

The Importance of Educational Forum as Perceived by Students from Mataa Location, Mbooni West Sub- County

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine how students of Mataa location perceive their educational forum when grouped according to: gender, parental support, level of education and Challenges faced. The study used descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the collected data. The descriptive statistics used in data analysis in this study were, frequencies, percentages and standard deviation. Inferential statistics were T-test, standard deviation and percentage were used to compute data for question one. For question two T-test and ANOVA were used to test whether the perception of students varied significantly. The population for this study comprised of 300 students who attend the Mataa Education forum each year. However, during this particular day when the data was collected, 118(39%) students were absent, therefore never participated in the study. This gave 182(61%) of the students population, which was reasonable. When grouped according to gender, the perceptions of the students varied depending on the question. When grouped according to the level of education the secondary school students had high perception of the education forum than college and university students. The students felt that the forum had motivated them to improve academically, be future oriented and realize their potentials. Parental support was perceived as playing a positive role. Majority of the students in Mataa are affected by lack of school fees, learning facilities, lack of strong parental support and lack of enough role models in the locality.

Keywords: Students, Perception, Education, Forum, Mataa, Location, Parental Support, Gender

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Students' perceptions are not on individual opinions with regard to educational forums but they are rather framed in response to memories and experiences of social actions and interactions. From this standpoint, that which is 'memorable' is a function of shifting cultural categories which influence what is thinkable, what is appropriate, what is valued, and what is noteworthy. This is because perceptions are in themselves part and parcel of reality (Brown, 2004; Peterson & Irving, 2007).

Soong, Chan, Chua, & Loh, (2001) underpin the importance of students' perception and the mindset about learning which appears to be a vital component in relation to the question of students' active role in discussion during educational forums. Research indicates that students' perception towards knowledge construction and learning processes is very vital. As a result, majority of the students express their skepticism about their own capability to contribute to knowledge construction in a group of students (Soong, Chan, Chua, & Loh, 2001). Students who do not attend the education forums lack previous experience from academic studies leading to doubts on the discussion forum therefore lacking value on their own contribution, discussion, learning process and may not be motivated to participate in a discussion. According to Pelz (2004), an educational forum is a social interaction that has a great impact on the learning process of the involved. This is because interactivity is the heart and soul of effective asynchronous learning. In addition, it has been proven in educational research that a student who is actively involved has a greater learning potential compared to a passive listener (Pelz, 2004).

According to (Dysthe, 2003 & Bundy, 2011) education forums are organizations designed to allow interested students share ideas and information focused on a specific topic. An education forum can be used as a learning tool for people employed in a particular profession or who have a common interest in a given subject. The main purpose for an educational forum is to share new information, strategies and, in general, provide means for people to increase their personal banks of knowledge about the subject under consideration.

An education forum can also benefit students from all walks of life. An education forum allows students to pool their knowledge and experience in order to creatively deal with current and upcoming trends within a given area. The education forum may be a simple organization, specifically for local students or a more formal structure that includes professionals from around the world. Thanks to developments in online technologies, it is now possible to hold meetings of education forums by streaming audio and visual communications over the Internet, including regularly scheduled web conferences, message boards, and other forms of electronic communication (Bundy, 2011).

In some instances, an education forum is a means for interested parties to gather together and confer on subjects such as history, music, or even political ideologies. The forums will often include opportunities to explore some aspect of the main subject in great detail, as well as provide ways for people with common interests to socialize. As with any forum, the structure can be as casual or as formal as the forum members desire (UNESCO, 2013)

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While the main function of most education forums is geared toward educating the members of the group, they may also be a means of educating a larger constituency as supported by Dysthe (2003) who proved that educational discussion forums support learning because they offer an opportunity to study and use the discussion forums whenever it suits the students best. As a consequence, this can lead to more extensive discussion contributions compared to oral discussions, due to the fact that students have time to reflect on an issue before they express their own opinion. Some negative aspects of being independent of time and place can also be observed (Dysthe, 2003).

According to World Education Forum (WEF) (2015, education forums are an opportunity to reframe the global education agenda as the international community defined the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030. Achieving sustainable development is only truly possible through cross sectorial efforts that begin with education – not any type of education, but one that addresses the interdependence of environment, economy and society, and helps bring about the fundamental change of mindsets needed to trigger action for sustainable development.

Education forums help the participants to:

- ❖ Recognizing the important role of education, in relation to the proposed SDGs
- ❖ Recognize that education has the potential to accelerate progress towards the achievement of all of the SDGs
- ❖ This is particularly true with regard to poverty reduction, health, and climate change.
- ❖ Be equipped with the competencies to increase their income and escape poverty (SDG 1).
- ❖ To access, understand and apply information about health, which helps to reduce diseases and contributes to better health outcomes
- ❖ Acquire the skills and values to change behavior and find solutions to environmental challenges (UNESCO, 2014)

Educational forums are said to promote learning that prepares student well for their future profession, which are not only rooted in their society's views of education, but also derive from their own personal experiences of schooling and discussions in educational forums (Tambo, 2000; Ndongko & Nyamnjoh, 2000, Stuart, Akyeampong, & Croft, 2009). Further, Vandergrift (2002) describes how educational forums describe a learning community and suggests dramatic gains in personal learning result from taking part in such discussions; the background and willingness of students to communicate.

1.1 Gender

Engaging students in education forum discussion has been recognized as a challenge for female students (Tiggemann, 2010). Over the years, it has become increasingly recognized that the problem is more often located in social issues within which females are expected to participate and relate to the social construction of gender (Enright & O'Sullivan, 2010). Rich (2004) posit that there is a growing body of research pointing towards the continued prevalence of gender inequality and exclusion in often complex ways within the social structures and practices. In particular, female students in rural and regional settings have additional factors affecting their participation due to lack of social support (Casey, Eime, Payne, & Harvey 2009). According to Macdonald and Penney (2009), key roles should be put in place for challenging the

social constructions, such as gender stereotypes, that limit female student engagement in educational forum discussion.

Among this focus is the challenge of traditional hegemony that is highly directed, to formal and textbook skill and drill oriented teaching. In other words, a broader meaning should be developed despite the challenges to support specifically gender sensitivity and inclusion in educational forums (Pill, 2011). Socio-cultural, psychological, and contextual factors affect female students' participation in educational forums that are related and not limited to social constructions of gender and gender stereotypes (Cockburn & Clark, 2002; Ennis, 1999; Macdonald, 1990; Rich, 2004; Tinning, 1997; Whitehead, 2008); social support and influences from parents, peers and role models; (Bauer, Yang, & Austin, 2004; Casey et al., 2009; Coakley, 2006; Dowda et al., 2007; Hall, 2008; Hills, 2007; McNeill, Kreuter, & Subramanian, 2006; Trost et al., 2003) and; the discussion environments that are competitive in nature (van Daalen, 2005; Dudley Pearson, & Okley, 2006; Larsson, Fagrell, & Redelius, 2009). In addition, female students have reported feelings of embarrassment, low perceived ability, concerns over body image, lack of interest in the issues being discussed and the dominance of males therefore affecting their involvement in (Flintoff & Scraton, 2006; Wright 1995; Wright & Macdonald, 2010). Finally, the location of the regional, as opposed to a metropolitan setting, can impact female students' engagement (Casey et al., 2009). Furthermore, females in rural and regional settings are typically provided with limited educational activities that tend to comply with gender stereotypes of femininity and masculinity. For example, female students are often required to participate in the traditionally feminine discussions, while the male students participate in rough and tumbled educational discussions (Casey et al., 2009).

Recommended strategies for engaging female students in educational forum discussions include involving females in educational forum design (Enright & O'Sullivan, 2010); the use of role models (Bauer et al., 2004; Coakley, 2006; Dowda et al., 2007; Hall, 2008; Wallhead & Buckworth, 2004); single gender discussions (Macdonald, 1990; McCaughtry, 2006; Wright, 1996; 1999) and giving female students a 'voice' and 'choice' in the types of activities offered during an educational forum discussion (Azzarito et al., 2006; Fissette, 2008; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Hills, 2007; McMahan, 2007; Oliver, Hamzeh, & McCaughtry, 2009; Prusak et al., 2004). Other reported strategies for combatting gender exclusive practices, promoting inclusivity and challenging stereotypes include taking the focus away from competition and performance enhancement, such as through adventure in educational forums (Gehris, Kress, & Swalm, 2010) and emphasizing pleasure, cooperation and participation in educational discussions (Dudley et al., 2006; Hills & Croston, 2012; McCaughtry, 2006; Smyth, Hattam, & Lawson, 1998; Tinning, 1997).

Studies have shown that increasing educational forum awareness of gendered discourses and practices through locally organized workshops and professional development days has been identified as an effective step in the process of gender reform (Azzarito et al., 2006; Brown & Rich, 2002; Keay, 2007; McCaughtry, 2006; Rich, 2004; Wright, 1999).

1.2 Level of Education

Student perception is an influential factor in the successful adoption of educational forums. To get any educational value, the students must pursue educationally sound behaviors such as participation and interaction (Rodriguez and Anicete, 2010). In today's advancement in education, educational forums have been increasingly adopted by many higher educationists as one of the Learning Management Systems (LMS), tools that provide enormous flexibility and ease for access of various learning content. Its functionality is providing user friendly environment and interactivity of the highest pulling order (Palmer, Holt, and Bray, (2008). Research hold that learners of higher academic levels perceive educational forums more positively compared to their counter parts in the lower cadre for they are capable of stimulating an individualized form of learning through interaction at the higher levels as indicated by (Levine, 2007).

Orhan (2008) found that majority of students in colleges enjoyed being in a blended learning environment where they discussed freely. They did not prefer continuing their educational forums with face-to-face learning environments where only the instructor talks. Meyer (2003) found that face-to-face format had value in terms of its immediacy and energy while the forum discussion format increased the amount of time students spent on objectives and reflection upon vital issues affecting them directly or indirectly which, in turn, facilitated higher-order thinking. The threaded discussions were described as often more thoughtful, more reasoned, and drew evidence from other sources (Meyer, 2003). In addition, discussion forums provided students an avenue "to share current articles or reports rather than waiting for class time to do so and to relate their current events to course topics" (Meyer, 2003, p.61). However, students with different strengths are likely to respond differently to forum discussion setting. She suggests that "the student who learns or processes information by talking...may feel satisfied in such a setting" whereas "the student who requires reflection to learn or construct an answer may be advantaged" (Meyer,2003, p. 62). Therefore, it is recommended that "offering a mix of ways to be involved in discussion may well improve the likelihood that most students find an avenue for contributing that satisfies their learning needs" (p. 62) as each class is likely to be comprised of students whose preferences for forum discussion is mixed (Meyer, 2003).

Vonderwell (2003) explored the perceptions and experiences of undergraduate students towards educational forums and discovered that students who participated in this study indicated that the group discussions during educational forums were helpful in learning and acquiring knowledge unlike the lower level learners who seemed not to gain much. However, they also expressed a lack of social engagement with their peers in lower levels who seemed hesitant to contact each other (Vonderwell, 2003). In addition, students expressed that educational forums gave them a greater sense of anonymity, which provided them with greater confidence in approaching the facilitators with questions and constructing interpersonal and social relationships with them (Vonderwell, 2003). As a result, Vonderwell (2003) stresses that facilitators must be aware of the challenges associated with a communication gap, which may exist in the educational forums learning environment and overcome that barrier "...with effective, deliberate planning, and strategies for improved communication between instructors and students and between students and themselves" (p. 87).Rodriguez and Anicete (2010) utilized an undergraduate and high school educational discussion forum learning environment to examine students' views of the forum. The

results indicated that despite some challenges, students had overall positive views and experiences towards learning. Specifically, Rodriguez and Anicete (2010) determined that educational forum tasks including journal compositions and discussion forums gave students more opportunities to think critically about their own ideas as well as readings. Such tasks increased the mindfulness of the students when responding to questions which were designed to stimulate reflection and encourage them to seek information beyond that which was presented by the facilitators (Rodriguez & Anicete, 2010). In addition, the act of asking students to explain their ideas in which other students respond to them led to a heightened level of interactivity within students of higher level of education (Rodriguez & Anicete, 2010).

1.3 Parental Support

Research indicates that parents are important partners in the education of children for they are viewed a primary source for learning since they are the first teachers of their children (Zygouris-Coe, 2007). The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110) stated that parental involvement is an essential factor for improving student's development in all walks of life. Additionally, substantial research through the last three decades supports the belief that identifying parents' participation as a decisive contributor to student achievement (Larrotta & Ramirez, 2009; Olivos, 2004; Orozco, 2008; Quezada, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2003; Smith, Stern & Shatrova 2008; Young & Vrogistinos, 2010; Zygouris-Coe, 2007).

Literature review affirms that parental involvement is a powerful tool to support students' academic success. The role that parents play in their children's education is crucial in motivating children to desire a better future for them; parents provide their children with emotional support to reach their future goals (Larrotta & Ramirez, 2009; Olivos, 2004; Quiocho & Daoud , 2006; Ramirez, 2003; Shah, 2009; Zygouris-Coe, 2007).

According to Walker, Ice, Hoover & Sandler (2011) parents play a basic support roles in their children's academic development in diverse forms. These include having high aspirations for their children's learning, promoting the importance of education, and observing their children's schoolwork and performance. Orozco (2008) explained that some parents limit their role in their children's education to the home, ensuring their children are fed, dressed and provided with the motivation and support to continue studying to pursue higher education. Often, parents limit their participation in their children's academic development to the home because they see involvement in schools and educational forums as an encroachment (Shan, 2009).

Shah (2009) and Smith et al. (2008), posit that parents understand their role as supervising homework, preparing their children for school, and teaching them to behave appropriately and showing good manners. Also, the type of participation parents present includes discussing school-related matters with their children, and engaging with their children in intellectual activities like literacy at home (Altschul, 2011). Parents believe that in order to support their children's learning, they must establish a strong partnership with the school. Parents, on the other hand, believe that it is the schools 'responsibility to teach their children while they focus on doing their part at home (Walker et al., 2011).

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Challenges encountered by parents are the language barrier, a lack of understanding the role of families and parents in schooling, parents' level of education and socioeconomic status. Other inhibiting factors are previous negative experiences with schools, the unwelcoming environment provided by schools, parents feeling intimidated based on their status, and lack of time for many parents who work long hours (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Moreno & Valencia, 2002; Ramirez, 2003; Smith et al., 2008). Language is a significant factor inhibiting parental involvement and participation in educational forums (Altschul, 2011). Parents are fearful to express themselves and their views because of the lack of English language skills (Auerbach, 2011; Loera, Rueda & Nakomoto, 2011). These communication gaps have generated a great deal of fear for parents because they feel frustrated, intimidated and underpowered to influence decisions affecting their children's education during educational forums (Good, Mesewicz & Vogel, 2010; Loera et al., 2011). The language barriers impede promoting ongoing dialogue between parents and educators for mutual understanding during educational forums for they perceive the forum environment as not welcoming (Good et al. 2010). Beyond language research has it that parents frequently felt uncomfortable, intimidated and unwanted in their children's educational forums (Altschul, 2011; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Olivos, 2004; Quiocho & Daoud, 2006; Zygouris-Coe, 2007).

In the study conducted by Good et al. (2010), one of the biggest concerns expressed by parents was that they felt the educational forum personnel ignored them or did not respect their efforts. Parents had lost their sense of trust for educational forums. They felt ignored and uncomfortable to participate in any decision-making, and they felt incapable of expressing their opinions. Many parents perceived the education forum organizers as condescending, disrespectful, and discriminating against them based on stereotypes like family background, level of education and other social class factors (Good et al., 2010). Also, parents feel judged by their occupation, economic status, or social class (Salinas, 1997, Good et al., 2010). The effects of these negative attitudes against them create an uncomfortable environment and results in the absence of parents' participation and support of their children in most education forums (Olivos & Mendoza, 2010).

Research documents that majority of the parents might be having information gaps and may not be aware of the expectations from the educational forum organizers and the role they must play in their children's participation in the education forum (Salinas, 1997). The lack of information in the parent's impedes parental involvement and support therefore preventing their children from total participation during the educational forums (Good et al., 2010; Olivos & Mendoza, 2010; Salinas, 1997).

1.4 Challenges faced by Students

Difficulties arise in categorizing the exact nature of the activities to be undertaken by learners of various levels, the role of assessment, and the relationship of discussion to other parts of the forum (Vandergrift 2002, van Weert & Pilot, 2003)

1.5 Lack of Role Models

The concept of a role model is rooted deep in role theory (Merton, 1957) which makes the assumption that people define roles for themselves and others based on social learning and reading. The importance of the role model plays a large part in the socialization process

described by Bandura (1986), whose social learning theory claims that we learn about others attitudes, values and beliefs and eventually come to our own as a result of observing and experiencing the behavior of others. Thus, if the active model (in this case the practitioner/teacher/parent) shares characteristics such as sexuality and religion (Skelton, 2003) along with gender, age, race and/or social location (Bricheno & Thornton 2007) with the passive modeller (in this case the child) it is believed that the passive modeller is more likely to emulate the active model because of their shared characteristics. Ashley (2002) articulates this within an educational context in what he refers to as crude.

For role models to be of value to students, Walker (2007) argues that they need to be geographically, generationally and experientially close to their own lives. As a result, Walker (2007) shows support for the thinking of Lamb (1987) who believes that the term “role model” refers to a relatively mundane, personally known figure from a previous generation as cited in (Walker, 2007). This notion mirrors the findings of Bricheno & Thornton (2007) who conclude that children clearly favor role models from their direct social environment for example their friends and/or relatives. Two important findings from Bricheno & Thornton (2007) had no indication that...boys and girls identified with their teachers, male or female”. The second, and most profound finding, is that the children did not see their teachers as role models; this supports the research findings of (Biskup and Pfisters 1999).

2.0 METHODOLOGY

This study we sought to get students’ perceptions on the Mataa Education Forum. The study used descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the collected data. The descriptive statistics used in data analysis were, frequencies, percentages and standard deviation. Inferential statistics were T-test, standard deviation and percentage were used to compute data for question one. For question two T-test and ANOVA were used to test whether the perception of students varied significantly.

2.1 Population

The population for this study comprised of 300 students who attend the Mataa Education forum. However, during this particular day when the data was collected, 118(39%) students were absent, therefore never participated in the study. This gave 182(61%) of the students population which was reasonable for the study.

2.2 Research Instrumentation

The main research instrument used for data collection in this study consisted of a questionnaire which the researchers had constructed in conjunction with their research questions and literature review. This is because Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) hold that questionnaires are commonly used to obtain information about a population .In addition, administering a questionnaire was easy and that helped the researchers to collect relevant information from the respondents within the time limit. Apart from the above, it ensured confidentiality, therefore helping the researchers to gather more candid and objective responses as portrayed in Gay, Mills and Airasian (2008).The questionnaire for this study consisted of four sections namely: Demographic/background information of the students, operational information, opinion

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questions and open ended questions in which the students were to identify the challenges they face, state their expectations and what the stakeholders should do better to make the Mataa education forum a success.

2.3 Validity of the Instruments

Validity refers to the degree to which a questionnaire (test) measures what it is supposed to measure and consequently; permit appropriate interpretation of scores, that is according to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2008). Validity is said to be important in all forms of research and all types of tests and measures and is best thought of in terms of degree. For the purpose of this study, it was used to establish how students in Mataa Location perceive the Education Forum. In this study, content validity was established. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) content validity is defined as to how well the questions represent all the possibilities of questions available. In order to establish content validity of the instruments, the researchers gave the developed instrument to experts at Baraton University to assess and guide.

2.4 Reliability of the Instruments

According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2008), reliability is said to be the degree to which a test measures consistently whatever it is measuring. For the purpose of this study, a pilot was conducted in Kithungo location to test and ensure that the instruments are reliable. This is because students in Kithungo location have the same characteristics with those in Mataa location. The responses were subjected to a statistical treatment using Cronbach Alpha Technique. The cut off point was set at level 0.60. The Cronbach's Alpha for the subscales are summarized in table 1 below.

Table 1: Reliability

Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
The educational meetings have adequate facilitators compared to the size of the learners	31.1813	38.028	.402	.880
Different age groups are cared for	30.9725	36.038	.607	.862
I am satisfied with the kind of facilitation	30.8242	35.869	.657	.857
The preparation of the day is well organized	30.8571	36.112	.618	.861
Essential information is given	30.5879	36.929	.743	.853
There should be awards given to the best academic performer	30.6374	37.271	.645	.859
My parents support Mataa Education Day	30.6648	37.219	.628	.860
It will be a good idea to invite other students from neighbouring locations	30.5769	37.295	.698	.856
My expectations are met	30.6813	36.705	.701	.855

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It will be a good idea to invite other students from neighbouring locations	30.5769	37.295	.698	.856
My expectations are met	30.6813	36.705	.701	.855
There is a follow up of students, after finishing primary, secondary, college or university	30.8462	38.595	.399	.879

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.874	10

The Questionnaire was deemed reliable with a cronbach Alpha of .874 > .600 the set cut off point as shown in table above.

2.5 Statistical Treatment of Data

For this study, descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the collected data. The descriptive statistics used in data analysis in this study were, frequencies, percentages and standard deviation. Inferential statistics were T-test, standard deviation and percentage were used to compute data for question one. For question two T-test and ANOVA were used to test whether the perception of students varied significantly.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2: *Learners perception when grouped by gender*
T-Test

		Group Statistics			
	gender of students	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
The educational meetings have adequate facilitators compared to the size of the learners	Male	97	3.05	1.17	.118
	Female	85	3.00	1.14	.120
Different age groups are catered for	Male	97	3.21	1.08	.110
	Female	85	3.26	1.08	.117
I am satisfied with the kind of facilitation	Male	97	3.43	.95	.096
	Female	85	3.32	1.13	.122
The preparation of the day is well organized	Male	97	3.33	1.03	.103
	Female	85	3.36	1.10	.119
Essential information is given	Male	97	3.64	.780	.079
	Female	85	3.59	.880	.095

Table 2 shows that male students have a higher perception when Mataa education forum is viewed from the concept of adequacy of facilitators in relationship to the size of students with a mean of (3.05) unlike the females who have a low perception with a mean of (3.00). When asked if different groups were catered for, the females perceived it highly with a mean of (3.2588) while the males were a bit low with a mean of (3.21). When asked if they were satisfied with the kind of facilitation, the males seemed to be more satisfied than the females with a mean of (3.43) while the females had a mean of (3.32). On the day's preparations, the females seemed to perceive it higher with a mean of (3.36) and the males (3.33). About the information given, the males were more contented with a mean of (3.64) while the females were satisfied but to a lesser level with a mean of (3.59).

Table 3: *Learners perception when grouped by gender***T-Test****Group Statistics**

	gender of students	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
There should be awards given to the best academic performer	Male	97	3.68	.758	.077
	Female	85	3.44	1.01	.110
My parents support Mataa Education Day	Male	97	3.65	.804	.082
	Female	85	3.41	1.02	.110
It will be a good idea to invite other students from neighboring locations	Male	97	3.67	.760	.077
	Female	85	3.58	.905	.098
My expectations are met	Male	97	3.59	.790	.080
	Female	85	3.45	.994	.108
There is a follow up of students, after finishing primary, secondary, college or university	Male	97	3.35	1.07	.109
	Female	85	3.36	1.08	.117

Table 3 shows that male students feel that awards should be given to the best academic performer with a mean of (3.68), the females support the same with a mean of (3.44) This is an indication that male students are more attracted to reward than females therefore they would be more attracted to the education day if rewarded. On parental support the table shows that male students are attracted to the education day if they are fully supported by their parents with a mean of (3.65) and females (3.41). This indicates that for a better perception, male students should be well supported. As Pertaining inviting students from other locations, the male students were more receptive with a mean of (3.67) than females with a mean of (3.58). This indicates that the males are more accommodative than the females. On their expectations, the males expectations seem to be highly met compared to the females with a mean of (3.59) while the females are less met with a mean of (3.45). This may be an indication that the male and female students have different expectations hence the variations.

As pertains to follow up, both male and female felt that it was not done to satisfaction, however the females seem to appreciate what is done better than the males with a mean of (3.36) and the males (3.35).

Table 4: *Learners’ perception when grouped by level of education*

One way

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
The educational meetings have adequate facilitators compared to the size of the learners	form 1-2	53	3.06	1.18	.16	2.73	3.38	1.00	4.00
	form 3-4	73	3.00	1.21	.14	2.72	3.28	1.00	4.00
	College	31	2.84	1.13	.20	2.42	3.25	1.00	4.00
	University	21	3.24	.831	.18	2.86	3.62	1.00	4.00
	Total	178	3.02	1.15	.09	2.85	3.19	1.00	4.00
Different age groups are catered for	form 1-2	53	3.42	.887	.122	3.17	3.66	1.00	4.00
	form 3-4	73	3.15	1.16	.14	2.88	3.42	1.00	4.00
	College	31	3.06	1.24	.22	2.61	3.52	1.00	4.00
	University	21	3.19	1.03	.22	2.72	3.66	1.00	4.00
	Total	178	3.22	1.09	.08	3.06	3.38	1.00	4.00

Table 4 shows that form 1-2 tended to agreed that the educational meetings had adequate facilitators compared to the size of the learners with a mean of 3.06, form3-4 did the same with a mean of 3.00, the college students tended to disagree with a mean of 2.84 an indication that something should be done to cater for the individual differences. The university students agreed with a mean of 3.02. On the caring of different age groups, all the four levels tended to agreed that they were cared for with the following means form 1-2 (3.42),form 3-4(3.15),college(3.06),university(3.19).This implies that the stakeholders should categorize the students further so as to meet their academic needs.

Table 5: *Groups according to level of education***One way**

		Descriptive							
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
I am satisfied with the kind of facilitation	form 1-2	53	3.55	.822	.11	3.32	3.77	1.00	4.00
	form 3-4	73	3.22	1.19	.14	2.94	3.50	1.00	4.00
	College	31	3.26	1.15	.21	2.83	3.68	1.00	4.00
	University	21	3.67	.58	.13	3.40	3.93	2.00	4.00
	Total	178	3.38	1.04	.08	3.22	3.53	1.00	4.00
The preparation of the education forum day is well organized	form 1-2	53	3.19	1.16	.16	2.87	3.51	1.00	4.00
	form 3-4	73	3.47	1.00	.12	3.23	3.70	1.00	4.00
	College	31	3.19	1.19	.21	2.76	3.63	1.00	4.00
	University	21	3.52	.68	.15	3.21	3.83	2.00	4.00
	Total	178	3.34	1.06	.08	3.19	3.50	1.00	4.00

Table 5 implies that when grouped according to the level of education, all students tend to agree that they are satisfied with the kind of facilitation given with the following means form 1-2 (3.55), form 3-4(3.22), college (3.26) and university agreed (3.67), an indication that the form 1-2 and university students are more satisfied with the kind of facilitation given when compared to form 3-4 and college students. On the preparation of the day, all academic levels of students tended to agree that the preparations of the day are well organized with the following means form 1-2(3.19), form 3-4(3.47), college (3.19) and university agreed with a mean of (3.52). This implies that form 3-4 and university students perceived the education forum day's preparations highly when compared to the form 1-2 and college students. This high perception might be due to the experience and exposure the university students have.

Table 6: *Learners perception when grouped by level of education*

		Descriptives							
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Essential information is given	form 1-2	53	3.70	.723	.010	3.50	3.90	1.00	4.00
	form 3-4	73	3.49	.97	.11	3.27	3.72	1.00	4.00
	College	31	3.61	.80	.14	3.32	3.91	1.00	4.00
	University	21	3.81	.51	.11	3.58	4.04	2.00	4.00
	Total	178	3.61	.83	.06	3.49	3.74	1.00	4.00
There should be awards given to the best academic performer	form 1-2	53	3.57	.82	.11	3.34	3.7922	1.00	4.00
	form 3-4	73	3.51	1.00	.12	3.27	3.74	1.00	4.00
	College	31	3.48	.96	.17	3.13	3.84	1.00	4.00
	University	21	3.81	.51	.11	3.58	4.04	2.00	4.00
	Total	178	3.56	.90	.07	3.42	3.69	1.00	4.00

Table 6 indicates that students of all levels anonymously agreed that essential information is given during the education forum day with the following means Form 1-2 (3.70), college (3.61) and university (3.81) an exception of Form 3-4 scholars who tended to agree on the same with a mean of 3.49. This implies that the University scholars seem to perceive the information given highly, maybe it is due to the fact that they are able to discern essential from what is not essential. As far as awards are concerned all the students, with an exception of college students, agreed that awards should be given to the best academic performer with the following means: Form 1-2(3.57), Form 3-4(3.51), college(3.48) and University(3.81) with the highest level of agreement. This is an indication that this cadre of students is highly attracted to gifts or awards.

Table 7

One way

		Descriptives							
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
My parents support Mataaa Education Day	form 1-2	53	3.55	.87	.12	3.30	3.79	1.00	4.00
	form 3-4	73	3.42	1.07	.12	3.18	3.67	1.00	4.00
	College	31	3.58	.81	.14	3.28	3.88	1.00	4.00
	University	21	3.76	.62	.14	3.48	4.05	2.00	4.00
	Total	178	3.53	.92	.07	3.39	3.66	1.00	4.00
It will be a good idea to invite other students from neighboring locations	form 1-2	53	3.68	.73	.100	3.48	3.88	1.00	4.00
	form 3-4	73	3.53	1.00	.12	3.30	3.77	1.00	4.00
	College	31	3.61	.76	.14	3.33	3.89	1.00	4.00
	University	21	3.76	.54	.12	3.52	4.01	2.00	4.00
	Total	178	3.62	.84	.06	3.49	3.74	1.00	4.00

Table 7 implies that all the students with an exception of Form 3-4 agreed that their parents support Mataaa education forum with the following means: Form 1-2(3.55),Form 3-4(3.42),College(3.58) and University(3.76) with the highest mean which indicates that such a group of students perceives the education forum day highly when the parents support it fully. For the form 3-4 the more the parents support the education day the less they perceive it. May be this is due to the fact that they are in a transitional age which likes doing the opposite or they are not intrinsically motivated.

Table 8
One Way

Descriptives

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
My expectations are met	form 1-2	53	3.58	.72	1.00	3.39	3.78	1.00	4.00
	form 3-4	73	3.48	1.02	.12	3.24	3.72	1.00	4.00
	College	31	3.48	.93	.17	3.14	3.82	1.00	4.00
	University	21	3.48	.87	.19	3.08	3.87	1.00	4.00
	Total	178	3.51	.90	.07	3.38	3.64	1.00	4.00
There is a follow up of students, after finishing primary, secondary, college or university	form 1-2	53	3.70	.64	.09	3.52	3.87	1.00	4.00
	form 3-4	73	3.32	1.12	.13	3.05	3.57	1.00	4.00
	College	31	3.03	1.35	.24	2.54	3.53	1.00	4.00
	University	21	3.00	1.18	.26	2.46	3.54	1.00	4.00
	Total	178	3.34	1.08	.08	3.18	3.50	1.00	4.00

Table 8 shows that Form 1-2 agree that their expectations are met with a mean of (3.58).The other group tended to agree that their needs are met with the following means :Form 3-4(3.48),college(3.48),and university (3.48).All the levels tended to agree that there is follow up after finishing the different education levels with the following means: Form 3-4(3.32),college(3.03),university (3.00) except Form 1-2 who agreed that there is follow up with a mean of(3.70). This might be caused by the fact that they are still young and joining secondary to them may mean follow up. However, the university students had the lowest mean, an indication that follow up to this cadre may be in terms of well-paying jobs, scholarships to further their studies, income generating projects and such like things which might not be applicable in the lower level of education.

Table 9: *How Mataa Education Forum has helped students*

How the Education Day has helped them	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Improve Academic work	60	33
Motivates learners	50	27.5
Makes Learners future oriented	32	17.5
Realize their potentials	40	22
Total	182	100

Table 9 indicates that 60(33%) of the students felt that the education day has helped them to improve their academic work, 50 (27.5%) has it that the academic day has motivated them, 32(17.5%), 40(22%) holds that the education day has helped them to realize their potentials. This is therefore an indication that the education day has helped the learners in a variety of ways.

Table 10: *Challenges students are facing in Mataa Location*

Challenges faced by students	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of fees	80	43
Lack of learning facilities	40	23
Lack of parental support	30	16.4
Lack of enough role models	20	11
Drugs	12	6.6
Total	182	100

Table 10 shows that 80(43%) had a challenge of school fees, 40(23%) lacked learning facilities like reference materials, paraffin/ electricity, good studying environment.30(16.4%) lacked parental support,20(11%) lacked enough role models and12(6.6%) faced the challenge of drugs which are taken either by their parents, colleagues or by themselves. This is an indication that students in Mataa Location are affected by a multiplicity of issues which should be addressed effectively by stakeholders if success is to be realized.

Table 11: *The expectations of students of Education Forum*

Students expectations	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To be provided with learning facilities	12	6.6
To be advised by leaders	20	11
To be allowed a chance to say what to expect in the future	50	27.4
Awards to be given to the best performing students	100	55
Total	182	100

Table 11 indicates that 12(6.6%) expected to be provided with learning materials,20(11%) expected to be advised by leaders,50(27.4%) expected to be allowed a chance to say what they expect in the future and 100(55%) which is the largest group expected awards to be given to the best performing students.

Table 12: *What stakeholders should do better to make the Education day more successful*

What stakeholders should do	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Make follow up of students after std 8, form 4,college and university	40	22
Reward best performers	30	16.5
Have special speakers for every academic level	10	5.5

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Build a library in Mataa Location	30	16.5
Have a parents Day to advise parents to support Education	10	5.5
Advertise the Day properly	10	5.5
Set a college/University in Mataa location	30	16.5
Have Educational tours to learn what others are doing for success	12	6.5
Invite neighboring locations	10	5.5
	182	100

Table 12 shows that 40(22%) felt that the stakeholders should make follow up of students after completing std 8,form 4,colleges and university,30(16.5%) are for the view that rewards should be given to the best performing students,10(5.5%) felt that the stakeholders should have special speakers for every academic level,30(16.5%) holds that a library should be built in Mataa location,10(5.5%) are for the view that there should also be a parents day to advise them to support education. 10(5.5%) indicated that the day should be advertised properly,30(16.5%) had the view that a college/university should be set up at Mataa,12(6.5%) felt that educational tours should be planned to see what other locations are doing for success. Finally 10(5.5%) felt that other locations should be invited.

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Understanding the elements of successful educational forum discussions can offer suggestions for instructors and students to facilitate and improve their learning experiences. Educational forums provide a great platform for educators and learners to contribute their thoughts, comments and ideas. It is useful to have a perception on the educational forum to prompt into their interest in educational forum discussion. Apart from perception, listening behaviors which show their characteristics in discussion in educational forum should also be investigated. Listening behaviors provide the input of different types of learners' activities in the educational forum. Thus, it gives practitioners the chance to analyze different type of learners and provide them the appropriate learning activities that suit them best.

From literature review and findings from this study, it is recommended that:

- i) Students from poor families be supported, financially to achieve their academic dreams
- ii) Parents be sensitized to support their children academically
- iii) The ward should ensure that it has enough role models
- iv) Students to be provided with adequate learning facilities
- v) Good academic performers be awarded
- vi) Ward educational stakeholders to make follow ups on school leavers to monitor their progress
- vii) The ward to organize for educational tour for benchmarking

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