



# Parental Marital Status as a Determinant of Their Involvement in Pre-primary School Activities in Yatta Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya

Paul Musyoki Makau, Hannah Kangara & Hudson Ouko Ong'ang'a  
School of Education  
Mount Kenya University  
Email: [paulmakau10@gmail.com](mailto:paulmakau10@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** Parents' involvement in pre-primary school activities is important in ensuring that learners acquire quality education. However, in Yatta Sub-County, levels of parents' involvement in school meetings, volunteering activities and learning material development is low. The study sought to examine how parental marital status determines their involvement in public pre-primary school activities in Yatta Sub-County. The study was guided by the dynamic theory of determinants and the parental involvement theory. The study adopted a mixed methodology and thus applied concurrent triangulation research design. Target population was 256 respondents which comprised 64 headteachers, 128 pre-primary schoolteachers and 64 parent representatives from which a sample of 155 respondents was determined using Yamane's Formula. This consisted of 15 headteachers, 15 parents' representatives and 125 pre-primary schoolteachers. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically along the objectives and presented in narrative forms. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively by computing frequencies and percentages while inferential analysis was done by running Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis in Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS 25) and presented using tables. The study established that parents rarely participated in pre-primary school education of their children. Parents rarely attended school meetings, participated in volunteering activities or development of learning materials. This could be attributed to their marital status. The study recommends that parents value the education of their children regardless of their marital status and participate in their pre-primary school activities. They also focus on creating a stable routine at home that includes designated study times, emotional support and encouragement.

**Keywords:** Pre-primary schools, Parental marital status, Determinants, Parental involvement, Pre-primary school activities

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## 1. Introduction

Parents play an important role in the education of their children and there are positive correlations between parents' involvement in their children's learning outcomes. In the United States, Duncan and Brooks-Gunn (2023) posit that the processes by which parents are involved in their children's education may affect children's development directly or indirectly. Direct effects may consist of enrichments to the child's home

learning environment and parent-child interactions. This indicates that families are responsible for preparing their children with the necessary skills in the early years. However, the involvement of parents in their children's education depends heavily on their marital status. Marital status refers to the legal and social recognition of an individual's relationship with a partner. In most cases, it includes categories such as married, single, divorced or separated (Lam, Park & Lee, 2023). In the words of

Gonzalez, Carillo and Ortega (2022), parental marital status affects not only the emotional and financial stability of families but also the levels of engagement parents have in their children's schooling. For instance, married couples are typically found to have more stable financial resources and a greater capacity to engage in school-related activities compared to single or divorced parents (Hill & Tyson, 2021). Parental involvement in pre-primary school settings.

In the United States, studies have shown that married parents are more likely to attend parent-teacher conferences, volunteer for school events, and participate in other school-related activities than single or divorced parents (Wang & Hsu, 2024). This trend has been linked to the increased availability of time and resources that married parents typically have, which allows them to engage more actively in school activities (Kramer, Johnson & Lee, 2022). Similarly, in the United Kingdom, Lister, Richardson and Slater (2020) posit that single parents, particularly mothers, faced more significant barriers to involvement due to time constraints, financial challenges, and lack of support systems. Divorced parents also reported lower participation rates compared to married parents, primarily because of the split household responsibilities (Moss & O'Brien, 2023).

In Brazil, parents from low-income and single-parent households were less likely to engage in pre-primary school activities due to financial instability and work obligations (Lima, Silva & Barbosa, 2021). This situation was similar in many African countries, where single-parent families often struggled to balance work and childcare responsibilities, limiting their involvement in school activities (Asare, Agyemang & Owusu, 2018; Onyango, Akinyi & Kinyua, 2020). In Tanzania, where communal living is prevalent, extended families often play a significant role in supporting children's education, helping alleviate the participation gap between single and married parents. In Kenya, Mwasaru and Kamau (2022) assert that married parents were more actively involved in their children's pre-primary education than their divorced or single counterparts. This trend was linked to better financial stability and stronger community support for married families. Conversely, single parents, particularly mothers, faced challenges such as a lack of time and resources to participate in school activities. Yatta Sub-County is no exception with the level of parents' involvement in the education of their children at the pre-primary school level being still low. For example, a report by the Ministry of Education (2024) shows that parents leave the education of their children to teachers once they admit them to pre-primary school. Many parents do not attend meetings, nor do they go to school even on invitation by pre-primary school teachers (MoE, 2024). This is attributed to many dynamics which determine the extent to which parents participate in the pre-primary school education of their children. Thus, this study sought to examine how

parents' marital status influences their involvement in pre-primary school activities.

## 1.1 Research Objectives

The study sought to address the following objectives:

1. To assess the status of parental involvement in pre-primary school activities in Yatta Sub-County.
2. To establish how parental marital status determines their involvement in pre-primary school activities in Yatta Sub-County.

## 2. Literature Review

Parents' marital status is critical to the socio-emotional development of children which, in turn, influences their learning outcomes. Cherlin (2021) opines that most parents are either single, married, separated or divorced, which usually has an impact on the child's learning outcomes. In a study conducted in San Francisco, Blake (2023) revealed that children who grow up in single-parent families are less likely to complete high school or even attend college than children who grow up with both parents. Blake (2023) further found that this relationship has aroused considerable concern among policymakers and scholars. Especially, in light of recent projections that half of all children born in the last decade will spend some time living in a single-parent family before reaching 18 years old. Education is a key factor that determines long-time economic success and the association between family disruption and lower educational attainment raises the question of the sharp increase in family instability during the past two decades will have lasting negative consequences on the educational attainment of the next generation (Blake, 2023).

Consistent with these assertions, Bumpas (2024), in a study carried out in the Netherlands, found that one reason why children from single-parent families are less likely to do well in school is the precarious economic position of their families. Bumpas (2024) further indicates that mother-only families are more likely than other families to be poor, and their poverty is more extreme than that of other groups. Bumpas (2024) further revealed that even among single-parent families living above the poverty line, income insecurity is commonplace. In a study conducted on the intergenerational effects of family disruption in China, Beane and David (2023) established that income account for between 30 and 50 percent of the difference in pre-primary school among children from intact and non-intact families. Sociologists have to ask how child-rearing practices and the parent-child relationship are affected by the family position and single parenthood and how these affect the longtime time well-being of children (Beane & David, 2023).

Children growing up in a non-intact family is more likely to drop out of school. This disengagement from school is associated with low educational aspirations since high aspirations are a critical factor predicting education achievement (Wilkins, 2024). A good measure of behavioral disengagement is the learners' attendance record; attitude towards working hard in school and going to primary and secondary schools are good indicators of the affective aspect of disengagement. Meanwhile, Barker and Stevenson (2022) noted that the average income of stepparent families is substantially higher than the income of stepparent families but somewhat lower than that of two-parent intact families. The quality of parent-child relationships in single-parent and stepparent families may be lower than in intact families because of the stress associated with divorces, remarriage, or both, because of conflict between children and step parents for 'mother's male- partners. Children in step-parent families also share corner experiences with children in single-parent families in that they live apart from a natural parent and may be exposed to conflict between their biological parents.

In Nigeria, Adesehinwa and Aremu (2020) posit that factors resident in child, family, society, government and the school may be composite causative effects for these downtrends; they, however, concluded that there is a need for each of these variables to be considered extensively, hence the focus of this study is to critically consider the family type and effects on the academic achievements of pre-primary school learners. The family, being a powerful influence on the child and its importance as a primary agent of socialization could in no doubt enhance or hinder the academic achievement of the child depending on the social climate in the family.

Variance in psycho-social, emotional fortification in the monogamy and polygamy family background could be an indicator of high or low parents' involvement in pre-primary school activities. In Kenya and Yatta Sub-County particularly, Mwangi (2023) indicates that in monogamous families, a favorable learning environment is created, while Peterson (2022) noted that conflicts are relatively easier to solve in the monogamous than in the polygamous families. Moreover, a less psychological disturbance is envisaged in the former than in the latter. Learners from polygamous families are therefore more likely to experience more problems than students from monogamous families. This invariably affects their academic achievement. This is because psychological problems are potential sources of trouble with learning. However, a study undertaken by Mwangi (2023) is not indicative of the fact that even monogamous families are not devoid of challenges that might hamper parents' involvement in pre-primary school activities. Mwangi (2023) and the literature reviewed have not indicated how different parents' marital statuses influence parents' involvement in pre-primary school activities; research gaps which this study sought to fill.

## 2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Dynamic Theory of Determinants which was proposed by Kyriakides (2009). This theory is based on the assumption that factors at different levels are expected to have not only the direct effects of parents' involvement in the education of their children, but also indirect effects. According to this theory, factors or determinants such as the values of learning to the society and the importance they attach to education, play an important role both in shaping expectations of parents and learners. In the context of this study, the determinants concerned with the parents as stakeholders refer to the actions taken by the parents to help their children take part in academic activities without hindrance since parents have a clear understanding of what is expected from them to do to improve their involvement in pre-primary school activities of their children. This theory underscores the fact parents' marital status influences the extent to which parents participate in pre-primary school activities of their children. In other words, only changes in their marital status are crucial determinants of the extent to which they get involved in the education of their children. The study was also guided by the parental involvement theory which was postulated by Palkovitz (2010). According to Palkovitz (2010), the core features of parenting, including nutrients and protection are more universally recognized and much greater consensus exists about parents who are involved in their children's education than those who are not involved (Palkovitz, 2010). This theory holds that parents can help their children practice newly acquired skills in many different, real-life settings and hence their involvement in intervention may be crucial for wider generalization and improvement of learning outcomes among pre-primary school learners. Palkovitz (2010) opines that various parental factors may potentially influence learning outcomes in children. Parents with higher education levels may be better able to understand and implement different pedagogical techniques, thereby promoting learning and generalization of new skills in their children. This theory further holds that higher parental education is positively associated with parents' achievement beliefs, higher economic status, and a more stimulating home environment, all of which may increase children's learning opportunities and attainments. In the context of this study, parents' thoughts about monitoring, planning, or worrying about their children's lives may not represent observable behaviors but may significantly influence how they interact with their children in different settings.

Parents who think at length about how they might help their children deal with personal problems or developmental issues are much more likely to be well prepared to be involved with their children positively than parents who respond to their children without much deliberation (Palkovitz, 2010). In some instances, tasks may be highly relevant to parents because they are

aversive or pleased with them. Parents who are employed and work overtime to provide financially for their children engage in indirect forms of involvement. Likewise, parents who are not employed, but pay child support or monitor their children's lives through third parties are indirectly involved. Thus, this theory is relevant in that it underscores the fact that determinants of parents' involvement in pre-primary school activities, such as level of education, occupations and income levels, marital status and attitude are key to their learning outcomes.

### 3. Methodology

This research utilized a mixed methodology and thus applied concurrent triangulation research design. Target population was 256 respondents which comprised 64 headteachers, 128 pre-primary school teachers and 64 parent representatives from which a sample of 155 respondents was determined using Yamane's Formula. Stratified sampling was used to create five strata based on the number of zones in Yatta Sub-County. To ensure proportionality, from each zone, three (3) headteachers and three (3) parents' representatives were selected using purposive sampling. However, from each zone, 25 pre-primary school teachers were selected using simple random sampling to avoid bias and favouritism. This procedure realized a sample size of 15 headteachers, 15 parents' representatives and 125 pre-primary school teachers. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from pre-primary school teachers and interviews to collect qualitative data from headteachers and parents' representatives. Data analysis began by identifying common themes from the respondents' descriptions of their experiences. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically along the objectives and presented

in narrative forms. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively by computing frequencies and percentages while inferential analysis was done by running Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis in Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS 23) and presented using tables. In this study, an ethical clearance certificate was obtained from Mount Kenya Ethical Review Committee (MKU ERC) before embarking on data collection processes. The researcher undertook to keep private any information given by the respondents that touched on their personal life. The researcher assured the respondents that no private information would be divulged to a third party. The nature and the purpose of the research were explained to the respondents by the researcher. The researcher explained to the respondents the procedure that would be followed during the data collection so that they could participate willingly. The raw data collected were filed for easy reference. Once the data were analyzed, computer printouts were filed while soft copies were stored in storage devices such as CDs and flash discs.

### 4. Results and Discussion

In this section, findings of the study as per the objectives of the study are outlined besides highlighting presentation of findings as well as discussions.

#### 4.1 Response Rates

The researcher administered 125 questionnaires to pre-primary school teachers, out of which 119 (95.2%) were successfully filled and returned. At the same time, the researcher also interviewed 13 headteachers and 11 parents' representatives. This yielded response rates shown in Table 1;

**Table 1: Response Rate**

| <b>Respondents</b>          | <b>Sampled Respondents</b> | <b>Those Who Participated</b> | <b>Achieved Return Rate (%)</b> |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Headteachers                | 15                         | 13                            | 86.7                            |
| Pre-primary School Teachers | 125                        | 119                           | 95.2                            |
| Parents' Representatives    | 15                         | 11                            | 73.3                            |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>155</b>                 | <b>143</b>                    | <b>92.3</b>                     |

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 1 shows that headteachers registered a response rate of 86.7%, pre-primary school teachers registered a response rate of 95.2% and parents' representatives registered a response rate of 73.3%. This yielded an average response rate of 92.3%, which affirmed the assertions of Creswell (2014) that any response rate above 75% is sufficient and of the acceptable levels to enable the generalization of the results to the target population.

#### 4.2 Levels of Parents' Involvement in Pre-primary School Activities

The first objective of the study sought to assess the levels of parents' involvement in pre-primary school activities. To achieve this, the researcher assessed the frequency of attendance of school meetings, school visits, volunteering activities and involvement of the material development of learners. Descriptive data were collected from pre-primary school teachers and the results are shown in Table 2:

**Table 2: Levels of Parents' Involvement in Pre-primary School Activities**

| Parents' Involvement Activities                  | Good | Fair | Below Average |
|--|------|------|---------------|
|  | %    | %    | %             |
| Attendance of school meetings                    | 30.3 | 11.8 | 6.6           |
| School visits                                    | 29.4 | 17.6 | 53.0          |
| Volunteering activities                          | 26.1 | 18.5 | 55.7          |
| Involvement in material development for learners | 32.8 | 15.1 | 52.1          |

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 2 shows that 36(30.3%), of the pre-primary school teachers indicated that parents' attendance of school meetings is good, 14(11.8%) indicated fair whereas 69(57.9%) of the pre-primary school teachers indicated below average. Similarly, 35(29.4%) of the pre-primary school teachers indicated that school visits by parents in good, 21(17.6%) stated fair whereas 63(53.0%) stated that school visits by parents are below average. Table 2 also shows that 31(26.1%) of the pre-primary school teachers stated that levels of parents' involvement in volunteering activities are good, 22(18.5%) indicated fair while 66(55.4%) stated below average. Table 2 further indicates that 39(32.8%) of the pre-primary school teachers stated that levels of parental involvement in material development for learners are good, 18(15.1%) indicated fair whereas 62(52.1%) stated below average. During the interviews, headteachers also supported the views expressed by the pre-primary school teachers that, on many occasions, parents do not frequently participate in pre-primary school activities designed for the academic growth and development of their children. Headteacher, H1, noted;

*At my school, parents rarely attend meetings unless made mandatory, they rarely visit schools on their own volition to assess how their children are progressing, rarely participate in volunteering activities, nor are they frequently taking part in the development of materials for the learning of their children while at school.*

However, parents' representatives disagreed with the headteachers and pre-primary school teachers. Parents' representative, PR1, stated:

*I value the education of my child and cannot miss attending school meetings whenever I am invited. I sometimes visit my child's school to take stock of how he is progressing and even take in volunteering activities as a motivation.*

Despite these contradictions, it is evident that the role of parents is key to the academic as well as cognitive growth and development of pre-primary school learners. The activities they undertake such as attending meetings, school visits, volunteering and material development for learners play a major role in the holistic growth of children in the pre-primary school settings. These findings corroborate the assertions of Koech (2022) that, though not often focused on much, the role of parents in the academic activities of their children in pre-primary schools cannot be wished away. According to Koech (2022), if it is taken into account, the schools that achieve the best of these results are known to have the parents of their learners actively involved in the activities of the schools. This implies that parents must take their roles in shaping the academic as well as behaviour patterns of their children by constantly participating in school activities such as attending meetings, visiting schools, volunteering and material development for the learners.

### 4.3 Parents' Marital Status and Involvement in Pre-primary School Activities

The second objective of the study sought to examine the marital status of parents and how such marital status influences their involvement in pre-primary school activities. Descriptive data were collected and presented as shown in Table 3;

**Table 3: Parents' Marital Status**

| Marital Status         | Number of Parents |      |
|------------------------|-------------------|------|
|                        | f                 | %    |
| Single parent          | 543               | 23.2 |
| Married                | 1384              | 59.0 |
| Separated and divorced | 418               | 17.8 |

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 3 shows that 59.0% of the parents of pre-primary school learners are married, 23.2% are single while

17.7% are either separated or divorced. Headteachers and parents' representatives also noted that, from the

school records, many parents are married with a few cases of single instances of single parenthood or divorce. This lends credence to the assertions of Adesehinwa and Aremu (2020) that a family, being a powerful influence on the child and its importance as a primary agent of socialization could in no doubt enhance or hinder the

academic achievement of the child depending on the social climate in the family. This indicates that parents' marital status is an important socioeconomic dynamic that lays tasks and family responsibilities on them with effect on involvement in pre-primary school activities.

**Table 4: Views of Pre-primary School Teachers on the Influence of Parents' Marital Status on Involvement in Pre-primary School Activities**

| Summary of Test Items   | SA<br>% | A<br>% | U<br>% | D<br>% | SD<br>% |
|---|---------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| In pre-primary schools, learners come from single-parent families which make it hard for them to create time and attend school activities | 58.0    | 15.1   | 4.2    | 16.0   | 6.7     |
| In pre-primary schools, many parents are married and thus take time to participate in their children's education                          | 59.7    | 19.3   | 2.5    | 11.8   | 6.7     |
| Family status of parents of pre-primary school learners does not allow them to participate in school activities                           | 38.7    | 12.6   | 3.4    | 32.8   | 12.5    |
| Parents who are divorced rarely take part in academic activities of their pre-primary school children                                     | 30.3    | 10.1   | 6.7    | 47.1   | 5.8     |
| In pre-primary schools, parents who are separated usually have no time to participate in their children's academic activities             | 33.6    | 10.9   | 4.2    | 42.9   | 8.4     |

**Source: Field Data (2025)**

Table 4 reveals that slightly more than half, 69(58.0%), of the pre-primary school teachers strongly agreed with the view that, in pre-primary schools, learners come from single-parent families which make it hard for them to create time and attend school activities while 18(15.1%) agreed. On the contrary, 5(4.2%) were undecided, 19(16.0%) of them disagreed whereas 8(6.7%) strongly disagreed. These findings corroborate the findings of a study conducted in San Francisco by Blake (2023) which established that children who grow up in single-parent families are less likely to complete high school or even attend college. Blake (2013) further found that, in such family arrangements, the only parent may not have adequate time to participate effectively in pre-primary school activities. In a study undertaken in the Netherlands, Bumpas (2024) also established that one reason why children from single-parent families are less likely to do well in school is the precarious economic position of their families. Bumpas (2024) further found that mother-only families are more likely than other families to be poor, and their poverty is more extreme than that of other groups. This indicates that single parenthood is a real challenge since most of the family responsibilities are on the shoulders of the only parent which denies them adequate time to take part in the academic activities of their children in pre-primary schools. Slightly more than half, 71(59.7%), of the pre-primary school teachers strongly agreed with the view that, in pre-primary schools, many parents are married and thus take time to participate in their children's education while 23(19.3%) agreed. However, 3(2.5%)

were undecided, 14(11.8%) disagreed whereas 8(6.7%) strongly disagreed. These findings are consistent with the findings of Blake (2013) that children who grow up in families with both parents are more likely to complete high school or even attend college. This implies, with both parents, tasks are shared and thus, parents dedicate time to participate in the pre-primary school activities. Table 4 shows that 46(38.7%) of the pre-primary school teachers strongly agreed with the view that the family status of parents of pre-primary school learners does not allow them to participate in school activities as did 15(12.6%) of the pre-primary school teachers who agreed. However, 4(3.4%) were undecided, 39(32.8%) disagreed whereas 15(12.5%) strongly disagreed.

This contradicts the assertions of Adesehinwa and Aremu (2020) that a family is a powerful influence on the child and its importance as a primary agent of socialization is in no doubt enhances or hinders the academic achievement of the child depending on the social climate in the family. According to Adesehinwa and Aremu (2020), variance in psycho-social, emotional fortification in the monogamy and polygamy family background could be an indicator of high or low parents' involvement in pre-primary school activities. This implies that the role of family types and parents' marital status is key to the success of children in their education since it determines the extent to which parents create time to participate in and monitor the academic undertakings and activities of children in pre-primary schools.

Table 4 shows that 36(30.3%) of the pre-primary school teachers strongly agreed with the view that parents who are divorced rarely take part in academic activities of their pre-primary school children while 12(10.1%) also agreed. However, 8(6.7%) were undecided, 56(47.1%) disagreed whereas 7(5.8%) strongly disagreed. The study also revealed that 40(33.6%) of the pre-primary school teachers strongly agreed with the view that, in pre-primary schools, parents who are separated usually have no time to participate in their children’s academic activities whereas 13(11.9%) also agreed. However, 5(4.2%) were undecided, 51(42.9%) disagreed whereas 10(8.4%) strongly disagreed. These findings lend credence to the findings of a study conducted in China in which Beane and David (2023) found that children growing up in a non-intact family are more likely to drop out of school. This is because, according to Beane and David (2023), such parents find it difficult to balance between family responsibilities and attendance of school activities. This implies divorce and separation create

more responsibilities in each of the parents and thus have not adequate time to participate in pre-primary education. Much of their time is spent fending for the family and, in most cases, time to monitor their children’s behavioural and academic activities is not available.

#### 4.4 Inferential Analysis

To verify the possibility of a relationship between parents’ marital status and involvement in pre-primary school activities, data were collected on the extent (Great Extent = 3, Low Extent = 2 and Not Sure = 1) to which marital status determines parents’ involvement in pre-primary school activities and frequency of attendance of meetings, involvement in volunteering activities and involvement in learning material development for learners. Results are shown in Table 5:

**Table 5: Extent to which Parents’ Marital Status Determines Involvement in Pre-primary School Activities, Frequency of Attendance of Meetings, Involvement in Volunteering Activities and Learning Material Development in Pre-primary Schools**

| Extent of Determination of Parents’ <u>Marital Status</u> | Involvement in Pre-primary School Activities |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
|   | Frequency of Attendance of <u>Meetings</u>   | Frequency of Involvement in <u>Volunteering Activities</u> | Frequency of Involvement in <u>Learning Material Development</u> |
| 1   | 1  | 1  | 1  |
| 1   | 1  | 2  | 1  |
| 1   | 1  | 2  | 3  |
| 2   | 3  | 2  | 2  |
| 2   | 3  | 3  | 3  |
| 2   | 3  | 3  | 2  |
| 2   | 1  | 4  | 2  |
| 3   | 5  | 5  | 4  |
| 3   | 3  | 4  | 2  |
| 3   | 1  | 4  | 3  |
| 3   | 2  | 3  | 4  |
| 2   | 2  | 4  | 3  |
| 3   | 4  | 4  | 3  |

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 5 shows that, to a great extent, parents’ marital status determines their involvement in pre-primary school activities. In other words, it determines how often parents participate in school meetings, volunteering

activities and learning material development. These results were subjected to Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Analysis and results are shown in Table 6:

**Table 6: Pearson’s Product Movement Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Parents’ Marital Status and Involvement in Pre-primary School Activities**

|          |                     | <b>A</b> | <b>B</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>D</b> |
|----------|---------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>A</b> | Pearson Correlation | 1        | .584*    | .791**   | .637*    |
|          | Sig. (2-tailed)     |          | .036     | .001     | .019     |
|          | N                   | 13       | 13       | 13       | 13       |
| <b>B</b> | Pearson Correlation | .584*    | 1        | .520     | .448     |
|          | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .036     |          | .069     | .124     |
|          | N                   | 13       | 13       | 13       | 13       |
| <b>C</b> | Pearson Correlation | .791**   | .520     | 1        | .597*    |
|          | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .001     | .069     |          | .031     |
|          | N                   | 13       | 13       | 13       | 13       |
| <b>D</b> | Pearson Correlation | .637*    | .448     | .597*    | 1        |
|          | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .019     | .124     | .031     |          |
|          | N                   | 13       | 13       | 13       | 13       |

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Key: **A-** Extent of Determination of Parents’ Marital Status; **B-** Frequency of Attendance of Meetings; **C-** Frequency of Involvement in Volunteering Activities; **D-** Frequency of Involvement in Learning Material Development

Table 6 shows that there is a positive correlation between parents’ marital status and involvement in pre-primary school activities ( $r(13) = 0.584, 0.791, 0.637, p = 0.036, 0.001, 0.019$  at  $\alpha = 0.05$ ). These findings further support the fact that parents’ marital status determines their involvement in pre-primary school activities. Their marital status is a key determinant of how often they attend school meetings, participate in volunteering activities and learning material development for their children in pre-primary schools.

## 4.5 Thematic Analysis

Qualitative data were also collected using interviews. During the interviews, headteachers and parents’ representatives noted that marital status is a key determinant of parents’ ability to participate in pre-primary education. Headteacher, H2, stated:

*Parents who are either single or divorced sometimes find it difficult to balance family responsibilities such as fending for their families and creating time to take part in pre-primary school activities.*

Parents’ representatives also indicated that family responsibilities pose a challenge to single and separated parents who must shoulder all the tasks alone. This makes it hard for them to adequately participate in pre-primary school academic activities.

As noted in quantitative findings, these views supported those expressed by Blake (2023) that single parenthood is a real challenge since, when not well planned, it denies parents adequate time to participate effectively in pre-primary school activities. This is compared to instances where both parents are together such that tasks and they can dedicate time to participate in the pre-primary school activities. From these mixed findings, parents’ marital

status is key to the success of children in their education since it determines the extent to which parents create time to participate in and monitor the academic undertakings and activities of children in pre-primary schools.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

Parents rarely participate in pre-primary education. They rarely attend school meetings, participate in volunteering activities and learning material development. Most parents of pre-primary school learners are married with a few of them being single, separated or divorced and this has had a net effect on their involvement in pre-primary school activities. The study established that single parent, separated or divorced family status makes it hard for them to create time and attend school activities. This is attributed to the fact that the only parent may not have adequate time to participate effectively in pre-primary school activities. However, married couples share responsibilities and thus create time to participate in the pre-primary school activities.

### 5.2 Recommendations

As a practice, parents should value the education of their children regardless of their marital status and participate in their pre-primary school activities. Parents, regardless of marital status, should focus on creating a stable routine at home that includes designated study times, emotional support, and encouragement. In cases where marital conflict exists, minimizing stress at home and shielding children from tensions can also help maintain a calm atmosphere conducive to learning.



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