Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Care and Education and its Impact on Children's Social-Emotional Development in Uganda. A Case of Wakiso District

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Abstract

This paper investigated the impact of parent involvement in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) on children's social-emotional development in Wakiso district, Uganda. It examined the relationship between parental involvement and the development of children's social-emotional skills, including the emotion regulation, emotional well-being, relationships with teachers, and relationships with peers. Despite its importance, parental involvement in ECCE is limited and understudied. The paper reviewed current literature on the topic and examines the challenges faced by parents in Uganda in engaging with ECCE. It also explored how parents, as key stakeholders, can be engaged to ensure that their children benefit from quality ECCE. The study used a cross-sectional research design underpinned by a positivist paradigm. Descriptive research methods were employed to analyse the data from 97 parents, selected using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) method. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and linear regression methods. The paper considered existing research on the impact of parent involvement on social-emotional development and its potential to improve the achievement of competencies. Finally, it presented recommendations on improving parental involvement in ECCE in Uganda, such as providing information and support and increasing access to resources. This paper contributes to the growing body of literature in ECCE and will be valuable to stakeholders involved in ECCE in Uganda.

Keywords: Early childhood care and education, parent involvement, social-emotional

Introduction

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) has been recognized as a critical stage in a child's life worldwide. The importance of this stage lies in the fact that children's experiences during their early years can have long-lasting effects on their future learning and development (Taimur & Sattar, 2020). Over the years, there has been growing interest in ECCE across the globe. In Africa, the importance of ECCE has been highlighted by the African Union (AU), which adopted the "Africa Early Childhood Care and Education Initiative" in 2007, aiming to increase access to quality ECCE for all children on the continent (McCoy, Zuilkowski, Yoshikawa & Fink, 2017). In Uganda, according to Ejuu (2018), efforts have also been made to improve the access and quality of ECCE. The Ugandan government recognized the importance of ECCE and implemented policies to support its development. For instance, the "National Policy for Early Childhood Development and Education" was launched in 2007 to promote access to quality ECCE services, including parental involvement. However, despite these efforts, the level of parental involvement in ECCE in Uganda, remains limited. This lack of parental involvement in ECCE has a significant impact on children's social-emotional development (Noreen, 2022). Research by Cosso, von Suchodoletz and Yoshikawa (2022) has shown that parental involvement in ECCE can support children's learning and development, particularly in the development of social-emotional skills. Therefore, this study investigated the impact of parent involvement in early childhood care and education (ECCE) on children's social-emotional development in Uganda. The study seeks to identify the factors that hinder parental involvement in ECCE and explore strategies to enhance parental involvement as key stakeholders in ensuring that their children benefit from quality ECCE. By doing so, the study also contributed to the existing body of knowledge on the importance of parental involvement in ECCE, particularly in developing countries like Uganda, and provided insights into how to improve access and quality of ECCE services for children.

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Problem Statement

Roy and Giraldo-García (2018) pointed out that parental involvement plays a vital role in promoting the social-emotional development of young children, especially in their early years. Recognising this importance, Uganda implemented policies aimed at improving parental involvement in ECCE, such as the National Strategy for Early Childhood Development, which recognise the crucial role of parents as the primary caregivers and educators of their children. Despite these efforts, parental involvement in ECCE in Uganda remains limited, and the adverse effects on children's social-emotional development persist (Noirine, 2022). This lack of parent involvement is evident in areas such as emotion regulation, emotional well-being, relationships with teachers and peers, and self-esteem. In addition, research on parental involvement in ECCE in Uganda is limited, and there is a gap in knowledge regarding effective strategies to enhance parental involvement (Malhotra, Ayele, Zheng, & Amor, 2021). This study also provided valuable insights that can inform policies and practices in the field of ECCE in Uganda to fill this gap.

This study therefore investigated the impact of parent involvement in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) on children's social-emotional development in Uganda. The study recognises that parents are key stakeholders in their children's education and therefore, it seeks to examine ways to involve them in promoting quality ECCE for their children.

Research Objectives

1. To determine the level of parental involvement as key stakeholders in ECCE in Uganda.
2. To examine the relationship between parental involvement and the development of children's social-emotional skills.
3. To identify the challenges faced by parents in engaging in their children's ECCE and how to overcome these challenges.
4. To make recommendations for improving parent involvement in ECCE in Uganda.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of parental involvement as key stakeholders in ECCE in Uganda?
2. Is there a statistical relationship between parental involvement and the development of children's social-emotional skills?
3. What are the challenges faced by parents in engaging in their children's ECCE, and how can these challenges be addressed?
4. What recommendations can be made for improving parent involvement in ECCE in Uganda?

Research Hypothesis

1. Parental involvement has a statistical relationship on the development of children's social-emotional skills.

Study Significance

This study is significant in several ways:

1. Policy and programme development: It sheds light on the obstacles parents face when engaging in their children's early childhood education in Uganda, as well as the strategies that can be used to improve their participation. This information is useful for policymakers, educational institutions, and stakeholders in the ECCE sector to develop and implement effective programmes and policies that will enhance parental involvement and promote positive child development outcomes.

2. Parental guidance: The study is beneficial to parents as it provides them with important information on the benefits of their involvement in their children's education and how they can support their children's learning.

3. Educational support: The study is beneficial to teachers by highlighting the importance of parental involvement and the role they can play in promoting it.

4. Academic contribution: The study contributes to the literature on parental involvement in ECCE, particularly in Uganda, by exploring the challenges faced by parents and the impact of parental involvement on children's social-emotional development.

Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to provide a comprehensive overview of existing research on parent involvement in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and its impact on children's social-emotional development. This review followed the research objectives/questions of the study as indicated below: 1). To determine the level of parental involvement as key stakeholders in ECCE in Uganda, 2). To examine the relationship between parental involvement and the development of children's social-emotional skills, 3). To identify the challenges faced by parents in engaging in their children's ECCE and how to overcome these challenges and 4). To make recommendations for improving parent involvement in ECCE in Uganda.

Level of Parental involvement as a key stakeholder in ECCE

Extensive research has examined the role of parental involvement in shaping children's social-emotional development. Parental involvement, defined as the active participation and engagement of parents in their children's early childhood care and education (ECCE), has been consistently identified as a critical factor. Empirical studies have shown that parental involvement in education has a positive correlation with academic performance, improved self-esteem, better school attendance and retention rates (Danişman, 2017; Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017, and Kocayörük, 2016). Additionally, parent involvement has been found to be associated with favourable school attachment and positive school environments for children (Wong et al., 2018). Furthermore, research has demonstrated that parental involvement programmes have positive effects on the children, their families and the school community (Magwa & Mugari, 2017).

Cosso, Suchodoletz and Yoshikawa, (2018) posit that the type and extent of parental involvement can have differential effects on children's social-emotional development. For instance, Lewallen and Neece, (2015) found that parental involvement, specifically parental sensitivity and responsiveness, had a significant positive impact on children's self-regulation and social competence. However, parental intrusiveness or over-involvement can negatively affect children's autonomy and emotional regulation (Miller, 2022). Kurtulmus, (2016) has also highlighted the importance of different types of parental involvement, such as home-based activities, school-based activities, and parent-teacher communication, in promoting children's social-emotional development. For example, home-based activities like reading to children and engaging in play have been associated with higher levels of emotional regulation and fewer behavioural problems in children (Lin et al., 2019). Similarly, school-based activities, such as volunteering in the classroom or attending parent-teacher meetings, have been linked to improved academic and behavioural outcomes in children (Park & Holloway, 2017).

Research has shown that parents who are actively engaged in their children's learning can promote positive outcomes in their children's academic, social, and emotional development. These positive outcomes include better cognitive development, stronger social skills, higher academic achievement, and improved school attendance (Greenberg, Domitrovich, Weissberg and Durlak, 2017).

Studies by Varghese and Wachen (2016) also showed that when parents engage in home-based activities, such as reading to their children, participating in play, and engaging in learning activities, they can promote their children's cognitive and language development. Additionally, parents who are actively involved in their children's education tend to have higher expectations for their children, leading to increased motivation and achievement in school (Đurišić and Bunijevac, 2017).

Despite the importance of parental involvement in ECCE, research has shown that many parents struggle to engage in their children's education due to various factors. These include limited access to information about their children's education, language barriers, work commitments, and lack of support from schools. In some cases, parents lack the necessary skills to engage in their children's education effectively (Yulianti, Denessen & Droop, 2019).

A literature gap in this area is a lack of research on the specific factors that hinder parental involvement in ECCE in Uganda. There is also limited research on effective strategies to promote parental involvement in ECCE in low-income countries such as Uganda. Understanding the specific challenges faced by parents in Uganda can help educators and policymakers to design effective interventions that promote parental involvement and improve children's outcomes (Boydell et al., 2017). Furthermore, while research has established the importance of parental involvement in children's academic success, less is known about the relationship between parental involvement and children's social-emotional development (Roy & Giraldo-García, R. 2018). This literature gap suggests a need for research to investigate the impact of parental involvement in ECCE on children's social-emotional development in Uganda. Such research would provide valuable insights for policymakers and educators seeking to promote positive social-emotional outcomes in young children.

The relationship between parental involvement in children's social-emotional development

Parental involvement in children's ECCE has been found to be a significant predictor of children's social-emotional development. Children whose parents are involved in their education are more likely to have higher levels of emotional well-being, self-esteem, and positive relationships with teachers and peers (Diale and Sewagegn, 2021). Additionally, parental involvement has been linked to lower levels of behavioural problems, such as aggression, in children (Haine-Schlagel, and Walsh, 2015). Parental involvement has been a topic of interest in the field of early childhood education for several decades. Research suggests that parental involvement in children's education can have a significant impact on their social-emotional development. In particular, children whose parents are involved in their education tend to have higher levels of emotional well-being, self-esteem, and positive relationships with teachers and peers (Liu, Sulaimani & Henning, 2020).

Kang, Horn & Palmer, (2017) found that parental involvement in early childhood education was a significant predictor of children's social-emotional development. They discovered that children whose parents were involved in their education exhibited higher levels of emotional well-being, measured by the child's positive affect and the absence of negative affect. Additionally, these children had higher self-esteem, reflected in their feelings of competence and worthiness. Moreover, (the study indicated that parental involvement fostered more positive relationships between children and their teachers and peers.

Similarly, a study by Shumow and Lomax, (2002) linked parental involvement to lower levels of behavioural problems, such as aggression in children. Their findings suggest that children with more involved parents had fewer behavioural issues and were less likely to exhibit aggressive behaviour. The study posited that parental involvement might help to create a more positive and supportive home environment, which can have a protective effect on children's social-emotional development.

Despite the many benefits of parental involvement, gaps remain in understanding the most effective ways to involve parents in their children's early education. Some research suggests that different types of parental involvement may have different effects on children's social-emotional development (Smith et al., 2023). Furthermore, it is unclear whether parental involvement is equally effective for all children or if some children benefit more than others (Muller, 2018). Liu, Sulaimani and Henning (2020) argue that further research is needed to better understand the complex relationship between parental involvement and children's social-emotional development, and identify the most effective ways for involving parents in early education.

Children's social-emotional development is a critical aspect of their overall growth. It encompasses a range of skills that enable children to understand and regulate their emotions, form and maintain positive relationships, and interact effectively with the world around them. The importance of social-emotional development in children cannot be overstated, as it is critical to their success in many areas of life (Campbell et al., 2016).

A key component of social-emotional development is emotional regulation, which refers to a child's ability to manage and control their emotions in response to different situations. Children who struggle with emotional regulation may be prone to outbursts, anxiety, and other negative emotions that can hinder their development (McLaughlin, Aspden, & Clarke, 2017). Another essential aspect of social-emotional development is the ability to form and maintain positive relationships, which includes developing empathy, sharing, and cooperation skills. Children with strong social-emotional skills are more likely to make friends easily, develop positive relationships with teachers and other adults, and better academic outcomes (Alzahrani, Alharbi, & Alodwani, 2019). Additionally, social-emotional development involves the ability to take on challenges and adapt to change. Children who possess a growth mindset and are resilient in the face of adversity are better equipped to handle the challenges of growing up (Osher, Guarino, Jones & Schanfield, 2021).

While substantial research exists on children's social-emotional development, there are still gaps in our understanding. More research is needed to understand how different cultures and communities' impact social-emotional development. Additionally, while there is some understandings of how social-emotional skills are developed, more research is needed to determine the most effective strategies for supporting these skills in children (Thapa, Nganga & Madrid, 2022). The relationship between social-emotional development and academic achievement also warrants more investigation. Understanding how these skills are related and how educators can help to foster social-emotional development to support academic success is crucial. Lastly, there is also a need for more research on the impact of technology on social-emotional development, particularly in light of the increasing use of technology in schools and at home (Panayiotou, Humphrey & Wigelsworth, 2019).

Challenges faced by parents in engaging in their children's ECCE

Parental involvement in early childhood education (ECCE) is essential for promoting children's academic and social-emotional development, but several challenges hinder this engagement. Poverty is a significant barrier, as it limits parents' access to resources and educational materials and makes it challenging to pay school fees. Other factors include transportation, work, and limited knowledge of the importance of ECCE. Language barriers and limited access to information are also significant obstacles to parental involvement in ECCE. Many parents are unaware of the importance of their involvement and how they can support their children's learning at home, while language barriers make it difficult to communicate with teachers and understand the curriculum. To improve parental involvement in ECCE, it is essential to address these challenges and provide resources, information, and support to parents in need (Kamusiime, 2018; Strachan et al., 2020; Mahuro & Hungi, 2016; Hansen, Grosso, Kakkar, & Okeyo).

Cultural beliefs also play a significant role in parental involvement in ECCE in Uganda. Some cultural beliefs in Uganda prioritize work or household chores over education, leading to a lack of emphasis on the importance of education. In some cases, gender roles may also prevent mothers from being actively involved in their children's education (Wodon, Nguyen and Tsimpo, 2016).

Inadequate parental involvement policies and lack of support from educational institutions also contribute to low levels of parental involvement in ECCE in Uganda. Policies that encourage parental involvement, such as providing information on the benefits of parental engagement, may be lacking. Educational institutions may not provide adequate support to parents, which can result in limited involvement in their children's education (Wassaaka, 2019). Literature gaps include the need for more research to understand how cultural beliefs affect parental involvement in ECCE in Uganda. More studies are also required to understand the role of language barriers in parental involvement and identify strategies to overcome these challenges. Additionally, more research is needed to understand how to develop and implement effective parental involvement policies in ECCE programs in Uganda (Ezati, Madanda & Ahikire, 2018).

Strategies for improving parental involvement in ECCE

Parental involvement is essential for the success of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes. However, in Uganda, several challenges hinder parents from engaging in their children's education (Mligo, 2018). Strategies have been proposed in a study conducted by Ejuu, Locoro, Nandera, Omoding, Mafabi, Kutosi & Kharono, (2022) that to improve parental involvement in ECCE in Uganda, parent and teacher associations and community engagement programmes should provide a platform for parents to participate in their children's education. The use of technology, such as mobile phones and social media, have also been proposed as an effective way to improve parental involvement in ECCE in Uganda. In addition, Lester, Pearce, Waters, Barnes, Beatty, & Cross. (2017) explain that educational institutions can provide training and resources for parents to support their children's learning at home. Such interventions can enhance parental involvement and improve children's outcomes.

Several studies have found that promoting home-school partnerships has been found to be an effective way to improve parental involvement. This involves encouraging parents to be active participants in their children's education by creating opportunities for them to interact with teachers, attend parent-teacher conferences, and volunteer in the classroom (Kocayörük, 2016). Additionally, providing parent education programmes and workshops can equip parents with the skills and knowledge needed to support their children's learning at home and in school (Mahuro & Hungi, 2016).

However, there are some gaps in the literature regarding strategies to improve parental involvement in ECCE in Uganda. For example, more research is needed to identify effective strategies for engaging fathers in their children's education, as most parental involvement programs in Uganda tend to focus on mothers (Carter, 2017). Additionally, there is a need for more research on how to overcome the cultural and language barriers that often hinder parental involvement in ECCE among immigrant and families (Norheim & Moser, 2020). Finally, there is a need to explore the effectiveness of strategies that involve the wider community, such as involving community leaders and religious leaders in promoting parental involvement in ECCE (Kunda, refugee 2016).

Research Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional research design to investigate the impact of parental involvement on children's social-emotional development in ECCE in Uganda, involving data collection at a single point in time. The study was underpinned by the positivist paradigm, which emphasises objective observation, measurement, and empirical data analysis in research (Williams, 2020).

The positivist paradigm aligns well with the study's aim to establish cause-and- effect relationships between parental involvement and social-emotional development outcomes in children.

The survey was descriptive research utilising quantitative data analysis, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the study topic. The inclusion criteria required participants to be citizens of Uganda with a child enrolled in early childhood care and education (ECCE). The target participant group was parents, defined as a biological or adoptive caregiver, guardian, or legal custodian of a child. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula, with a minimum sample size of 97 parents out of a total of 130 parents (See Appendix II).

The survey was conducted in two nursery schools, one in an urban setting and one in a rural setting. Permission to conduct the survey was secured from both nursery schools. After constructing the questionnaire, the researcher visited the selected schools and nominated research assistants in the chosen schools to help with distribution, follow-up and collection of completed instruments.

Data collection methods included self-administered questionnaire to collect quantitative data. The questionnaire, developed based on existing literature on parental involvement and social-emotional development, was pilot-tested to ensure validity and reliability. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics to summarise the data and linear regression analysis to examine the statistical relationship between parental involvement and social-emotional development in children. The findings were triangulated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research question.

Ethical considerations were thoroughly addressed in the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before they answered the survey questionnaire, and their confidentiality and anonymity were ensured throughout the study.
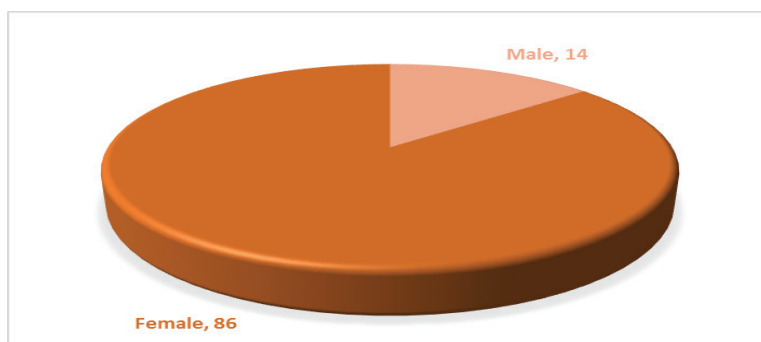
Results

This section presents the study sample, frequencies, descriptive statistics, and research question results.

Parents' Demographics

In this study, the researcher examined the demographics of the parents who took part in the survey, with a specific focus on their gender.

Figure 1: Sex of respondents

Source: Primary Data,2023

According to Figure 1, 86% of the participants were female, while only 14% were male. This indicates that the majority of the participants were women, suggesting that women are more likely to attend their children's school activities. This gender disparities implies that women are taking a more active role in their children's education and participating more in school-related activities than men.

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This gender gap in parental involvement may have implications for children's academic and social-emotional development. Research has shown that parental involvement is linked to positive outcomes in both of these domains. Therefore, it is crucial to encourage and support both mothers and fathers to be actively involved in their children's education to promote the best outcomes for their children.

Parental involvement in ECCE

Data on parental involvement was analysed to establish their level of participation in the education of their children in in early childhood care education is presented

Table 1: Parent involvement

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Enough time to be involved in my child's education	97	1	5	3.8763	0.85705
Communicate with my child's teachers or caregivers often	97	1	5	1.701	0.67954
Involvement in your child's education has helped them positively	97	1	5	1.3299	0.59023
Confident in helping my child with school activities like home work	97	1	5	3.6804	1.09494
Valid N (listwise)	97				

Source: Primary Data, 2023

Based on the data analysed in Table 1, it can be concluded that most parents feel that they do not have enough time to be involved in their children's education, with the mean score of 3.8763. However, they do communicate frequently with their children's teachers or caregivers, as indicated by a mean score of 1.701. This frequent communication suggests that parents are interested in staying informed about their children's progress and well-being. This could positively impact their child's social-emotional development, as frequent communication with caregivers can foster strong relationships between parents, children, and caregivers, which is important for the child's emotional well-being.

Furthermore, the data in Table 1 reveals that parents involved in their children's education have a positive experience, with a mean score of 1.3299, indicating strong disagreement. This involvement could lead to increased motivation and engagement in the child's learning. Specifically, children with involved parents tend to have higher levels of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and emotional regulation. On the other hand, parents appear to lack confidence in assisting their children with school activities, such as homework, with a mean score of 3.6804 indicating disagreement. This lack of confidence may negatively impact the child's social-emotional development, as children who struggle with academic tasks may experience frustration, anxiety, or low self-esteem.

Table 2: Ways parents are involved in children's education

	Parents involvement	Frequencies		
		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
ways of parents' involve-ments	Attending parent-teacher conferences	81	30.10%	83.50%
	volunteering in the classroom	26	9.70%	26.80%
	Helping with homework or projects	92	34.20%	94.80%
	Participating in school events or activities	70	26.00%	72.20%
Total		269	100.00%	277.30%
a. Group				

Source: Primary Data, 2023

Table 2 presents the various ways in which parents are involved in their children's early childhood education, as reported by the participants. The data shows that 34.2% of parents help their children with homework or projects, 30.1% attend parent-teacher meetings, 26% participate in school events or activities, and only 9.7% volunteer in the classroom. This indicates that parents are more likely to get involved in their child's education through helping with homework, attending parent-teacher meetings, and participating in school events or activities, rather than volunteering in the classroom. Parents who help their children with homework, attend parent-teacher meetings, and participate in school events or activities are more likely to have a positive impact on their child's social-emotional development.

Relationship between Parent involvement and Children's social-emotional skills

Table 3: Parent involvement and children's social-emotional development

	Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
How often do you engage in activities with your child that promote social-emotional development, such as reading, playing games, or having conversations?	97	1	5	2.2474	0.8664
How often do you communicate with your child's teacher(s) about their well-being	97	1	5	2.1649	0.64032
How would you rate your child's emotional well-being and self-esteem	97	1	5	4.2577	0.79423

How would you rate your child's relationships with teachers and peers	97	1	5	4.299	0.6947
Emotional development	97	1	4	1.9794	0.28793
Empathy	97	1	5	3.9691	0.94045
Cooperation and sharing	97	1	54	4.7732	5.08778
Adaptability	97	1	5	1.4845	0.6143
Valid N (listwise)	97				

Source: Primary Data,2023

Table 3 presents the mean values related to parent involvement and children's social-emotional development. The data indicated that the majority of parents (mean = 2.2474) reported that they sometimes engage in activities with their children to promote social-emotional development, such as reading, playing games, or having conversations. Additionally, most parents (mean = 2.1649) reported sometimes communicating with their children's teachers about their well-being. Parents with a mean of 4.2577 reported that their children had excellent emotional well-being and self-esteem.

Table 3 also shows that parents with a mean of 4.299 reported that their children had excellent relationships with their teachers and peers. These findings suggest that when parents actively engage in promoting their children's social-emotional development and communicate with teachers, it can have a positive impact on their children's well-being and relationships with others.

The parents were surveyed regarding their observations of their children's social-emotional development, specifically in terms of emotional regulation, empathy, adaptability, cooperation, and sharing. The majority of parents with a mean of 4.7732 reported that their children always show signs of cooperation and sharing, while the majority of parents with a mean of 3.9691 reported that their children often show empathy. However, the majority of parents with a mean of 1.9794 reported that their children show limited emotional regulation, which is measured by the ability to manage and control emotions in response to different situations. Additionally, the majority of parents with a mean of 1.4845 reported that their children rarely exhibit adaptability, which is the ability to take on challenges and adapt to change. These findings indicate that while children demonstrate strength in certain aspects of social-emotional development, there is a need for improvement in others. Therefore, targeted interventions may be necessary to support children's emotional regulation and adaptability skills

Statistical relationship between parental involvement and children's social emotional development

In this section, a hypothesis testing was conducted for the statistical relationship between parental involvement and social-emotional development is presented. A model summary table is provided, which displays the level of variation between the two variables. Additionally, an ANOVA table is included, which indicates the level of significance between the variables.

Table 4: Model summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.903a	0.816	0.814	0.29467
a. Predictors: (Constant), Parent Involvement				

Table 4 displays a model summary table presenting the R and R^2 values. The R value, representing the simple correlation between parent involvement and social-emotional development, is 0.903, indicating a high degree of correlation. The R^2 value indicates the proportion of the total variation in children's social-emotional development that can be explained by the level of parent involvement. In this case, the R^2 value is 0.816, indicating that 81.6% of the variation in social-emotional development can be explained by the level of parent involvement. This suggests that as the level of parent involvement in children's education increases, their social-emotional development also improves. Additionally, the R^2 value indicates that a significant proportion (81.6%) of the variation in social-emotional development can be explained by the level of parent involvement. This suggests that as the level of parent involvement in children's education increases, their social-emotional development also improves.

These findings highlight the importance of parent involvement in promoting positive social-emotional development in children and reinforce the need for schools to encourage and support parent involvement in their children's education.

Table 5: Anova tests

ANOVAb						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	36.496	1	36.496	420.304	.000a
	Residual	8.249	95	0.087		
	Total	44.746	96			
a. Predictors: (Constant), Parent Involvement						
b. Dependent Variable: Social-Emotional Development						

Table 5 presents the Anova table, which includes the F-test with a value of 420.304 and 96 degrees of freedom. The high significance level of the F-test suggests a linear relationship between the variables in the regression model. Moreover, the results indicate that the regression model is an effective predictor of children's social-emotional development since the p-value is less than 0.05, with a value of 0.000. This implies that the regression model statistically significantly predicts the level of social-emotional emotional development in children.

Table 6: Coefficients table

		Coefficients(a)				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	0.236	0.127		1.864	0.014
	Parent Involvement	0.94	0.046	0.903	20.501	0
a. Dependent Variable: Social Emotional Development						

Table 6 presents the coefficients of the regression equation, which takes the form of y = c + bx. In this equation, y represents the dependent variable (social-emotional development), c represents the constant, b represents the independent variable (parent involvement), and x represents the variable that brings about changes in the dependent variable. The regression equation derived from the coefficients table is:

Social-emotional development = 0.236 + 0.94 (Parent involvement).

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This equation implies that a change in parent involvement level results in a corresponding change in their children's social-emotional development. Furthermore, the hypothesis between parent involvement and social-emotional development was presented in Table 6. The p-value of 0.014, which is less than 0.05, indicates that the null hypothesis was rejected. This result implies that parent involvement has a significant effect on children's social-emotional development in Uganda. It suggests that limited parent involvement in their children's education negatively impacts their social-emotional development, while increased parent involvement leads to positive social-emotional development outcomes in children.

The analysis indicates that there is a significant positive correlation between parent involvement and children's social-emotional development in Uganda. Specifically, the regression equation shows that for every unit increase in parent involvement, there is an increase in social-emotional development by 0.94 units. Additionally, the ANOVA test indicates that the regression model significantly predicts the level of children's social-emotional development, and the coefficient table shows that the relationship between parent involvement and social-emotional development is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the implication of this analysis is that encouraging and increasing parent involvement in their children's education can have a positive impact on their social-emotional development in Uganda. This could have significant implications for policy and practice in early childhood education and development in the country.

Challenges faced by parents in engaging in their children's education

The survey identified several primary obstacles that hinder parents' participation in their children's education. The majority of parents reported that limited time due to work and lack of financial resources were significant barriers to their involvement. Additionally, language barriers were identified as an obstacle that could hinder effective communication between parents and teachers. Furthermore, parents reported difficulties with the educational system, such as different methods of teaching letters and challenges in motivating their children to learn at home.

During the survey, participants were asked about the type of support they received from their children's school to help them be more involved in their education. Parents mentioned that they received support in the form of homework assignments for their children and regular feedback on their children's progress. Additionally, the school provided parents with a WhatsApp communication platform where they could receive extra information about their children's learning progress, as well as receive extra calls from the school about their children. This level of support from the school is highly beneficial for parents, as it helps them stay informed and engaged in their children's education.

Participants were asked if there were any cultural beliefs or practices that affected the parents' involvement in their children's education. The majority of parents reported that they did not have any cultural beliefs of practices affecting their involvement in the children's education. However, some parents stated that they lacked information about the importance of parental involvement in their child's education. They expressed interest in learning about ways to balance work and education, methods to enhance their child's communication skills and confidence, strategies to raise children in the contemporary era, and techniques to assess and improve their child's mental well-being.

Recommendations and strategies for improving parent involvement in ECCE in Uganda

According to the survey, participants emphasised incorporating technology, such as mobile phones and social media, to enhance parental involvement in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). Parents acknowledged that technology can facilitate communication between them and their children's teachers and enable access to quality educational content like rhymes and videos.

However, parents expressed the need for appropriate regulation of information accessible through technology to ensure that children only access relevant educational materials. Therefore, educating parents on regulating technology is crucial in promoting children's access to appropriate educational content. Participants also expressed a desire to take part in parent education programmes and workshops on topics such as personal hygiene, social-emotional development, and ways to motivate children to improve their self-esteem and confidence. They also suggested that schools should provide materials in local languages to address language barriers and work closely with parents to ensure they are informed about their children's development. By addressing language barriers and providing opportunities for parent education, parents can play an active role in their children's education and development.

Additionally, parents also suggested more of class presentations at the children's schools, more homework, and increased opportunities for sports, dance and drama. These activities can teach children about their culture, enhance self-esteem and build confidence.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

This section summarises the discussions, conclusions, and recommendations based on the findings presented in Chapter Four. The discussions were structured around the research questions, and the conclusions were drawn from the survey data. Finally, recommendations were provided based on the findings to improve parental involvement and children's social-emotional development in early childhood education.

Discussion

The study's first question examined parental involvement in early childhood care and education (ECCE) in Uganda. The survey revealed that parental involvement is essential for a child's overall development. The obtained data showed that parents are actively communicating with their children's teachers or caregivers, indicating their interest in staying updated on their children's progress and well-being. This communication can positively impact a child's social-emotional development by fostering strong relationships between parents, children, and caregivers, which is crucial for their emotional well-being. Additionally, Kurtulmus (2016) emphasised the significance of different forms of parental involvement, such as home-based and school-based activities, and parent-teacher communication in promoting children's social-emotional development. The study found that parental involvement in children's education results in positive experiences for both the parent and child. This involvement leads to increased motivation and engagement in children's learning, resulting in higher levels of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and emotional regulation. Liu, Sulaimani and Henning, (2020) also found that involved parents contribute to their children's emotional well-being, self-esteem, and positive relationships with teachers and peers. Schools can provide resources and support for parents to feel confident in assisting their children with academic tasks. Parental involvement through homework help, attending meetings and participating in school events fosters a strong parent-child relationship and promotes essential life skills for the child's social-emotional development.

The study's second research question examined the relationship between parental involvement and the development of children's social-emotional skills. The survey data revealed that parental involvement positively impacted children's social-emotional development, which is consistent with prior research studies (Liu et al., 2020; Kurtulmus, 2016). Targeted interventions are necessary to improve children's emotional regulation and adaptability skills. Parents can significantly contribute to supporting their children's social-emotional development by fostering positive relationships, providing emotional support, and encouraging them to explore their emotions in a safe environment.

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Empirical studies have demonstrated that parental involvement has a positive correlation with academic performance (Danişman, 2017; Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017), improved self-esteem (Kocayörük, 2016), better school attendance and retention rates (Danişman, 2017), favourable school attachment (Wong et al., 2018), and positive school environments for children (Wong et al., 2018). The survey result implies that limited parent involvement in children's education negatively impacts their social-emotional development, while increased parent involvement leads to positive outcomes. This indicates that parent involvement has a significant effect on children's social-emotional development in Uganda. Therefore, encouraging and increasing parent involvement in their children's education can have a positive impact on their social-emotional development, which could have significant implications for policy and practice in early childhood education and development in the country.

The third research question was about the challenges faced by parents in engaging in their children's ECCE, and how these challenges can be addressed. The survey aimed to uncover the primary obstacles that parents face when trying to participate in their children's education. The majority of parents cited their limited time due to work and the need to provide for their families as a significant barrier. The study also found financial obstacles, lack of educational resources, and language barriers to be challenges for parents. The literature review also pointed out that parents living in poverty may lack the resources needed to support their children's learning, such as educational materials and the ability to pay for school fees (Kamusiime, 2018). Parents living in poverty also have limited access to transportation, lack of time due to work or other responsibilities, and limited knowledge of the importance of ECCE (Strachan et al., 2020). Furthermore, limited access to information is a significant barrier to parental involvement in ECCE. Many parents in Uganda are not aware of the importance of their involvement in their children's education and how they can support their children's learning at home (Mahuro & Hungi, 2016). Additionally, language barriers can make it challenging for parents to communicate with teachers and understand the curriculum (Hansen, Grosso, Kakkar, & Okeyo).

The study emphasised the importance of effective communication between parents and teachers for a child's social-emotional development. The survey results showed that schools provide support to parents in the form of homework assignments, progress feedback, and communication platforms like WhatsApp. However, some parents expressed a lack of information about their involvement in their children's education and wanted to learn more about balancing work and education, improving their children's communication skills and mental well-being.

The fourth research question was about recommendations provided by the parents that can be made for improving their involvement in ECCE in Uganda. The survey revealed that technology, such as mobile phones and social media, can enhance parental involvement in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) by facilitating communication between parents and teachers and providing access to quality educational content. However, appropriate regulation of technology is necessary to ensure that children only access relevant educational materials. This was in line with the literature review that pointed out that the use of technology, such as mobile phones and social media, have also been proposed as an effective way to improve parental involvement in ECCE in Uganda. However, more research is needed to determine the feasibility of using technology as a means of engaging parents and promoting positive outcomes in children's development (Sumani, Twine and Busingye, 2017). The survey found that educating parents on regulating technology is crucial for promoting children's access to appropriate educational content, as technology such as mobile phones and social media can enhance parental involvement in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Uganda. Additionally, parents expressed a desire to participate in parent education programmes and workshops on various topics related to child development, and suggested that schools should provide materials in local languages and work closely with parents to ensure they are informed about their children's development.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the survey results demonstrate that parental involvement is crucial for the social-emotional development of children in Uganda. Effective communication between parents and teachers is essential to ensure positive outcomes. The survey also identified several barriers that parents face when participating in their children's education, including limited time due to work, financial obstacles, and language barriers. Schools must provide parents with resources and support to facilitate communication and ensure full participation. Technology can enhance parental involvement in ECCE, but appropriate regulation is necessary to ensure that children only access relevant educational materials. The survey highlights the importance of parent education programmes, addressing language barriers, and involving parents in various activities to support their children's social-emotional development. The findings of the study can inform policies and practices in early childhood education and development in Uganda.

Overall, the findings of this survey highlight the need to prioritise parental involvement in ECCE and address the challenges that parents face in supporting their children's social-emotional development. By addressing the concerns highlighted, children can receive the support and guidance they need to thrive and reach their full potential.

Recommendations

Based on the information provided from the survey, the researcher made the following general recommendations to improve the parent involvement as a strategy to improve children's social-emotional development:

1. Provide resources and support for parents: Schools should provide resources and support for parents to help them feel more confident in assisting their children and inform them about the significance of their involvement in their children's education. This can be done through parent education programmes and workshops that cover various topics related to child development and provide materials in local languages.

2. Encourage parental involvement: Schools should encourage parents to get involved in their children's education by providing opportunities for them to participate in school events, activities, and parent-teacher meetings. This can help to foster positive relationships between parents, children, and caregivers, which is essential for the children's emotional well-being.

3. Utilise technology: Technology can be a powerful tool in enhancing parental involvement in early childhood education. Schools should utilise technology such as mobile phones and social media to facilitate communication between parents and teachers and provide access to quality educational content.

4. Address language barriers: Language barriers can be a significant obstacle to parent involvement in early childhood education. Schools should work closely with parents to ensure they are informed about their children's development, and provide materials in local languages to improve communication and understanding.

5. Promote social-emotional development: Schools should prioritise promoting social-emotional development by providing opportunities for children to engage in activities that build self-esteem and confidence. This can include sports, dance, drama, and other cultural activities that teach children about their heritage and build their sense of identity.

6. Create safe and supportive environments: Creating safe and supportive environments can help children develop positive relationships with their parents, teachers, and peers. This can include fostering positive peer relationships, creating opportunities for children to develop their self-confidence, and promoting positive discipline practices.

7. The study recommends that schools provide resources and support for parents to facilitate communication and ensure full participation. Additionally, schools should provide parents with information about the importance of their involvement in their child's education and how to balance work and education.

8. It was also recommended that there is need to have more class presentations, homework, and opportunities for sports, dance, and drama to teach children about their culture and build self-esteem and confidence.

Build strong partnerships: Schools can work to build strong partnerships with parents, which can include creating opportunities for parents to engage with school staff and participate in decision-making processes related to their child's education. By implementing these recommendations, schools and educators can create a positive and supportive environment that fosters the social-emotional development of children while also strengthening the relationship between parents and their children's schools. This can have significant long-term benefits for children's overall well-being and success.

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