

A Comparative Study of Parent Engagement in Homework: The Case of Private and Government Secondary Schools in Addis Ababa

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Abstract

This study examined parent engagement with their children's homework in public and private secondary schools in the city of Addis Ababa. Through a qualitative case study approach, the researchers interviewed a total of 30 participants: 12 teachers, 12 parents, and six school leaders. Member checking and peer review were conducted within the research team to ensure validity and reliability, and the findings were then summarized by theme. Overall, the study highlights the complex relationships between school type, socioeconomic status, parental academic support, and supportive environments. The findings suggest that parental engagement is significantly higher in private schools, where well-educated and affluent parents are more likely to be involved in their children's homework. In contrast, public schools, which serve predominantly low-income families, struggle with parental involvement, citing communication and socioeconomic barriers. Notably, the study highlights the varying strategies employed by schools to promote parental involvement, with private schools focusing on incentives and extracurricular activities and public schools offering tutoring services. While both school types emphasize a positive learning environment, the approach to homework and parental involvement differs significantly. The study's results underscore the need for schools to adopt context-specific strategies that cater to the diverse needs of their student populations, taking into account socioeconomic factors, parental academic support, and creating a conducive homework environment. By doing so, schools can foster a more inclusive and supportive environment that promotes parental engagement in homework and, ultimately, improves student academic outcomes.

Keywords: Homework, Parental Involvement, Private, And Public Secondary Schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Origin and Development of Homework

In the nineteenth century, Horace Mann, a German politician, had a significant impact on homework. But in the twenty century, Robert Neviris presented it as a discipline. Before homework became common around the world (Bembenutty 2010), its educational value had been under debate in the early twenty-first century, especially in the United States. Meanwhile, according to Cooper's (1989) study, excessive homework was criticized. On the contrary, Sullivan and Sequiria (1996) support the benefits of homework, and in a competitive global environment, there is growing interest in using homework to improve student achievement (Anderson, 1986). Meanwhile, in this area, Cooper (1989) defined homework as a job, apart from class hours.

Historically, parental involvement in their children's homework was not common. Nevertheless, to address these issues, the twentieth century, especially the 1960s, saw the implementation of homework as a means to equip children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds and racial or ethnic minority groups for academic environments, with the goal of reducing potential disadvantages (Brooks-Gun et al., 2000). In addition, Grolnick and Slowaraczek (1994) proposed two theories about the participation of parents. This is an indirect impact, contributing to the motivation, attitude, and direct value of academic skills.

Presently, children in Ethiopia have homework, but they are generally less engaged, interested, and motivated in their studies, leading to low attendance rates. In addition, according to a document from the Ethiopian Ministry of Education (2018), if the educational system does not motivate students, they will be disinterested in learning and developing skills. Furthermore, this leads students to complete only the minimum tasks required for assessment outside of class, which promotes a passive attitude in class, as noted by Battin-Pearson et al. (2000).

Hence, the study aimed to compare parent engagement in homework between private and government secondary schools in Addis Ababa. Reasons for parent involvement included personal interest, professional experience, and gaps in the literature. Also, differences in national test scores, levels of parental involvement, and socioeconomic influences on homework completion have been noted across school types. The research focused on parental involvement in educational activities, creating a conducive homework environment, and how socioeconomic status affects children's academic performance in homework.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Perspectives

Although different schools of thought were once dominant, by the 1960s parental involvement in homework was recognized as important to children's academic progress, and various studies have shown that children from different socio-economic backgrounds can benefit from homework for their children (Books-Gun et al., 2000). For instance, Epstein's six models provided educators with a roadmap for improving student outcomes by fostering positive relationships between schools and parents. Despite historical skepticism about the educational value of homework, attitudes have changed over time (Gill and Schlossman, 2004). Although concerns about student well-being and stress persist, most parents continue to support homework (Kralovec and Buell, 2000). Besides, as suggested by Toney et al. (2003), teachers were encouraged to assist parents in helping their children with their homework, emphasize the importance of completing homework, and provide positive feedback to improve students' performance. Research has found that there are certain factors that promote effective parental involvement in homework, including: among other things, homework regulation helps children develop skills, attitudes, and behaviors and promotes cooperation and communication between parents and students (Corno et al., 1996). Furthermore, school parent involvement programs (TIPS)

improve student attitudes and completion rates by motivating parental involvement (Epstein and Van Voorhis, 2001). Supportive parental involvement is beneficial for homework, but dysfunctional relationships can exacerbate the problem. The impact of parent-child bonding on homework performance needs to be considered (Bempechat et al., 2004).

Studies agreed that homework promotes children's academic and extra-academic development, as stated by Bembenutti (2011), who highlighted long-term benefits such as improved academic performance, participation in extracurricular activities, and parental support. Also, Gill and Schlossman (2004) emphasized how homework has improved student self-adjustment skills and prepares for training and discipline. In addition, duties have established relationships, communication, and personal development, which proves their importance in education (Epstein, 1983).

Earlier research has shown that various factors influence the effectiveness of homework completion. Parental socio-economic status is one of the major influences on children's educational outcomes. For example, wealthy families provide their children with access to resources through technology and private tutors that improve their academic performance. In contrast, children from poor families may not benefit from these advantages, which affects their academic achievement (Ermisch and Francesconi, 1997 and 2000). Parents' support, participation, and monitoring play an important role in the formation of children's education. The educational level of parents, especially mothers, influences children's academic achievement (Hiveman et al., 1995). Also, technology has facilitated communication between parents and teachers by providing collaborative and multimedia resources (Richards-Babb et al., 2011). Homework accountability is another component that is essential to achieving academic goals because it explains judgments and actions related to homework (NOUN, 2008).

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated parental engagement in homework tasks in public and private secondary schools in Addis Ababa. Motivated by parents' desire for quality education and their concern for student outcomes (Saboka, 2003), the researcher seeks to fill the knowledge gap by studying the differences and similarities in parents' engagement with homework in these schools. In this qualitative methods study, our research questions (RQs) are as follows:

RQ1. How are parents involved in their children's instructional activities in public and private secondary schools in Addis Ababa city?

RQ2. How are parents involved in creating favorable conditions for a child's homework process in private and government secondary schools in the city of Addis Ababa? How is this affecting learners' engagement?

RQ3. To what extent do parents' socioeconomic conditions influence homework process in private and public secondary schools in the city of Addis Ababa?

METHODS

Research Design and Approaches

Among other qualitative approaches, an embedded approach defines the study's methodology, multiple-case study design, and qualitative research methods. The use of qualitative research methodology enabled the comprehensive and detailed exploration of the phenomenon, facilitating the collection of extensive data through various methods (Pring, 2015). Hence, employing a multiple-case study design provided a more in-depth understanding of the subject, and the embedding approach facilitated comparisons across cases (Yin, 2013). These methodological aspects enabled a complete investigation of how parents engage in homework activities in private

and public secondary schools within the Addis Ababa City Administration.

Samples and sampling techniques

Purposive sampling is employed since it is a method where researchers select specific individuals, events, or locations based on the valuable insights they provide (Ogula, 2005). The ensuing table shows the characteristics of the selected respondents.

Table 1.Characteristics of Respondents

	Gender		Total	Qualification	Gender		Total	Qualification
	M	F			M	F		
School Leaders	2	1	3	Masters	1	2	3	Masters
Teachers	4	2	6	Degree	3	3	6	Degree
Parents	3	3	6	Diploma	5	1	6	Diploma
Total	9	6	15		9	6	15	

In the above **Table 1**, 30 participants—12 teachers, 12 parents, and six school leaders—from both public and private schools participated in the study. They were selected based on their qualifications and their status within the organization. The study concentrated on six chosen secondary schools, identified as six distinct cases, which exhibited different levels of academic success across three sub-cities, attributed to variations in student performance on national assessments (World Bank, 2005). These were Etege-Menen and Bekulos-Nur; high-achieving secondary schools; medium-achieving secondary schools were Addis Ketema and Amigonia; and low-achieving secondary schools were Ayer-Xena and Betel-Mekane-Yesus. The research focused on three sub-cities, Gullale, Kolfe-Keranio, and Addis-Ketema, due to observed disparities in student performance on national examinations.

Data collection instruments

A semi-structured interview was employed as one method of data collection. A semi-structured interview is a data-gathering technique in which the interviewer is not required to ask exact formal questions (George, 2022).

Semi-structured Interviews

In this study, semi-structured interviews were used to collect accurate and individualized information. Respondents are willing to use tape recorders. Interviews lasted 50 to 60 minutes. The study utilized interviews conducted in the Amharic language, as it is the official language of the city and the country. The interviews were recorded and then translated into English to make analysis easier. A total of 30 individuals, 12 parents, 12 teachers and six school leaders, participated in the interview process.

Method of Data Analysis

Thematic data analysis was conducted post-data presentation, examining varied epistemologies and inquiries. Braun and Clarke (2006) define it as detecting, analyzing, categorizing, summarizing, and presenting themes through color-coding. Accordingly, the data analysis classified teachers as T one (T1) to T twelve (T12), parent responses as P one (P1) to P twelve (P12), and school leaders as L one (L1) to L six (L6). As well, both private and public schools have received the assigned codes and are classified as high-achieving private schools as HAPS, medium-achieving private schools as MAPS, and low-achieving private schools as LAPS, while high-achieving government schools as HAGS, medium-achieving government schools as MAGS, and low-achieving government secondary schools as LAGS. The dataset underwent rigorous analysis to discover

recurrent trends. The performance of schools in national exams determined their categorization into three groups: low-achieving, medium-achieving, and high-achieving.

RESULTS

As currently mentioned, the concept of parental engagement in homework became evident in the nineteen sixty through the twentieth century, when parental involvement in homework was crucial to a child's academic progress. (Brooks-Gun et al., 2000). Parental involvement in homework has many dimensions, but this study analyzes homework involvement from three perspectives only: participation in instruction, creating a favorable environment, and parental socio-economic influence on homework. The results indicate divergent and convergent trends in their participation in homework in both private and public secondary schools, which were based on three themes identified in each topic through category formation.

Instructional involvement of Parents in Homework

Today, digital technology is playing a pivotal role at everyone's door. The effectiveness of homework also depends heavily on parental involvement in the provision and monitoring of the use of digital devices during homework. Thus, feedback from participants across the three private and public high school levels indicated variations in the application of digital technology for homework purposes. They expressed:

As eminent by HAPS, Most students used digital technologies to finish their homework. [T1, P2, L1,...]. But in HAGS, some parents avoided the use of digital technologies and encouraged children to utilize social media. [P7, T6, L4]. Once again, as stated in MAPS, children are allowed to use laptops and Wi-Fi effectively to do their homework. [P3, T3, L1]. As well, in MAGS, Parents handled the use of digital technology. [T9, P8, L5]. Yet respondents in LAPS and LAGS felt the same way, saying the use of technology among children is bad. [L3, T5, P6, and T12, L6, P11].

Earlier research has backed the necessity of educational accountability, particularly as homework validation demands higher levels of responsibility, and many stakeholders do not hold favorable views on this matter. In numerous private and public high schools, families urge institutions to ensure their children remain responsible for finishing their homework. In certain private and public high schools, the accountability links among stakeholders are not very strong. This was emphasized by respondents:

Parents in HAPS have efficient monitoring even when there is no legislation controlling education.[T2, L1, P1]. While, in HAGS, full clarification was given regarding the responsibilities of each party in carrying out their respective tasks, and stakeholders responded effectively. [T7, P8, L4]. Respondents in MAPS say parents support children with more responsibility and emphasis.[L2, T4, P4]. As well, in MAGS, a system of accountability exists that promotes children and helps them become law-abiding citizens.[P9,T8,L5]. Additionally, in LAPS, children are aware of and know their responsibilities and rights when it comes to homework.[T6, L3, P5]. However, children couldn't maintain the necessary criteria to meet the responsibilities. [P11, L6, T11]. as celebrated by LAGS.

Regardless of their educational background, parents' support and guidance at home have a beneficial impact on a child's learning. To help their children meet homework goals, parents need to support and remind them about their homework. In this setting, the sources mentioned that:

In both HAPS and HAGS, continuous and erratic assistance was provided, and also children were well reminded while they were working on their homework assignments. [T1, L1, P2], and [L4, T7, P8]. In addition to offering their support, parents in both MAPS

and MAGS reminded and urged their children to turn in their homework on time.[L2, T3, P3], and [T9 10, L5]. But in LAGS, less assistance was provided. [P11, L6, T12], while in LAPS, only devoted parents provide the support.[T5, L3, P6].

Parental motivation is essential in influencing the way children engage with their homework in a positive manner. In certain schools, children who were motivated showed a greater enthusiasm for participating and completing their homework assignments. They were also driven by leisure activities, tangible rewards, and monetary incentives. Consequently, participants came to realize that:

Parents are very supportive and recognise the best students. [L1, T2, P1], and [T7, L4, and P8] in both HAPS and HAGS., while in MAPS ad MAGS, children are inspired and provided recreational opportunities. [T3, L2, P4], and [P9, T10, L5]. Additionally, in LAPS, free time is more important.[T5, L3, P6], but in LAGS, both monetary and material benefits were provided by parents.[P11, L6, T12].

Previous studies have shown that effective parent-child conversations and harmonious communication contribute to better completion of homework tasks by children. In three categories of private and public secondary schools, parents interact with their children to different extents. Participants emphasized the importance of this mutual communication between the two sides:

HAPS shows high parent-child dialogue. [P2, L1, T1], but HAGS show lower communication. [P7,L4, T8]. AS well, in MAPS, inadequate communication was observed, [T3, P4, L2], but in MAGS, a moderate degree of cooperation was achieved. [T9. L5, T8]. LAPS also show an effective interaction with children. [L3, P5, T6], while in LAGS, telephone conversation was common. [P11.T12, L6].

The participation of individual parents can greatly improve a child's homework experience, but the role of parent leaders in this situation is just as important. In certain schools, parent leaders focus more on financial matters than on academic concerns, whereas in others, they emphasize achieving excellence in homework and have made important contributions to this area. The participants emphasized the significance of their involvement in all three levels of secondary education, as outlined below:

In HAPS and HAGS, parent leaders strived for homework excellence and have made a significant contribution to homework. [P1, T2, L1], and [P7, T8, L4]. Also, in MAPS, they engaged in productive interaction between them and teachers. [P4, T3, and L2], but in MAGS, parent leaders struggle with finances as opposed to academics. [P9, T10, L5]. Similarly, in both LAPS and LAGS, they handle money issues more than academics. [P6, T5, L3], and [P11, T12, L6].

Creation of a conducive Environment for Children's Homework

A nurturing homework setting greatly enhances how effectively a child can complete their assignments. Homework environments encompass both tangible and mental aspects. The information collected from various sources suggests that some parents have created supportive atmospheres for homework, whereas others have not managed to do so. Participants stated that:

With regard to maintaining steady rules in both HAPS and HAGS, parents maintain an uninterrupted homework routine and assist children in following schedules. [L1, P2, T1] and [L4, P7, T8]. Nevertheless, parents in both MAPS and MAGS applying of rules without guiding the principle. [P3, T4, L2], and [T8, P9, and L5]. Also, both, LAPS and LAGS maintain discipline without formal guidelines or procedures. [P5, L3, T6], and [L6, P12, T11] respectively.

A well-equipped study space is a crucial component of a nurturing homework environment that parents should create. In this context, not all institutions across the three educational tiers offered sufficient facilities and conducive study environments. Some participants communicated that: Both HAPS and HAGS have “a calming house environment.” [L1, T2, P1], and [L4, T7 and P8]. “Digital device prohibition is challenging.” [L2, T3, P3], and [L5, T9, P10] in both MAPS and MAGS. In LAPS, “Peace disrupted by noise.” [P6, T5, L3], while, in LAGS, “some parents turn off their electronics to avoid distraction.” [P11, T12, L6].

A properly furnished study space is a crucial component of a conducive homework atmosphere that parents should create for their children. In this context, not every school across the three educational stages offered sufficient facilities and conducive learning environments. Some participants mentioned that:

Parents provide organized study spaces for homework. [T2, P1, L1], and [T7, P8, and L4] in both HAPS and HAGS. However, in MAPS and MAGS, children seldom complete in reading rooms, and in most cases, no separate study room was filled with materials. [T3, P3, L2], and [T8, P7, and L5]. Also, in LAPS, children use the shared room for doing homework. [P6, T5, L3], and in LAGS, in most cases, no conducive study areas were available. [P11, T12,L6].

Parental Socioeconomic influences on Homework

The socioeconomic status of parents influences homework, having both beneficial and detrimental effects. Factors such as parental wealth, educational background, job circumstances, and gender significantly influence homework performance. Consequently, participants shared their insights on how parental socioeconomic status affects homework performance in the following ways:

With regard to impacts of economic disparities on homework, parents in HAPS have better parents managing financial issues and course material. [L1, P2,T3]. But parents in HAGS provide free food and clothing to reduce stress. [T8, L4,P7]. Comparably, in MAPS, parents provided adequate meals, clothes, and efficient instruction. [P4, L2, T3], however, in MAGS, free clothing and food distribution has reduced the disparity among parents, which was provided by the government. [L5, P9, T10]. In LAPS, Parental economic gaps impact children. [T6, P5,L3]. Similarly, in LAGS, the mechanisms of teaching and learning are deteriorating, though material support was provided. [P11, T12, L6].

It was acknowledged that the economic circumstances, particularly for affluent parents, could impact their children's educational achievements, although having financial resources doesn't automatically guarantee better performance. Children encounter unforeseen situations when given additional money. In regard to this, respondents emphasized:

In HAPS, financial resources do not necessarily lead to superior performance. [L1,P1,T2]. Besides, in HAGS, children are subjected to unexpected circumstances when provided with more money. [T7, L4, P8]. In MAPS, Learning affected by finances. [P3, T4, L2], While in MAGS, parental background impacts a child's education more than monetary supply. [L5,P9,T10]. LAPS also reflect on the ethical and psychological effects of money on children's education. [L3, P5,T6], Similarly, in LAGS, context and heredity are responsible for good performance compared to financial issues. [P12, L6, T11]

The educational success of children is significantly shaped by the various backgrounds of parents. The work conditions of parents, whether in the public or private sector, influence their children's ability to complete homework assignments. Parents come from various educational

backgrounds. Additionally, the employment and educational background of parents play a significant role in their children's education, especially when homework is concerned. Respondents indicated that:

In HAPS, employee parents invest more time in their children's homework than do jobless parents. [L1,P1,T2]. On the other hand, parents in the public sector offer sufficient assistance. [L4, P8, T7] in HAPS. Moreover, fathers generally offer more support to their children and appear to prioritize homework to a greater extent. [L2, P3, T4] in MAPS. While in MAGS, education level and home responsibilities affect homework. [L5,P9, T10]. Besides, in LAPS, employed parents have more access to education. [L3, P6, T6], and in LAGS, some employees do pay for their children's education. [L6, P11, and T12].

The gender of parents influences the effectiveness of homework completion. The active involvement of both parents significantly enhances the completion of their child's homework. However, the participants indicated that various factors could influence their level of engagement with homework.

Fathers help children more, and they appear to value homework more. [L1, P2, T1], and [L4, P7, and T8] in both HAPS and HAPS. Yet, in MAPS and MAGS, mothers are more concerned about household duties than homework. [L2, P3, T4], and [L5, P9, T10]. Comparably, in low- achieving private and public secondary schools, Dads worry more about homework than anyone else. [L3, P5, T6], and [L6, T11, P12].

DISCUSSION

This section discussed the engagement of parents in homework and compares the results with previous studies. It examines data on parental engagement in homework, the learning environment, and the impact of socioeconomic status on involvement in homework performance in both private and public secondary schools.

Parental involvement in Homework Instruction

Homework has evolved in its significance and perception since the nineteen sixties, according to Gill and Schlossman (1996). A recent finding indicates that, with the exception of low- and high- performing secondary schools, students view homework positively and attribute it to improving academic skills and facilitating learning opportunities. Digital technologies have become also instrumental in shaping homework practices, Richards-Babb et al. (2011). Therefore, the findings show that the use of digital tools in secondary schools is increasing, although not all schools have fully embraced it. As well, the implementation of homework accountability is crucial for effective education policies, as noted by the National Open University of Nigeria (2008). Hence, most secondary schools, both private and public, adhere to traditional homework accountability measures.

According to Ermisch (2000), parents have varying priorities when it comes to assigning homework to their children, with some valuing homework over leisure. Hence, only parents from average-performing private and public secondary schools assign more homework, while parents from average-performing private and public schools take a moderate approach. Contrary, Parental involvement in homework activities was facilitated by initiatives such as TIPS, which encourage parental involvement in homework and can thus lead to greater investment in academic outcomes (Epstein and Van Voorhis 2001). Thus, compared to others, only parents from average-performing private or public secondary schools tend to do so.

Ineffective monitoring of homework execution may impede the achievement of intended goals. The outcomes of the study suggest that both public and private secondary schools engage in varying proportions of oversight regarding their students' homework. This was aligned with

available sources that characterize homework monitoring as involving assistance requests, progress tracking, and parental supervision of children's homework assignments, as perceived in 2003 by Toney et al.

Additionally, interview results reveal that many private and public secondary schools have recognized that notifying students about incomplete homework encourages timely completion. This approach implies that experts advocate for diverse homework strategies in which parents oversee and remind their children of essential tasks while allowing students the autonomy to decide the order in which they tackle these assignments.

Favorable Conditions for doing Homework

Studies show that the achievement of scholarly goals is closely affiliated with the comfort experienced during homework tasks. Hence, most secondary educational institutions, whether public or private, adopt uniform policies aimed at cultivating a supportive learning environment. It is vital to establish a nurturing educational setting for children, as their academic performance is deeply influenced by the comfort they derive from engaging in homework activities. This assertion was supported by earlier studies that emphasize the significance of parents in delivering their children with a relevant learning framework and timetable (Delgado Gaita et al., 1992). Additionally, to uphold the credibility of both physical and psychological environments, it was invaluable for school administrators to formulate a serene atmosphere conducive to effective homework completion (Xu and Corno, 1998). The overwhelming number of results imply that all secondary schools, regardless of whether they are private or public, serve as a quiet space for students to accomplish their homework tasks.

Avoiding interference in the homework environment is also an important aspect that requires special attention for children. In this regard, compared to the three school levels, the best performing private and public secondary schools are generally better equipped to deal with disruptions that arise during students' homework and show notable effectiveness in controlling noise and distractions compared to less efficient private sector schools. Therefore, this result is consistent with the results of Delgado- Gaitan et al., who stated that educational personnel, including teachers, parents, and after-school program staff, systematically advised students to eliminate external distractions while doing homework. It is not enough to simply avoid disruption; applying positive reinforcement is also very important. Most private and public schools provide positive reinforcement through tangible and intangible means. Thus, a study by Xu and Corneau in 1998 identified the need for positive reinforcement, which includes incentives such as extra free time or rewards that encourage teachers, parents, and postsecondary program staff to perform their tasks effectively.

Parents play a crucial role in creating a conducive learning environment for their children, but many schools lack uniforms and supportive facilities. Therefore, the best-performing public and private secondary schools have more effective learning spaces than the others, which is consistent with the previous study that advised teachers, parents, and guardians to prepare their learning environment. Delgado-Gaitan et al. (1992). Although studies show the great positive contribution of Internet services to homework routine and to the increase in collaboration, access to multimedia resources, and immediate feedback (Sarrendo, 2004), most schools have limited access to these resources.

Parental Socioeconomic Circumstances and Homework

Parents' socio-economic status significantly influences children's academic outcomes, either positively or negatively. For example, economic inequality could have a negative impact on children's academic and emotional well-being (OECD, 2014). Nevertheless, high-level parents interrupt this gap and provide free dinner and effective educational methods. The study argues that while the results show that higher social classes often take on greater responsibilities, in some

cases, lower socio- economic groups will be more successful than higher social classes due to environmental and inheritance factors. However, children from lower socio-economic backgrounds struggle to use and become unfamiliar with technology, while parents of successful private school children prioritize partying over learning.

A study by Haveman et al. (1995) found that education and employment conditions have a significant impact on children's development. Hence, in the findings, educated and employed parents provide knowledge-based support, hire tutors, and encourage reading activities compared to uneducated and unemployed parents in most secondary schools. On the other hand, parental support for homework varies by gender and biological factors: working mothers tend to have lower academic achievement; a 2000 study by Elmisch found that children whose mothers worked actively during their formative years tended to have lower academic achievement than those whose mothers were often at home. Hence, mothers became more active in middle-performing secondary schools, while fathers are more supportive in both high and medium secondary schools.

CONCLUSION

The study's findings led to the following conclusions regarding parental engagement in homework, specifically contrasting high, medium and low achieving private and public secondary schools, according to their respective cases.

Case one and two: High-achieving private and government secondary schools

The study explores parental engagement in high-performing private and public secondary schools, highlighting the challenges of academic excellence and homework. Both school systems prioritize a positive learning environment through consistent routines and dedicated learning spaces. However, parental involvement differs between the two schools. Private schools use various motivational approaches, such as incentives and parental involvement in extracurricular activities, while public schools offer additional support services such as tutoring and counseling. In both types of schools, fathers emphasize the importance of doing homework, but private schools suggest a more moderate workload.

Case three and four: Medium-achieving private and government secondary schools

A comparative analysis of medium-achieving private and public secondary schools revealed similarities and differences in parental involvement in homework: Both types of schools place a high value on homework and use motivational strategies and technology. Private schools struggle with disruptions and internet access, while public schools face communication issues and varying parental support. Both lack dedicated study spaces, offer incentives, and enforce rules. Socio-economic factors such as education level and parental responsibility influence homework experiences: in private schools, parents provide better support, whereas in public schools, mothers prioritize household chores over homework help more than fathers.

Case five and six: Low-achieving private and government secondary schools

A comparative analysis of private and government secondary schools with a low level of height emphasizes the importance of parents' participation in homework. Both types of schools consider homework important and contribute to the interaction between parents and teachers. However, private schools excel at creating a positive homework environment with clear instructions and incentives, while public schools rely more on rewards. Socio-economically, both parent groups value education, but there are differences in the importance of father involvement and time management. Private school parents are more involved in homework guidance, while public school parents may have difficulty providing the same level of support due to time, resource, or knowledge constraints. Besides, the study emphasizes the diverse challenges of parental involvement in low- performing schools. Both private and public schools struggle with engaging

parents and creating supportive homework environments, with success influenced by socioeconomic factors and institutional policies.

Suggestions

The study investigated both private and public secondary schools with differing performance levels—high, medium, and low—concentrating on elements like parental involvement in homework, the existence of an environment that encourages homework, and socioeconomic factors. While parental engagement has proven to improve academic performance in some schools, many institutions have failed to recognize its importance. Recommendations include developing frameworks to encourage parental participation, educating parents on its benefits, providing additional support for families with financial limitations, promoting involvement from parents of all socioeconomic statuses, and ensuring that every child has equal access to educational resources to enhance academic achievement.

Limitations

This study has some limitations; its concentrated examination of a limited number of government and private secondary schools might restrict its relevance to other groups and institutions nationwide, highlighting the need for further studies on this subject in different contexts.

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Ethical Statements: The research was conducted in accordance with the approval from the Institutional Review Board of the College of Education and Behavioral Studies (CEBS) at Addis Ababa University. This approval is recorded under protocol number CEBS_C & I/IRC/05-2024, dated February 22, 2024, and was endorsed by the committee members.

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