well being) is affected by the number of children in the family, public expenditures on education, and their assessment of the financial return of such investment to the family. When education must be financed by the family, additional children reduce the amount of investment in each child, particularly in low-income families (Becker & Tomes, 1986; Rosenzweig & Schultz, 1982). However, poor and middle-income parents are more willing to invest in their children if they believe that such investment increases children's potential for financial contribution to the family and that children can be counted on to care for elderly parents (Becker & Tomes, 1986).

Researchers also argue that nonmonetary factors such as parenting (measured by parents' educational expectations for their children and the attention parents give to their children's education) and home environment (measured by the presence of books, newspapers, and other learning materials at home) can be more important for children's academic achievement than money.

They have found that regardless of family income, high parental expectations and more parental attention to and effort toward their children's education help raise children's academic achievement (Bradley et al., 2001b; Coleman, 1988; Mayer, 1997; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Yeung et al., 2002).

In a well-designed cross-cultural study, Stevenson (1992) showed that teaching styles and educational structures also affect children's academic achievement. He found that on the same mathematics tests, the first- and fifth-grade students in Beijing, China did

so much better than their counterparts in Chicago that the average score of only 1 of the 20 Chicago area schools “was as high as the worst” of the ten Beijing schools (Stevenson, 1992, p. 71). On a computation test, only 2% of the Beijing first graders scored as low as the mean for their Chicago counterparts.

Although the variable Family income was not used in Stevenson’s study, the fact that 98% of Beijing children scored higher than the average score of American children means that many poor Chinese students did as well or better than well-to-do American children. Stevenson attributed Chinese children’s higher achievement to China’s educational system; well-prepared, enthusiastic teachers; and academic and social activities that make school an enjoyable place for students. Using my 1999 survey of Chinese eighth graders and the 1988 National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS) of American eighth graders, the present article explores the relationships among family income, parenting, home environment, and mathematics achievement of children in China and the United States. Although I expect a positive relationship between family income and children’s mathematics achievement in both countries, I also expect that Chinese children in general do better than their American peers. Because Chinese parents have only one child, regardless of income, parents’ expectation for children’s education will be higher in China than in the United States. Furthermore, because high parental expectations have been found to lead to higher academic achievement, I predict that high parental expectations among poor Chinese families will help mitigate the effects of low income on children’s academic achievement. In other words, the relationship between income and achievement is weaker with Chinese children than with American children.

The family plays a meaningful role in a child's academic performance and development (Cornell & Grossberg, 1987) education and family incomes influence adolescent educational outcome expectancy beliefs (Rhea & Otto, 2001). Balli et al. (1998) in their study on sixth-grade students found that parents with higher level of education were more prominent in helping with their child's homework compared to parents with low level of education who need help from schools to help their children.

Another study by Baker & Stevenson (1986) on mothers of eighth-grade students from middle school indicated that well-educated mothers have more knowledge of their child's schooling, are more aware of their child's education and his/her achievement and they take greater effort to monitor their child's academic progress than the less-educated mothers. A study conducted by Poston and Falbo (1990) also found that parents who were highly educated often communicate and interact with their children. Consistent with the studies above, Lueptow (1975) in his study also found that students who are high achievers at school are from urban areas, who have educated parents with a higher occupation status and a higher income home.

A study by Campbell, Hombo, & Mazzeo (1999) using NAEP data indicated that students who reported higher parental education levels tended to have higher average scores. Parent educational status as an indicator of SES reflects the potential for social and economic resources such as household incomes that are available to the student.

Dave & Dave (1971) found that higher percentages of rank holder belong to homes with higher parental education and higher percentage of failed students belong those

who have lower parental education. Rumberger (1995) found that students' family background is widely recognized as the most significant important contributor to success in schools. Rumberger's research supported the findings of earlier researchers who argued that the home has a major influence on student school success (Swick & Duff, 1978) and that it is the quality of relationships within students' home environments that has an important effect on school performance.

Previous studies have showed that students who come from families with illiterate parents have significantly less school success than students from educated parents (Martini, 1995; Walker *et al.*, 1998) and intact families (Amato & Keith, 1991) Some potential explanations were - parents in such settings reported lower educational expectations, less monitoring of children's school work and less overall supervision of social activities compared to students from highly educated and intact families (Jacob and Harvey, 2005). More educated parents are assumed to create environments that facilitate learning (Williams, 1980; Teachman, 1987) and involve themselves in their children's school experiences and school environments (Steinberg *et al.*, 1992; Useem, 1992). However, there are students who come from low-income and single parent homes who are high achievers and many students from high socio-economic and intact families who are low achievers. Students may also come from homes where the parents are highly educated and involved in their children's education, yet achieve poorly at school (Jacob & Harvey, 2005).

Several studies (Baharudin, 1998; Gerris & Dekovic 1997; Harris & Liebert 1987; Hines 1997) show the role of the family and the specific interactions between a child and parent have been determined to be powerful indicators of development. Some

specific interactions include regular family discussions, encouragement, limit setting, warmth, daily routine, praise, and intellectual stimulation. These studies have shown all of these connections to produce an impact on academic achievement.

Children have an unbelievable thirst for knowledge. If parents do not tap into that drive in early childhood it could be lost before the children even enter the school system. The parents that do not foster learning are easily identified. It is truly amazing how little children mention their parents. Parents' encouragement to achieve and interest in school performance are significantly related to student motivation and student achievement (Hawley et al., 1984). Hawley cited Walberg when he found:

What might be called "the curriculum of the home" predicts academic learning twice as well as the socioeconomic status of families.

This curriculum includes informed parent/child conversations about everyday events, encouragement and discussion of leisure reading, monitoring and joint analysis of televiewing; deferral of immediate gratification is to accomplish long-term goals, expressions of even occasional doses of caprice and serendipity. In 29 controlled studies conducted during the past decade, 91% of the comparisons favored children in programs designed to improve the learning environment of the home over children not participating in such programs. Although the average effect was twice that of socioeconomic status, some programs had effects 10 times as large.

Because few of the programs lasted more than a semester, the potential exists for even greater benefits from programs sustained over all the years of schooling. (p.400)

Rosenblatt (1990) spoke about the importance of taking time for children and playing with them. He quoted Neitzsche when he said that there is nothing so serious as a

child at play. The decision parents make to either thrust themselves into their children's worlds of amusement or allow them to be unsupervised will make a profound impact on the children's life. The most vulnerable and dangerous time for children is between 3:00 PM and 8:00 PM. This period is known as "Crime Time". Many people would love to think their children would never be involved in something like a violent crime. They may not be the perpetrators but they very well could be the victims. Victims outnumber perpetrators 10 to 1 (Alter, 1998).

Walberg, Bole & Waxman (1980) declare the importance for families to share interests in hobbies, activities and games. Reading material should be abundant and discussed on regular intervals. The study states that cultural activities and parental involvement show a significant relationship to academic achievement. Some cultural activities include going to the museum, zoo or public library. It does not take money to be enthralled by culture. School Success Strategies Watkins (1997) theorized that parents' involvement has made an impact on a child's learning and motivation. The study looked at various types of involvement including home instruction, volunteering in the classroom and participation in school governance. His comments on achievement goal theory were particularly interesting.

Achievement goal theory looks at how children view the reasons for learning and the purpose of education. A child having a mastery goal orientation focuses on learning more than performing, and a child having a performance goal orientation is concerned more with the evaluation they receive than acquisition of skills. Students with a mastery goal seem to have more persistence and a higher intrinsic motivation. On the

other hand, performance goal students appear to have greater difficulty with deep information processing.

There were separate scales used in this study for mastery orientation and performance orientation. Some questions asked about encouraging hard work, talking about what's going on in school and reading with children. Many authors (Harris & Gibbon, 1996; Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001; Jameson, 1997; Wallis & Cole, 1998) discuss factors in a home environment that provide children with educational tools needed to achieve academic success. Jameson (1997) specifies the importance of a quiet time and place for homework. There was also a discussion on the negative impact of television, but the positive impact of praise. Harris & Gibbon (1996) state communication is a vital component for school success. Parents who prepare their children talk about setbacks, possible stressors and coping skills. Wallis (1998) wrote a parent's guide on the importance of encouraging, praising and involvement.

Hofferth & Sandberg (2001) did a study on how American children spend their time. The authors were careful not to try and determine causality, but rather examine some activities significantly associated with achievement. This article has shown that the amount of time spent at home eating, sleeping and reading is linked to children's achievement and behavior. (p. 11) Other activities thought to affect academic success were: household work, household conversations, group leisure activities, and family meals.

Individual differences in children's achievement were studied by Baharudin & Luster (1998) relative to differences in the home environment. They found the quality of the

children's home environment to be positively related with achievement. Children with higher test scores came from more supportive homes. The parents of preschool children were asked about conveying positive feelings, answering child's questions, taking trips to the museum, eating meals as a family, requiring the child to keep play area clean, conversing with the child, and encouraging the child to develop and sustain hobbies.

The literature suggests home environment factors affect school achievement, and home environment factors may be influenced if the family culture follows the current trend. The essence of a 'traditional American family' has deteriorated with the stress in many of today's families because of poverty, single parenting styles and working mothers. Stress in the home deteriorates the environment and these stressors affect school achievement. Hopefully, this study will help to examine home environment factors that may impact children's academic achievement.

### **2.3 The influence of family Involvement on students' academic performance**

In today's fast-paced society, families are finding it more difficult to stay connected with their children's education (Epstein, 2001). Increasingly, in the modern family, both parents work outside of the home (Benson, 2002). In the report "Every Child Learns, Every Child Succeeds," Alberta's Commission on learning (2003) found that Often the family is led by a single parent with little or no help from extended family Members. Furthermore, the extended family has become significantly less extended as Mobility has increased. Parents are becoming isolated from their children and finding it difficult to keep a careful watch on what needs to be done to help them succeed in school.

Many families are not even led by a parent, but by a grandparent, guardian, or some other adult (Benson, 2002). In what is sometimes called a traditional family environment, parents, usually including a stay-at-home mother, were able to monitor the school work of their children carefully and in turn to ensure to a much greater degree than in today's nontraditional family that student performance remained high in factors such as engagement, academic achievement, attendance and attitude toward school (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005).

Parents attended parent/teacher interview sessions and found out at first hand just how productive and engaged their children were in the process of school (Weiss et al., 1998). Report cards were valued and trusted in the home as an accurate reflection of academic achievement (Guskey, 2002). Parents were able to keep in touch with the school and the life of their children in the institution, and to monitor success or lack thereof. When children came home from school, homework was completed, assignments finished, tests studied for and snacks eaten, more often than not at the kitchen table under the watchful eye of a parent (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005).

Just as this traditional family may have existed, it may also have been a figment of society's collective imagination. Whether it existed or not, however, there is no denying that the school-to-home connection, at least for middle class America, was in place and effective at keeping parents involved in the education process. Many parents worked closely with their children, in cooperation with the school, and marked academic success occurred (Epstein, 2001). With the changes in family life and indeed in societal makeup, schools are now finding it increasingly difficult to

keep parents informed of and actively engaged in the day-to-day progress of their children (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005). Teachers and administrators are discovering that the support they once received in getting students to do their homework is not there, because the parents are not at home to insist that students complete their assignments. Even if parents are present, homework turns out to be a major issue within the home environment (Allen, 2000). A 1997 report by Public Agenda Online states, “Homework is the vortex where teacher complaints and parental pressures seem to converge. In many households, it is tinder that ignites continuous family battles and a spawning ground for mixed signals and even some resentment between teachers and parents”

For parents, staying connected to the day-to-day school life of their children has become difficult. Perhaps they will find it easier to stay connected through the use of technology. Many web-enabled software management programs are available, such as Students Achieve Desire to Learn, and Edline. In a study of computer use in the home in 2003, Statistics Canada (2004) found that 64% of Canadian households had at least one member who used the Internet regularly. This was a 5% increase from 2002, an increase that built on gains of 19% and 24% respectively observed in 2000 and 2001. The trend certainly indicates an increase in these numbers in future years, and a potential avenue of communication that schools can explore.

However, even if the possibility exists for increased parent involvement, a basic question arises whether there is a relationship between the type of parent involvement and high school student performance factors such as engagement, academic achievement, attendance and attitude toward school. Researchers such as Epstein (2001) and Allen (2000) claim that increased parent involvement will result in greater

student engagement, productivity and academic success. Epstein's research, for the most part, relates to the influence of parent involvement in the lives of elementary-aged students.

Research findings show that parental involvement in children's learning activities positively influences their levels of achievement and motivation to learn (Epstein, 1992). Many studies indicate that the influences of parental involvement upon students' in primary school education make a difference. Similarly, parental influence on a student's academic success in high school may be a factor that cannot be ignored.

Data from the public use files of the *National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988* (NELS: 88) are enhancing the study of parental involvement in secondary education. Research Using these data reveals that in the middle grades, parents are mostly involved in the daily supervision of children's lives (Type 1, above) and educational activities (Type 4, above). These activities include establishing family rules for the supervision of students' homework, TV viewing, and curfews, and discussing career aspirations and plans about high school programs. Most parents are trying to supervise and guide their children during the 3 middle grades, but with limited assistance from schools. They are more likely to supervise and set rules about activities that families traditionally control (such as doing family chores), than about activities for which they lack information (such as improving report card grades).

In high school, parental involvement of drops as parents loosen their daily supervision of their teenagers, but parents become more concerned about the learning opportunities that high schools provide. Parental involvement during high school increases parent-school communications about school programs and student progress

and parent participation as volunteers at school (Catsambis & Garland, 1997). As children move from the middle grades to the last years of high school, parents also crystallize their educational expectations for their children. As students near high school graduation, parents become increasingly concerned about their teen's further education and about the effects of high school programs on postsecondary opportunities (Catsambis & Garland, 1997).

Investigations show that the effects of family practices on students' academic success tend to vary by age and are strongest for elementary school children (Singh et al., 1995). By far the most important effect that is consistent across studies is that of parents 'educational aspirations for their children. High parental aspirations tend to positively influence students' levels of achievement in primary and secondary education (Astone & McLanahan, 1991)

A number of studies reported that the academic achievement of secondary school students is positively affected by other indicators of parental involvement, including parent/student discussions regarding school experiences and academic matters (Keith et al., 1993).Lee, 1994; Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996; Muller, 1993), argued that the general parental supervision and monitoring of student progress and to a lesser extent, parent participation in school-related activities, (volunteering and parent-teacher organizations) (Stevenson & Baker, 1987).Most of the above studies examine the effects of parental involvement in middle school rather than in high school.

Some negative effects of parental involvement on students' achievement are also reported for a number of parental involvement indicators: parents' close supervision

of homework and after school activities (Milne et al., 1986; Muller, 1993), frequent contacts with school or Parent-teacher conferences (Ho & Wilms, 1996; Lee, 1994; Muller, 1993) and frequent talks with children (Astone & McLanahan, 1991). Thus, both positive and negative effects are reported by different researchers for parent communications with the student or school, and for parental monitoring of students' behavior.

In cases where negative effects are reported, researchers interpret them as indicating parents' efforts to help children with low academic performance or behavioral problems. In the study by Sui-Chu and Willms (1996), some of the negative effect of frequent communication with schools on eighth grade achievement is mediated by students' problematic behavior and performance. The authors recognize the need to include more detailed measures of behavioral and learning difficulties in order to fully account for this negative effect.

Csikszentmihalyi and Schmidt (1998) argued that the fact that students' performance was positively associated with parent involvement in their lives highlights a basic understanding about the important role of parents at this stage in their children's lives. Parents should not place undue limits on adolescents' movement and freedoms, nor excuse them from responsibility. Parents should establish expectations for adolescents that are reasonable yet challenging. They should not isolate adolescents from adult role models. Parents need to be available to their adolescent children to discuss issues of relevance and importance to the adolescents themselves. Finally, parents should not look to limit adolescents' boundaries, but work to expand their horizons.

Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salinas, Jansorn, and Van Voorhis (2002) draw three key conclusions about parental involvement. First, parental involvement tends to decline across the grades unless schools make conscious efforts to develop and implement partnerships with parents. Reasons for this declining pattern include parents' lack of familiarity with curriculum at the higher grades; adolescents' preferences to have their parents stay involved in less visible ways; parents' decisions to return to the work force once their children gain more independence; and secondary teachers' lack of awareness of how to effectively involve parents at the higher levels.

Second, affluent parents tend to be involved in school more often and in positive ways, whereas economically distressed parents have limited contact with schools, and usually in situations dealing with students' achievement or behavior. Schools that work on building relationships with all parents, however, can equalize the involvement of all socioeconomic groups. Finally, single parents, employed parents, fathers, and parents who live far from the school, on average, are less involved in the school unless the school organizes opportunities that consider these parents' needs and circumstances. Although these patterns are generally observable among schools, they can be overcome if schools develop programs that include families that otherwise would not become involved on their own.

The degree and nature of impact on student achievement is somewhat debated in the literature. Fan and Chen's (2001) meta-analysis of the literature concerning the connection between parental involvement and students' academic achievement suggests a "moderate to practically meaningful" relationship. The relationship seems to be more general than specific, indicating that parental involvement has an overall

effect on students' success, rather than a direct effect on any particular subject area. Their research finds parents' expectations and dreams for their children's academic achievement are the strongest factor influencing students' school performance.

Despite the ambiguity in measuring the academic impact of parental involvement, various in-depth studies have established a relationship. Henderson and Berla (1994) synthesized over sixty studies regarding the effects of family involvement on student achievement. Their work attributes to parental involvement effects that include higher grades and test scores, increased homework completion, improved school attendance, more positive attitudes, fewer discipline problems, increased high school completion rates, decreased school leaving rates, and greater participation in postsecondary education. Importantly, like Epstein, Henderson and Berla suggest parents' involvement can contribute to these outcomes from early childhood through high school.

Studies conducted among specific grades and subject areas support the contention that parental involvement can influence students' academic achievement regardless of the student's age or subject. For example, Stegelin (2003), Wirtz & Schumacher (2003), and Hertz-Lazarowitz & Horovitz (2002) focused on early childhood education and literacy, noting a link between families who engage in literacy activities at home and their children's success with reading and writing. Strategies such as reading with the child, discussing stories, and creating a book-friendly environment contribute to the development of children's literacy skills and positive attitudes toward reading.

Teachers' attitudes toward involving parents influence the extent to which parents are involved in their children's school. A report by West (2000) discusses an elementary teacher's efforts to increase parent-teacher communication, and its effect on students' success in reading. Findings from this study show that parent-teacher communication can motivate students to complete reading homework, which results in better quiz and test scores. This particular report demonstrates the importance of teachers initiating positive contact with parents, and the potential effect it can have on students' achievement in school.

Studies of the middle and secondary grades reflect the above findings. It is recognized that adolescents both desire and require more independence. Van Voorhis (2001) and Simon (2001) found that regardless of students' background or prior school achievement, involving parents in various ways had a positive impact on achievement, attendance, behavior, and course credits completed. Significantly, parental guidance and support of their adolescent students is critical to secondary students' school and future success (Sanders & Epstein, 2000).

Although parental involvement has reached a higher level of acceptance today as a key factor in improving schools, "acceptance does not always translate into implementation, commitment, or creativity" (Drake, 2000, p. 34). Central to this challenge is educators' and administrators' uncertainty about initiating and maintaining involvement that is meaningful and mutually beneficial for the school, the family, and the student.

The most promising practices involving parents seem to be those that embrace collaboration among teachers, parents, and students. Fundamental to this type of cooperation is a shared definition of “meaningful parental involvement.” There is evidence of disjuncture between professionals’ and parents’ understanding of partnership. Fine (1993) for example, claims a hierarchical relationship between teachers and parents prevails, such that professionals may assume parents regard their position as equally influential, but parents themselves defer to professionals’ expertise. Beck and Murphy (1999) agree that although schools set up structures, such as school councils or collaborative teams, decision-making ultimately rests in the professionals who possess specialized knowledge inaccessible to most parents. They further contend that organizational changes such as site-based decision-making that attempts to include parents have the least positive effect on parents of minority groups.

Researching the effects of parent involvement practices on student achievement in American schools under the *No Child Left Behind Act*, D.Agostino, Hedges, Wong, and Borman (2001) also found that programs which attempt to involve parents at the school through school-sponsored activities or governance structures have a negligible impact on student achievement. Rather, parent programs that provide resources and assistance that parents may use with their children at home are more likely to have an effect on students’ academic progress. Gewirtz, Bowe, and Ball’s (1995) study of school choice in Britain is important when considering diversity among parents. The school choice movement assumes a monolithic parent group; the idea that parents can and will respond similarly to opportunities to make decisions for their children, or participate in their children’s schools is, in fact, erroneous. Their study highlighted

that inequalities in social and economic capital influence parents' level of participation and ability to advocate for their children. Specifically, middle to upper income parents capitalize on opportunities to influence their children's schooling, whereas lower income parents are disadvantaged because of circumstance or skill. Crozier's (2000) qualitative study of parents, teachers, and students reinforces that "central to understanding the nature of the parent-school relationship and the influences upon it is the issue of social-class" (p. xv). Together, Fine, Beck and Murphy, Gewirtz, Bowe, and Ball, and Crozier point to the importance of dialogue between schools and families to identify encouraging and meaningful ways to engage all parents for the benefit of all children.

Many studies have documented the importance of parental involvement in children's homework. Callahan, Rademacher, and Hildreth (1998) find that parents' involvement with at-risk sixth and seventh grade students improved students' homework performance. Central to this success, however, is the school's development of training programs for parents which aim to provide parents with strategies for assisting and supporting their children at home. There is some indication in the research that diverse educational backgrounds influence the nature and frequency of parents helping their children with homework assignments. Balli, Demo, and Wedman (1998) report that when teachers prompt parents to become involved with math homework, parent involvement significantly increases. Importantly, this study shows that two-parent families are more likely to help with homework than single-parent families. Home circumstances and family structures are therefore necessary considerations for schools aiming to increase the level of parental involvement with homework.

Greene, Tichener, and Mercedes (2003) offer specific strategies for parents to participate in schools. Suggestions include individual activities with children, setting up homework space and routine, discussing needed resources for home supervision with teachers, or reflecting on one's own assumptions about school. Volunteering in the school and the community are other positive ways that parents can become involved, and on their own terms.

Although certain types of parent involvement such as discussions about homework and school-related topics have positive effects on homework completion, there is research that contradicts this finding. Cooper, Lindsay, and Nye (2000) suggest that parenting style plays a part in the effectiveness of parents' involvement in their children's homework. In their survey of over 700 parents of elementary, middle, and high school students, two-thirds of parents reported helping their children with homework was negative or inappropriate. Specifically, in some cases parents helped their children with homework in order to have them finish it faster, and in other cases parents made homework completion more difficult for the student. These findings speak to the importance of school-home discussions that will encourage interactions that support student learning.

#### **2.4 The Influence of Parenting Styles on students' academic Performance**

Parenting styles and techniques have consistently been shown to relate to various outcomes such as child psychological problems (e.g., aggression) and academic performance (Warner, & Eyberg, 2002). Several conceptualizations of parenting styles or characteristics have been delineated. Most have focused on quantities and

qualities of warmth, responsiveness, and control in the parenting repertoire (e.g., Coolahan, McWayne, & Fantuzzo, 2002).

The majority of published studies on parenting styles have used some variation of the parenting style construct delineated by Baumrind (1966, 1967). Baumrind (1966) has identified three parenting styles: authoritative, permissive, and authoritarian. Authoritative parenting is characterized by high levels of nurturance, involvements, sensitivity, reasoning, and encouragement of autonomy. Parents who direct the activities and decisions for their children through reasoning and discipline would be described as authoritative. Conversely, permissive parenting is characterized by making few demands, exhibiting non-controlling behaviors, and using minimal punishment. For example, parents who do not establish rules and guidelines for their child's behavior would be described as possessing a permissive parenting style. Authoritarian parenting tends to fall at the other end of the continuum. Parents characterized as authoritarian exhibit highly directive behaviors, high levels of restriction and rejection behaviors, and power-asserting behaviors. These parents tend to have a philosophy that "it's my way or the highway."

A plethora of research exists building on the work of Querido et al. (2002). In general, an authoritative parenting style emphasizing both responsiveness and demandingness appears superior in fostering higher academic performance (Reitman, Rhode, Hupp, & Altobello, 2002). Turner, Baumrind (1991) found that children (age's 4-15years old) of parents who were characterized as authoritative were the most motivated, the most competent, and the most achievement oriented.

Baumrind and Black (1967) found that authoritative parenting was positively associated with academic performance; and authoritarian and permissive parenting is negatively associated with grades. This relation between authoritative parenting style and academic performance in children has been found across ethnic groups. However, some research has shown that this relation does not exist for Hispanic Americans and African Americans (e.g., Dornbusch et al., 1987; Park & Bauer, 2002). Further examinations across ethnic groups have found that among African Americans, parenting style was not a significant predictor of grades (Dornbusch, Ritter, & Steinberg, 1991). In one study using a sample of African American adolescents (11-19 years old), Attaway and Hafer-Bry (2004) found that parental beliefs in high degrees of control predicted lower grades, but parental beliefs in responsiveness did not contribute to adolescents' grades.

Regarding associations between parenting style and Asian Americans, parenting styles may not have the same influence as generally seen in other ethnic/racial groups. Asian American parents are often described as "controlling" or "authoritarian," and these parenting behaviors have typically been found to predict poor academic achievement (e.g., Attaway & Hafer- Bry; Baumrind & Black, 1967; Chao, 1994).

Given these findings one would expect Asian American children to be less academically successful, but that is often not the case. Asian Americans generally show better academic performance than do their counterparts (Peng & Wright, 1994).

Some have stated that Asian American parents view "parental control" as a more organizational type of control that fosters smooth family functioning and harmony (Chao, 2001). Although the effects of parenting styles have been shown to be inconsistent across ethnic groups, research has generally found a positive relationship

between authoritative parenting and academic performance (e.g., Baumrind, 1991, Ingoldby, Schvaneveldt, Supple, & Bush, 2003).

Over the past few years, the relationship between parenting characteristics and academic performance has been examined in college students, but inconsistent results have been found. Strange and Brandt (1999) examined the role of parenting styles in the lives of college students and found that previous parenting behaviors continue to be important in the lives of college students as with children and adolescents. They found that the more autonomy, demand, and support parents provided, the more students were confident and persistent academically. In other words, authoritative parenting was found to continue having an influence on students' academic performance. Conversely, researchers have found that parenting styles and college students' grade point average (GPA) are not related (Joshi, Ferris, Otto, & Regan, 2003). For the complete sample no significant relation was found, but results in a subsample of European American students found a significant correlation between academic performance (i.e., GPA) and parental (i.e., mother and father) strictness and paternal involvement. However, the method in which the study measured parenting styles was not consistent with Baumrind's (1966) prototypes, and this may have resulted in methodological limitations.

The Center for Families and the Cooperative Extension Service compiled data depicting a sad picture for the treatment of today's American children. Many people believe we are the leading nation in everything. We are the leaders in the military and in higher levels of education, but this is not true for most child-related issues. In fact, among industrialized nations, the U.S. is one of the lowest when it concerns priorities

for our children. The citizens of our nation seem to be confused as to who has responsibility for the well being of our children (University of Purdue, 1996).

The government is thought to have the responsibility ("Remembering Latchkey," 1999). The article stated federal funds are currently organizing after-school programs for 380,000 children. Some governments in industrialized nations are increasing compensation for childcare and education. This compensation, however, may have long-term effects on decreasing parental responsibilities.

Orlich (1994) suggest that parents have the responsibility. However, the Education Digest also reported less than seven percent of U.S. households consist of a working father, a mother, and two or more children, compared to 60 percent in 1955. Central parental values ("Decline and Fall," 1997) are commitment, duty, and responsibility. Commitment involves the realization that marriages are often imperfect, and they take hard work. Traditional family values support that parental duty is to put their own wants behind the needs of the family, and the job of a parent includes taking on the responsibility of raising their children rather than some social agency.

Of all the poor in the United States, 40 percent are children. Poor children have a dropout rate three times greater than that of more affluent children (Orlich, 1994). Not only are children the poorest citizens in our country, they are also the poorest children in the industrialized world (Lindquist, 1995).

Peak (1995) states that some of the children that are lucky enough to have a home, live in housing projects. The projects tend to be high in stress, violence and crime. They also have cramped living conditions and poor community resources, which in fact, are not conducive to a quality-learning environment. Many of these children

simply come to school because they believe it to be a safe haven from the streets. They also know they will be warm in the winter and get a hot meal. Learning could be last on their list of reasons to come to school, if in fact, it even made the list. Unbelievably, the above-mentioned children can also be considered lucky. Kozol (1991) retold a situation where the cafeteria of a school was in the basement. This basement would flood with sewage two to three times a week. He also cited a case where the only natural light the children saw within their school was from a hole in the wall. Peak and Kozol would agree with the Center for Families and the Cooperative Extension Service (Purdue University, 1996) when they talk about children living in poverty. Their Parental perceptions of poverty do not mean they cannot buy the latest style of Nikes on the market or eat at McDonald's on a whim. There are a striking number of children in this country who are not being given the basic needs for human survival.

Even though Wallis (1998) suggests that you cannot purchase a child's success or wish it into existence, poverty affects a child's academic success in many ways. Baskerville (1991) tells us, "A U.S. Department of Education study cites the length of time a child spends in disadvantaged conditions, coupled with the degree of poverty of the local school district he or she is enrolled in, as often bearing a direct impact on a child's ability to maintain an expected grade level" (p.1).

Methods and results of an empirical study (Hines, 1997) show divorce is the most common but only one way a traditional family might develop into a single-parent family. Registered marriages are declining in the United States, but separations and divorces remain very high. Half of all marriages are expected to end in divorce. Then

again, not all people who separate actually file for divorce. A more representative statistic might be, approximately 64% of the marriages will be disrupted.

Whether the reason is divorce or something else Orlich (1994) reminds us that 50% of the country's children will live in a single-parent home by the year 2001. An article by Schwartz (1992) cited the National Center for Health Statistics, and reported the lack of a second parent put children at a higher risk for poor academic achievement. Children from divorced families are more likely to have difficulties with school performance, delinquency, and disruptions in peer relationships, precocious sexual behavior and substance abuse (Hines, 1997). McLanahan (1996) compares children from Parental Support 10 a two-parent home versus children from a single-parent home as being more likely to drop out of school, less likely to ever-complete college, and more likely to become single parents themselves.

Sandefur (1995) talks about the importance of spending quality time with children. Common sense tells us that single parents have less time to spend with their children. The responsibilities are overwhelming. They are accountable for the entire family income, maintaining a home, nutrition needs and child rearing.

The influx of women to the workforce is another reason for less time spent with children. Naomi Freundlich (1997) reported a whopping 50% of the workforce is comprised of women and 55% of all women contribute more than half of their family's income. Finding a balance for fulfilling traditional family roles of housekeeper and caregiver and attaining traditional success symbols of money and power is becoming increasingly difficult.

Many women are devastated with the conflict of working versus child rearing. Fifty million mothers worry about placing their children in daycare, according to the national Institute of Child Health and Human Development ("Quality time counts," 1998). Whatever losses the children endure, from a working mother of a low-income family, are compensated for by the added paycheck. Therefore, the negative impact of working mothers may be limited to the middle class (Hawley, Rosenholtz, Goodstein, & Hasselbring, 1984). The consequences of "trying to do it all" are not only felt in the heart of the family, but also in the job performance and within the self.

## **2.5 Theoretical Framework.**

This study is based on Charles Darwin's social theory which emphasize that every citizen should be given, through education, the social status to which he or she entitles him or her to inherited aptitude. Schematically, the theory observes that provision of formal equity of access to education by putting everybody on the same level from the scratch guarantees that the ensuing run is a just one. The theory asserts that the criteria of the scholastic promotion should be ability and will. Therefore the home environment is expected to set in motion an intensive social mobility by facilitating an open competition where the academically able would get access to careers that they deserve is significant. All students should therefore be given a conducive home environment to learn so as to excel in academics.

## **2.6 Conceptual frame work**

In writing this proposal, the researcher conceptualized the independent, dependent and intervening, variables as shown in Figure 2.1

### Independent Variables

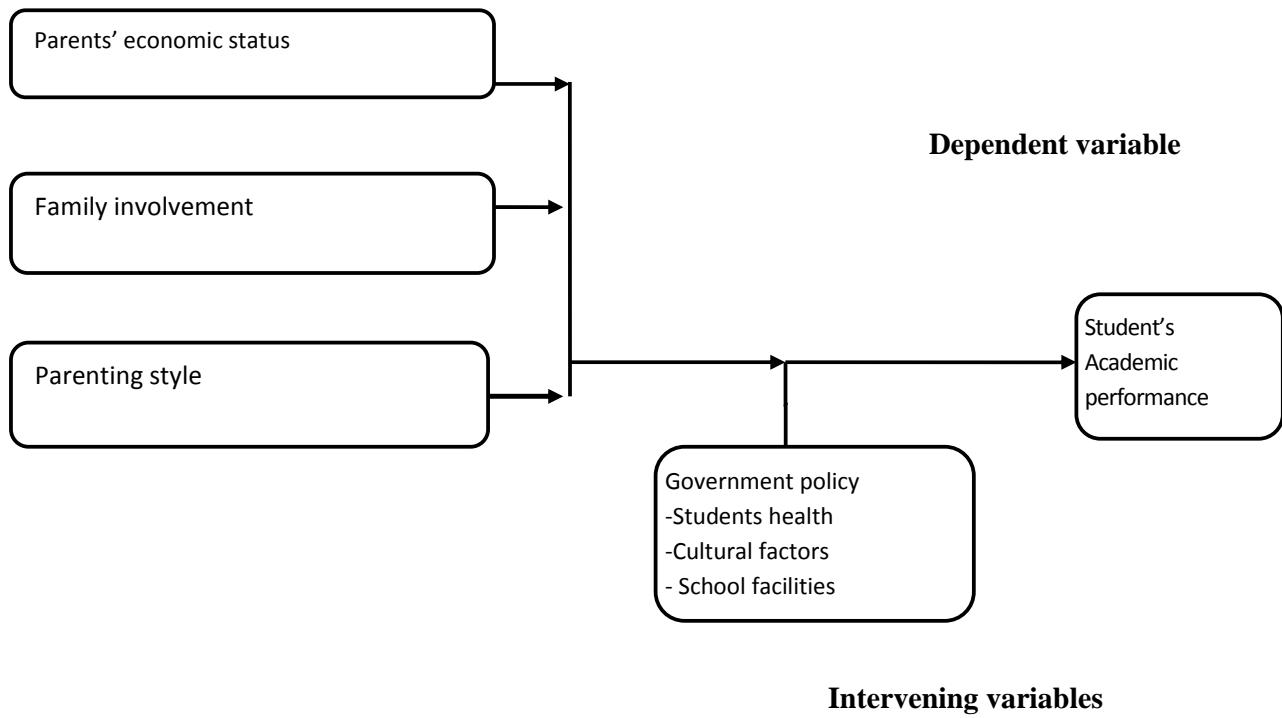


Figure 2.1

Conceptual framework

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the methods that were utilized in the study. They include the research design, target population, sampling and sampling techniques, research instruments for data collection, Validity and reliability of instruments, data collection procedure, and data analysis techniques.

#### **3.2 Research design**

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey design was selected because the study entailed asking a large number of people questions (in form of questionnaires) about their opinions and ideas, and even describe what the people say. This study also used descriptive survey design since the variables were not manipulated, and there was an opportunity to explore and probe the respondents for more information. The major purpose of descriptive survey research design is a description of the state of affairs as it exists at present. (Kothari, 2003) According to Kerlinger (1973) descriptive survey design is a branch of social scientific investigation which studies large and small populations or universe by selecting and studying sample chosen from the population to discover the relative incidence, distribution and interrelations. The descriptive survey allows collection of large amounts of data from the target population. The study used descriptive because it ‘described what was’ by use of quantitative and qualitative methods.

### **3.3 Target population**

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), a population is a group of individual , objects or items from which samples are taken for measurement while the target population refers to the total of subjects (OSO & Onen , 2005 ).The target population for the study was all the principals, students and parents of the 28 public secondary schools in Kitui West Sub County, Kitui County Kenya.

### **3.4 Sample size and Sampling Procedure**

Out of the 28 public secondary schools in Kitui West Sub County, the researcher studied a sample of 8 principals from the eight selected schools which is 30% of the total population of schools. In each of the selected school, the researcher selected 10% of the students in form three and four, making a sample 144 out of a population of 1440 students. This is sufficient according to Gay (2003) who stated that a sample size of at least 10% of the population is sufficient. The researcher also interviewed the PTA chairpersons in the eight selected school.

According to Best and Khan (1993), the ideal sample is that which is large enough to serve as an adequate representation of population about which the researcher wishes to generalize and small enough to be selected economically in terms of subject availability, expense in terms of time, money and complexity of data analysis.

According to Sharma (1984) sampling is the selection of individuals from the population in such a way that every individual has an equal chance to be taken into the sample. Kombo and Tromp (2006) define sampling as the procedure a researcher uses to gather people, places or things to study. According to Gupta and Gupta (1886) sample size depends on various factors relating to the subject under study like time,

cost and degree of accuracy. Gupta and Gupta (1986) also states that two factors should be considered when determining the appropriate sample size. One, the sample size should increase as the variation in the individual increases.

The second one is that the greater the degree of accuracy required the larger the sample should be

**Table1: Sample size**

Respondents	Population	Sample size	Percentage %	Sampling technique	
Principals	28	8	30%	Simple	random sampling
Students	1440	144	10%	Simple	Random Sampling
PTAchair person	28	8	30%	Simple	Random Sampling
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1496</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>11%</b>		

### 3.5 Research Instruments

The information for this study was gathered by use of questionnaires as the main research instrument. The questionnaires were administered to the principals, students and PTA chairperson from the selected schools. Questionnaire is a set of questions prepared to ask a number of questions and collect answers from respondents relating to the research topic. The questions were in printed form and were to be answered by the individuals. The forms had blank spaces in which the answers can be written. Sets of such forms are distributed to groups and the answers are collected relating to

research topic. A questionnaire is a series of questions asked to individuals to obtain statistically useful information about a given topic. When properly constructed and responsibly administered, questionnaires become a vital instrument by which statements can be made about specific groups or people or entire populations. Inappropriate questions, incorrect ordering of questions, incorrect scaling, or bad questionnaire format can make the survey valueless, as it may not accurately reflect the views and opinions of the participants. A useful method for checking a questionnaire and making sure it is accurately capturing the intended information is to pretest among a smaller subset of target respondents. In a research or survey questions asked to respondents, and designed to extract specific information.

The questionnaires had both closed and open questions. The questionnaires were divided into Four parts; section A of the questionnaires covered the demographic details of the respondents, section B the influence of parents' economic status on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kitui West Sub County, section C the influence of Parent/Family Involvement on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kitui West Sub County and section D the effect of parenting style on students.

### **3.6     Instrument Validity**

Validity is the degree to which the results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represents the phenomenon under study (Orodho, 2005). The validity of the instruments was determined by experts in research methodology from the Department of Educational Administration and Planning of South Eastern Kenya University. The experts advised on the questionnaire and the questionnaires open-ended items were corrected.

### **3.6 Instrument reliability**

In research, the term reliability means "repeatability" or "consistency" of measures (Kasomo, 2006). To determine reliability of research instruments, a pilot study was conducted. Three questionnaires' were administered to three principals, three PTA chairpersons and three students. Care was taken so as not include them into the study. The data values collected were operationalized and the numerical scores were split into two using 'old number versus even number items' process to get two sets of values which were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to calculate the coefficient of relationship. A correlation coefficient 0.8 was obtained which was sufficient for these questionnaires to have high reliability (Kasomo, 2006

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedure.**

A researcher obtained an introductory letter from school of education, South Eastern Kenya University then a research permit was obtained from National commission for science and Technology under the ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology. There after the DEO (District Education Officer) Kitui West Sub County was conducted to give an introductory letter to school Principals. The researcher visited the identified schools for this research for coordination purposes, with the respective authorities. Permission to collect research in a particular school was sought from the Principal of concerned school. The researcher issued the questionnaires to respondents concerned and arranged with them the date for collecting the completed questionnaires.

### **3.8 Data Analysis techniques**

Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Statistical tally system was used to generate frequency counts from the responses so as to prepare frequency distributions. Percentages were calculated from the responses out of the total study sample response per item. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson's correlations, Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and multiple Regressions.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents results and discussions following the research objectives. This study investigated influence of home environment on student's academic performance in public schools in Kitui west Sub County, Kitui County, Kenya. This was in the light that, although students may be of comparable abilities, learn in the same environment and follow the same syllabus, their academic performance still varies. Despite the fact that the Government of Kenya has been funding both primary and secondary schools, there is still poor performance among the students. In Kitui west Sub County there are students who may be bright but perform poorly despite the good learning facilities in their schools.

The study sought to determine the influence of parents' economic status on students' academic performance in public secondary schools, to establish the influence of Parent/Family Involvement on students' academic performance in public secondary schools and to investigate the effect of parenting style on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in kitui west Sub County, Kitui County. The study adopted both descriptive survey designs. Simple random sampling was used to select the sample included in the study. Questionnaire method was used for data collection. The collected data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics using the statistical package for social scientist (SPSS).

The information for this study was gathered by use of questionnaires as the main research instrument. The questionnaires were administered to the principals, students and PTA chairperson from the selected schools.

#### **4.2 Questionnaires return rate**

The researcher sought to establish the number of returned questionnaires before embarking on the data analysis so as to establish the number of respondents used in the analysis. The results on questionnaire return rate are presented in Table 1

**Table 2: Questionnaires return rate**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Returned</b>	<b>Not retuned</b>
Principals	8(100%)	0(0%)
Students	144(100%)	0(0%)
PTA chairperson	8(100%)	0(0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>160(100%)</b>	<b>0(0%)</b>

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Table 2 shows that, all the questionnaires were returned by the principals, students and PTA chairpersons under this study. This shows that data was collected from all the intended respondents and therefore was a good representation as proposed by the researcher. Also the researcher seems to have made a good follow up of the distributed questionnaires which enabled him to get back all the questionnaires. Both the principals and the students and PTA chairperson seem to be interested with the study and therefore were hoped to have given information which would help in achieving the study objectives.

#### **4.3 Respondents' distribution by gender**

The researcher sought information concerning the gender distribution of the respondents to ascertain whether the study was gender sensitive. The results were presented in table 3

**Table 3: Respondents' distribution by gender**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Principals	6(75%)	2(25%)
Students	86(60%)	58(40%)
PTA chairperson	8(100%)	0(0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100(62%)</b>	<b>60(38%)</b>

Table3 revealed that, majority (75%) of the secondary school principals interviewed were males. This shows that there was a gender imbalance in distribution of principals. However the principals' gender had no influence on the results of this study. On the other hand the gender distribution for students was almost the same with the male respondents slightly higher (60%) and female (40%). This means the students were well distributed in terms of gender and therefore were likely to give information which is relevant for the study. It was however revealed that the 100% of the PTA chairmen were male indicating a big imbalance in the distribution of the PTA chairpersons by gender.

#### **4.4 Age distribution of respondents**

The researcher further sought to establish the age distribution of respondents. This was to establish whether age was affecting academic performance in any way. The responses were presented in table 4 and 5

**Table 4: Age distribution of principals**

<b>Age in years</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Less than 40	0	0.0
41 – 45	5	62
46 – 50	3	38
51 – 55	0	0.0
Above 55	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4 revealed that majority (62%) the principals were 41 – 45 years of age while the minority (38%) were 46 – 50 years of age. There were no principals below 40 years or above 50 years. However the age of the principals might not influence academic performance. Further the researcher investigated the age distribution of students. The results were presented in table 5

**Table 5: Age distribution of students**

<b>Age in years</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Less than 17	74	52.0
17 – 18	70	48.0
Over 18	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 5 shows that all the students interviewed are below 19 years.

#### **4.5 Principal's academic qualification**

The researcher sought to establish the academic qualification of the respondents. The responses were presented in table 6.

**Table 6: Principals academic qualification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
PhD	0	0.0
M.Ed	3	37.0
B.Ed	5	63.0
Dip. Education	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 6 revealed that majority (63%) of the principals had a bachelor of education as their highest academic qualification; a few (37%) had masters of education degree. It

was however revealed no principal had a Diploma or PhD. However the principal's academic qualification might not have any influence on results of the study.

#### **4.6 Parents' economic status and students' academic performance in public secondary schools**

The first objective for this study was to establish the influence of parents' economic status on students' academic performance in public secondary schools Kitui Sub County Kitui County. To achieve this objective, the researcher first investigated the parent's major economic activities. The results were presented in table 7.

**Table 7: Parents economic activities**

<b>Economic activities</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Subsistence farmers	90	56.0
Employed	46	29.0
Non employed	24	15.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 7 shows that majority (56%) of the parents were subsistence farmers, followed by 29% who are employed and 15% who are non- employed. This is an indication that majority of the parents (56%) have low economic status since Kitui west Sub County is characterized by little rainfall throughout the year. This means that the earnings from the subsistence farming might not be enough to finance their children education. This is likely to affect their academic performance. Further the researcher requested the respondents to fill a 5-Likert scale with Strongly agree(SA)=5, Agree(A)=4, Undecided(U)=3, Disagree(D)=2, and Strongly Disagree(SD)=1.

The responses were presented in Table 8 below.

**Table 8: Parents economic status and performance**

Parents economic status	5	4	3	2	1	<b>Total</b>
a) Increasing family income is associated with an increase in student achievement	90(56%)	40(25%)	30(19%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	<b>160(100%)</b>
b) Students who achieve high performance in education at school were from urban areas, which had parents with a higher occupation status.	80(5%)	40(25%)	40(25%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	<b>160(100%)</b>
c) Better financial resource among the parents enhances the motivational support to their children; thereby encouraging the children to have high aspirations in education	120(75%)	40(25%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	<b>160(100%)</b>
d) Students from well up families have more learning materials	140(88%)	20(12%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	<b>160(100%)</b>
Mean responses	<b>107(67%)</b>	<b>35(22%)</b>	<b>18(11%)</b>	<b>0(0%)</b>	<b>0(0%)</b>	<b>160(100%)</b>

Table 8 revealed that majority (67%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statements given in Table 4.7. At the same time 22% agreed while 11% were undecided.

Next the researcher tested the hypothesis to establish whether there is significant relationship between parents' economic status and students' performance. The hypothesis was as stated below.

$H_0$ : There is no significant relationship between parent's economic status and students' performance.

$H_1$ : There is significant relationship between parent's economic status and student's performance.

The results were presented in table 9

**Table 9: Relationship between parents' economic status and students performance (N=160).**

		Parents economic status	Students performance
Parents status	Pearson Correlation	1	0.8
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.004
	N	160	160
Students performance	Pearson Correlation	0.8	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.004	
	N	<b>160</b>	<b>160</b>

Table 9 shows that the correlation coefficient between parents' economic status and students' performance is  $r=0.80$  implying there is a very strong positive correlation. This implies that an increase in parents' income has significant increase in the performance of a student and vice versa.

The researcher also used ANOVA to test the hypothesis in this section. The results were presented in table 10.

**Table 10: One way ANOVA for the difference in mean between parents' economic status and students performance**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	0.6458	1	0.658	7.197	0.01
Within Groups	9.982	159	0.113		
Total	10.531	160			

The above Table 10 shows that there is difference in mean between parents economic status and students' performance  $F(df_B, df_w) = F(159, 1) = 7.197$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Significance value is 0.01,  $r(1, 159)$ . This agrees with the correlation result in table 9.

#### **4.7 Parent/Family involvement and students' academic performance**

The second objective for this study to investigate the influence Parent/Family Involvement on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kitui West Sub County, Kitui County, Kenya.

To achieve this objective the researcher sought to establish parent's attendance to education days in the schools. The responses were presented in Table 11

**Table 11: Parent's attendance to school education days**

Options	Responses	Percentage
Very good	67	42.0
Good	93	58.0
Poor	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 11 revealed according to (58%) of the respondents the parents attendance to school education days was good while according to 42% the attendance was very good. None of the respondents stated that the parent's attendance to school education days was poor. This is likely to enhance the performance of the students.

Further the researcher requested the respondents to fill a 5-Likert scale with Strongly agree(SA)=5, Agree(A)=4, Undecided(U)=3, Disagree(D)=2, and Strongly Disagree(SD)=1.

The responses were presented in Table 12.

**Table 12: Parent's involvement in student's academic performance**

Statement	5	4	3	2	1	Total
parental involvement in children's learning activities positively influences their levels of achievement	120 (75%)	20 (12.5%)	20 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	160(100%)
Parental supervision and monitoring of student progress influences their performance	80 (50%)	80 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	160(100%)
A family which set rules to their children about academics improves students' grades.	80 (50%)	20 (12.5%)	20 (12.5%)	20 (12.5%)	20 (12.5%)	160(100%)
Increased parent-school communications improves students' performance.	120 (75%)	20 (12.5%)	20 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	160(100%)
High parental aspirations for their children tend to positively influence students' levels of performance.	38 (24%)	80 (50%)	40 (25%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	160(100%)
<b>Mean</b>	<b>87(54%)</b>	<b>44 (28%)</b>	<b>20 (12.5%)</b>	<b>5 (3%)</b>	<b>4(2.5%)</b>	<b>160(100%)</b>

According to Table 12, majority of the respondents (54%) strongly agreed with the given statements about parent's involvement in school activities and student's

performance, 28% agreed, 12.5 were undecided, 3% Disagree, and 2.5% Strongly Disagreed.

Further the researcher tested a hypothesis to establish the strength of the relationship between Parent/Family Involvement in school activities and students' academic performance in public secondary schools. This was done by testing the hypothesis below.

$H_0$ : There is no significant relationship between Parent/Family Involvement and students' academic performance.

$H_1$ : There is significant relationship between Parent/Family Involvement and students' academic performance in public secondary schools Kitui West Sub County  
The results were presented in table 13.

**Table 13: Relationship between Parent/Family Involvement and students' academic performance in public secondary schools (N=160).**

		Parents involvement	Students performance
Parents involvement	Pearson Correlation	1	0.45
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.04
	N	160	160
Students performance			
	Pearson Correlation	0.45	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.04	
	N	<b>160</b>	<b>160</b>

Table 13 shows that the Correlation coefficient between parents' involvement and students performance is  $r = 0.45$ , implying that there is a weak positive relationship between Parent/Family Involvement and students' academic performance in public

secondary schools. This implies that increment in parents' involvement increases students' performance.

The researcher also used ANOVA to test the hypothesis given in this section. The results were presented in Table 14

**Table 14: One way ANOVA for the difference in mean between parents involvement and students performance**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	168.962	159	1.119	19.746	.04
Within Groups	.170	1	.057		
Total	169.132	160			

Table 14 shows that there is difference in mean between parent involvement and students' performance in public secondary schools in Kitui West Sub County Kitui County. The ANOVA results are  $F(159,1) = 19.75$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . This shows that the mean differences between the responses are significant and therefore we reject the hypothesis and conclude that there is significant relationship between Parent/Family Involvement and students' academic performance in public secondary schools Kitui West Sub County. These results agrees with the correlation results in Table 13.

#### **4.8 Parenting style and students' academic performance in public secondary schools.**

The third objective for this study was to investigate the effect of parenting style on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kitui West Sub County. To achieve this objective the respondents were required to state the extent to which they agreed with the given statements. The responses were shown on table 15.

**Table 15: Parenting style and students' academic performance**

Parenting styles	5	4	3	2	1	Total
Children of parents who were authoritative tent to be the most achievement oriented.	98 (61%)	32 (20%)	30 (19%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>160(100%)</b>
Permissive parenting is negatively associated with performance	90 (56%)	70 (44%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>160(100%)</b>
Parenting style is a significant predictor of grades	120 (75%)	20 (12.5)	20 (12.5)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>160(100%)</b>
Previous parenting behaviors continue to be important in the lives of secondary students as with children.	13 (8%)	89 (56%)	47 (29%)	11(7%)	0 (0%)	<b>160(100%)</b>
<b>Mean</b>	<b>81(51%)</b>	<b>55 (33%)</b>	<b>24 (15%)</b>	<b>2 (1%)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>160(100%)</b>

According to Table 15, majority (51%) of the respondents strongly agreed with given statements in Table 15, 33% only agreed, 15% were undecided, while 1% disagreed.

Further the researcher tested the hypothesis below to establish the relationship between parenting style and student's performance.

$H_0$ : There is no significant relationship between parenting styles and students' performance.

$H_1$ : There is significant relationship between parenting styles and students' performance.

The results were presented in table 16.

**Table 16: Relationship between parenting styles and students' performance**

		Parenting style	Student's performance
Parenting style	Pearson Correlation	1	0.49
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.031
	N	160	160
Student's performance	Pearson Correlation	0.49	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.031	
	N	<b>160</b>	<b>160</b>

The correlation coefficient between parenting styles and students' performance is  $r = 0.49$ , implying that there is a weak positive relationship between parenting styles and students' performance. This implies change in parenting styles affects student performance.

The researcher also used ANOVA to test the hypothesis given in this section. The results were presented in Table 17

**Table 17: One way ANOVA for the difference in mean between parenting styles and students performance**

	Sum Squares	of df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	35.77	93	9.3	13.0	0.013
Within Groups	.000	3	.000		
Total	29.677	96			

Table 17 shows that there is a significant difference in mean between parenting styles and students' performance  $F(df_B, df_w) = F(93,3) = 13.0, p < 0.05$ . We therefore reject the hypothesis. This agrees with the correlation results in Table 16.

#### 4.8 Multiple regression analysis

This study examined the contribution of the determinants (home factors – parent economic status, family involvement and parenting style) of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kitui west district, Kitui County. The data resulting from scoring of the instrument and coding were subjected to stepwise multiple regression analyses to test the hypotheses below.

$H_0$ : The contribution of combined home environment factors is not significant in prediction of students' performance in public secondary schools in Kitui west Sub County, Kitui County.

$H_1$ : The contribution of combined home environment factors is significant in prediction of students' performance in public secondary schools in Kitui west Sub County, Kitui County.

Data were tested for significance at the 0.05 level. The results were presented in Table 18.

**Table 18: Coefficients of home factors predicting students' performance**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	f	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	120.066	107.835	1.113	.004
	Economy status	2.735	.886	.728	3.088
	Family involvement	.177	.537	.053	.329
	Parenting style	7.234	3.191	-.362	-2.267

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

The results in Table 18 indicated that home environment factors significantly predict the performance of students in public secondary schools in Kitui West Sub County.

$$Y = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3$$

Where  $X_1$ =Economic factors

$X_2$  = involvement of parents

$X_3$  =parenting styles

Performance = 120.066 + 2.735 (Economic status) +0.177 (involvement factors) + 7.234 (Parenting style). The multiple regression results shows that the dependent variables are significant at 0.05% significant level ( $p=0.003$ ,  $p= 0.001$  and  $p=0.006$  respectively) and that the parenting styles predicted students' performance significantly at 7.234.

#### **4.9 Discussion of the findings**

The researcher discussed the findings from this study against other studies in the literature review. The study established that the correlation coefficient for the relationship between parents economic status and students performance is +0.80 which implies that there is a strong positive relationship between parent's economic status and student's performance. ANOVA results are that  $F(df_B, df_w) = F(159,1) = 7.197$ ,  $p=< 0.05$ .Indicating that there is significant relationship between parents' economic status and students' academic performance. This agrees with (Bryk, & Smith, 1993) who suggested that economic status is one of the best predictors of student achievement. Also Hill and O'Neil (1994) found that, increasing family income in USA by \$10,000 per year is associated with an increase in student achievement of 2.4 percentile points. Grissmer, (1994) had similar findings on the relationships between income and mathematics as well as income and reading achievement. Lueptow (1975) in his study found that students who achieve high

performance in education at school were from urban areas, who had educated parents with a higher occupation status and a higher income home. Consistent to Lueptow (1975), and Ho Sui-Chu and Willms's (1996) study indicated that the parent's socioeconomic status has a significant and positive relationship with parent's involvement in their child's education. These studies found that the parent's from higher socioeconomic status exert greater parental involvement in their child's education.

The study established that the correlation coefficient for the relationship between Parent/Family Involvement and students' academic performance in public secondary schools is +0.45, implying that there is a weak positive relationship between Parent/Family Involvement and students' academic performance in public secondary schools. The ANOVA results are  $F (159, 1) = 19.75$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , indicating that there is significant difference in mean between Parent/Family Involvement and students' academic performance.

This agrees with Epstein, (1992) who stated that parental involvement in children's learning activities positively influences their levels of achievement and motivation to learn. Also some negative effects of parental involvement on students' achievement are also reported for a number of parental involvement indicators: parents' close supervision of homework and after school activities (Milne et al., 1986; Muller, 1993), frequent contacts with school or Parent-teacher conferences (Ho & Wilms, 1996; Lee, 1994; Muller, 1993) and frequent talks With children (Astone & McLanahan, 1991). Thus, both positive and negative effects are reported by different researchers for parent communications with the student or school, and for parental

monitoring of students' behavior. In cases where negative effects are reported, researchers interpret them as indicating parents' efforts to help children with low academic performance or behavioral problems. In the study by Sui-Chu and Willms (1996), some of the negative effect of frequent communication with schools on eighth grade achievement is mediated by students' problematic behavior and performance. The authors recognize the need to include more detailed measures of behavioral and learning difficulties in order to fully account for this negative effect.

Finally the study revealed that, 51percent of the respondents strongly agreed with the statements that, children of parents who were authoritative tent to be the most achievement oriented, permissive parenting is negatively associated with performance, parenting style is a significant predictor of grades and previous parenting behaviors continue to be important in the lives of secondary students as with children. Also the correlation coefficient between parenting styles and students' performance is +0.49, implying that there is a weak positive relationship between parenting styles and students' performance however there is a significant relationship between student's performance and parenting styles. The ANOVA results indicated that, there is a significant difference in mean between parenting styles and students' performance  $F(df_B, df_w) = F(93,3) = 13.0$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . This agrees with Baumrind and Black (1967) who argued that authoritative parenting was positively associated with academic performance; and authoritarian and permissive parenting is negatively associated with grades. This relation between authoritative parenting style and academic performance in children has been found across ethnic groups. However, some research has shown that this relation does not exist for Hispanic Americans and African Americans (e.g., Dornbuschet al., 1987; Park & Bauer, 2002). Further

examinations across ethnic groups have found that among African Americans, parenting style was not a significant predictor of grades (Dornbusch, Ritter, & Steinberg, 1991).

The multiple regression results shows that the dependent variables are significant at 0.05% significant level ( $p=0.003$ ,  $p= 0.001$  and  $p=0.006$ ) respectively) and that the parenting styles predicted students' performance significantly at 7.234

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further research following research objectives.

#### **5.2 Summary of the findings**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of home environment on student's academic performance in secondary education in public schools in Kitui west Sub County, Kitui County, Kenya. Data were collected using the questionnaires as the main research instruments. The collected data was coded and analyzed using statistical package for social scientists using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

The first objective for this study was to determine the influence of parent's economic status on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kitui West Sub County. The study revealed that that majority (56%) of the parents were subsistence farmers. This was followed by 29% who are employed and 15% who are non- employed. It was also established that (67%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statements that Increasing family income is associated with an increase in student achievement, students who achieve high performance in education at school were from urban areas, who had parents with a higher occupation status, Better financial resource among the parents enhances the motivational support to their children; thereby encouraging the children to have high aspirations in education and Students from well up families have more learning materials.

Also The correlation coefficient for the relationship between parents economic status and students performance is +0.80 which implies that there is a strong positive relationship between parent's economic status and student's performance. ANOVA results are that  $F(df_B, df_W) = F(159,1) = 7.197, p < 0.05$ . Indicating that there is a significant difference in mean between economic status and students' academic performance.

The second objective for the study was to establish the influence of Parent/Family Involvement on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kitui West District. The study revealed that majority (58%) of the respondents to the parent's attendance to school education days was good while according to 42% the attendance was very good. Also the correlation coefficient for the relationship between Parent/Family Involvement and students' academic performance in public secondary schools is +0.45, implying that there is a weak positive relationship between Parent/Family Involvement and students' academic performance in public secondary schools. ANOVA results are that,  $F(df_B, df_W) = F(159,1) = 19.75, p < 0.05$ .Indicating that there is significant differences in mean between parents 'involvement and students' academic performance.

The last objective for this study was to investigate the effect of parenting style on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kitui West District. The study revealed 51percent of the respondents strongly agreed that the statements that, children of parents who were authoritative tent to be the most achievement oriented, permissive parenting is negatively associated with performance, parenting style is a significant predictor of grades and Previous parenting behaviours continue to

be important in the lives of secondary students as with children. Also the correlation coefficient between parenting styles and students' performance is +0.49, implying that there is a weak positive relationship between parenting styles and students' performance. However there is a significant relationship between student's performance and parenting styles. ANOVA results are that  $F(df_B, df_W) = F(93,3) = 13.3$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Indicating that there is significant differences in mean between parenting styles and students' academic performance.

### **5.3 Conclusions from the Study**

From the findings of this study the researcher concluded that the parent's economic status influences students' academic performance. This is because the parents will be able to pay school fees in good time and provide other learning materials. This is likely to help the student to perform well in their academics.

Secondly, we can also conclude that, Parent/Family Involvement influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools. This can be done by attending the school education days, checking on the student's performance and motivating the student. This is likely to go a long way in improving the student's performance.

Finally we can conclude from the findings of this study that, parenting style affects students' academic performance in public secondary schools to a great extent. Thus authoritative parenting was positively associated with academic performance; and authoritarian and permissive parenting is negatively associated with good performance.

#### **5.4 Recommendations of the study**

From the findings of this study, the researcher wishes to make the recommendations below.

- i) The Government should increase the bursary allocation to the students from poor families so as to retain them in school to enhance their performance.
- ii) The school administration need to increase the number of education days for parents so that parents can be more involved with their student's academic performance.
- iii) Parents ought to improve their parenting styles as this can affect their children performance.

#### **5.5 Suggestion for further research**

This study investigated the influence of home environment on student's academic performance in secondary education in public schools in Kitui west Sub County.

Further research can be done on the following:-

- i) To investigate the influence of school environment on student's academic performance in secondary education in public schools.
- ii) To investigate the influence of school type on student's academic performance in secondary education in public schools.
- iii) The influence of the student's personal characteristics on academic performance.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: TRANSMITTAL LETTER

SOUTH EASTERN KENYA UNIVERSITY

P.O. BOX 170,

KITUI.

20<sup>TH</sup> OCT, 2013.

Dear Respondent,

I am a post graduate student in South Eastern Kenya University pursuing a Masters of Education Degree in educational administration and Planning. As part of the requirements for this degree, I am carrying out a research on the “influence of home environment on student’s academic performance in public schools in Kitui west district, Kitui County, Kenya”.

You have been sampled for the study and you have been selected as a respondent.

Please answer the questions as truthfully as possible.

The result of this study will be used for academic purposes only. I do request for your cooperation and support. Any information collected will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Yours Faithfully,

MR JEROME MUSILI KAMUTI

## **APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRINCIPALS**

This questionnaire is intended to collect information on Influence of home environment on student's academic performance, in public schools in Kitui west Sub county, Kitui County, Kenya. The information given will be used for the purpose of this research only.

The identity of the respondent will remain confidential.

Do not write your name and that of your school on the questionnaire

### **Section A: Demographic information**

(Instructions-tick where appropriate)

1. Gender

Male  Female

2. Age in years

Below 20  21-30  31-40  41-50  
 51-60  Above 61

3. What is your professional qualification?

Doctorate  masters  Bachelor's  Diploma  
 Certificate  None

4. Working experience in years

Less than five  6-10  11-15  16-20  21 and above

5. School type

Boys boarding  Girls boarding  Mixed day  Mixed day and boarding

6. School size?

Single stream  double stream  three streams  four and above

### **Section B: Parents' economic status and students' academic performance.**

7. What are the major economic activities for your parents?

Employed  Subsistence farmers  Non employed

8. How would you rate the economic status of most of your parents?

Upper class  Middle class  Poor

9. The statements below relate to the influence of parents' economic status on students' academic performance. Supplied also are five options corresponding to these statements: Strongly agree(SA)=5, Agree(A)=4, Undecided(U)=3, Disagree(D)=2, and Strongly Disagree(SD)=1.

Please circle the option that best suits your opinion on the statement given

Parents economic status	5	4	3	2	1
b) students who achieve high performance in education at school were from urban areas, who had parents with a higher occupation status.					
c) Better financial resource among the parents enhances the motivational support to their children; thereby encouraging the children to have high aspirations in education					
d) Students from well up families have more learning materials					

10. In your opinion how does parents' economic status influence a students' performance?

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**Section C: Influence of family Involvement on students' academic performance**

11. Do your school involve parents in students' performance?

Yes       No

12. How is the parents' attendance to school education days?

Very good       Good       Poor

13. The statements below relate to the influence of family involvement on students' academic performance. Supplied also are five options corresponding to these statements: Strongly agree (SA)=5, Agree(A)=4, Undecided(U)=3, Disagree(D)=2, and Strongly Disagree(SD)=1.

Family involvement	5	4	3	2	1
a) parental involvement in children's learning activities positively influences their levels of achievement					
b) Parental supervision and monitoring of student progress influences their performance					
c) A family which set rules to their children about academics, improves students' grades.					
d) Increased parent-school communications improves students' performance.					

e) High parental aspirations for their children tend to positively influence students' levels of performance.					
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#### **Section D: Parenting Styles and academic Performance.**

14. Does the parenting style influence students' performance?

Yes       No

15. The statements below relate to the influence of Parenting style on students' academic performance. Supplied also are five options corresponding to these statements: Strongly agree(SA)=5, Agree(A)=4, Undecided(U)=3, Disagree(D)=2, and Strongly Disagree(SD)=1.

Parenting styles	5	4	3	2	1
a) Children of parents who were authoritative tend to be the most achievement oriented.					
b) Permissive parenting is negatively associated with performance					
c) Parenting style is a significant predictor of grades					
d) Previous parenting behaviors continue to be important in the lives of secondary students as with children.					

THE END

THANK YOU

### **APPENDIX III: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS**

This questionnaire is intended to collect information on Influence of home environment on student's academic performance in public schools in Kitui west Sub County, Kitui County, Kenya. The information given will be used for the purpose of this research only. The identity of the respondent will remain confidential.

Do not write your name and that of your school on this questionnaire.

#### **Section A: Demographic Information**

**(Instructions-tick where appropriate)**

1. Gender

Male  Female

2. Age bracket

Below 16 years  16-18  above 18

3. What is your class?

Form three  Form Four

4. What was your grade last term?

5. Have you ever repeated a class in secondary school?

Yes  No

#### **Section B: Parents' economic status and students' academic performance.**

6. What is the major economic activity for your parents?

Employed  Subsistence farmers  Non employed

7. How would you rate the economic status of your parents?

Upper class  Middle class  Poor

8. Are there students who have ever dropped out of school because of school fees in your class? Yes  No

9. The statements below relate to the influence of parents' economic status on students' academic performance. Supplied also are five options corresponding to

these statements: Strongly agree(SA)=5, Agree(A)=4, Undecided(U)=3, Disagree(D)=2, and Strongly Disagree (SD)=1.

Please circle the option that best suits your opinion on the statement given

Parents economic status	5	4	3	2	1
a) Increasing family income is associated with an increase in student achievement					
b) students who achieve high performance in education at school were from urban areas, who had parents with a higher occupation status.					
c) Better financial resource among the parents enhances the motivational support to their children; thereby encouraging the children to have high aspirations in education					
d) Students from well up families have more learning materials					

10. In your opinion how does parents' economic status influence a students' performance?

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### **Section C: Influence of family Involvement on students' academic performance**

11. Do your school involve parents in students' performance?

Yes       No

12. How is the parents' attendance to school education days?

Very good       Good       Poor

13. Do your parents ever visit the school to enquire about your performance?

Yes       No

14. If yes, how often?

---

15. Does parents' involvement in your academics improve performance?

Yes       No

16. How are your parents involved in your academics at home?

---

17. The statements below relate to the influence of family involvement on students' academic performance. Supplied also are five options corresponding to these statements: Strongly agree(SA)=5, Agree(A)=4, Undecided(U)=3, Disagree(D)=2, and Strongly Disagree(SD)=1.

Family involvement	5	4	3	2	1
a) parental involvement in children's learning activities positively influences their levels of achievement					
b) Parental supervision and monitoring of student progress influences their performance					
c) A family which set rules to their children about academics, improves students' grades.					
d) Increased parent-school communications improves students' performance.					
e) High parental aspirations for their children tend to positively influence students' levels of performance.					

**Section D: Parenting Styles and academic Performance.**

18. How would you rate the discipline in your school?

Very good       Good       Poor

19. Are there in disciplined students in your school?

Yes  No

20. What are some of parenting styles among your parents?

---

21. Does the parenting style influence your performance?

Yes  No

22. If yes, how?

23. The statements below relate to the influence of Parenting style on students' academic performance. Supplied also are five options corresponding to these statements: Strongly agree(SA)=5, Agree(A)=4, Undecided(U)=3, Disagree(D)=2, and Strongly Disagree(SD)=1.

Parenting styles	5	4	3	2	1
a) Children of parents who were authoritative tent to be the most achievement oriented.					
b) Permissive parenting is negatively associated with performance					
c) Parenting style is a significant predictor of grades					
d) Previous parenting behaviors continue to be important in the lives of secondary students as with children.					

**END**

**THANK YOU.**

## **APPENDIX IV: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PTA CHAIRPERSON**

This questionnaire is intended to collect information on Influence of home environment on student's academic performance in public schools in Kitui west Sub County, Kitui County, Kenya. The information given will be used for the purpose of this research only. The identity of the respondent will remain confidential.

Do not write your name and that of your school on this questionnaire

### **Section A: Demographic Information**

#### **(Instructions-tick where appropriate)**

1. Gender

Male       Female

1. Age bracket

below 30 years     30-40     Above 40

2. What is your highest academic level?

Certificate     Diploma     Degree     others (specify)

3. How long have you been a chairperson?

Less than two years     3 - 4     More than four years

### **Section B: Parents' economic status and students' academic performance.**

4. What is the major economic activity for your parents?

Employed     Subsistence farmers     Non employed

5. How would you rate the economic status of your parents?

Upper class     Middle class     Poor

6. Are there students who have ever dropped out of school because of school fees in your school?    Yes     No

7. The statements below relate to the influence of parents' economic status on students' academic performance. Supplied also are five options corresponding to

these statements: Strongly agree(SA)=5, Agree(A)=4, Undecided(U)=3, Disagree(D)=2, and Strongly Disagree(SD)=1.

Please circle the option that best suits your opinion on the statement given

Parents economic status	5	4	3	2	1
a) Increasing family income is associated with an increase in student achievement					
b) students who achieve high performance in education at school were from urban areas, who had parents with a higher occupation status.					
c) Better financial resource among the parents enhances the motivational support to their children; thereby encouraging the children to have high aspirations in education					
d) Students from well up families have more learning materials					

9. In your opinion how does parents' economic status influence a students' performance?

---

---

### **Section C: Influence of family Involvement on students' academic performance**

10. Do your school involve parents in students' performance?

Yes       No

11. How is the parents' attendance to school education days?

Very good       Good       Poor

12. Do parents ever visit the school to enquire about performance of their children?

Yes       No

13. If yes, how often?

---

14. Does parents' involvement in academics improve performance?

Yes      No

15. How are parents involved in academics at home?

---

16. The statements below relate to the influence of family involvement on students' academic performance. Supplied also are five options corresponding to these statements: Strongly agree(SA)=5, Agree(A)=4, Undecided(U)=3, Disagree(D)=2, and Strongly Disagree(SD)=1.

Family involvement	5	4	3	2	1
a) parental involvement in children's learning activities positively influences their levels of achievement					
b) Parental supervision and monitoring of student progress influences their performance					
c) A family which set rules to their children about academics improves students' grades.					
d) Increased parent-school communications improves students' performance.					
e) High parental aspirations for their children tend to positively influence students' levels of performance.					

**Section D: Parenting Styles and academic Performance.**

17. How would you rate the discipline in your school?

Very good       Good       Poor

18. Are there in disciplined students in your school?

Yes       No

19. What are some of parenting styles among your parents?

---

20. Does the parenting style influence child's performance?

Yes       No

21. If yes, how?

---

22. The statements below relate to the influence of Parenting style on students' academic performance. Supplied also are five options corresponding to these statements: Strongly agree(SA)=5, Agree(A)=4, Undecided(U)=3, Disagree(D)=2, and Strongly Disagree(SD)=1.

Parenting styles	5	4	3	2	1
a) Children of parents who were authoritative tend to be the most achievement oriented.					
b) Permissive parenting is negatively associated with performance.					
c) Parenting style is a significant predictor of grades					
d) Previous parenting behaviors continue to be important in the lives of secondary students as with children.					

END

THANK YOU

## Appendix V. Timeframe

### Work plan

<b>2013 – 2014 Study Activities</b>	<b>Sep. – Oct. 2013</b>	<b>Nov. - Dec. 2013</b>	<b>Jan – Dec. 2014</b>	<b>Jan. – April 2015</b>
Proposal wiring and Defense				
Research project Data collection				
Research project Data Analysis				
Research report writing				
Project report defense and corrections				
Project report hard cover binding				

## **Appendix VI Budget**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>COST (KShs.)</b>
Proposal writing costs	40,000
Questionnaire administration	5,000
Data collection	10,000
Data analysis	15,000
Stationery	5,000
Miscellaneous 10%	7,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>82,500</b>





## NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

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P.O. Box 30623-00100  
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref. No.

Date:

12<sup>th</sup> May, 2014

NACOSTI/P/14/6129/1530

Jerome Musili Kamuti  
South Eastern Kenya University  
P.O.Box 170-90200  
**KITUI.**

### RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "*Influence of home environment on academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Kitui West, Kitui County, Kenya,*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Kitui County** for a period ending **31<sup>st</sup> July, 2014**.

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Kitui County** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.

*2014-05214.*  
SAID HUSSEIN  
FOR: SECRETARY/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner  
The County Director of Education  
Kitui County.

