

Parental Involvement and Learning Outcomes of Early Grade Students under Competence Based Curriculum in Tanzania

Nashir Adam Kamugisha*
Ibrahimu Maalim Kadau**

Abstract

The role of parental involvement in facilitating early learning under Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) is important especially in the situations where schools are challenged by the scarcity of resources and capacity. This research paper has looked at how parents facilitate learning among early primary learners (Grades 1-3) in the public primary in the Tanga Municipality, Tanzania. Convergent mixed-methods design was used, which comprised quantitative data of 100 pupils and qualitative data of 10 parents. Child friendly questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data, whereas qualitative data was gathered by semi-structured interviews with parents. Data analysis was performed by descriptive statistics and the thematic analysis and the integration happened during the interpretation phase. The results have indicated that there are five key types of parental involvement including provision of learning resources, monitoring of learning progress, promotion of self-study, offering transport support, and providing sufficient rest. Although the research does not draw up causal links with academic performance, it proves that parents have a multifaceted supportive role in increasing the learning engagement of pupils under the CBC. The paper ends with a conclusion that focuses on the need to reinforce the school-parent partnership as a way of facilitating successful CBC implementation in early primary school.

Keywords: *Parental involvement, Early primary education, Learning outcomes, and Competence-Based Curriculum.*

* The University of Dodoma, P.O.BOX 256, nashgisha@gmail.com, Tanzania, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4342-8336>, 255716609478

** Muslim University of Morogoro, P.O.BOX 1031, Ibrahimkadau41@gmail.com, Tanzania, 255622177085

Introduction

Education is a major contributor to social and economic development because it equips individuals with knowledge, skills, values, and skills and competencies that enable them to be productive members of the society. Primary school is especially important, as cognitive, social, and emotional development are especially crucial in early primary school, and this determines future results in learning. The importance on the impact of the experiences in the initial years of the school education is always stressed by scholars, as they determine the attitude of learners to the process of acquiring the higher-order competencies (UNESCO, 2015).

The implementation of Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Tanzania is one of the notable changes in the model and practise of education. As opposed to content-based curricula, the CBC focuses on the learner centred pedagogy, active participation, problem solving, and application of knowledge in real life scenarios. The CBC, according to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST, 2019), should help learners to develop competencies that would allow them to apply the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes in any life situation. In this model, home and community spaces are needed to support the implementation of a curriculum since one needs to learn to leave the classroom.

The involvement of parents has thus emerged as one of the key pillars of CBC implementation. Parents are not only supposed to ensure the provision of basic educational needs but also facilitate the process of learning at home and keep in touch with the schools. According to Epstein (2011), parental involvement involves a joint role of family and school in learning and development of children and this includes support at home, school involvement and shared decision making. In young learners, especially the Grades 1-3 learners, such involvement is especially critical because of their developmental reliance on adult directions, supervision and motivations.

Studies have shown that parental participation in the first grade education helps in promoting good learning behaviours such as motivation, engagement, and persistence (Hill and Tyson, 2009). Hartas (2015) goes on to state that children whose parents are active in their learning have more positive attitudes towards school and learning activities. Nevertheless, the type and amount of parental involvement depends on the perception, which differs in various contexts and depends

on the socio-economic factors, the level of parental education, and institutional requirement.

Although the policy has a high rate of parental engagement, the empirical results on how parents actually contribute towards learning in Tanzania at the CBC level is very scarce, especially in the initial stages of education at the primary school. The majority of the available literature concentrates on upper primary or secondary education and tend to illustrate parental involvement based on the educational successes but not the processes involved in learning. In addition, not many studies present the perspectives of pupils and parents, particularly, in a mixed-method paradigm.

This research thus aimed to review the parental involvement forms that facilitate the learning of the pupils in CBC in the selected schools in the Tanga Municipality which are in the public. Instead of finding causal relationships with academic achievement, parent practises, which may lead to a readiness to learn, engagement, and continuity of home-school learning were described and documented. The study adds context-specific evidence by emphasising the needs of early primary learners to inform educators, policymakers, and school leaders on how to enhance parent-school partnerships to ensure effective implementation of CBC.

Literature Review

Parental Educational involvement

Parental involvement (PI) has been identified long enough as an important element that affects the academic performance and overall development of learners. According to Epstein (2011), parental involvement refers to a complex relationship between schools and parents that includes both activities in homes, in schools, and in the community to improve the learning outcomes. This kind of involvement is especially essential in early primary education, where young learners are largely dependent on adult support in getting things done, building learning routines and class expectations (Hill and Tyson, 2009).

It has always been found that the children of parents who actively track the homework, offer learning materials, and discuss the learning process show better academic results and are more motivated (Hartas, 2015; Kimaro and Machumu, 2015). The role of parents is not confined to academic assistance but encourages social-emotional development,

establishes a schedule of studying and resting and positive views on education (Durisic and Bunijevac, 2017).

Types of Parental Involvement

Parental involvement can be classified into home based and school based parental involvement (Epstein, 2011).

Home-Based Involvement

Supervision of homework, promotion of self-study, issuance of learning materials, and establishment of a desirable learning environment are among the home-based practises. In the case of early primary students, this is very important since children cannot always learn on their own. Mwakinyobi (2013) and Rwezaura (2016) noted that parental involvement in providing learning resources to the pupils like textbooks, exercises books, and other learning materials has a positive impact on the competency acquisition of the pupils in Tanzanian primary schools. Recent research interviews have shown that as parents follow up homework and encourage children to study, learners are performing better and show confidence in activities in classrooms (P1, 2025).

School-Based Involvement

The school-based engagement is the involvement in the parent-teacher meetings, volunteering in school activities, attending workshops and communication with teachers. Shah (2019) underlines that proper cooperation between school and homes is a key to the successful implementation of any curriculum and improvement of the outcomes of students. School-based involvement in the CBC situation also guarantees that parents know the purpose of the curriculum, the competencies and the criteria used to assess practises, thus the gap between the home and school learning settings is closed.

The Involvement of Parents under Competency-based Curriculum

With the introduction of the CBC in Tanzania, the focus to rote learning has been changed to competency development with a focus on learner-centred approaches, critical thinking, problem-solving, and practical application of knowledge (MoEST, 2019). In this system, parents have to play an active role in supporting learning by:

- i. Placing resources in line with competencies
- ii. Tracking progress of home learning daily

- iii. Promoting individual research and education
- iv. Assuring sufficient rest and time of the young learners
- v. Working with teachers to monitor learning outcomes on the curriculum.

Empirical evidence indicates that under such practises in the parents, the learners will more often than not develop the anticipated competencies and show greater classroom activities (Narad and Abdullah, 2016; Mwenje, Giuthi, and Mwariri, 2020). The participation of parents is, however, usually limited by work, financial constraints, and insufficient knowledge about the curriculum requirements (Antony-Newman, 2019; Saware, 2020).

Arguments against Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is also constrained by a number of factors. Lack of financial resources impacts the provision of learning resources and transport by parents (Nyembeke, 2016; Hamlin and Flessa, 2018). Work commitments lead to time limitations that limit the chances of checking homework or school involvement (Antony-Newman, 2019). Additionally, poor communication with parents and teachers may limit cooperation, diminish the effect of parental support on the learning outcome (Makgopa and Makhele, 2013).

Still, despite those difficulties, there are indications that even a small amount of parental involvement, including frequent encouragement, home homework review, or discussions on school experience, has a positive effect on learning outcomes (Kayombo, 2017). These results support the importance of context-related practises of parental involvement within the CBC, particularly among the early learners at the primary level in semi-urban and urban regions of Tanzania.

Research Gap

Although literature has shown the significance of parents in the school life in primary education, there is paucity of empirical evidence of how the parents in the early primary level can support the learners under the CBC in Tanzania. Even the secondary and upper primary learners are targeted by most studies with less emphasis on the Grades 1-3 where the learners are very reliant on adult guidance. Moreover, not many studies implement a mixed-methodology that can describe quantitative patterns and qualitative information of the parents and pupils. This gap was addressed to have a context-related evidence to be used in policies,

school practise, and parental engagement strategies that will help in the successful implementation of the CBC.

Methodology

The current study assumed convergent mixed methods design in which quantitative and qualitative data were gathered simultaneously in order to test the impact of parental involvement in supporting learning of early primary pupils with Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in a sample of public primary schools in the Tanga Municipal. The sample was divided into 100 (Grades 1-3) randomly selected pupils and 10 purposely selected parents to give detailed insights regarding home-based engagement. The quantitative data were collected with the help of child-friendly questionnaires that included the following practises: the provision of learning resources and promotion of self-study and the tracking of progress, and qualitative data were collected with the assistance of semi-structured interviews with parents that were conducted to discuss the strategies, challenges, and cooperation with teachers. Quantitative data were examined using descriptive statistics and qualitative data were examined thematically according to Braun and Clarke (2006) six-step process, and integration took place during interpretation in order to triangulate the results. The ethical clearance, parental consent, pupil assent, confidentiality and voluntary participation were strictly followed.

Results

The results are displayed based on the overall aim of the research as to analysing the modalities where parents are engaged in facilitating the learning of pupils under Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Grade 1-3. These data were classified into five broad categories which are indicative of parental involvement which include the provision of learning resources, monitoring of academic progress, encouraging self-study, support of transportation and provision of conducive learning environment. Numerical findings are provided in the form of tables, and the information available on the qualitative level is produced through interviews with parents and enriches the interpretation.

Theme 1: Learning Resources Provision

The availability of good learning materials was also found to be a major aspect that promotes the competencies of the pupils under the CBC. The

quantitative data showed that most pupils were enjoying the advantages of having their parents buy the textbooks and other books.

Table 1. Assistance in Provision of Learning Resources

Variable	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	78	78%	78%	78%
Not always	10	10%	10%	88%
No	12	12%	12%	100%
Total	100	100%	100%	

This was supported by qualitative interviews. One parent explained:
I never make sure to give my child all the books required in school and other exercises. I also write to teachers in case they need extra materials.
 (Parent 3, 2025)

This shows that the majority of parents are very encouraging to learning as witnessed by the provision of necessary resources which allow pupils to interact with CBC competencies.

Theme 2: Academic Progress Surveillance

It was pointed out that the important element of the engagement was the parental monitoring of the pupils daily learning and homework. The quantitative findings are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Parental oversight of Educational Advancement

Variable	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	92	92%	92%	92%
Not always	5	5%	5%	97%
No	3	3%	3%	100%
Total	100	100%	100%	

Parents reported various another way of monitoring which includes checking exercise books, inquiring about daily lessons, and monitoring test results. One parent remarked:

I question my child on a daily basis about what he or she has learned and go through his or her exercises. It assists me in knowing their areas of weakness and assisting them. (Parent 7, 2025)

The results show that a regular cheque-in will promote responsibility and practise at home.

Theme 3: Self-Study Promotion

Assisting students to do independent research was the other theme. The quantitative data showed that most of the parents were strong advocates of home-based learning.

Table 3. Encouragement of Self-Study

Variable	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	90	90%	90%	90%
Not always	6	6%	6%	96%
No	4	4%	4%	100%
Total	100	100%	100%	

The parents stated they encouraged children instead of punishing them whenever they failed to follow the studying routines. One parent shared: *There is an explanation of why education is important to make my child study. I do not punish them and attempt to make the study an enjoyable experience. (Parent 2, 2025)*

The results indicate that positive attitudes to learning and the development of competencies are the results of parental encouragement within the CBC.

Theme 4: Transport Support

Parents offered transport fares to address the issue of daily commuting which alleviated fatigue and ensured that people were punctual.

Table 4. Transport Support Provisions

Variable	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	87	87%	87%	87%
Not always	5	5%	5%	92%
No	8	8%	8%	100%
Total	100	100%	100%	

Parents also indicated that transport system assisted them in ensuring that their children concentrated on learning instead of struggling with the effects of long distances to school due to fatigue. One parent explained:

I give my child money to carry him whenever I have the money to do so. When I am unable they walk, but this interferes with studying concentration and energy. (Parent 5, 2025)

Such assistance helps to attend school on a regular basis and minimise obstacles to active participation in learning.

Theme 5: Providing a Favourable Learning Environment

Parents were reported to have provided proper rest and at home conducive situations to study. The quantitative results are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Getting Adequate Rest and Study Environment

Variable	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	85	85%	85%	85%
Not always	7	7%	7%	92%
No	8	8%	8%	100%
Total	100	100%	100%	

The parents focused on rest and play as well as the study time. One parent stated:

After school I make sure that my child can rest. They also pay more attention when they are properly rested during their studies and lessons. (Parent 9, 2025).

These results emphasise that a well-organised home setting is the key to the most extensive use of parental interference in early learning.

Discussion

This paper has explored the issue of parental support with regard to learning of early primary pupils within the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in the selected government primary schools in the Tanga Municipality. The results indicate that parental involvement is multi-dimensional, which includes the possibility of providing learning materials, tracking the school progress, promoting self-study, providing transport assistance, and providing an appropriate home learning environment. These activities correspond to the theoretical approach according to which the parental involvement is an indispensable factor of academic achievements of learners (Gonzalez-Mena, 2011; Hartas, 2015).

Learning Resources Provision

Most parents (78%), at all times, would purchase textbooks and other learning additional materials implying that parents are proactive in

supporting learning. It was reported that the parents are the active liaisons with teachers and make sure that the resources are oriented to CBC competencies. These observations are similar to those of Narad and Abdullah (2016) who stressed that the availability of relevant learning materials increases knowledge, skills, and attitude mastery of the learners. The paper also shows that the process of providing materials is not only logistical, but also symbolic, which confirms the need to educate and encourage students to interact with learning activities.

Observation of Academic Progress

The most common type of parental involvement was the parental monitoring, where 92% of the parents participated in activities including checking the homework, inquiring about the lesson and monitoring school attendance. It supports the results of Kimaro and Machumu (2015) and Durisic and Bunijevac (2017) that found a positive relationship between regular parental monitoring and academic achievement. Qualitative data came to the realisation that parents develop adaptable approaches based on available time, focusing on engagement rather than coercion. This type of monitoring can help identify the learning gaps in a timely manner, act in time and support CBCs principles promoting mastering of competencies by means of constant formative feedbacks.

Encouraging Self-Study

Promotion of self-study (90% of parents) is an acknowledgement of agency in the child during the learning process. Instead of punitive measures, parents stressed on motivating and guiding and encouraged intrinsic motivation and desirable views towards learning. This observation is in line with the one made by Kayombo (2017), who observed that parental encouragement instead of punishment strengthens learner autonomy and facilitates competency development. It is also an indication of how vital it is to the CBC learner-centred pedagogy where the learners are supposed to be responsible in their own learning.

Transport Support

The provision of transport (87%) reduces fatigue caused by commuting and therefore enable the pupils to attend school in a state of mind to participate actively in lessons. The discovery validates the study conducted by Nyembeke (2016) who found commuting issues to be an obstacle to educational performance in primary schools in Tanzania. The provision of parental support in this regard can be the guaranty of equity

in access and participation especially to learners who travel a long distance proving that indirect forms of involvement -not the classroom involving activities -can be of importance to total learning results.

Providing a Conducive Learning Environment

Most parents (85 percent) reported a well-organised home environment, such as having enough sleep and fewer distractions. The qualitative information focused on the balance between rest, play, and study, to improve concentration and interest. These practises represent the generalised perception of parental involvement as the promotion of conditions that facilitate the cognitive and socio-emotional development (UNICEF, 2016; MoEST, 2019). Parents can maximise the results of the CBC implementation and support good learning behaviours by placing more emphasis on rest and structured routines.

Integrated Interpretation

The reconciliation between the quantitative and qualitative results proves that the role of parents in the initial primary education is holistic and contextualised. Although the most evident is the material provision and monitoring, motivation, guidance, and environmental structuring are also important in developing the competencies of learners. These results indicate that parental involvement is not a single dimension concept but an element of supportive, participatory and collaborative practises that will be complementary to instruction led by the teacher in CBC. The paper also highlights the need of a long-term communication between parents and teachers, which selects efforts on both sides to improve academic performance.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The research comes to the conclusion that parental activities in Grades 1-3 with CBC in the Tanga Municipality are essential towards encouraging academic interest and development of competencies. Parents have direct and indirect roles that include the provision of learning resources, keeping track, motivating self-studying, assisting in transportation, and provision of a conducive learning environment at home. All the practises will improve the capacity of the pupils to achieve CBC expectations and develop favourable learning behaviours. This research proposes that schools and policymakers should look at ways of enhancing parental involvement, and they include:

- i. Parent education courses to raise the awareness levels on the goals of CBC and effective approaches to assist learning at home.

- ii. Increased communication between parents and teachers, such as frequent meetings and electronic feedback about progress of learners.
- iii. Assistive programmes to low-income families (e.g. subsidised learning resources or transportation support) in order to eliminate parental participation gaps.
- iv. Suggestion of the home-school partnerships, stressing motivation, positive reinforcement, and the autonomy of the learners.

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