



Level of Parental Involvement in Type 1-6 of Epstein Typologies in the Current School Practices

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Abstract: *This descriptive-correlational study examined the level of parental involvement in type 1-6 of Epstein typologies and the level of parents' education knowledge base in curriculum content extracted from the mandated national curriculum guide in Kenya and whether the parental involvement practices predicted the parents' education knowledge base in curriculum content using data collected from selected Seventh - day Adventist primary schools in Central Kenya Conference. Questionnaires were used to collect data from 291 parents. Results showed that the level of parental involvement among the parents was average and parents were somehow knowledgeable in curriculum content. Additionally, there was a positive linear effect between the predictor variables and the level of parents' education knowledge base in curriculum content in different grade groups. Learning at home typology was identified as the best predictor variable in most subjects followed by communications typology. On contrary, volunteering typology was not a significant predictor of any subject. It was recommended that schools, parents and community to work collaboratively to enhance effective partnership and empowered parent-teacher community for the success of the students.*

Keywords: *Parents, Type 1-6, Typology, School, Epstein*

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1. Introduction

As schools have pushed into the 21st century educational needs, researchers, educators, and parents, have championed the idea of a reciprocal relationship between schools and home alike (Knopf & Swick, 2007). Many researchers maintain that the more parents are involved in their children's education, the greater the effect on achievement. This spike in achievement is especially true in the early years (Cooper & Crosnoe, 2007; Cotton & Wikeland, 2001; Darch, Miao, & Shippen, 2004; and McWayne et al., 2004). Furthermore, Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis and George (2004) discovered that parents who spent time in school developed relationships with school staff and felt more comfortable to address

teachers when their children were experiencing difficulties.

According to Mapp (2012), parents can support schools by knowing what changes are occurring in school practices and instruction. Parents not informed cannot participate fully in schools. Edwards (2009) noted that teachers have a list of things they tell parents to do: read to your child, be a good literate model, take your child to the library, check all the assignments among others. When asking the parents to do all these tasks, the teachers assume a level of understanding that parents 'know' what they (the teachers) are asking them to do. However, sometimes, parents have other iterations of what they interpret teacher's words to be (Edwards, 2009).

Research conducted by The Graduate School, University of Wisconsin-Stout as presented in Horvatin & Lindsay (2011) described a range of barriers standing in the way of parent engagement. These include a lack of time among working parents; negative prior experiences with schools; an inability of parents to help children with their homework; limited funding to support parent engagement activities; teachers and administrators connecting to parents primarily when their children misbehave; and a lack of staff training in different strategies to engage parents (Horvatin & Lindsay, 2011).

Williams and Sanchez (2011) also looked at the obstacles that prohibit parental involvement in education, especially for inner-city African American parents. In their study, parents were not feeling empowered, capable or confident in their ability to help their children in academic work. The study suggested that educators develop tools to empower parents not only in certain subject areas, but also in unfamiliar or nontraditional curricula changes in the education system (Williams & Sanchez, 2011).

National Middle School Association, (NMSA) (2000) established that parent involvement by itself can lead to gains, but when paired with other types of school improvements and curriculum enrichments, its effects can be even greater. The outcomes will depend on many factors including the particular way parents are involved, the achievement measures used to measure academic outcomes (e.g., grades or test scores), the academic subjects that are being measured (e.g., math or languages), and the socioeconomic background of students (National Middle School Association, 2000).

While a significant relation between parent involvement and a child's academic performance is well established, studies have yet to examine whether the parents are knowledgeable with the curriculum taught to their children that they (parents) get involved with day in day out. The goal of the present study was to assess the level

of parent involvement in education and the level of parents' knowledge base in curriculum content. The study also examined the six variables that may mediate, or explain if, the level of parent involvement in education predicted the level of parents' knowledge base in curriculum content. The parental involvement typologies formed the independent variables while the curriculum content formed the dependent variables.

The level of parental involvement was measured through the assessment of the mean ratings for parental involvement in the six typologies as theorized in Epstein model for viewing different levels of parent involvement. On the other hand, the level of parents' education knowledge base was measured through the assessment of the mean ratings for parents' confident level in curriculum content as mandated in the national curriculum guide (syllabus) in Kenya. The mean ratings for parents' education knowledge base in curriculum were then regressed on the Epstein's six parental involvement typologies.

In Kenya, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), formerly known as, the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) is the body mandated to develop curricular and curriculum support materials for all levels of education below the University. Curriculum support materials are in both Print and Digital formats. Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development is a State Corporation established by KICD Act. No. 4 of 2013 (Wango, 2011).

In order to study all the eight grades (classes) in primary school level of education, the grades were clustered as follows: grade group A (lower primary school class 1-3), grade group B (lower upper primary school class 4 & 5) and grade group C (upper primary school class 6,7 & 8). The curriculum content was derived from the five compulsory and examinable subjects (English, Kiswahili, Mathematics, Science, and social studies) as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Classification of the Grade Levels and Grade Groups in the Primary School

Grade Levels (Classes)	Grade Groups
1 – 3	A
4 – 5	B
6 – 8	C

2. Literature Review

Parental involvement in education has been a topic of interest for many years among those who are concerned with improving academic achievement for children (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Traditionally, education has been viewed as the exclusive job for the experts in the education sector whereby the teachers are viewed as the sole educators of the child (Bridgemohan, Wyk & Staden, 2005). However, times have changed. Of late, schools have shifted from restricted professionalism to open a debate on actual parental involvement in school life, which has enabled the development of closer ties between the home and the school, translating into enhanced attendance and higher academic achievement.

Hoover-Dempsey, Battiato, Walker, Reed, DeJong, and Jones (2001) explained that the body of research by then consisted primarily of descriptive accounts of what parents do when they are involved, what teachers or schools do to invite parent involvement, and what student outcomes are related to parent involvement.

Early studies have reviewed literature on parent involvement in their children homework. Many researchers recognize the important role, a strong positive bond between homes and schools play in the development and education of children (Sanders & Sheldon, 2009; Richardson, 2009; Sheldon, 2009; Edwards & Alldred, 2000; Kabarere, Makewa, Muchee, & Role, 2013).

Research has also shown that successful students have strong academic support from their involved parents (Sheldon, 2009). Furthermore, research on effective

schools, those where students are learning and achieving, has consistently shown that these schools, despite often working in low social and economic neighbourhoods, have strong and positive school-home relationships (Sanders & Sheldon, 2009; Sheldon, 2009). More importantly, these effective schools have made a real effort in reaching out to their students' families in order to bring about liaison and cooperation (Sheldon, 2009).

Bryk and Schneider (in Sanders & Sheldon, 2009) maintained that schools become successful when a strong and positive relationship among students, parents, teachers and the community has been established. All students are more likely to experience academic success if their home environment is supportive (Sanders & Sheldon, 2009; Henderson & Berla, 1994). The benefit for students of a strong relationship between schools and homes is based on the development of trust between parents and teachers. According to Bryk and Schneider (in Muscott et al., 2008), this trusting relationship occurs when teachers and parents respect one another and believe in the ability of the other person and his or her willingness to fulfil their responsibilities.

Epstein's theoretical model asserts that the degree of the shared responsibilities as well as that of the overlap is dependent on the specific type of involvement that is applied. Epstein (2010) offered a model that outlined six components of home-school partnerships as summarized in Figure 1. There are six categories of involvement that can be adopted at any given time. They include parenting, volunteering, communication, decision making, collaborating with the community and learning from home (Epstein, 2010).

Parenting	Communicating	Volunteering	Learning At Home	Decision Making	Collaborating with Community
Assist families with parenting and child-rearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions that support children as students at each age and grade level. Assist schools in understanding families.	Communicate with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications.	Improve recruitment, training, work and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school or in other locations to support students and school programs.	Involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum-related activities and decisions.	Include families as participants in school decisions, governance and advocacy through PTA/PTO, school councils, committees, action teams and other parent organizations.	Coordinate community resources and services for students, families and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups, and provide services to the community.
TYPE 1	TYPE 2	TYPE 3	TYPE 4	TYPE 5	TYPE 6

Figure 1. Epstein's six types of parental involvement in education.

(Source: Epstein et. al. (2010), Partnership Center for the Social Organization of Schools)

Research has regularly shown that with increasing parental participation in their children's education student success rate increases. According to the Department of Education (2004) in the United States, studies have shown that students with involved parents are more likely to earn higher grades, pass their class and be promoted, they are more likely to attend school regularly and graduate and go on to postsecondary education, irrespective of their socio-economic status. Jerry Trusty (in Henderson & Mapp, 2002) concurred with this statement and claimed that the level of parental involvement in high school influence the students' expectations to finish college. In addition, Obeidat and Al-Hassan (2009) maintain that not only do children with involved parents gain academically, but also they are more likely to show improved behavior and to have better social skills.

Epstein et al. (2002) drew three key conclusions about parental involvement in the education of their children. 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, according to Epstein et al. (2002) 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 (Epstein et al. 2002).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive- correlational research design. According to Jackson (2009), descriptive research design is a scientific method, which involves describing the behavior of a subject without influencing it in any way. Descriptive studies are usually the best methods for collecting information that will demonstrate relationships and describe the world, as it exists.

Correlational research design, on the other hand, determines whether a relationship or association exists between two or more variables, but cannot determine if

one variable causes another. Although correlational research cannot determine causality, it is useful for predicting the level of one variable based on knowledge of the other variable. In this study, parental involvement formed the independent variables while the parent education knowledge base in curriculum content formed the dependent variables.

3.2 Population and Sampling Techniques

This study was conducted in Adventist-owned schools in Central Kenya Conference (CKC) of the Seventh-day Adventist church. CKC covers sixteen political counties nationwide and eight stations according to the church geographical demarcation. There were 64 primary schools with total enrollment of 9,643 pupils (statistical data presented in the CKC end year executive committee report on 24th – 25th November 2015 by the Education Director).

The study covered all the 8 grades (classes) in primary section. The grades were grouped into 3 categories. Grade group A comprised of the lower primary section class 1-3. Grade group B comprised of the middle primary section class 5 and 6. Grade and group C comprised of the upper primary section class 6, 7 and 8.

Purposive sampling was used to select only the Adventist owned primary schools with the complete primary section running from grade 1 through grade 8, under the same managerial and environmental setting. The purpose of this sampling was to minimize extraneous variables that could be influenced by the diversity of ecological factors in the in-complete level of the primary school section. The assumption here was that the parents under similar managerial and environmental settings were likely to generate data that was comparable within the grade levels. The day school setting enhanced a daily connection between the school and the home thus ensuring an active relationship between the school and home environment.

Total number of 22 primary schools was selected from different stations across the conference with a total number of 5630 primary school pupils.

Due to limitations in this research study, it was unrealistic to include all the parent population as the participants. Cluster sampling was used to classify schools according their stations, only five stations were included in the study. Three stations did not have any school that had a complete primary school section. Some had only pre-schools while others had grades up to class 6 or 7. Using random sampling, the researcher randomly picked one school from each cluster thus having a total number of five primary schools with the enrollment of 1200 pupils all together.

Finally, to get a sufficient and non-biased sample size, the sample size table was used to dictate the sample size of the participating parents regardless of their children's grades. According to the table (appendix K), the recommended minimum sample size of population of 1200, at a confidence level of 95%, and a margin of error (degree of accuracy) of 0.05 would be 291 children in primary schools. To have a balanced number of parents in each grade group, a ratio of 1:1:1 was used. Therefore, the total sum of participants N= 291 was divided by 3 to get N= 97. Equal number of parents from each grade group was therefore selected to participate in the study.

Purposive sampling was used to ensure that the expected sample size was realized by maximizing the school enrollments where by the school(s) with more parents in specific grade group compensated for the schools with fewer parents in the respective grade groups.

3.3 Research Instruments

The research design adopted in this study necessitated the use of the survey questionnaires for data collection. There was one type of questionnaire for parents with two sections. The questionnaire was researcher-developed. The researcher, developed section 1 of the questionnaire based on the related studies and literature of parental involvement according to Epstein's six typologies while section 2 was developed based on the curriculum content as described in the syllabus documents of each grade.

Section 1 had 3 parts. The first part gathered demographic information about the parent. The second part had 6 sub-sections with 42 items of information on the level of parental involvement in the six typologies based on the school practices. These typologies included parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaboration. A four-point scale with the choices of Disagree (1), Tend to disagree (2), Tend to agree (3) and Agree (4) was used to tabulate the levels of parental involvement in their children education. In order to define the levels of parents' involvement, the mean scores of the respondent groups were interpreted as follows: 1.00-1.49 = Disagree, 1.50-2.49 = tend to disagree, 2.50-3.49 = tend to agree and 3.50- 4.00 = agree.

Section two of the parent questionnaire gathered information on the parent familiarity on the curriculum content based on specific subjects in each grade group. Grade group A, B and C had 50 items from the 5 subjects namely English, Kiswahili, Mathematics, Science and Social studied in the primary school level of education.

A four-point scale with the choice of Not at all confident (1), Not very confident (2), somehow confident (3) and Very confident (4), was used to ascertain the level of parent knowledge base in education of their children. In order to define the levels of parent education knowledge base, the mean scores of the respondent groups were interpreted as follows: 1.00-1.49 = Not at all confident, 1.50-2.49 = Not very confident, 2.50-3.49 = Somehow confident and 3.50- 4.00 = Very confident.

3.5 Validity of the Instrument

To ensure that the instruments measured the construct, content, and face validity, the researcher consulted the supervisors who were both specialists in curriculum studies and research methodologies who examined the content of the instruments and indicated the degree to which they gather the intended information. Suggestions made by the supervisors were used to improve the instruments. Peer review was also used to enhance content validity of the instruments.

3.6 Reliability of the Instrument

Joppe (2000) defined reliability as the extent to which results are consistent over time and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered reliable. To ensure reliability in this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to measure internal consistency of the instrument within each category studied. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is a measure of internal consistency showing the degree to which all items in the test measures the same attribute (Polit & Beck, 2008). A reliability coefficient of 0.60 and above was acceptable.

The instruments were piloted in one school, which was not to be involved in the actual study. The survey data on which the reliabilities were established were based on results collected from 47 parents from grade 1-8 in primary school level of education. The reliability levels indicated the surveys were effective for research purposes. The reliability coefficients for the parent surveys ranged from moderate ($\alpha = .70$) to high ($\alpha = .95$). This was a respectable level of reliability when considering that coefficients are most reliable as they approach 1.0 on a 0 to 1 continuum.

The piloted instruments were improved by excluding those statements that contributed to the increase of the reliability upon their deletion. The instruments were also improved by restructuring the words in some statement to make them more relevant and positive. A few questionnaires were analyzed to check the appropriateness of the analyzing procedures. After the approval of the

supervisor in charge of research methods, the improved version of the questionnaire was used to collect the data.

3.7 Data Gathering Procedures

Before the initiation of the study, the proposal and the research instruments were submitted to the supervisors and ethics committee of the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton for approval for data collection and for ethics clearance, respectively. A letter of introduction was obtained to seek for the research permit from Ministry of Education, Science and Technology department of the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Permission was then obtained from the office of the Education Director in the conference and from the principals of the selected schools to use the parents from their schools for this study.

Using the contact information gathered from the schools prior to the data collection exercise, the researcher booked an appointment time with each one of them and arrange the mode of questionnaire delivery and the appropriate time and place when the two parties could meet to issue and fill the questionnaire. On the appointment day and time, the researcher introduced herself to the participant and issued the participant with the letter of informed consent and the questionnaire.

The researcher had initially planned to wait upon the participant to fill the questionnaire and attended to any clarification needed. However, most parents requested to be left with the questionnaire overnight to study and fill the questionnaire keenly. The parents then sent the pupil with the questionnaire whereby the researcher received the questionnaire back through the school administration. Only a few parents were able to fill and complete the questionnaire as the researcher waited upon him/her. Upon the completion of the filling of the questionnaires in whichever way, the researcher checked if all the parts of the instruments were filled as expected.

3.8 Statistical Treatment of Data

After the collection of data, questionnaires from the field were reviewed and coded to quantify the data. The questionnaire information was entered into the computer software- Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. After entering the information in the variable view and verifying the accuracy in the data view, the analysis was done according to the research question. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data.

For research question 1, descriptive analysis was processed to provide summaries about percentages, means, and standard deviation as the statistical measure to

determine the level of parental involvement in type 1-6 of Epstein typologies (parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community) in the current school practices based on grade groups A, B and C.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical aspects of this study were effectively addressed following the guidelines as proposed by (Bryman & Bell, 2007). First, respect for the dignity of research participants was prioritized in every aspect of interaction and communication. Second, full consent was obtained from the participants prior to the data collection exercise and the protection of the privacy of research participants was ensured. Third, adequate level of confidentiality of the research data was ensured by coding the managing and storing the data documents in restricted access only to be availed to the research team associated to this study. Anonymity of individuals and schools participating in the research was also ensured by unrevealing the names, identity, and any link of the individual participants and schools. Finally, any type of communication and reporting in relation to the research was done with honesty and transparency avoiding any type of misleading information, as well as representation of primary data findings in a biased way.

The research instruments were submitted to the supervisors and ethics committee of the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton for scrutiny, in order to ensure that the questionnaires did not contain any degrading, discriminating or any other unacceptable language that could be offensive to any member of the sample group. The committee also ensured that the questionnaire had been designed to collect information directly related to the research questions, and no private or personal questions were asked from respondents.

4. Results and Discussion

The following research question was addressed: *What is the level of parental involvement in type 1-6 of Epstein typologies in the current school practices based on grade groups A, B, and C?*

The research question was deconstructed in order to reveal each of the six parental involvement typologies (parenting, communications, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community) based on grade group A, B, and C. The mean response on a 4-point scale was interpreted as shown in table 2.

Table 2: Scale interpretation

Weight	Range	Verbal Interpretation
1	1.00 - 1.49	Disagree/ Very Low/Poor
2	1.50 – 2.49	Tend to disagree/Low/Below average/Fair
3	2.50 – 3.49	Tend to agree/High/Average/Good
4	3.50 – 4.00	Agree/Very High/Very good

Parenting Typology

Parenting typology: *What is the level of parenting typology in the current school practices in grade group A, B, and C?*

Table 4 presents results of the mean rating of parenting typology in the three grade groups. The five items in the questionnaire on the parenting typology have been disaggregated among the three grade groups in order to gain a better understanding of how the different groups felt about the items, and these results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Mean Rating for Parenting Typology Based on Grade Group A, B, and C (N=97)

Our school:	Grade A Mean	Std. dev.	Grade B Mean	Std. dev.	Grade C Mean	Std. dev.
1. Our school conducts workshop and provides information for parents on child development and age characteristic in each grade.	3.31	1.024	3.14	1.099	3.29	1.172
2. Our school produces information for parents that is clear, usable and linked to children's success in school.	3.62	.783	3.51	.855	3.64	.819
3. Our school asks parents for information about children's goals, strengths and talents.	3.29	1.070	3.15	1.130	3.27	1.141
4. Our school provides parents with information/training on developing home conditions or environment that support learning.	3.16	1.067	3.02	1.181	3.20	1.151
5. Our school cares about family life and good relationship between parents and their children.	3.52	.843	3.43	.923	3.60	.874
Valid N (listwise)						
Mean rating for parenting typology in grade group A, B, and C.	3.38	.660	3.25	.754	3.40	.760

According to table 3, all the parents in the three grade groups tended to agree that the school enhanced their parental involvement through parenting skills and engagement at an average level. Different items rated different across the three groups with item 2 (our school produces information for parents that is clear, usable and linked to children's success in school) rating the highest with ($M=3.62$, $SD= .78$) in grade group A, ($M=3.51$, $SD=.85$) in grade group B, and ($M=3.64$, $SD= .81$) in grade group C respectively. This indicated that parents in the three groups agreed that the school produced information that was relevant and usable. It also means that the level of parental involvement in seeking information about the children was average.

Item 4 (our school provides parents with information and training on developing home conditions or environment that support learning), rated the lowest among the three groups with the mean ($M=3.16$, $SD=1.06$) in grade group A, $M=3.02$, $SD=1.18$) in grade group B, and ($M=3.20$, $SD=1.15$) in grade group C. This results contradicted

results in item 2 since the parents now felt that even though the school provided usable information about parenting knowledge, the school did not offer adequate training to the parents on how to develop home conditions that support learning.

Schools can assist families in meeting their responsibilities as parents of children at every age level by providing activities that increase their knowledge and strengthen their skills in an effort to influence their child's growth and development (Epstein et al., 2009). Epstein (2001) suggested some activities that may strengthen parents' understanding of development, assist with parenting skills, and improve home conditions that may support learning to include but not limited to family support programs, parent education workshops, and home visits Activities. Epstein cautioned that it is critical to provide information to all families, not just the families who attend the workshops or meetings at school. Often families who do not attend or cannot attend are the families who really need the information (Epstein, 2001).

Communications Typology: *What is the level of communications typology in the current school practices based on grade group A, B, and C?*

Table 4: Mean Rating for Communications Typology Based on Grade Group A, B, and C. (N=97)

Our school:	Grade A (Class 1-3)		Grade B (Class 4-5)		Grade C (Class 6-8)	
	Mean	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.
1. Our school establishes clear two-way channels for communication from home to school and from school to home.	3.45	.968	3.21	1.089	3.40	1.047
2. Our school is good about staying in touch with me through letters, phone calls or e-mails.	3.45	.968	2.94	1.223	2.95	1.286
3. Our school conducts a formal conference with every parent at least once a year.	3.40	.975	3.11	1.117	3.12	1.210
4. Our school conducts an orientation for new parents.	3.10	1.159	3.09	1.091	2.86	1.291
5. Our school provides clear information about curriculum, assessments, and achievement level and report cards.	3.57	.900	3.38	.994	3.57	.923
6. Our school contacts families of students having academic or behaviour problems.	3.46	.902	3.31	1.004	3.33	1.077
7. Our school builds policies that encourage all teachers to communicate frequently with parents about their curriculum plans, expectations for homework, and how parents can help.	3.38	.951	3.24	1.039	3.37	1.074
8. Our school briefs parents on the syllabus content and coverage in every grade termly or yearly.	3.33	.954	3.09	1.119	3.13	1.142
Mean rating for communications typology in grade group A, B, and C.	3.39	.584	3.17	.722	3.22	.789

Table 4 indicates the mean ratings for parents on the eight items of the communication typology among the three grade groups. The mean rating for communication typology in grade group A was ($M=3.39$, $SD= .58$) in grade group A, while grade group B ($M= 3.17$, $SD= .72$) and finally grade group C ($M= 3.22$, $SD=.79$). According to the overall mean for the three grade groups, the parents tended to agree that there was an average two-way communication between the parents and the school. Schools communicate with families about programs, curricula and student’s progress, and create two-way communication channels between school and home (Epstein & Salinas, 2004).

Most of the items had a mean response of greater than 3.00 except item 2 (Our school is good about staying in touch with me through letters, phone calls or e-mails.), in

grade group B and C which had ($M= 2.94$, $M= 2.95$) respectively. In this era of technology explosion, schools and teachers may have challenges in deciding which communication method is best for his/her parents. Communicating with parents is both an essential task and a bit of a chore. While e-mail and class websites have increased the avenues for reaching parents, they lack the personal touch of a phone call or a handwritten note. A teacher will likely need to use a mix of phone calls, e-mail, handwritten notes and class website (if possible) to reach parents. In short, the teacher/ school will need to use school-communication efforts that are targeted, proactive, and direct; that may have larger impacts than approaches that are more general and indirect. (Altschul, 2011; Harris and Goodall, 2008).

Item 4 (Our school conducts an orientation for new parents.) also rated low with ($M=2.86$, $SD=1.29$) in grade group C. Communication with new families is widely seen as important in helping families engage with a new school environment. New parents can be oriented by being invited to visit the school and meet their child's teacher or sending a formal "Welcome" packet to the home containing information regarding the school (Epstein & Sheldon, 2005).

Item 5 (Our school provides clear information about curriculum, assessments, and achievement level and report cards.) rated high with ($M=3.57$, $SD=.90$) in grade group A, ($M= 3.38$, $SD=.99$) in grade group B, and ($M=3.57$, $SD=.92$) in grade group C. This is encouraging since the ultimate goal of the communicating dimension is to keep families informed about what is happening at the school, keep them involved in school programs, and keep them up to date on the academic progress of their children (Epstein, 2008). Parents value relationships with teachers,

believing these relationships will lead to better and more frequent communications including conferences, updates, newsletters, and informal discussions of progress. In many cases, these should be school-initiated activities (Epstein, 2008).

Although the results in this study indicated that there were two-way communications between school and home, the level of communication was at an average mean. The class teachers and other school staff can elevate the communication levels especially on curriculum issues by encouraging and supporting home-school communication. This can be done by encouraging frequent discussions about school programs and the student's academic progress and achievement via newsletters from the school, telephone conversations between parent and teacher, parent-teacher conferences and personally extending invitations to the parents to attend school activities. (Epstein, 1987; Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Volunteering Typology: *What is the level of volunteering typology in the current school practices based on grade group A, B, and C?*

Table 5: Mean Rating for Volunteering Typology Based on Grade Group A, B, and C (N=97)

Our school:	Grade A (Class 1-3)		Grade B (Class 4-5)		Grade C (Class 6-8)	
	Mean	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.
1. Our school provides a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about tutorial, parenting, and other things that affect their children.	3.02	1.145	2.89	1.189	3.11	1.198
2. Our school creates flexible volunteering and school events schedules, enabling parents who work to participate.	3.08	1.092	2.81	1.219	2.93	1.210
3. Our school recognizes volunteers for their time and efforts.	3.23	1.066	3.10	1.094	3.10	1.123
4. Our school encourages families and community to be involved with the school in variety of ways e.g. assisting in classroom, giving motivational talks, monitoring halls and dormitories, leading activities like worship etc.	3.24	1.028	3.28	1.038	3.14	1.181
Mean rating for volunteering typology in grade group A, B, C.	3.14	.805	3.02	.897	3.07	.946

Table 5 represents the mean rating for volunteering typology in grade group A, B, and C. The overall mean rating for grade group A was ($M= 3.14$, $SD=.80$), the mean for grade group B was ($M=3.02$, $SD=.90$), while the mean for grade group C ($M=3.07$, $SD= .95$).

Volunteering typology involves organizing and recruiting parental support and help. Parents in this study tended to agree that their school enhanced their parental engagement through voluntary activities. The mean ranged from ($M=3.02$, – $M=3.14$) which showed the parents level of parental involvement in volunteering

typology was average. However, although the parents rated volunteering typology high, item 2 (Our school creates flexible volunteering and school events schedules, enabling parents who work to participate) rated least among the four items with the ($M=3.08$, $SD=1.09$) in grade group A, ($M=2.81$, $SD=1.21$) in grade group B, and ($M=2.93$, $SD=1.21$) in grade group C respectively. This could mean that, probably the parents were willing to volunteer in school activities but the school limited their will by not creating a flexible and enabling environment or not planning for parents' volunteering programmes.

The Nemours Foundation (1995-2016) noted that parent volunteers offer a huge resource and support base for the school community while showing their children the importance of participating in the large community. Parents provide valuable service to our school. Through the Parent Volunteer Program, parents have the opportunity to meet each other and build community. Additionally, schools gain access to talents and abilities that would otherwise have to be funded.

Epstein and Dauber (1991) identified lack of planning and lack of mutual understanding as the two greatest barriers to effective parent involvement. Epstein and Dauber (1991) advised that school staff wishing to institute effective volunteering programs would need to be both open-minded and well organized in their approach to engaging parent participation. Epstein and Dauber also established that the most successful parent participation efforts are those, which offer parents a variety of roles in the context of a well-organized and long-lasting program. Parents will need to be able to choose from a range of activities, which accommodate different schedules, preferences, and capabilities (The Nemours Foundation, 1995-2016). As part of the planning process, teachers and administrators will need to assess their own readiness for involving parents and determine how they wish to engage and utilize them (Waterman, & Harry, 2008).

Learning at home Typology: *What is the level of learning at home typology in the current school practices based on grade group A, B, and C?*

Table 11 represents the mean rating for learning at home typology in grade group A, B, and C. The overall mean rating for grade group A was ($M=3.32$, $SD=.68$), the mean for grade group B was ($M=3.21$, $SD=.76$), while the mean for grade group C was ($M= 3.27$, $SD=.92$). There was no much discrepancy in the mean within the items because all the items had a mean of 3.00 and above except item 5 in grade group B (Our school schedules regular interactive homework that requires students to demonstrate and discuss what they are learning with a family member) which had ($M=2.85$).

Epstein et al. (2002) had earlier pointed out that the biggest setback that schools face when incorporating this parental involvement is coming up with interactive homework on a regular basis that would help parents to keep track of their children's schoolwork and content. However, despite the challenges, Sheldon and Epstein (2005) pointed out that by providing enrichment materials to students to take home, schools can facilitate the home-based learning environment for economically or educationally restricted families.

Learning at home parental involvement typology, involves providing ideas and information to the families on the different ways they can help the students to undertake the curriculum related activities such as homework and decisions that may impact on their academic life. When parents are engaged with students' learning in the home and work collaboratively with their children on schoolwork, significant and meaningful improvements are consistently observed for both standardized test scores and grades (Sheldon and Epstein, 2005; Harris and Goodall, 2008; Altschul, 2011).

Table 6: Mean Rating for Learning at Home Typology in Grade Group A, B, and C.N=97

Our school:	Grade A (Class 1-3)		Grade B (Class 4-5)		Grade C (Class 6-8)	
	Mean	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.
1. Our school provides information to parents on how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home.	3.43	.923	3.26	1.111	3.28	1.170
2. Our school provides ongoing and specific information to parents on how to assist students with skills that they need to improve.	.43	.877	3.43	.956	3.42	1.029
3. Our school makes parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to listen to their child read or read aloud with their child.	3.47	.879	3.42	.899	3.28	1.161
4. Our school assists families in helping students set academic goals, select subjects, courses and programs.	3.36	.959	.35	.979	3.24	1.107
5. Our school schedules regular interactive homework that requires students to demonstrate and discuss what they are learning with a family member.	3.23	.984	2.85	1.193	3.13	1.230
6. Provides parents with information and skills that the child should master in each grade level.	3.21	1.060	3.14	1.099	3.28	1.097
7. Our school encourages parents to own and familiarize themselves with the syllabus and relevant manuals in their children's grades.	3.08	1.124	3.02	1.207	3.25	1.155
Valid N (listwise)						
Mean rating for learning at home typology in grade group A, B, and C.	3.32	.684	3.21	.763	3.27	.915

Decision- making Typology: *What is the level of decision-making typology in the current school practices based on grade group A, B, and C?*

Table 6 shows the mean for the 6 items in this section of the survey analyzed according to the grade groups. The overall mean rating for grade group A was ($M=3.36$, $SD=.60$), while grade group B recorded ($M=3.19$, $SD=.72$), and lastly, the mean for grade group C ($M=3.24$, $SD=.83$). Generally, the parents in this study tended to agree that the school involved them in making some decisions in the school.

Item 1(Our school has active PTA and other parent organization) rated high with ($M=3.57$, $SD=.84$) in grade group A, ($M=3.40$, $SD=.97$) in grade group B, and ($M=3.49$, $SD=.98$) in grade group C respectively. This was a positive indicator of good school management. Decision-making activities include the voices of families in helping to develop mission statements, designing, reviewing, improving school policies, and helping to aid in creating policies, which positively affect students and families (Epstein, 2008). Parents air their opinions through PTAs and PTOs. Parents in this study indicated that they attended the parents' meetings and that some of them were involved in the school management committees.

Item 2 (our school involves parents in revising the school curricula), rated low with ($M=3.19$, $SD=1.05$) in grade group A, ($M=3.04$, $SD=1.14$) in grade group B, and ($M=3.08$, $SD=1.15$) in grade group C respectively. This can be attributed to the nature of curriculum design process in Kenya. Kenya uses a mandated curriculum designed and developed by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD). This does not mean that other stakeholders are silent about the activity; however, parents' involvement in curriculum revision is passive.

Zhou (2015) acknowledged that the development of school curriculum entails involvement of different stakeholders who are either involved with the school program directly or indirectly, they may include teachers, parents and specialists in the field of education. It is important at this level to note that curriculum development and design does not end with the curriculum developers at the national level, but the process progresses down to the schools and to the class.

To enhance parental participation in the process of curriculum development at the school level, the school should air the parents' opinions as well as involving the parents actively in the interpretation of crucial segments

of the curriculum content. Adventist schools in Kenya use the national curriculum, therefore, parents as key stakeholders have the right to review, to request for inclusion of part(s) of the curriculum that will reinforce the Adventist philosophical perspectives of the school and vice versa.

Item 5 (our school includes students (along with parents) in decision-making groups) rated the least among the statements with ($M=3.12$, $SD=2.94$) in grade group A, ($M=2.94$, $SD=1.19$) in grade group B, and ($M=3.08$, $SD=1.19$) in grade group C. Student participation in decision making refers to the work of student representative bodies - such as school councils, student cabinets and the prefectural body.

Huddleston (2007) felt that students should be involved in all areas of school life. He adds that the range of activities that make up the work of a school can be categorized in several different ways. However, whichever way it is categorized, one should expect students to have opportunities for involvement in each major area – in a school's: ethos and climate – including rules, rewards and sanctions, curriculum, teaching and learning, management and development planning.

Table 7: Mean Rating for Decision-making Typology Based on Grade Group A, B, and C
N=97

Our school:	Grade A (Class 1-3)		Grade B (Class 4-5)		Grade C (Class 6-8)	
	Mean	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.
1. Our school has active PTA and other parent organization.	3.57	.840	3.40	.975	3.49	.980
2. Our school involves parents in revising the school curricula.	3.19	1.054	3.04	1.145	3.08	1.152
3. Our school includes parent representatives on the school's advisory council, improvement team, or other committees.	3.46	.890	3.27	1.016	3.26	1.092
4. Our school involves parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely way in the planning, review, and improvement of curriculum programs.	3.34	.888	3.06	1.097	3.10	1.150
5. Our school includes students (along with parents) in decision-making groups.	3.12	1.092	2.94	1.197	3.08	1.196
6. Our school involves parents in behavioral and disciplinary issues.	3.51	.868	3.40	.986	3.44	.957
Mean rating for decision making typology in grade group A, B, and C.	3.36	.596	3.19	.722	3.24	.825

Others have had different perspective to student participation in decision-making. For example, Magadla (2007) believed that students must remain passive and receive instructions from parents and teachers. Squelch (1999) and Magadla (2007) on the other hand suggested that students can participate but only to a certain degree.

In their study, Tikoko and Kiprop (2011) found out that in as far as student participation in decision-making was concerned; students were not invited to participate in majority of administrative, curriculum and student welfare issues in secondary schools in Kenya. The study found out that students were excluded from key decision-making areas of the school. Respondents were categorical that student participation was unnecessary on the aforementioned decision making areas mainly due to their youth and lack of expertise on technical tasks. It was also felt that students should concern themselves with core issues such as learning and not in affairs, they knew nothing about. Probably, the schools in this study also felt that the students should be least involved in decision-making activities and the responsibility be only upheld by the adults.

According to Tikoko and Kiprop (2011), calls for inclusions of students in the decision-making structure in schools have led to various attempts by the Ministry of Education to put in place structures for inclusion. The most prominent of this was the formation of the Kenya Secondary School Student Council (KSSSC) formed in 2009 with a view to making secondary school governance more participatory. In this new arrangement, students would be part of decision-making to ensure their interests are adopted in the administration of schools (Tikoko and Kiprop, 2011).

Collaborating with community Typology: *What is the level of collaborating with community typology in the current school practices based on grade group A, B, and C?*

Table 9 presented the mean ratings for the sixth typology of parental involvement. The mean response for the collaborating with community typology rated lowest among the six typologies. The overall mean for grade group A ($M=3.06, SD=.80$), the mean for grade group B ($M= 2.97, SD=.83$), while the mean for grade group C ($M=2.99, SD=.92$). Although the general rating indicates that the parents tended to agree that the school collaborated with the community at the scale between

2.50- 3.49, the overall mean rated lowest among the six typologies.

Collaboration with the community is the process of identifying and integrating services and resources that are provided by the community with the aim of strengthening family practices, school programs as well as the student’s development and learning (Epstein & Jansorn, 2004). Reasons for this typology scoring the lowest among the other typologies in this study, may not be specifically tagged to one reason and may differ from one school to the other. However, there are common challenges that face many schools in general.

Epstein (2005) pointed out that there are challenges that schools face as they try to implement this type of parental

involvement. First, Epstein noted that matching the school goals with the contributions of members of the community is not an easy task, as societies tend to provide assistance in varied forms. In addition, it is often difficult to ensure that parents and students receive a fair representation of the few resources provided by the community (Epstein, 2005). Christian schools for example, may be struggling to maintain their philosophies and safeguarding the status qua of their institution against the ‘secular’ philosophies. Adventist schools may not be excluded from such believes. Anderson (2009) in his writing on ‘how to kill Adventist education’ asserted that many of the Adventist schools, while not intentionally so, are not experts in presenting themselves to their communities.

Table 8: Mean Rating for Collaborating with Community Typology Based on Grade Group A, B, and C
N=97

Our school:	Grade A (Class 1-3)		Grade B (Class 4-5)		Grade C (Class 6-8)	
	Mean	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.
1. Our school involves families in locating and utilizing community resources.	2.92	1.124	3.08	1.087	3.00	1.155
2. Our school provides a community resource information for parents and students with information on community services, programs, and agencies.	.16	.038	.96	.117	.13	.178
3. Our school works with local businesses, industries, and community organizations on programs to enhance student skills and learning.	3.06	.126	3.08	1.048	3.00	1.173
4. Our school opens its building for use by the community after school hours e.g., for seminars and conferences.	3.15	1.149	2.84	1.161	2.84	1.256
5. Our school offers after-school programs for students with support from community businesses, agencies, and volunteers.	2.98	1.155	2.88	1.111	2.98	1.172
Mean rating for collaborating with community typology in grade group A, B, and C.	.06	.806	2.97	.832	2.99	.924

No wonder, item 4 (Our school opens its building for use by the community after school hours e.g. for seminars and conferences.) and item 5 (Our school offers after-school programs for students with support from community businesses, agencies, and volunteers) had a mean score of less than 3.00. However, it is important to remember that schools cannot operate in separation with the community.

Highly effective schools have high levels of parent and community engagement (Mertkan, 2011). Knowledge about school-community collaborations is a developing area of research and practice in schools. Strong school-community engagement can bring a range of benefits

(Anderson & Curtin, 2010). These are not only to students, but also to teachers, schools, partners and the wider community. For these benefits to occur, school-community partners need to have a shared vision, work in genuinely collaborative ways, and monitor the progress and effectiveness of their partnership activities. Sharing the results of this good practice means others can recognize the important role that community groups can play in supporting education and schools.

Preparing twenty-first century learners depends on everyone in the community seeing this as their business (Anderson & Curtin, 2010). Successful school-parent-

community partnerships are not stand-alone projects or add-on programs but are well integrated with the school's overall mission and goals. Parent-school-partnerships improve schools; strengthen families, build community support, and increase student achievement and success.

Table 9 presents the summary tables of the results of the variables in study's research question. The table summarizes the mean rating for the parental involvement in the six typologies in order to analyze the level of parental involvement in all the grade groups.

**Table 9: Summary for the Mean Rating for Parental Involvement Typologies in all Grade Groups
N=97**

Typologies	Grade Group		Standard Deviation
		Mean	
Parenting	A	3.38	.66
	B	3.25	.75
	C	3.40	.76
Communications	A	3.39	.58
	B	3.17	.72
	C	3.22	.79
Volunteering	A	3.14	.80
	B	3.02	.80
	C	3.07	.94
Learning at home	A	3.32	.68
	B	3.21	.76
	C	3.27	.92
Decision making	A	3.36	.60
	B	3.19	.72
	C	3.24	.81
Collaborating with community	A	3.06	.81
	B	2.97	.83
	C	2.99	.92

The results in the descriptive analysis for research question 1 showed that the mean score for the level of parental involvement in the six typologies ranged between, 2.50 – 3.45 as shown in Table 9 above. This indicated that the parents' level of involvement in the current school practices was average.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether the parents in the Adventist schools in Central Kenya Conference were knowledgeable with their children's curriculum through the assessment of how confident the parents were in assisting their children in curriculum content as described in the syllabus of each grade. The study also examined the level of parental involvement in type 1-6 of Epstein typologies in the current school practices based on grade groups A, B and C. Finally, the study sought the parental involvement typologies that best predicted a statistically significant relationship in the level of parents' education knowledge base in curriculum content based on grade group A, B, and C.

The findings indicate that parents in this study were involved in their children's education through participating in the school practices on an average level. Parenting typology received the highest rating while collaborating with community received the lowest rating.

The study makes the following recommendations:

1. Give interactive homework that requires parents and children to work together— particularly for grade group A and B.
2. Provide enrichment materials that students can take home to use with their families.
3. Provide a checklist where parents can indicate the areas they have difficulties in helping their children with homework. Using the checklists, the teachers can plan for personalized help.
4. Initiate teacher development programmes in both insets and in-service training sessions on strategies to enhance parental involvement in curriculum.

- Examine school practices and policies that may be regarded as barriers to parent involvement. Create an action plan on how to get rid of the barriers.

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