

Characterizing Home Learning Experiences Current Practices, Challenges and Pathways

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the different forms of the home-learning environment (HLE) and their impact on children's academic achievement in North 'A' District, Unguja, Zanzibar. The study aims to identify various aspects of the HLE that contribute to student success, including physical space at home for learning, learning resource/learning materials at home, children's interaction with other groups, children's practical activities at home learning, and community learning resources. Several questions were asked to the teachers, students and the parents/caregivers. It was proved that the physical space/room, learning materials, and practical activities, were not well observed. The study also proved that most parents do not prepare children's learning space, and learning materials were not provided to the children. Similarly, the study revealed that parent involvement in children's academic achievement was weak, so children could not effectively achieve high achievement that while material resources are limited in many homes.

Keywords: Home-learning environment, academic achievement, parental involvement, educational resources.

INTRODUCTION

Children's academic success is influenced by various external factors, one of the most important being the home-learning environment (HLE). The HLE includes the physical, emotional, and intellectual atmosphere at home that supports children's education. It consists of children's interaction with other groups, children's practical learning activities at home, community learning resources, the availability of learning materials, and other cultural and social practices. In Zanzibar, particularly in North 'A' District, the quality of the HLE is crucial as schools often face challenges such as overcrowding, limited resources, and insufficient teacher support. This study seeks to identify the different forms of the HLE that contribute to children's academic achievement in this region, focusing on the role of family and community practices.

Research Questions

This study attempted to answer the following questions

- 1) What are the challenges that face parents in creating HLE in North 'A' District -Unguja?
- 2) What are the forms of HLE that help children's academic achievement in the North 'A' District –Unguja, Zanzibar?

Background

The home-learning environment is a broad concept encompassing various factors that support children's education outside the formal school setting. Globally, research indicates that the HLE significantly affects academic outcomes. Factors such as parental involvement, the availability of educational materials, family routines, and the cultural emphasis on education have been shown to contribute to students' success. In Zanzibar, education is a priority, but many families in rural areas like North 'A' District lack access to sufficient learning resources. However, non-material aspects of the HLE, such as emotional support, family routines, and parental engagement, may compensate for these shortages. The study seeks to explore how these different forms of HLE manifest in the local context and contribute to children's academic achievement.

Statement of the Problem:

In recent years, educational stakeholders have increasingly acknowledged the significant role of the home-learning environment (HLE) in shaping children's academic outcomes. The home-learning environment encompasses a range of factors, including parental involvement, availability of learning resources, family routines, and the general support system at home, all of which contribute to a child's cognitive and academic development. In the North 'A' District of Unguja, Zanzibar, while efforts have been made to improve formal education systems, there is still limited research exploring how the different forms of HLE influence children's academic achievement in this region. Understanding the types and effectiveness of HLE is crucial, particularly in a context where cultural, economic, and social dynamics may shape the nature of home-based learning support. In this study researcher examined different forms of HLE to children 's academic achievement in the areas of such as physical space at home for learning, learning resource/learning materials at home, children's interaction with other groups, children's learning practical activities at home, and community learning resources There is a critical need to investigate the forms of HLE that are most prevalent in this district and their corresponding effects on academic achievement. This study will address the gap by examining the forms of HLE. The findings will provide insights for educational policymakers, parents, and educators to optimize HLE practices and ultimately improve student performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Forms of HLE towards children's academic achievement

Parents play a critical role in promoting academic success through parent-school involvement, stimulation of cognitive growth at home, and promotion of values consistent with academic achievement. Parental engagement in their children's learning at home has a greater effect on their achievement than parental involvement in school-based activities (Goodall 2013; Altschul, 2011). The reviewed literature in this context has extremely contributed to the current study. It looks like the same issues when compared to the parents' home learning. However, the reviewed literature is quite different when looking at the current study sub-themes like physical, learning materials, and practical activities. Furthermore, support for the home learning environment in the early years is critical and needs to become embedded as part of all early childhood education and care, early health, and family support services, Wheeler & Connor, (2009). The study reveals that supporting parents in providing a rich HLE for their children throughout childhood, as well as cumulative participation in family support services, have beneficial effects on children's skill development and parents' attendance rates in other educational services. The reviewed literature has contributed to the current study. It seems a bit related to the title. In addition to that on the matters related to general contexts of the current study. However, the reviewed literature is quite different from the methodology point of view. The reviewed literature was considered more qualitative while the current ones were based on mixed similarly, the current study variables were different from the reviewed one.

McCormick et al., (2020). Their study aimed to provide support for families by examining how different types of home-based learning activities influence academic skills. Results revealed that overall engagement in home learning activities was generally moderate to high. This finding reflects national trends showing that all parents regardless of income or education are interacting with and engaging in learning activities at home e.g., reading books, doing art projects, and playing games on a fairly frequent basis. Research has revealed that the way a parent involves a child in various learning activities at home helps the child to expand their mind in learning various things and perform well academically. The reviewed study has provided input to the researcher. The reviewed study assessed how different types of home-based learning activities influence academic skills which is a part of the concerns of the current study. Even if, the reviewed literature has different themes and sub-themes. The study embarked on the qualitative while the current study used mixed whereby SPSS used to analyse the quantitative data.

The study by Turja, & Heiskanen, (2022) studied children's participation plans in early childhood education (ECE) as forms of HLE settings in Finland. The study adopted a multidimensional approach to find out how practices of children's participation were conceived in pedagogical plans made by ECE staff, representing a focus that is rare in the existing body of research. The results of the analysis conclude that in early childhood

education plans, there were comprehensive notions of prerequisites for participation. However, the study indicates that the level of participation varied between plans for different activities; it was highest in play and limited in terms of time and effect in other pedagogical and caregiving activities. The reviewed literature contributed to the current study.

It indicated how practices of children's participation at home learning. In similar views teacher's perception to parents and students learning. Contrary to the literature reviewed the current study targeted the important forms. The study by Aman, et al., (2019), posited the relationship between children's participation in daily activities, engagement with family and friends, and their subjective well-being (SWB); and established the extent to which the nature of the relation differs across three age groups (8, 10, and 12), gender, and geographical context (urban and rural). The study found a significant relation between children's engagement with family and friends and participation in daily activities and their SWB with the combined influence of engagement with family and friends and participation in daily activities explaining 31% of the variance in SWB. The reviewed literature has contributed to the current study. The reviewed literature provides a relation to the current study on children's participation in daily activities engaging with family and friends and academic achievement. In addition to that, some sub-themes such as practical activities, and learning materials in the reviewed literature are quite different. Based on the existing literature reviewed through this study, the researcher found that there is a knowledge gap in prior research concerning the forms of home learning environments. This sheds light that, many previous studies did not mention it particularly in Zanzibar North 'A' district. Therefore, the aforesaid review highlighted the need to undergo this study.

Challenges that face parents in preparing home learning environment

The study by Alice, et.al (2016) investigated challenges facing parents in their active participation in the education of preschool learners in Kiogoro Division, Kisii County. The study used simple random sampling to select preschool teachers and parents. Purposive sampling was used to select primary school head teachers and preschool teachers. Data was collected by use of a questionnaire, interview schedule, and document analysis guide. Coded data was presented using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version and analysed using descriptive statistics such as %ages presented in tables as well as Pearson correlation to establish the relationship between the variables. The study found that lack of clear policies in preschools regarding parental participation, lack of proper mode of communication with their children; poor parent-preschool teacher relationship, unfavourable head teachers' leadership style, and illiteracy among the parents were some of the challenges facing parents in their active participation in education of preschool learners.

Both questionnaires and interviews were used in data collection and SPSS used in quantitative data analysis in the reviewed and current study. The reviewed literature has contributed to the current study. It indicates the relation between the challenges facing parents in their active participation in the education of preschool learners. However, the reviewed literature is quite different since the environment of the people and the perception of the parents. The study of Whaley, & Pfefferbaum (2023) investigated the challenges of parents in this time of learning during the pandemic Covid-19. The study applied qualitative which involves interviews, observations, on-line responses, and text messages. This research found out the awareness of the parents of the different alternative distance learning modalities, however, perceived such as challenging activities in the new normal.

It also found out difficulty of parents to provide learning to their children due to their poor educational background and the delivery of quality learning due to the absence of teachers, especially modular learning. The reviewed study applied qualitative which involved interviews, observations, on line responses, and text messages as data collection methods which are quite different from the current study whereby questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions were used. The reviewed literature has contributed to the current study. It provided an in-depth understanding of the researcher. However, the reviewed literature is quite different when relating to the actual environment in the North 'A' district where the study was based. The study by Chai et.al (2023) studied parent's involvement in the learning of their children in pre-primary education and associated challenges.

The purpose of this study was to explore parent's involvement in the learning of their children in pre-primary education (PPE). The study employed qualitative methodology and a case study design where only PPE level among other levels of education was involved. Data was generated by using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions guided by a series of open-ended questions as well as documentary reviews. The study reveals that parents were involved in parenting school meetings and in helping their children's academic work. Shortage of time, parents' illiteracy, poor school experience of parents and the lack of sensitive learning programs between school and home limited parents from getting involved in the study of their children. Finally, the section ends by indicating the existing gap in this study. The reviewed literature is similar to the current study in terms of data collection methods such as focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews, the reviewed literature also provides a relation to the current study on parents' participation in their children's education and the challenges they face. The reviewed literature is quite different compared to the current study in terms of variable where by reviewed literature focuses on parents' involvement in the learning of their children in pre-primary education while this study focuses on home learning environment towards children's academic achievement. The reviewed literature identified the different challenges that face parents toward their children's academic achievement. Unfortunately, few studies addressed challenges that face parents in preparing affective home learning environments. Therefore, it is unavoidable study to the North 'A' district due to no study undertaken to address this dimension currently.

Theoretical Literature Review.

This study was guided by theory of Academic Achievement developed by Walberg.

Theory of Academic Achievement

It was found by Walberg in 1986. Walberg's theory was an early synthesis of existing research on the educational effects of the time but it still influences current research such as investigations of predictors of academic achievement in some of the large-scale academic achievement assessment studies. Walberg have identified key variables that effect student outcomes: student ability/prior achievement, motivation, age/developmental level, quantity of instruction, quality of instruction, classroom climate, home environment, peer group, and exposure to mass media outside of school (Walberg, Fraser & Welch, 1986).

In the current context, the first three variables (ability, motivation, and age) reflect characteristics of the student. The fourth and fifth variables reflect instruction (quantity and quality), and the final four variables (classroom climate, home environment, peer group, and exposure to media) represent aspects of the psychological environment (DiPerna et al., 2002). Similarly, the theory relates to study objectives one and two i.e. parents' awareness of home learning environment towards children's academic achievement and forms of home learning environment towards children's academic achievement.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used a mixed methods approach, whereby a researcher incorporated methods of collecting and analysing data from the quantitative and qualitative research approaches in single research study Tashakkori and Teddlie, (2015). Apart from that, the mixed methods approach provides a better understanding of research problems, resulting in better solutions for the discovered issue Molina-Azorin, (2012). In a similar vein, some weaknesses for example restriction of respondents in the survey questionnaires as well as the randomized way of getting sample size which may arise in one method can be overwhelmed by another method.

In addition to that, the accuracy of data can be attained through mixed methods. It is the way where researchers combine both elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches for an in-depth understanding of the problem one is dealing with Johnson et al., (2007). Thus, the use of a mixed methods approach helped the researcher to examine the problem deeper and wider than when quantitative or qualitative research would be done in separation. Similarly, this study used m (key informant interviews), and questionnaires were designed in a Likert Scale format (mostly with closed but a few open-ended questions) t

Sample Size

According to Kothari (2004), the sample size needs to be optimal, neither too small, as it may not serve to achieve the objective nor too large as leads to huge. Then, if items of the universe are homogeneous a small sample can serve the purpose. The study involved 45 respondents whereby 20 were parents, 10 teachers, and 15 students. The researcher involved these kinds of respondents because of the nature of the study relating to the forms of home learning environment that helps children's academic achievement.

Table 3. 1: Determination of sample Size

S/N	Category of the study Population sample	Selection of Sample Size	Tool used to collect data
1	Students	15	Focus group discussion
2	Ordinary teachers	10	Interview
3	Parents	20	Questionnaire
	Total	45	

Source: Developed by Author, 2024

Data Collection Tools

The study used the primary source of data to obtain information from the respondents. Several questions were asked of the students, parents/caregivers, and teachers. In the survey questionnaire, there were 20 respondents involved in this study. Data such as parent's awareness of H L E and forms of H L E were collected through a questionnaire. Similarly, through interview-guided questions, the researcher involved 30 key informants i.e. teachers and parents/guardians to get detailed information about parents' awareness, forms of H L E, and challenges faced by parents in preparing an effective home learning environment. There were 15 students from the North 'A' district selected primary were also used to obtain the students' views about HLE, whereas data like forms and parents' awareness of HLE were collected through focus group discussions.

Data Analysis

As explained by Ary, et al., (2010) data analysis is the process in which data are searched and arranged by researchers to be understood and enable them to present for others to read. In this study, the data from the questionnaire were analysed through descriptive analyses. Through descriptive analyses, data collected from questionnaires were analysed by using mathematical and statistical modelling and measurement. Ali, (2021) Data from interviews were analysed through thematic analysis; thematic analysis techniques were employed to analyse the collected data. Thematic analysis is a method for familiarizing data, generating codes, combining codes into themes, reviewing themes, determining the significance of themes, and reporting findings (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Rahi, 2017). The rationale for choosing thematic analysis is that it allows a researcher to legitimately focus on analysing meaning across the entire dataset by using interviews. In brief, researcher during the analysis stage at first the researcher gets to know the study data. It's important to get a thorough overview of all the data collected before starting to analyse individual items. This might involve transcribing audio, reading through the text taking initial notes, and generally looking through the data to get familiar with it. Next to in the coding step researcher made phrases or sentences – and came up with shorthand labels or “codes” to describe their content according to the study context. In the generating themes step researcher looks over the codes created, identifies patterns among them, and starts coming up with themes. Themes are generally broader than codes which are combined into a single theme. The researcher decided to vary according to what the researcher found out. During the reviewing themes researcher have to make sure that themes are useful and accurate representations of the data. Researchers combine them, and create new ones, whatever makes them more useful and accurate. Step five was to define and name themes. It involves formulating exactly each theme and figuring out how it researcher understands the data. The researcher wrote

up the analysis of the data. In the results or findings section researcher addressed each theme in turn. The researcher described the themes and sub-themes including examples from the data as evidence. Finally, the researcher concludes by explaining the main takeaways and showing how the analysis has answered our research question.

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study talks about “The forms of home learning that help children's academic achievement in North A district- Unguja”, The data were collected through interviews, survey questionnaires and Focus group discussion. This section presents the results more fluidly, and the analysis is arranged around the study question and objective established earlier in the study. In addition to this introduction, demographic profiles of respondents and an analysis based on the study goals are provided below.

Profile of the Respondents

Table 4. 1: Age of the Respondents

Age category of the Respondents		Frequency	Percent
Parent’s age	Below 35	2	10.0
	36 – 46	14	70.0
	50 – above	4	20.0
	Total	20	100.0
Student’s age	Nine years	2	13.3
	Ten years	11	73.3
	Eleven years	2	13.3
	Total	15	100.0
Teacher’s age	30 – 35	4	40.0
	36 -40	2	20.0
	41 – 45	3	30.0
	46 – above	1	10.0
	Total	10	100.0

Source: Field Research data, (2024)

Table 4.1 describes the results of the parent’s age distribution being slightly more dispersed. The parents were between years 36-49 old comprising 14 (n=14) (n= number of respondents in that category) equal to (70.0 %) of the total, followed by the above 50 years old (n=4) equal to (20.0%), and the last one was below 35 years old (n=2) equal to (10%). The results indicate that, in general, the age groups categorized highest is between 36-49 (n=14) equal to (70.0 %). then follows above 50 age group (n=4) equal to (20%). These results show that most of the parents involved in this study were at the labour force age, where they can do anything that reflects children's learning in facilitating the availability of different forms of home learning.

Many of the parents involved in this study were still physically healthy and strong and can do a lot to help their children learning at home. In the same vein, Table 4.1 describes that the student's age distribution is slightly more dispersed. Most of the students were 10 years old comprising 11 (n=11) equal to (73.3 %) of the total, followed by the 9-year-old and 11-year-old which contain 2 respondents each (n=2) equal to (13.3) of the respondents. The results indicate that, in general, the age group categorized highest is 10 years old (n=11) equal to (73.3 %). then followed by both 9 and 11 years’ old which contain 2 respondents each (n=2) equal to (20%).

The study results indicate that the highest student’s age fell in 11 and 9. The implication of this result denotes that it is the stage in which young people establish the social, cultural, educational, emotional, and economic resources to maintain their well-being across their life course. Similarly, children of this age are keen to ask

and understand what things look like and shape their future learning development. In connection to this aspect the current study complies with the study by Skelton, (2013) posted that, students in the transition to adolescence stage an age that can already analyse what is best and what is not best in a home learning environment, something that was expected to produce real research results in the relevant area.

Parent's Occupation

This section concerns the parent's occupation as asked in the field. The study results reflect that many respondents fell in farmers and fishers, occupations. While (n=4) respondents are equal to (20.0%) scored teacher, whereby (n=5) is equal to (25%) scored farmers. While (n=7) equal to (35.0%) scored fisher. For further illustration, please see the following table 4.2 below

Table 4. 2: Parent's Occupation

Category of Answer	Frequency	Percentage%
Farmers	5	25.0
Fisher	7	35.0
Teacher	4	20.0
Pharmacist	1	5.0
Others	3	15.0
Total	20	100.0

Source: Field research data, (2024)

These results reflect the economic activities of the people who live in the North 'A' district. It was mentioned in the population census of 2022 that the majority of residents in North A district are fishers, farmers, and public employees. (Population census, 2022). The current result reveals that form of home learning are affected by the various economic activities that people deal with in their daily lives. The current study results comply with the study by Chai et.al, (2022) addressed that parents claim they must work to maintain their family's financial standing. This makes parents work from morning to late evening or night-time. As a result, they lack time to get involved in school activities either by participating in school meetings to discuss the learning progress of their children or helping with their children's school-work at home. In this study researcher examined different forms of HLE to children 's academic achievement in the areas of physical space at home for learning, learning resource/learning materials at home, children's interaction with other groups, children's practical activities at home learning, and community learning resources. Several questions were asked to the students and the parents/caregivers. In the survey questionnaire there were 20 respondents involved in the study. They were given directions on the proper way to fill required information. The survey questionnaires were in the form of a Likert scale format i.e. 1. Strongly agree, 2. Agree, 3. Neutral, 4. Disagree, 5. I strongly disagree. Through this instruction, the respondents (parents) were directed to select/score the sentence/clue by putting [✓]. Similarly, through interview-guided questions, the researcher involved 35 key informants i.e. teachers and parents to get detailed information. In addition to that, in focus group discussions there were 15 students from North 'A' district selected primary school were also used to obtain the student's views about parents' awareness on HLE.

FINDING BASED ON THE OBJECTIVES

Availability of Physical Space room at Home for learning

This sub-theme reflects that establishing a location that fosters focus, creativity, and academic advancement is crucial for parents navigating the world of providing educational support, whether it takes the form of home schooling, virtual learning, or just a designated homework area. The importance of physical space to children's learning at home recognized the value of peer pressure and social learning environment to enhance learning

motivations. In this study researcher was interested in understanding on the availability of a physical space room at home for learning created by parents or caregivers that support children's learning. The following were the results attained in the field reflecting on this section.

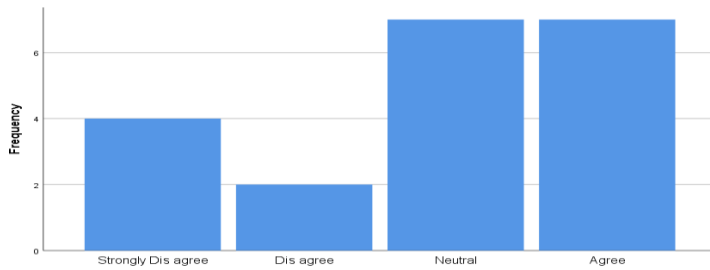


Figure 4. 1: Availability of Physical Space /room at Home

Source: Field Research data, 2024

Figure 4.1 depicts that only 35% of respondents agree that they have set learning spaces at home. This shows that few parents/guardians prepare special places for their children to learn at home. In a similar vein, during FDGs in the field researcher asked the students to express their views about the availability of space room for children at home learning. Student 3 addressed that: At home, there is no physical space. I've never seen my parents spending some amounts to prepare space for my studies at home learning. This inhibits me from participating in the learning process at home finally don't perform well in my tests and final examinations. (S3 in focus group discussion May 2024) This result highlighted that there was no Physical Space /room at Home that supports children's learning environment in many North A houses. According to Arroyo, (2023), a learning space at home is a space or corner in the house converted into a classroom where pupils are free to do the teacher's task. It can be a used area redesigned to be a safe place for learning by answering self-learning modules, watching television-based instruction, The current study result corroborates the study by Arroyo (2023) stated that, in terms of challenges encountered in the creation of the learning space, among the themes that emerged and were identified by the researcher regarding the problems encountered in the creation of the learning space at home was lack of time, no idea, lack of budget and materials.

Availability of learning resources/materials at home

This section talks about learning resources as the instruments of presentation and transmission of the prescribed educational materials. These include, amongst others: images, maps, photographs, sketches, diagrams, films, written material such as newspaper clippings, or articles from scientific. The importance of teaching and learning resources is further evidenced by today's textbooks that abound with dynamic and attractive visual material which is used to present between 40% and 50% of their content. In this paper researcher wanted to identify the condition of learning /materials resources at HLE. The following figure shows the actual situation in the field.

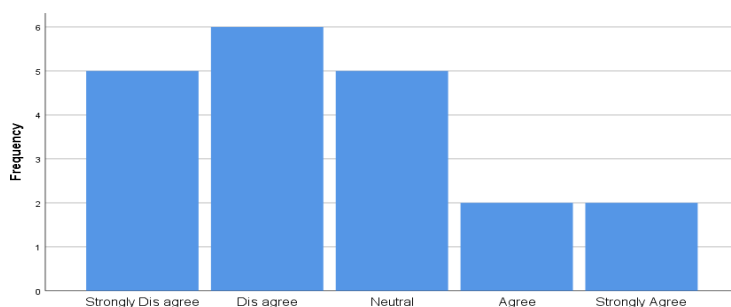


Figure 4. 2: Availability of learning resources/materials

Source: Field Research data, 2024

Figure 4.4 The results indicate that only (n=2) equal to (20 %) scores agree and strongly agree. This is a small number to the presence of learning materials for their children at home. This provided a picture of the poor condition of most parents at home that the children face in their HLE. Apart from that, during FGDs, the researcher asked the students the same question on the availability of learning resources/materials. The following sentences illustrated the actual responses from the student 4. Apart from that, during FGDs, the researcher asked the students the same question on the availability of learning resources/materials. The following sentences illustrated the actual responses from the student 4. At home, there are no learning materials like books, study desks, or reading card toys. I've never seen my parents buy or bring me any books. I sometimes tell kids to look for books, but they never seem to care. This inhibits me from participating in the learning process at home. (S4 in FGDs May 2024) The aforesaid sentences by the students in the field align with student 4 from one of the identified schools. The student indicated that learning resources are crude challenges that many students face in their home learning environment to academic achievement. In general, the situation indicated that most of the parents do not provide enough learning materials to support their children at HLE. The current study correlates with the study of Mupa, & Chinooneka, (2015) posited that most pupils lack parental support in terms of extra materials for learning at home such as textbooks and revision books. Parents must provide extra lessons for their children. They should try hard to purchase extra learning materials and help children do homework to motivate them to learn, for this promotes effective learning.

Children Interact with other Groups

This sub-theme deals with to what extent parents give direction to their children to interact with other groups within their community surroundings. It could be peer groups as well as support groups and the like. In this presentation, the researcher focused on this part to ask the respondents about the real situation within the community. The following results were obtained during the field data collection.

Table 4. 3: Parent Guidance

Category of Answer	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly disagree	4	20.0
Disagree	7	35.0
Neutral	4	20.0
Agree	3	15.0
Strongly Agree	2	10.0
Total	20	100.0

Source: Field Research data, 2024

The researcher combined the two types of answers which were agreed and strongly agree scores, portrayed that, only (n=5) equal to (25 %) which was a small number of parents/guardians lead their children to interact with peer groups that can help them in learning in the home environment, this expression how parents and guardians do not have the awareness to guide their children to learn at home environment however peer groups are very important for children learning while at home. Apart from that, the researcher was interested in asking students to get a chance and direction to interact with other groups at home.

Student 1 narrated that,

My parents did have not time to direct me in interacting with other groups. However, I try doing it myself by playing with the peer groups around my home areas. Even if this act provided significant attention as a key factor in enhancing educational outcomes and fostering social. (S1 FGDs May 2024) The current study results are allied to the study by Dwivedi et al., (2021) exposed that, peer relationships provide a unique context in which children learn a range of critical social-emotional skills, such as empathy, cooperation, and problem-

solving strategies. Peer relationships can also contribute negatively to social-emotional development through bullying, exclusion, and deviant peer processes.

Children's Practical Learning Activities at Home

Children during pre-primary and primary school parents should provide children with materials to trigger their imagination, provide opportunities to imagine and explain their ideas, appreciate children’s individuality, and encourage their different viewpoints. They also should encourage children to participate in creative games, should care about children’s new products, and value them. In this study researcher asked the respondents about the forms of HLE by considering parent creativity in Children's Practical Activities at Home. The following Table 4.8 shows the results.

Table 4. 4: Parent’s Creativity

Category of Answer	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Disagree	5	25.0
Disagree	5	25.0
Neutral	4	20.0
Agree	6	30.0
Total	20	100.0

Source: Field Research data, 2024

Table 4.8 The results stipulate that only (30.0%) of respondents prepare practical activities such as games to help their children learn at home, a situation that shows how parents and guardians are not aware of preparing practical activities to strengthen the home learning environment for their children. This situation fuels poor children's performance which is caused by poor awareness of their parents. Similarly, to this question during FGDs sessions with students in the field researcher is interested in knowing the students' views based on the above-identified point. Student 1 portrayed that: No, my parents do not create any activity that fuels me being busy with practical activities at home. My mother normally goes to work and comes back late in the evening. When my parents are at home I have already gone to the madrasa. During the night, my parents are busy with their housekeeping activities. (S1 in FGDs May 2024) Therefore, the researcher concludes that there is lack of awareness among the parents on preparing practical learning activities at home for effective learning for children's academic achievement. The current study results comply with the study by Verger, (2023) posited the contribution of parent-child creative activities to young children's resilience. This topic has received little attention in creativity research. The parent-child creative partnership model posits that when parents adopt attitudes that support children’s basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and

Children get a chance at home to use community resources.

In this section, the sub-theme is concerned with the extent to which Children get a chance at home to use community resources. Normally different communities have different community development stakeholders who build community libraries or community learning services canters. The canters are very important to children since their parents may miss directly to work closely with the children’s teachers as well as working effectively with their children in at home learning environment. It happens in the community stakeholders including private stakeholders, non-governmental organizations, etc. In this context, the researcher is interested in finding the situation of which children get a chance at home to use community resources. The following were the results attained in the field.

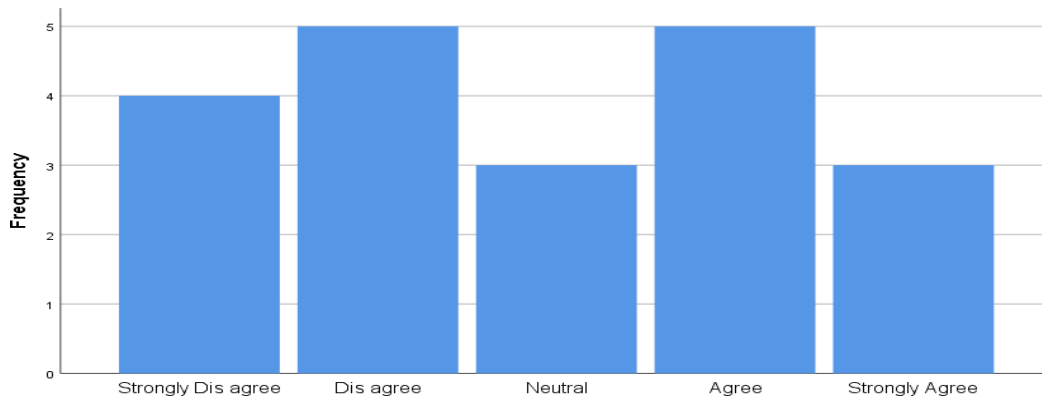


Figure 4. 3: Children get a chance at home to use community resources

Source: Field Research data, 2024

Figure 4.10 displays that. While (n=3) equal to (15.0%) scored Neutral. Whereby (n=5) equal to (25.0%) scored disagree. Whilst (n=4) equal to (20.0%) scored strongly disagree and (n=3) equal to (15.0%) scored strongly Agree. The results show that only a few parents/guardians (n=5, 25.0%) agree to lead their children to use community resources that can help them to learn at home environment. This demonstrates how parents and guardians do not have the awareness to guide their children to learn in a home environment. The current study result complies with the study by Ahasu, et.al, (2024) addressed the role of community resources in education planning and delivery in Ghana. The findings indicated that communities contribute to the development of effective educational policies by providing insights and perspectives through various channels, such as community forums, advisory committees, and public hearings. Also, communities celebrate and embrace cultural diversity, fostering inclusive within educational settings. Additionally, the current study corroborates with the study by Gatt, & Armani (2012) focused on how educational practices involving the community can promote social cohesion without additional costs. Different dimensions of community involvement: family education; participation in decision-making; participation in school and curriculum and evaluation; as well as participation in the classroom have all had a significant educational impact. The research has also shown that community involvement led to benefits beyond the school walls with an impact on improved housing, employment, health, social and political participation within the neighbouring communities.

Challenges that parents face in preparing a home learning environment in the North ‘A’ District - Unguja.

In this theme researcher examined on Challenges that parents face in preparing a home learning environment in the North ‘A’ District -Unguja. The questions relating to challenges were asked to the teachers through semi-structured interviews, the parents/caregivers through survey questionnaires, and students through FGDs. The following were the summary of the sub-theme as asked in the field.

Lack of education on how to direct their children

The respondents in the field indicated various challenges that parents face at HLE. The respondents mentioned that parents were not able to support their children due to their lacked education on how to direct their children. In connection to that the respondents presented that, there were challenges of lack of education among the parents/guardians that hindered them in helping their children in academic matters. For further justification see the following teacher’s expression. Teacher 2: “Among the challenges that threaten the home learning environment to children’s academic achievement are poor educational support to their children including helping them do their homework and other academic activities and this is due to the lack of education for many parents/guardians. (T2 interview May 2024)

The current study result reflects the study by Mapigano (2018) revealed that lower educated parents make it difficult to support their children academically either paying school fees on time, giving their children basic

needs, enough stationeries, and counselling sessions. The pupil's performance depends on different variables including socioeconomic factors, self-confidence, and motivation from parents. The finding also shows that communication between the home and the school promotes good academic results.

Time constraints

This is another challenge provided by respondents in the field, the researcher asked the respondents about the challenges that parents face on the HLE. Time is very important in our life because it shapes the human development and different stages of human passes based on the time. Therefore, even if the children achieve in the study, it requires parents to better utilize time to support the child. During the interview sessions with parents in the field. The respondents expressed that the challenges are difficulty in explaining or teaching, and time constraints.

For more justification

Teacher 3: Said” Most parents are farmers or fishers they normally lack time constraints to direct their children, after reaching home they seem tired with unable to play, direct, interact as well, and be supportive of their children. (T3 Interview May 2024)

Additionally, in the field through FGDs students expressed that parents most of the time are very occupied in the daily routine of serving the fittest.

The student 6 in the field showed that,

My mother has eight children who depend upon him. All of them are orphaned. She does not have any kind of support. She planned to sell bread and fried fish from morning to evening to support her family. She discovered that her business required many hours to service the family. She did not have enough time to deal with my studies. (S6 FGDs May 2024)

The study by Tomarong, & Potane, (2024) revealed that parents encountered challenges including time constraints, non-conforming modules, and inconsistency in self-learning module (SLM) distribution schedules. Otani, (2019) identified that time challenges are found great issues because some parents are too busy, poor, or have no way to go to school activities, help at school, or buy things for learning at home.

Poor parent-school-teacher relationships

Parent-school-teacher relationships are very important for the academic development of any child. The researcher asked the respondents in the field about the challenges faced by parents in HLE. The study showed that lack of proper mode of communication with their children; and poor parent-school-teacher relationships, threaten parents to be effectively involved in the home learning environment.

The following sentences from teacher 5: justify the reality.

Teacher 5: 'Proper mode of communication with their children; poor parent-school teacher relationship, threat parents to effectively involve in-HLE'. Sometimes fuels the culture of fear since they do not tend to meet with teachers in a school environment. (T5 Interview May 2024)

Furthermore, during the interview researcher asked the parents about the challenges related to parent-school-teacher relationships. In general, the results portrayed, poor relationships due to the busyness of the parents, lack of awareness, and poor level of family income which fuel the parents to go outside to work for food supply. For the detailed information gathered in the file please see the following voice from parent 8. The school teachers make much effort to contact parents, whether sending messages to participate in school events or to keep them updated about our academic progress. Some parents respond to teacher contact by participating in school activities, while others do not. Some children have issues that require teamwork between school and family to resolve. Unfortunately, some parents do not attend school or contact with teachers. Finally, the school has no idea how to help children with some issues. (P8 interview May 2024)

The current study resembles the study by Alice, et al., (2016) pointed out the challenges parents face while participating in the education of their children. The study found that lack of clear policies in schools regarding parental participation, lack of proper mode of communication with their children; poor parent-school teacher relationship, unfavourable head teachers' leadership style, and illiteracy among the parents were some of the challenges facing parents in their active participation in education of preschool learners. Parents should be encouraged through various programs to participate in the educational welfare of their preschool learners.

Awareness programs for parents should be organized informing them of the benefit of their participation in education activities for their children. Parents should also be enlightened on the best communication practices with both their children and the school administration to foster good parent-teacher and parent-child relationships. In a similar vein, the study by Erlendsdóttir et, al, (2023) investigated parents' involvement in their children's primary education in 4 primary schools in rural Malawi. They found that parents and teachers needed to develop stronger mutual relationships and interactions to support learners better. Schools also need to communicate positive aspects of children's learning to the parents. Enhancing positive reinforcement could enhance parental involvement.

Lack of finance to buy children's learning materials.

The obtained data in the field portrayed that, there is a lack of finance to the parent's threats to buy the children's learning materials. It was revealed that parents need to spend a lot on education per child as the most direct measure to assess whether sufficient resources are devoted to education. While it is difficult to establish and reach the required standards to ensure quality education. The following respondent in the field narrated the situation.

Parent 1: said 'I do have not money to buy learning resources since it is my role to make sure that before going to school children need the basic needs'. Everything in child learning recently depends on money while life is not easy to get money. (P1 interview May 2024)

Similarly, the researcher asked teachers to indicate the challenges that face in their families to improve the home learning environment. The teacher 7 expressed that,

Some students do better at school, but their family life income has made them behind other students because they have no necessary school learning materials needed such as books, and even financial support for school uses. This discourages them to achieve and perform well in their studies. (T7 interview May 2024)

The current study reflects the study by UNICEF, (2023) addressed the Children from the poorest households benefit the least from public education funding. Children living in poverty are less likely to have access to school and drop out sooner. In addition, children from poor households are less represented in higher levels of education, which receive much higher public education spending per capita. They are also more likely to live in remote and rural areas that are underserved and on the wrong side of the digital divide. Similarly, the study by Ahmed et.al, (2024) presented that parents' roles in their children's education are significant in terms of outcomes for the child. As research on parental involvement in children's education has often been conducted in high-income countries, there is a deep need for more research on parental involvement in contexts of disadvantage. The study results found that, through in-depth analysis of the data, two distinct narratives of parental involvement were identified: a narrative of hope and trust-building, indicating parents' confidence in state schools and their striving for a better future for their children.

Poor learning space/room for children at home

The researcher in the field identified this challenge as big since most respondents identified it as a big challenge. It was indicated that learning space /room is available specifically in most of our homes in local areas. The respondent showed that the physical structure of many homes did not consider learning space as an important aspect of supporting children's

HLE. The following sentences from parent 7 portray the situation.

Parent 7: As a parent, I did not consider physical space as important to me and my children while I constructed my house. I did not have a strong awareness of the logic of physical space in my house (P7 interview May 2024)

When the researcher interviewed another parent about this aspect the respondents expressed that,

Parent 4: The nature of many parents/caregivers is that they do not consider the set special rooms/or physical space for their children to support the learning process while they are at home environment, the results children missed parental enhancement and morals to increase effort in children's academic performance. (P4 interview May 2024)

The current study results align with the study of Chattaraj & Vijayaraghavan (2021) focused on why learning space matters: The study tells how the notion of learning space is perceived and experienced by learners in the Emergency Remote Learning (ERL) scenario. In doing so, the lived experiences of remote learners.

The study thus establishes the centrality of space in the process of learning and points out how the lack of a familiar learning space is linked to the absence of internal scripts that impact learning. In a similar vein, the study by Ana, (2024) addressed the perspective of the relationship between the physical dimensions of HLE and young people's learning motivations. Most participants found little use in home-schooling and wanted to return to in-person teaching. Students who adjusted the physical dimensions of the HLE were more motivated, especially if they had a private, semi-dedicated, or dedicated HLE.

Multiple Family Responsibilities.

The gathered data in the field stipulates that there are challenges faced by parents in supporting their children to HLE. It was presented by parent 6 that, being the father of the family he has multifaceted responsibilities that sometimes lead to being even confused because of the hardship of life. It is not easy to do all responsibilities at the perfect level since the lifecycle is a vicious cycle. The following expression from Parent 6 justifies:

Parent 6: Said being the head of the family of my family members I see life is not easy due to multiple responsibilities that sometimes lead to frustration on what should do and what should not do while both are important to help my family. (P interview May 2024)

While interviewing another parent 5 she addressed that,

Parents/guardians do not put much concentration on scheduling special rooms for children's home learning environment due to economic reasons which directly leads many parents to rather consideration on bedrooms and kitchens more than any other. (P5 interview May 2024)

In the same context, the researcher asked students to identify the challenges facing their parents while they are interested in supporting them in the home learning environment. They said that most of the family members are facing difficulties relating to their financial matters and related issues. The following sentences expressed by student 10 that,

'My parents have to work to keep our family's financial situation stable. This requires my parents to work from the morning till late evening or night-time. As a result, they do not have time to participate in school activities, such as attending school meetings to discuss my learning progress or assisting me with schoolwork at home. (S10 FGDs May 2024)

The current study results comply with the study by Mante, et.al (2021) focused on the influence of family structure on academic achievement in the Kwabre East Municipal Area. This study is guided by three objectives, namely to determine the families' roles in the academic achievement of senior high school students,

to identify the challenges to the adequate performance of families' roles in the academic achievement of senior high school students, and to investigate the influence of family structure on academic achievement of senior high school students in the Kwabre East Municipal Area. The study found that multiple family responsibilities including financial hardship are a significant challenge for the effective involvement of parents in the academic achievement of students. There is a significant strong positive correlation between parental roles in education and students' academic achievement.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that different forms of the home-learning environment both material and non-material play a significant role in children's academic achievement in North 'A' District, Unguja, Zanzibar. In this theme researcher examined different forms of HLE to children 's academic achievement in the areas of physical space at home for learning, learning resource/learning materials at home, children's interaction with other groups, children's practical activities at home learning, and community learning resources However, socio-economic challenges remain a significant barrier to optimizing the HLE.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Include community-based interventions to increase access to educational resources and programs aimed at raising parental awareness about the importance of structured learning at home.

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