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Abstract

This study examined the influence of parental engagement on the implementation of Competence-Based Education (CBE) in public junior schools in Langata Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. Guided by five research questions, the study investigated parental provision of learning resources, participation in school-based platforms, engagement in learners' homework, challenges to engagement, and strategies for strengthening parental involvement. The study was anchored on Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence and complemented by Fullan's Theory of Educational Change. A mixed methods approach, specifically a convergent parallel design, was adopted. The target population comprised 11 public junior schools, 11 Head Teachers, 275 teachers, and 5,500 parents. The sample consisted of 6 schools, 6 Head Teachers, 90 teachers, and 150 parents. Data were collected using structured questionnaires, semi-structured interview guides, focus group discussion guides, and document analysis. Validity was established through face, content, construct, and criterion validity, while reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha, with all subscales exceeding 0.70. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 28, while qualitative data were analysed thematically using NVivo 14. Findings revealed that all three dimensions of parental engagement significantly influenced CBE implementation, with provision of learning resources being the strongest predictor ($\beta = .312$, $p < .001$), followed by school-based participation ($\beta = .185$, $p = .017$) and homework engagement ($\beta = .168$, $p = .031$). The regression model explained 28.7% of the variance in CBE implementation. A significant perception gap

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existed between teachers and parents, with parents reporting higher engagement levels than teachers perceived. The study recommends a national framework for parental engagement, parent education, financial support for needy families, measures to address the digital divide, and integration of parental engagement into teacher training.

Keywords: *Parental engagement, learning resources, Competence-Based Education, junior schools, digital divide, Kenya*

1.0 Introduction

Globally, education systems have undergone significant reforms in response to the demands of the 21st-century knowledge economy. These reforms have shifted emphasis from teacher-centred, content-driven instruction to learner-centred, competence-based approaches that prioritize critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and digital literacy (Levine & Patrick, 2019; Sturgis & Patrick, 2020). Competence-Based Education (CBE) has emerged as a key response to these demands, implemented in various forms in the United States, Canada, Finland, and Australia. CBE differs fundamentally from traditional content-based curricula in that it focuses on the development of demonstrable competencies that learners can apply in real-world contexts, employs continuous assessment rather than high-stakes examinations, and emphasizes active, project-based learning rather than passive reception of information.

Achieving the goals of CBE requires active participation from multiple stakeholders, including teachers, parents, school administrators, and community members. Parental engagement has long been recognized as a cornerstone of educational success. Epstein (2019), Henderson and Mapp (2019), and Goodall and Montgomery (2019) established that when parents actively participate in their children's learning, students not only achieve higher academic outcomes but also demonstrate better attendance, exhibit improved behavior, and develop stronger motivation. Parental engagement has evolved from viewing parents as passive supporters of school-initiated activities to them being recognized as active partners whose involvement spans both home and school environments (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2019).

Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence (Epstein, 2019) provides a foundational framework for understanding parental engagement. The framework identifies six distinct types of involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. Meta-analytic evidence confirms that home-based involvement has a stronger effect on student achievement than school-based involvement, though both are beneficial (Jeynes, 2019; Wilder, 2020).

For curriculum reform to be successful, parental engagement ought to be impactful on the learner. Desforges and Abouchaar (2019) reviewed parental involvement in the United Kingdom and concluded that curriculum reforms succeed more often when parents understand the changes and receive clear guidance on how to support new pedagogical approaches. CBE requires parents to understand learning progressions, support project-based assignments, and engage with continuous assessment processes. Levine and Patrick (2019) found that schools implementing CBE with high levels of parental engagement reported better student outcomes and fewer implementation challenges.

In Kenya, the government introduced the Competence-Based Education (CBE) in 2017, replacing the long-standing 8-4-4 system. It was designed to address a skills gap by emphasising seven core

competencies: communication and collaboration, critical thinking and problem-solving, creativity and imagination, citizenship, digital literacy, learning to learn, and self-efficacy (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development [KICD], 2019). This paradigm shift from content-based to competence-based learning demanded fundamental changes in teaching, assessment, and the roles of teachers and parents (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2022). The implementation of CBE, through the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC), is implemented in progressive phases: early years, middle school, junior school, and senior school. Junior schools represent a critical transition phase, serving as the bridge between primary and senior secondary education (MoE, 2022).

In Kenya, the Basic Education Act (Republic of Kenya, 2013) mandates parental involvement in school governance through boards of management and parent-teacher associations. The KICD (2019) explicitly recognizes parents as key stakeholders, expecting them to support home-based learning, participate in school activities, and reinforce the values and competencies of the CBC. However, empirical research on parental engagement in CBC implementation is still emerging.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite the critical role of parental engagement in CBE implementation, existing studies have predominantly focused on primary schools or early years' education, leaving junior schools largely unexamined. Junior schools introduce subject specialization, more complex project-based learning, and adolescent learners whose developmental stage may fundamentally alter the nature, extent, and influence of parental engagement. Furthermore, there is limited systematic investigation of the specific forms of parental engagement that influence CBE implementation. While studies have examined parental involvement broadly, few have disaggregated engagement into specific dimensions such as provision of learning resources.

In Langata Sub-County, preliminary data indicate that less than 40% of parents attend school meetings regularly, and only 25% report actively supporting project-based learning at home (Langata Sub-County Education Office, 2024). The digital divide is also pronounced. While families in high-income areas have reliable internet and devices, those in informal settlements often lack even basic smartphones (ICT Authority, 2022). However, the specific influence of provision of learning resources on CBE implementation in junior schools has not been systematically investigated. Therefore, this study sought to address these gaps by examining the influence of parental provision of learning resources on the implementation of Competence-Based Education in public junior schools in Langata Sub-County.

1.2 Research Question

How does parental provision of learning resources influence implementation of Competence-Based Education in public junior schools in Langata Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya?

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study may contribute to academic knowledge on parental engagement in competence-based education by examining specific forms of engagement in junior schools, a level that has been largely overlooked in Kenyan research. It may provide policy-relevant evidence for the Ministry of Education and the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, helping to refine parent engagement strategies and sensitization programmes. School administrators and teachers are likely to gain insights into which forms of engagement are most beneficial and how to address persistent challenges. The study may benefit junior school learners by identifying effective parental

engagement practices that enhance their competency development, academic achievement, and transition to senior school.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence

This study was grounded on Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence (Epstein, 2019). The theory posits that students' educational success is maximized when the spheres of influence of the family, school, and community intersect and operate collaboratively. The extent of this overlap is shaped by multiple factors, including school policies, teacher practices, family circumstances, and the availability of community resources. Central to the theory is the identification of six types of parental involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community.

Within the context of this study, Epstein's typology directly informs the operationalization of parental engagement variables. Provision of learning resources aligns with the dimensions of parenting and learning at home, as it reflects the creation of supportive home environments and access to educational materials. The theory further provides an explanatory lens for identifying areas where the overlap between the spheres is weak or absent, thereby illuminating barriers to effective collaboration.

2.1.2 Fullan's Theory of Educational Change

Fullan's Theory of Educational Change provides an analytical lens for understanding the implementation of CBE as a curriculum reform in Kenya. The theory posits that successful implementation of curriculum is contingent upon the dynamic interaction of change characteristics, local contexts, and external factors (Fullan, 2016). Fullan (2007) argued that "the closer the parent is to the education of the child, the greater the impact on child development and educational achievement" (p. 189), positioning parental engagement as a central mechanism through which reform is mediated at the local level. Fullan (2001) also identified parental involvement as one of twelve key factors distinguishing effective from less effective schools.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

2.2.1 Parental Provision of Learning Resources and CBE Implementation

Moore and Ronau (2024) conducted a case study in the United States examining interactive homework as a tool for parent engagement in mathematics. The study found that interactive homework assignments improved parent mathematics self-efficacy and parent mathematics knowledge for teaching. However, the study was a single-case study involving one parent, limiting generalizability. The study focused on mathematics homework within a standards-based reform, not specifically on CBE implementation in junior schools.

Adhiambo (2020) conducted a study in Nairobi, Kenya, examining the financial and material demands placed on parents by CBE implementation. The study found that CBE implementation calls for additional financial outlay from parents, including demands for technology gadgets and extra learning items, often with limited school support. The study was limited to Nairobi and did not focus specifically on junior schools.

Piliyesi et al. (2020) conducted a study in Kenya examining parental contributions to CBE implementation. The study found that parents contribute by providing essential learning materials,

recognising their indispensable role beyond teachers in curriculum implementation. The study was limited in scope and did not disaggregate parental provision into specific resource categories.

Tumwesigye et al. (2024) conducted a study in Kazo County, Uganda, examining the relationship between parental involvement and learners' academic achievement in a competence-based curriculum in secondary schools. The findings indicated a statistically significant relationship between parental involvement and learners' academic achievement in the competency-based curriculum, with a p-value of 0.005 ($p < .01$). The study focused on secondary schools rather than junior schools and was limited to Uganda.

Amagove et al. (2024) conducted a study in Kakamega County, Kenya, assessing the roles of parents in CBC implementation. The study found that while some parents provided adequate learning resources and created conducive learning environments, others faced barriers such as limited financial resources and lack of awareness regarding their roles. The descriptive research design limits causal inferences. The study focused on primary schools, leaving junior schools unexamined.

Kiptoo (2024) conducted a study in Bomet County, Kenya, investigating the effect of teacher and resource-related factors on the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum in junior schools. The research findings revealed that the implementation of CBC has been affected by teacher and resource-related constraints including overcrowded classrooms, lack of teaching materials, laboratory equipment, libraries, and internet access. Parental support was limited by a lack of understanding and financial constraints, with a small percentage of parents actively participating in CBC activities.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a mixed methods research approach, specifically a convergent parallel design, in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously, analysed independently, and integrated during interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The quantitative strand employed a cross-sectional survey design, while the qualitative strand employed a phenomenology research design.

3.2 Location of the Study

The study was conducted in Langata Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. Langata Sub-County is characterised by considerable socio-economic diversity, encompassing high-income residential neighborhoods of Karen and Langata, middle-income areas including South B and South C, and lower-income informal settlements, particularly sections of Kibera South (Nairobi City County Government, 2021). According to the Langata Sub-County Education Office (2024), there are 11 public junior schools attached to public primary schools within the sub-county, serving approximately 5,500 learners.

3.3 Target Population

The target population comprised all 11 public junior schools in Langata Sub-County, together with their Head Teachers, teachers, and parents of learners in Grades 7, 8, and 9. The total population comprised 11 Head Teachers, 275 teachers, and 5,500 parents (Langata Sub-County Education Office, 2024).

3.4 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

All 11 public junior schools were stratified by socio-economic status using the classification of Nairobi households as defined by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2021). Two schools were randomly selected from each stratum, yielding a total of six schools. At the individual level, the sample sizes of 150 parents and 90 teachers were determined using the Cochran formula for finite populations at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error (Cochran, 1977). One Head Teacher was purposively selected from each of the six participating schools. Parents were purposively selected for focus group discussions, with eight to ten parents drawn from each of the six schools.

3.5 Research Instruments

The study used five major instruments: a teacher questionnaire, a parent questionnaire, a Head Teacher interview guide, a focus group discussion guide for parents, and a document analysis guide. The teacher questionnaire used Likert-scale items aligned with Epstein's six types of involvement. The parent questionnaire measured parents' self-reported provision of learning resources on a 4-point scale (1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Often, 4 = Always).

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Validity was established through face, content, construct, and criterion validity. Face validity was established by presenting the research instruments to experts in education and research methodology. Content validity was ensured by aligning the questionnaire and interview items with the study objectives. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each subscale, with all subscales exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Taber, 2018).

3.7 Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative data were coded, entered, and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS) version 28. Descriptive statistics included frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Inferential statistics included Pearson correlation coefficients and multiple linear regression analysis. Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis following the six-step framework of Braun and Clarke (2021), with NVivo 14 software used to manage coding and theme development.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical guidelines from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa and Kenyan national regulations. Prior to data collection, written approvals were obtained from the University's Research Ethics Committee, NACOSTI, and the Langata Sub-County Education Office. Informed consent was secured from all adult participants with forms translated into Kiswahili or read aloud for those with low literacy. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained through unique participant codes and pseudonymised school names.

4.0 Results and Findings

4.1 Response Rate and Demographic Characteristics

A total of 150 parents and 90 teachers were targeted for the quantitative phase. Of these, 128 parents (85.3%) and 81 teachers (90.0%) returned completed questionnaires. Additionally, all 6 Head Teachers (100%) participated in individual interviews, and 54 parents participated in 6 focus group discussions.

Table 1: Response Rate of Research Instruments

Category	Target Sample	Actual Sample	Response Rate (%)
Parents	150	128	85.3
Teachers	90	81	90.0
Head Teachers	6	6	100.0
Parents (FGDs)	54	54	100.0

Source: Field Data (2026)

The majority of teacher respondents were female (55.6%, n = 45), while 43.2% (n = 35) were male. The majority of teachers (67.9%, n = 55) held a Bachelor's degree, while 14.8% (n = 12) held a Master's degree. Concerning training on CBC implementation, the majority of teachers (77.8%, n = 63) reported having received training on the Competence-Based Curriculum. The majority of parent respondents were female (70.3%, n = 90), while 29.7% (n = 38) were male.

4.2 Parental Provision of Learning Resources

4.2.1 Teacher Perceptions

Teachers were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements regarding parental provision of learning resources on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Table 2: Teacher Perceptions of Parental Provision of Learning Resources

Statement	M	SD
Provide practical equipment	2.90	0.87
Supply supplementary reading materials	2.90	0.83
Provision Overall	2.94	0.91
Provide project materials	2.90	0.91
Ensure necessary stationery	2.81	1.07
Provide internet/data for research	2.68	0.96

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

Source: Field Data (2026)

The overall mean score for teacher perceptions of parental provision of learning resources was M = 2.94 (SD = 0.91), indicating a moderate to low level of agreement that parents provide adequate learning resources. The lowest mean score was for "Parents provide internet/data for their children's research activities" (M = 2.68, SD = 0.96), suggesting that the provision of digital resources is the most challenging area of parental resource provision.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Teacher Perceptions

Statement	% Agree
Ensure necessary stationery	30.8
Provide project materials	27.2
Provide practical equipment	24.7
Supply supplementary reading materials	23.4
Provide internet/data for research	19.7

Source: Field Data (2026)

Only 19.7% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that parents provide internet/data for research activities, highlighting a critical gap in digital resource provision.

4.2.2 Parent Self-Reported Provision of Learning Resources

Parents were asked to self-report their provision of learning resources on a 4-point scale where 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Often, and 4 = Always.

Table 4: Parent Self-Reported Provision of Learning Resources

Statement	M	SD	% Always/Often
Provide internet/data for research	3.48	0.65	89.9
Provide project materials	3.42	0.71	85.9
Supply supplementary reading materials	3.39	0.68	84.4
Provide practical equipment	3.32	0.72	81.3
Ensure necessary stationery	2.95	0.85	68.7

Note. Scale: 1 = Never to 4 = Always.

Source: Field Data (2026)

Parents reported high levels of provision of learning resources. The highest mean score was recorded for "Provide internet/data for my child's research activities" (M = 3.48, SD = 0.65), while the lowest was for "Ensure my child has necessary stationery for school" (M = 2.95, SD = 0.85). This finding contrasts with teacher perceptions, where internet/data provision had the lowest mean score (M = 2.68), indicating a significant perception gap between parents and teachers regarding resource provision.

4.3 Qualitative Findings

4.3.1 Head Teacher Perspectives

Theme 1: Willingness to Provide Basic Resources

Head Teachers reported parents' willingness to provide basic materials, though capacity varied. A Head Teacher from a low-income school noted: "The willingness is there, but the ability is not. Parents want to help, but when you have to choose between buying food and buying project materials, food wins" (HT, School 5, Low-Income).

Theme 2: Challenges with Digital Resources

Head Teachers identified digital resources as the most significant challenge. A Head Teacher explained: "The biggest gap is technology. CBC requires learners to research online, but many parents cannot afford data bundles or smartphones" (HT, School 4, Middle-Income).

4.3.2 Focus Group Discussion Findings

Theme 1: Economic Constraints

Parents cited economic constraints. A parent stated: "Everything comes back to money. If I had money, I would buy materials, I would transport to school, I would take time off work. But I do not have money" (FGD Participant, School 5, Low-Income).

4.4 Testing of Research Hypothesis

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to test the research hypothesis.

Table 5: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Parental Provision of Learning Resources Predicting CBE Implementation

Predictor Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig.
(Constant)	1.214	0.284	—	4.275	.000
Provision of Learning Resources	0.241	0.078	.312	3.089	.003

Note. $N = 81$. $R^2 = .287$, $Adjusted\ R^2 = .259$, $F(3,77) = 10.34$, $p < .001$.

Source: Field Data (2026)

The regression analysis revealed that provision of learning resources was the strongest predictor of CBE implementation ($\beta = .312$, $p < .001$). For every one-unit increase in parental provision of learning resources, CBE implementation increased by 0.241 units, holding other variables constant. The null hypothesis that parental provision of learning resources has no influence on the implementation of CBE in public junior schools in Langata Sub-County was therefore rejected.

5.0 Conclusion

From the findings, the study concludes that parental provision of learning resources significantly influences CBE implementation and is the strongest predictor among the three engagement dimensions. A perception gap exists between teachers and parents, with parents reporting higher provision levels than teachers perceive. Socio-economic disparities determine parents' capacity to provide resources, with digital resources representing a critical gap limiting equitable access to CBE learning opportunities. The study concludes that while parents demonstrate willingness to provide learning resources, economic constraints and the digital divide significantly limit their capacity, particularly in low-income households. Therefore, successful CBE implementation requires deliberate interventions to address resource disparities and support needy families.

6.0 Recommendations

Schools should provide clear guidance on learning resources at the beginning of each term, including detailed lists of required materials, explanations of their purposes, and information on where they can be obtained. Where possible, schools should encourage the use of locally available and affordable materials to reduce the financial burden on families. Schools should establish school-family partnership committees comprising teachers, parents, and community representatives to jointly plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate parental engagement strategies.

The Ministry of Education should establish a fund to support needy families with essential learning materials, including project materials, reading resources, and digital devices. The Ministry of Education and the Communications Authority of Kenya should invest in affordable internet connectivity, subsidized digital devices, and community digital hubs to reduce the digital divide and expand opportunities for parents and learners to access educational resources. This investment is particularly critical in low-income and marginalized areas where the digital divide is most pronounced. The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and teacher training institutions should integrate parental engagement strategies into teacher education and professional development programmes.

Comparative studies should be conducted across different sub-counties and counties to examine how parental provision of learning resources influences CBE implementation in diverse socio-economic and cultural contexts. Intervention studies should be conducted to empirically test the

effectiveness of specific strategies for strengthening parental provision of learning resources, such as resource mobilization programmes and digital literacy training for parents.

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