

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT OF CHILDREN
WITH DOWN SYNDROME: A CASE OF TWO INCLUSIVE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN
MOROTO DISTRICT, KARAMOJA SUB-REGION**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, **Ajumo Stella**, hereby declare that this dissertation titled, “Parental Involvement in the Education Achievement of Children with Down Syndrome: A Case of Two Inclusive Primary Schools in Moroto District, Karamoja Sub-Region,” is entirely original with no submissions to universities or other educational institutions for consideration of any kind of award.

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APPROVAL

We verify that this dissertation, entitled “Parental Involvement in the Educational Achievement of Children with Down syndrome: A Case Study of Two Inclusive Primary Schools in Moroto District, Karamoja Sub-Region,” was carried out under our guidance and is submitted for review with our consent as university supervisors.

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(Second Supervisor)

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my beloved family, who provided both financial assistance and direction during my academic career and research. May the Almighty shower you with blessings!

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Abbreviations

CWDs:	Children with Disabilities
DEO:	District Education Officer
DS:	Down syndrome
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
NGO	None Governmental Organization
P/S	Primary School
PI:	Parental Involvement
PWDs:	Persons with Disabilities
UPE:	Universal Primary Education

Acronyms

ABEK:	Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja
MoES;	Ministry of Education and Sports
SEN:	Special Educational Needs

ABSTRACT

Children with Down syndrome (DS) experience specific learning challenges that require significant involvement from their parents. While it has been demonstrated that parental involvement can improve educational outcomes for children, there is limited knowledge about its effects on the academic achievements of learners with DS in underprivileged areas such as Karamoja, Uganda. The purpose of the study was to explore how parental involvement contributes to the education achievement of children with DS in the two selected inclusive primary schools in Moroto District, Karamoja Sub-region. The objectives of the research were to: establish the forms of parental involvement in the educational achievements of their children with DS; examine the benefits of parental involvement towards the education achievement of children with DS; and find out the factors that hinder parent's involvement in the education achievements of their children with DS. The research was informed by the theory of parental involvement and utilized a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data was gathered from 23 participants, comprising 8 teachers and 15 parents, selected from two inclusive primary schools located in Moroto District. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, with participants chosen using purposive sampling. The reliability of the findings was assured through measures of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. This was accomplished by pretesting the interview questions with a small group of individuals not part of the main study to enhance clarity and relevance, validating the data with participants, maintaining consistent coding practices, seeking expert reviews, and employing purposive sampling to obtain rich and trustworthy insights. The findings of the study indicated that parents offered financial, healthcare, and academic assistance while also nurturing their children's emotional, social, and educational development. They were actively involved in their children's education, advocated for their rights, and included them in family and entrepreneurial endeavors to encourage independence. Additionally, the findings indicated that parental involvement was crucial in influencing the educational success and overall well-being of children with Down syndrome. It contributed to improved academic performance, literacy, numeracy, and cognitive abilities, while promoting peer interactions, social growth, and independence. This engagement also cultivated essential life skills, enhancing the children's confidence, self-esteem, and sense of belonging. Lastly, the study identified various hindrances to parental involvement, including attitudinal, socio-economic, and logistical challenges such as societal stigma, poverty, food insecurity, and safety concerns. The study recommends strategies like improving teacher-parent communication, fostering community engagement, and providing specialized support and economic empowerment to enhance parental involvement and create inclusive educational environments.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This research intended to explore how parental involvement affects the educational achievement of their children with DS. Children with DS often display physical traits such as small ears, short fingers, slanted eyes, and low birth weight (Wajuihian, 2016). They commonly experience learning difficulties linked to inattention and poor working memory. DS is an intellectual disability present from birth and is the most common chromosomal disorder globally, affecting about 1 in every 100 live births (World Health Organization, 2018). Parental involvement refers to the dedication and active participation of parents in their children's educational journey (Enemu & Obidike, 2013; Gonzalez-Mena, 2011; Olibie, 2014), is believed to enhance learners' success (Dixon, 2008). However, how parental involvement contributes to academic achievements of learners with DS has received less attention in the academic literature especially from the developing world perspective. This chapter presents the background, identifies the problem, clarifies the purpose, defines the objectives, poses the research questions, establishes the scope, highlights the significance, presents the theoretical framework, and explains the key terms of the research.

1.1 Background to the Study

Throughout history, parents have been seen as the main teachers for their children. Traditionally, children received their initial education at home with their parents' guidance until about 1580 BC (Pestalzzi, 1951). In the 1880s, a kindergarten movement began in the United States,

highlighting the significance of parental involvement in the education of children. Consequently, national parent education organizations were created in the late 1880s, and by the 1920s and 1930s, over seventy-five such groups had been established (Alexius, 1999).

The World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca, Spain, in June 1994 produced the historic proclamation supporting inclusion as a standard approach and advocating for the education of all children with impairments (Meijer & Watkins, 2019). Every child should be educated alongside their peers in mainstream classrooms, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other skills, according to the updated UNESCO Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (Meijer & Watkins, 2019). The right of people with impairments to fully express their preferences for schooling was also reaffirmed.

A historic agreement advocating for inclusion as the fundamental method of educating all children with disabilities was established at the World Conference on Special Needs Education held in Salamanca, Spain, in June 1994 (UNESCO, 1994). Consequently, parents possess an inherent right to engage in selecting the educational approach that is most appropriate for their children's needs, circumstances, and goals (Meijer & Watkins, 2019). This underscores the importance of parental involvement, particularly for children with Down syndrome.

Galindo and Sheldon (2012) propose that fostering robust connections via parental participation in their children's education greatly boosts their academic success and overall accomplishments. Likewise, Sheridan et al. (2012) argue that this involvement leads to increased satisfaction and joy in the learning process. In a similar manner, Čepić et al. (2019) commend parental engagement for its contribution to enhancing children's social and emotional skills while also decreasing behavioral issues.

Studies have shown a strong positive relationship between pupils' academic achievement and parental involvement in their schooling (Ayoola & Edegbai, 2019). For parental involvement to be impactful, it needs to encompass both decision-making and active participation in school activities such as field trips, conferences, volunteer opportunities, and discussions with teachers and principals (Ibrahim, 2012; Ngwenya, 2010; Patrikakou & Anderson, 2005). Furthermore, according to some research, family involvement in school may help identify a child's special education needs and disabilities so that appropriate support measures can be put in place (Afolabi, 2014; Vanderpuye, 2013).

As indicated by Epstein et al. (2018), parental involvement encompasses a wide range of activities that impact children's learning and growth at various skill levels. This viewpoint is consistent with that of Hornby (2011) and Ngwenya (2010), who assert that the educational activities parents engage in at home and in school have a substantial impact on the academic achievement of children with diverse needs. Since they provide a variety of learning environments that suit all kinds of learners, parents are regarded as their children's primary educators (Lara & Saracostti, 2019). For children with disabilities, who often confront unique problems and require additional help from their caregivers in order to attain educational outcomes comparable to those of their classmates without disabilities, this emphasizes the importance of parental participation (Bariroh, 2018).

In the East African context, parental involvement that is dynamic and continuous is the most beneficial for their children, according to Bakken and Obiakor (2016). In Tanzania, it is crucial for parents to play a key role in securing educational opportunities and advocating for their children's rights. This entails collaborating with instructors and special educators, attending

classes on a regular basis, and engaging in school activities (Nchimbi, 2020). Parental involvement initiatives in Rwanda primarily target low-income neighborhoods, where academic attainment and participation are typically lower (Tabaro & Uwamahoro, 2020). Nonetheless, a noteworthy problem—that of low parental involvement in Kenya—is brought to light by Kenyan scholars Okoth (2014) and Weke (2012). Many parents have chosen not to participate in their children's education, leaving it entirely up to the teachers. Parents of children with impairments are especially affected since they frequently do not fully comprehend their duties. Similarly, parents in Rwanda typically don't participate in their children's extracurricular activities, don't offer educational resources, don't volunteer at schools, and don't inform authorities about their children's wellbeing and academic development (Tabaro & Uwamahoro, 2020). Therefore, increasing parental involvement in East Africa is essential to improving all children's educational outcomes, especially for children with Down syndrome.

In Uganda, Ojok (2015) pinpointed that the country has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008) to improve educational services for children with special learning needs, and the Persons with Disability Act (2006) is in line with the country's 1995 Constitution. For kids with intellectual disabilities, these legal frameworks place a high priority on equity, access, and high-quality education (Ojok, 2015). In addition to encouraging parents to participate in their children's education, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) established the Special Requirements and Inclusive Education Department to assist these goals (MoES, 2023). Many children with Down syndrome do not attend school, even after the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program was introduced in 1997 with the goal of providing free primary education with an emphasis on children with disabilities (Mwesigye, 2015). This is illustrated by the limited enrollment statistics for children with Down syndrome in Ugandan

primary institutions (Gelaro et al., 2019), indicating that approximately 10 percent attend specialized schools, while only 5 percent are enrolled in inclusive schools (Gelaro et al., 2019; Parliament of Uganda, 2023). These difficulties highlight the need to investigate parental involvement in the education of children with Down syndrome in Uganda to uncover obstacles to enrollment and advocate for equitable access to quality education.

The above statistics are for a Ugandan national picture. The situation is however worse, in some parts of the country due to varied socio-economic factors of parents. In Moroto, which is among districts of the Karamoja region of Uganda, children with disabilities especially DS are seen loitering streets despite existence of two inclusive schools in the area. Even where some attempt to enroll in school, they are often noted to attend without scholastic materials. This brings up the essential question of whether parents in Moroto district, Uganda, recognize their importance in contributing to the educational success of their children with Down syndrome. It is within this framework that the present study was carried out.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In countries like Uganda that are just developing, there is limited awareness or recognition of Down syndrome, even though the number of infants born with the genetic condition is anticipated to rise. The limited appreciation makes such children not to enjoy their inherent rights including inaccessibility to education. Moreover, where attempts are made to enroll them, such children in schools have limitations on social participation, a factor that jeopardizes their academic achievement. This is due to their intellectual disability besides prevalent medical and sensory challenges relating to vision, hearing and heart disorders.

Certainly the preceding challenges are best understood by their parents as first line caregivers of services such as education and medical care.

Unfortunately, many parents do not meet their responsibilities, including engaging in the education of their children. In Moroto district, despite various programs implemented by the Ugandan government, such as the Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK) initiative designed to support all children regardless of their diversity, learners with Down syndrome have continued to leave school, perform poorly, and struggle to reach their educational objectives, with 16% of out-of-school children identified as having mental disabilities, including DS. Consequently, this research aimed to explore how parental involvement affects the educational achievements of children with DS in two selected inclusive primary schools in Moroto District, Karamoja Sub-region.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore how parental involvement affects the education achievements of children with DS in the two selected inclusive primary schools in Moroto District, Karamoja Sub-region.

1.4 Objectives

The study addressed the following objectives:

1. To establish different forms of parental involvement in the educational achievements of their children with DS.

2. To examine the benefits of parental involvement towards the education achievements of children with DS.

3. To find out the factors that hinder parents' involvement in the education achievements of their children with DS.

1.5 Research Questions

The research was directed by the subsequent questions.

1. What are the different forms of parental involvement in the educational achievements of their children with DS?

2. How does parental involvement in education of their children of their children with DS benefit such children in achieving academic excellence?

3. What factors affect the involvement of parents in the education achievement of their children with DS?

1.6 Scope of the Study

The research took place in two inclusive primary schools situated in the Moroto District: one in Rupa Sub-County and the other in Moroto Municipality. It examined parental involvement in various educational activities, including pre-school preparation, school-related responsibilities like attending meetings, and post-school activities such as family learning. The research focused solely on parents of children with Down syndrome who were registered in these schools, as well as teachers from those same institutions.

1.7 Significance of the Study

Parents of children diagnosed with Down syndrome need a support network to help them navigate their children's lives. This research is advantageous to various groups of stakeholders as described below.

To the learners, the study may enable children with DS to access education as a right, under the inclusion approach and hence access material support from their parents and teachers on recommendations of the expert in education department.

By underscoring the importance of parental support for children with Down syndrome and stressing their right to an inclusive education, the research encourages parents to reflect on and enhance their attitudes. Furthermore, it deepens the understanding of the roles and responsibilities that parents have in the education of children with Down syndrome.

For teachers, this research inspires creative ideas, including new teaching strategies to accommodate all learners, and improves existing methods to help children with Down syndrome attain educational success.

To the education partners, the research findings are helpful in a way that they make them know how much parents value education of their DS and what factors may be hindering their involvement.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

This research is based on the Parental Involvement Theory established by Joyce Epstein in 1987, which underscores the crucial part parents play in their children's educational growth. Epstein's

framework outlines six types of parental involvement: decision-making, parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, and collaborating with the community. The theory promotes a holistic strategy, stressing that effective parental engagement necessitates cooperation among families, schools, and communities. It suggests that children's academic success, social development, and emotional health are greatly enhanced when parents participate actively in these aspects (Epstein, 2009). This method has been extensively utilized in educational research and practice to assist schools in forming stronger connections with families.

The relevancy of Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory is found in its comprehensive perspective on educational achievement, acknowledging that learning takes place in conjunction with factors outside the classroom. By engaging parents in multiple facets of school activities, the theory promotes a nurturing learning atmosphere that goes beyond the limitations of school walls (Epstein, 2009; Epstein & Dauber, 1991). This is particularly important in today's diverse educational settings, where parental engagement can bridge cultural, social, and economic gaps that might otherwise hinder a child's academic progress. The theory's emphasis on collaboration between schools, families, and communities aligns well with contemporary educational initiatives that focus on comprehensive student development (Epstein, 2009).

However, the Parental Involvement Theory has faced criticism, particularly regarding its practicality and applicability across different socio-economic contexts. Critics such as Oranga et al. (2023) and Lalvani (2015) argue that the model assumes a level of parental involvement that may not be feasible for all families, especially those facing economic hardships, single-parent households, or parents with limited educational backgrounds. Additionally, some educators find the framework challenging to implement uniformly, given the varying levels of resources and support available in different schools and communities (Ayoola & Edegbai, 2019). These

criticisms highlight the need for a more flexible approach that considers the diverse realities of families and the potential barriers to parental involvement.

Despite some criticism, Epstein's family Involvement Theory was highly relevant to this study since it offered a framework for developing tactics that encourage family involvement in education, which was the main goal of the investigation. The theory's main components were essential for understanding and proving how parental involvement enhances students with DS's academic development.

1.9 Definition of Terms

The main terms and ideas utilized in this research, along with their definitions as they relate to this particular study, were as follows:

Down syndrome: This genetic condition results from an additional copy of chromosome 21, resulting in developmental and cognitive delays (Wajuihian, 2016). It is marked by unique physical traits such as a flat facial profile, upward-slanting eyes, small ears, and a protruding tongue.

Education achievement: This is the term used to describe the information and abilities that are produced in academic courses and are typically evaluated based on test results, teacher grades, or both. It results from how a student interacts with their surroundings, which includes their school, teachers, and peers (Nandan & Bhardwaj, 2014).

Parental involvement: This phrase describes a scenario in which parents are actively involved in their children's education, maintaining communication with educators and the school throughout the learning journey (Clinton & Hattie, 2013). It encompasses parents assuming

complete responsibility for enhancing their child's educational experience. More than merely inquiring about academic performance, this includes parents cultivating a solid relationship with their children, offering support, direction, leadership, and motivation (Clinton & Hattie, 2013).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This research explored how parental involvement affects the educational achievement of children with Down syndrome in inclusive primary schools. This chapter presents a review of relevant literature related to the study, organized according to the research aims: to identify the different forms of parental involvement in the education of children with DS; to examine the benefits of parental involvement regarding the educational outcomes of children with DS; and to uncover the factors that hinder parents from supporting the educational achievements of their children with DS.

2.1 Forms of Parental Involvement in the Educational Activities of their Children

Parental involvement in educational activities encompasses numerous actions that significantly influence children's development and academic success. Various forms of involvement are highlighted by empirical literature, ranging from direct engagement like helping with schoolwork and attending school meetings to indirect assistance like encouraging a good attitude toward learning and pushing for educational resources.

As stated by Bakken and Obiakor (2016), continuous and engaged participation from families is essential for optimal parental engagement in a child's educational journey. This encompasses the ability of families to choose appropriate schools and decide their degree of involvement. Beyond their participation in school events, parents play a crucial role by providing support at home. Family participation is crucial for good student learning, according to Jafarov (2015), and Olibie

(2014) suggests that it has a positive effect on children's academic abilities. Many governments worldwide promote family engagement in education, as Goodall and Vorhaus (2011) note, reflecting a societal interest in developing supportive attitudes and structures within the family unit.

Jigyel et al. (2019) investigated the manner in which Bhutanese parents collaborate to support their children with special educational needs (SEN). The study employed Leximancer text mining software and manual theme coding to evaluate individual interviews with parents whose children were either fully or partially integrated into urban, semi-urban, and rural schools. The findings indicated that four of Epstein's (1987) six categories of participation—parenting, school volunteering, home learning support, and community collaboration—were carried out by parents. However, Jigyel et al. (2019) had certain drawbacks in comparison to the current study. Without going into unique situations or specific contextual concerns, their study primarily examined parental participation for children with SEN in a variety of contexts. The current study, on the other hand, focuses on the particular needs of children with Down syndrome at two inclusive primary schools in the Moroto District, collecting information from both parents and teachers. This research provides a more thorough understanding of local forms of parental engagement in educational activities for these children by applying Epstein's (1987) Parental Involvement Theory within a qualitative case study approach, addressing aspects that might not have been taken into account in Jigyel et al.'s more comprehensive investigation.

To explore the manner in which home-school cooperation is incorporated within the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014, which was implemented in the autumn of 2016, Orell and Pihlaja (2022) conducted a document analysis. Value-based cooperation, cultural meeting-point cooperation, future-preparation cooperation, and support through cooperation are

the four main themes they highlighted. The curriculum's guidance emphasizes individual-level actions, directing cooperation efforts towards individuals while neglecting communal aspects and operating under the assumption that schools have unlimited resources. The study suggests that home-school cooperation and its effects on both individual and community levels should be explored in a more comprehensive way. Nonetheless, the work of Orell and Pihlaja (2022) contrasts with the present study because it did not concentrate on particular conditions like Down syndrome and mainly focused on examining curriculum documents. This approach potentially missed practical insights from direct participants in the educational process and lacked the nuanced, real-world perspectives that participant-based research can offer.

Dodge (2018) performed a phenomenological analysis to explore how both parents and educators viewed parental involvement in the development of Individual Education Programs (IEPs). The project was grounded in Neal and Neal's networked systems theory and Bronfenbrenner's human development theory, based upon ecological design theory. To identify recurring themes and patterns, the research analyzed interviews with parents and teachers of students who have severe intellectual disabilities. The findings showed that teachers concentrated on following state laws and the dynamics of the IEP development setting, whereas parents stressed the value of the parent-teacher relationship. According to the study findings, improving cooperation between parents and schools may result in a more favorable IEP design process for everybody involved. Dodge's (2018) study and recent research on parental participation in the academic achievement of children with DS differ in a number of ways. Unlike the current study, which is specifically situated in Moroto District, Karamoja Sub-region, Dodge's research does not specify a distinct geographic or cultural context. Furthermore, while Dodge employed a phenomenological method that centered on lived experiences and perceptions, the current study utilizes a case study

approach within a qualitative framework, offering detailed, context-relevant insights derived from purposive sampling for interviews and focus group discussions. The current study involves a detailed analysis of parental involvement from multiple perspectives within the educational ecosystem, including both parents and teachers in specific inclusive schools, offering a more holistic understanding compared to the specific focus on IEP processes in Dodge's study.

In order to determine the level of parental participation, Balli (2016) looked at 32 parents of children with special needs from seven schools in the Korça region of Albania. The study used snowball sampling, which enables beginning participants to recommend other parents for involvement, and qualitative approaches for data processing. The results showed how complicated the idea of parental involvement in schooling is. It was discovered that parents are essential to their children's social and academic growth as well as to educating educators, communities, and neighborhoods about their children's rights. This cooperation between educators and parents promotes the creation of a welcome, inclusive, and safe environment for children. In contrast to Balli (2016), who evaluated a broader group of special needs children without focusing specifically on DS and used snowball sampling in the Korça region of Albania, the current study specifically targeted children with DS. It was conducted in Moroto District, Karamoja Sub-region, with a detailed contextual focus. Additionally, while Balli's study involved only parents, the current research employed purposive sampling to select both parents and teachers, providing a more comprehensive analysis.

Alnoaim and Alharbi (2023) carried out research to explore the experiences of special education teachers in Saudi Arabia regarding family involvement in their children's education. The findings showed that parents' educational backgrounds had an impact on how well teachers and parents communicated. The study also discovered that teachers noticed variations in parental

involvement according on the kind of disability and the availability of social and academic possibilities at the school. However, what made Alnoaim and Alharbi's (2023) study different from the current one is that it provided a broad overview of parental involvement for various disabilities in Saudi Arabia, without a specific focus on Down syndrome, and used general qualitative analysis of teacher perceptions. In contrast, the current study focuses specifically on DS in Moroto District, Karamoja Sub-region in Uganda, employing a case study design with purposive sampling to gain a detailed, context-specific understanding from both parents and teachers. In contrast to the broader and area-specific emphasis of Alnoaim and Alharbi's study, this approach offers a deeper insight into parental engagement in inclusive educational settings.

In inclusive elementary schools in Bahir Dar City, Ethiopia, Gedfie and Negassa (2018) examined the function of family involvement in the education of children with disabilities. They collected information through semi-structured interviews and carried out theme analysis using a qualitative case study methodology. Although only a small percentage of parents provided direct academic support at home, the results showed that parents were involved in a variety of parenting activities that improved their children's education. Additionally, the research highlighted that parental involvement was most impactful when facilitated through parent-student-teacher associations. In contrast, the current study provides a more targeted examination of parental involvement for children with DS at two inclusive schools in Moroto District, Karamoja Sub-region, Uganda. Anchored in Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory and employing a case study design with purposive sampling, it delivers a comprehensive analysis of both parental and teacher viewpoints, specifically addressing the educational needs of children with DS—an area not explicitly addressed in Gedfie and Negassa's (2018) wider study of children with disabilities.

Additionally, Oranga et al. (2022) investigated family involvement in the teaching of Kenyan kids with intellectual disabilities through a phenomenological study that used Epstein's paradigm. They used cluster, purposive, and snowball sampling techniques to choose participants and analyzed data from semi-structured interviews using Atlas.ti software. The findings indicated that although parents offered foundational support, such as maintaining a safe home environment, providing transportation, managing behavior, and supplying some learning materials, their level of involvement fell short of Epstein's expectations. Notably, there was a gap between the anticipated and actual parental engagement, as parents did not take part in school activities, volunteer, or communicate their children's academic progress to the school. The limitations identified in Oranga et al.'s (2022) research include its use of a phenomenological design, in contrast to the case study design implemented in the present investigation. Additionally, the current study centered specifically on parental engagement for children with DS within inclusive schools in the Moroto District of the Karamoja Sub-region. It offered a more comprehensive analysis by incorporating input from both parents and teachers and applied purposive sampling for in-depth interviews and focus groups. By enabling a more thorough investigation of how various forms of parental participation affect academic success, this addressed the flaws found in the Kenyan study.

Oranga et al. (2023) investigated the importance, forms, and components of parental involvement in education in order to educate stakeholders about the contributions parents make to their children's education. Key components of parental involvement were identified by their study, including volunteering at schools, encouraging learning at home, keeping in regular contact with the school, participating in school decision-making, offering educational resources, setting up favorable learning environments at home, and setting an example of positive behavior.

The article emphasized these elements to highlight parental engagement in education, referencing Joyce Epstein's framework. In contrast to the current study, Oranga et al. (2023) broadly assessed various components of parental involvement but did not specifically explore the involvement of parents with children who have Down syndrome. Their research focused on general educational contexts and did not address the distinct requirements of inclusive primary schools. Moreover, they applied a wider framework to evaluate parental involvement, whereas the present study employed a case study approach, concentrating on particular schools and populations to deliver a more nuanced and context-relevant insight into parental involvement. Finally, unlike the current study, the research conducted by Oranga et al. (2023) did not incorporate teacher viewpoints.

Finally, Mugote (2019) examined the barriers and facilitators to parental involvement in the education of children with disabilities in Wakiso District, Uganda. The study employed focus groups and semi-structured interviews as part of its qualitative research approach, grounded in Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's theory of socio-cultural and human capital. Findings revealed that parents were motivated to support their children's education by purchasing school materials, covering food and tuition costs, and accompanying their children to and from school. Although Mugote's (2019) study was conducted in Uganda, it did not specifically focus on children DS. Additionally, Mugote's research was based in Wakiso District and did not address the unique dynamics of inclusive primary schools, unlike the current study, which examined Ki and Ra Primary Schools in Moroto District. The current study also included both parents and teachers' perspectives, offering a more comprehensive view of parental involvement unlike the Mugote's study that focused solely on parents. Furthermore, while Mugote used Hoover-Dempsey and

Sandler's theory, the current study employs Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory (1987), providing a different theoretical lens on the issue.

2.2 Benefits of Parental Involvement towards the Education Achievement

Empirical research emphasizes the considerable advantages of parental involvement in improving the educational outcomes for children with Down syndrome. Findings indicate that parents who actively engage—by supporting academic activities, nurturing a constructive learning atmosphere, and working alongside teachers—can enhance their children's academic success, social skills, and self-esteem. Studies also demonstrate that when parents take an active role in their child's education, they bridge the gap between home and school experiences and advocate for customized educational strategies that address the specific needs of children with Down syndrome.

Research indicates that children who receive unwavering love and encouragement from their parents tend to perform better in school. Furthermore, parents influence not only their child's achievements but also the overall performance of the school (Lara & Saracosti, 2019). High-quality education is often indicated by effective parental involvement (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017). Even if children with intellectual disabilities continue to make academic progress, there is still a significant discrepancy between theoretical expectations and actual results, possibly because different children have various levels of parental involvement.

According to Martinez et al. (2012), parents' expectations for postsecondary education in the US are shaped by their experiences with inclusive education from kindergarten through middle school. The research indicated that parents had a limited grasp of the transition process and that they often received inadequate information. It also showed that students whose parents actively

participated and whose transition plans were effectively supported tended to achieve better academic results. Additionally, the study emphasized the necessity of integrating career guidance and personal and social education into teacher training programs. However, the current study was prompted by a number of gaps. In order to improve information sharing and teacher preparation, Martinez et al. (2012) concentrated on parental involvement during the kindergarten to postsecondary education transition in the United States. However, their study did not address the particular needs of children with Down syndrome or the circumstances of inclusive primary schools in Uganda. In contrast, the current study uses Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory, which is different from the framework used by Martinez et al. (2012), to examine how parental involvement affects the educational success of children with Down syndrome at Ki and Ra Primary Schools in Moroto District, Uganda, taking into account perspectives from both parents and teachers.

In a similar vein, Lalvani (2015) carried out a qualitative investigation of how American parents and educators perceive and deal with disability in the context of educating and rearing a kid with a handicap. The study made clear how important active parental involvement is for enhancing special needs students' academic achievement, social skills, and attendance at school. According to Lalvani, effective parenting involves aiding children's education both at home and in school, creating a supportive learning atmosphere, supplying necessary educational materials, and being active in school activities such as attending meetings, coordinating field trips, and engaging in decision-making processes. Although Lalvani (2015) provided comprehensive insights into general parental engagement for students with special needs, the research did not specifically address children with Down syndrome as the present study does. Furthermore, Lalvani's research, which was carried out in the U.S., might not fully capture the distinctive aspects of

inclusive primary education in Uganda, the context of the current study. Additionally, Lalvani's investigation did not consider the viewpoints of teachers regarding parental involvement and did not implement Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory, which this study used to present a potentially different perspective on the advantages of parental engagement for children with Down syndrome.

Ruskus and Gerulaitis (2010) investigated the role of parental involvement in Lithuania, specifically concentrating on the education of children with mental disabilities via individual education planning. Their participatory action research aimed to align the goals of parents and professionals by addressing and negotiating varied needs, effectively utilizing available resources to achieve collective objectives, and creating and executing an action plan. The findings indicated that individual education planning enhances mutual understanding of goals, encourages collaborative thinking, mobilizes internal resources, fosters a new institutional culture, affirms parental expectations, and prepares both parents and educators for upcoming challenges.

Ruskus and Gerulaitis (2010) examined the function of parental participation in Lithuania, focusing on individual education planning for children with mental disorders. By addressing and negotiating a variety of demands, making efficient use of the resources at hand to accomplish group goals, and developing and carrying out an action plan, their participatory action research sought to match the aims of parents and professionals. The results showed that personalized education planning improves mutual comprehension of objectives, promotes teamwork, mobilizes internal resources, creates a new institutional culture, validates parental expectations, and gets educators and parents ready for future challenges. The study did not, however, particularly evaluate the benefits of parental participation for children with DS. The current

study, on the other hand, employs Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory within a qualitative case study framework and was conducted in Ki and Ra Primary Schools in Uganda. It emphasizes the educational benefits of parental involvement for children with Down syndrome and incorporates insights from both parents and teachers, providing a more holistic understanding of these benefits compared to Ruskus and Gerulaitis' focus on aligning the interests of parents and professionals through individual education planning.

Adams et al. (2018) explored the existing studies on collaboration between teachers and parents within the context of inclusive education in primary and secondary schools in Malaysia. Their study used contemporary empirical evidence to evaluate the impact of this collaboration on inclusive education practices, identifying key characteristics of successful collaborative models and their role in creating more inclusive classroom environments. The study offered perspectives on how teachers and parents perceive their responsibilities in improving results for students with special needs, highlighting the importance of strong collaboration between educators and families in fostering positive educational experiences for students with disabilities through creativity and innovation. Additionally, the study noted that parental involvement for students with DS often involves collaboration between teachers and parents, allowing for individualized care planning and sharing of insights on students' strengths and weaknesses to provide meaningful support. It examined teacher-parent cooperation in inclusive education in Malaysia, concentrating on developing inclusive classrooms and enhancing results for learners having special needs, including those with DS, in spite of the findings of Adams et al. The scholastic accomplishments of children with DS in the setting of Ki and Ra Primary Schools in Moroto District, Karamoja Sub-region, were not expressly addressed in their study, though. Additionally, this study filled in the gaps left by Adams et al.'s more general focus on inclusive education

practices by providing a thorough analysis of how parental and teacher collaboration improves educational outcomes using Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory and a qualitative case study methodology.

In a distinct study, Bariroh (2018) explored how parental engagement affects the learning motivation and academic performance of children with varying abilities at SMP Negeri 4 Gresik in East Java, Indonesia. By applying a regression model and analyzing questionnaire and documentation data through linear regression, the study determined that parental involvement positively influences children's academic success and recommended enhancing parental participation to improve motivation and achievement. In contrast, the current study, conducted in Ki and Ra Primary Schools in the Moroto District of Karamoja Sub-region, specifically looked into the advantages of parental involvement for children with Down syndrome. Guided by Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory and utilizing a qualitative case study approach with purposive sampling, this research delivered a thorough analysis of how parental engagement impacts the educational outcomes for children with Down syndrome. The current study offered a targeted understanding of the relationships between parents, teachers, and children with Down syndrome in an inclusive primary school setting, highlighting the unique needs and contributions of these parties in facilitating academic success, in contrast to Bariroh's more general investigation of children with various abilities.

Ayoola and Edegba (2019) investigated how parental participation affected the academic achievement of children with intellectual disability in Nigeria. In order to support these children's learning and academic performance, they emphasized the need of parents attending to their children's needs and the need for schools to provide suitable teaching resources. Their results demonstrated that academic attainment is significantly impacted by parental participation.

The current study, however, focuses on the advantages of parental participation for children with Down syndrome in Ki and Ra Primary Schools, which are situated in the Moroto District of the Karamoja Sub-region; their research was conducted in Nigeria. In addition, unlike Ayoola and Edegbai's broader approach to children with ID, the current research examined the specific dynamics between parents, teachers, and children with DS, addressing the unique challenges and support mechanisms within an inclusive educational context. This localized and targeted focus provided deeper insights into how tailored parental and educational strategies can enhance academic achievements for children with DS, filling gaps left by more generalized study.

Afolabi (2014) explored the link between parental involvement, inclusive education, and students' academic success, utilizing developmental ecological perspectives and the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model. The findings indicated that active parental participation greatly enhances educational outcomes for children with Down syndrome and facilitates early detection and prompt intervention for disabilities. However, Afolabi's study diverges from the present research by employing developmental ecological perspectives and the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler framework, while the current study is based on Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory. In addition, while Afolabi's research presents a general overview of parental involvement and its advantages, the current investigation provides a comprehensive, context-specific examination of how the engagement of both parents and teachers impacts educational results in inclusive primary schools in Moroto District. This focused approach addresses gaps in understanding the specific interactions between parental and teacher involvement and their effects on the academic achievements of children with Down syndrome in that unique environment.

Oranga et al. (2023) explored the significance, various types, and elements of parental involvement in education, highlighting benefits such as decreased behavioral issues, improved

school attendance, greater academic success, better adaptation to school, enhanced social skills, increased self-worth, and a lasting love for learning. The research also underscored the importance of parental engagement in establishing supportive school environments and nurturing positive relationships between educators and parents. However, while the findings from Oranga et al. provide a broad overview of the advantages of parental involvement, the present study delivers a more specific analysis of how these benefits pertain to children with Down syndrome. It investigates the distinct challenges and contributions of both parents and teachers within the inclusive educational framework of Ki and Ra Primary Schools in Moroto District, Karamoja Sub-region. This specialized approach provides a more profound insight into the customized strategies and support systems necessary to improve educational results for children with Down syndrome, which were less highlighted in Oranga et al.'s wider study.

2.3 Factors that Hinder Parental Involvement in the Education Achievement

Research studies identify a number of issues that prevent parents from actively participating in their children's educational development. These obstacles include a lack of communication and engagement support from schools, a lack of resources and understanding about successful teaching methods, and time constraints brought on by job and other commitments. In addition, parents may find it difficult to manage their own emotional and psychological demands, negotiate complex educational systems, and deal with societal stigmas related to impairments. These challenges may make it difficult for parents to fully participate in their child's education, which may have an effect on the academic achievement and general development of kids with Down syndrome.

Bagadood (2022) investigated the role of parents in the education of children with intellectual disabilities in Saudi Arabia. Although general school policies on family involvement may not always be beneficial, the study's qualitative interviews with four teachers indicate that parents are often encouraged to interact with their children. Difficulties arise from cultural conventions and educational backgrounds; for example, some cultures require teachers to oversee education on their own, and working parents find it challenging to engage in school activities. The study emphasizes the value of customized methods to promote parental involvement and give parents tools to support their kids' education. Despite these revelations, there are a number of ways in which Bagadood's work deviates from the present research. For example, Bagadood (2022) highlighted cultural differences affecting parental involvement, noting that in some cultures, teachers are solely responsible for education, and engaging parents can be challenging due to varying circumstances. In contrast, the current study focuses on inclusive primary schools in Moroto District, Karamoja Sub-region, and specifically examining parental involvement for children with DS, which involves different cultural and socio-economic factors. Moreover, whereas Bagadood's study solely focused on the perspectives of teachers, the present research includes insights from both parents and teachers, providing a more thorough understanding of the issues and potential solutions regarding parental involvement.

Mathatha and Ndhlovu (2017) investigated parents' involvement in the professional development of young people with intellectual disabilities in Zambia. Purposive sampling, semi-structured interviews, observations, and focus group discussions were used in the study to gather information from the districts of Kabwe, Chisamba, and Ndola. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. It was discovered that parents' involvement in their children's education is influenced by a number of factors, including expectations, income, and educational attainment,

and that proactive and encouraging parental involvement is essential for their children with intellectual disabilities to succeed in their careers. This study differs from the current research, though, in that it did not look at the difficulties parents encounter in helping their children with DS succeed academically in inclusive primary schools. By incorporating the viewpoints of both parents and educators, the new study also provides a more thorough knowledge of the factors influencing parental participation. Drawing on Epstein's Parental Participation Theory and concentrating on primary education, it sought to pinpoint certain tactics and approaches to improve parental involvement and assist the academic achievement of children with DS in the particular setting of Moroto District.

At the Dzorwulu Special School in Accra, Ghana, Djirackor (2017) examined the degree of family involvement in the education of children with intellectual disabilities. With a total of 22 participants, the study used both convenient and purposive sampling to gather data using semi-structured interviews and formal questionnaires. It emphasized how crucial it is for schools to involve parents and create successful parent-teacher partnerships. It also discovered that, when compared to children without intellectual disabilities, parental engagement greatly improves the academic performance and practical skills of children with disabilities. In contrast to Djirackor's research, which focused on specific roles and effects at one institution, the present study examines the factors that hinder parental involvement in the educational success of children with Down syndrome in inclusive primary schools in the Moroto District of the Karamoja Sub-region in Uganda. Methodologically, Djirackor's study used convenient sampling to select participants and yet, the current study used purposive sampling. Furthermore, unlike the current study that used purely interviews and FGDs, Djirackor also used structured questionnaires.

Chisembe (2017) investigated the involvement of parents in personal education programs in Lusaka, Zambia, concentrating on the elements that influenced their engagement. The study indicated that some parents refrained from participating due to a lack of awareness regarding the program. Utilizing a descriptive research design, data were gathered through qualitative techniques, including self-administered semi-questionnaires, interview guides, and focus group discussions, and analyzed thematically. Several obstacles to parental participation emerged, such as inadequate communication between schools and parents, parents' demanding work schedules, school policies, and parents' educational levels. Furthermore, some parents felt they should not interfere with the responsibilities of teachers, and cooperation between parents and teachers was limited. While Chisembe's (2017) research examined various aspects of parental involvement, similar to the current study's third objective, certain gaps persist. Specifically, Chisembe's (2017) study broadly addressed parental engagement in educational programs using a descriptive approach, whereas the present research in Moroto District explores the factors that hinder parental involvement in the education of children with Down syndrome through a case study approach, providing a more detailed and context-specific insight into the unique challenges encountered by this group.

Gedfie and Negassa (2018) performed a qualitative case study that investigated how parents were involved in the education of children with disabilities at inclusive government primary schools located in Bahir Dar City Administration, Ethiopia. Through the use of semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis, they discovered that although parents engaged in general parenting tasks, their communication with teachers and school principals was limited. Parents seldom visited the schools or talked about their children's education with educators, and only a few offered support for home-based learning because of time limitations, misunderstandings, and

a lack of skills. Direct involvement in decision-making was low, although indirect participation through parent-student-teacher associations was more frequently observed. The study suggested that schools should promote discussions and training to enable parents to understand and fulfill their roles more effectively. In contrast, the current study diverges in its geographical scope, methods of data collection, and its emphasis on a particular disability. This research was carried out in two inclusive primary schools within the Moroto District of the Karamoja Sub-region in Uganda, utilizing both interviews and focus group discussions, while Gedfie and Negassa (2018) focused solely on interviews. Furthermore, whereas Gedfie and Negassa explored a range of disabilities in children, this current study zeroes in specifically on those with Down syndrome. By expanding on their findings, this research offers a more comprehensive and context-specific examination of the factors affecting parental involvement in the education of children with Down syndrome in inclusive school settings.

Almalki et al. (2021) looked into ways to help Saudi Arabian students meet learning objectives that are specific to their requirements and skills. Through the use of questionnaires, the study collected data from 91 special education teachers. For statistical analysis, t-tests, confirmatory factor analysis, and Cronbach's alpha were employed. The importance of parental involvement in effective transition planning was emphasized by the findings. However, due to time restrictions and a lack of expertise, many parents felt left out of the process, and schools did little to involve them. Consequently, parents were largely responsible for preparing their children for the future, with schools often failing to provide essential information. In contrast, the current study differs in both focus and methodology. This study investigates how parents are involved in the education of children with Down syndrome in inclusive primary schools in Uganda, while Almalki et al. (2021) concentrated on the engagement of parents in transition planning in Saudi

Arabia through quantitative statistical analysis. It employs a qualitative approach, collecting information through focus groups and interviews with educators and parents. Unlike Almalki et al.'s more comprehensive statistical approach, this study provides a context-specific understanding of the obstacles that impact parental involvement in the academic achievement of children with Down syndrome in Moroto District, offering a thorough grasp of regional customs and difficulties encountered in inclusive educational settings.

Owusu et al. (2018) examined how parents in Ghana's Wa West area see their disabled children's education using a qualitative descriptive design. Twenty parents who were purposefully chosen were interviewed, and the information was thematically examined. Based on the survey, numerous parents held incorrect beliefs about the requirements and abilities of children with intellectual disabilities, which led them to think that their children would gain less from education. Parents who viewed their children's difficulties as impossible to overcome experienced feelings of depression stemming from this belief in the inherent limitations of children with disabilities. Due to these misconceptions that arose from a limited understanding of disability, children with disabilities were often sidelined compared to their non-disabled peers. The current research, which examines parental involvement in the education of children with Down syndrome in Moroto District, Uganda, differs in several important ways. While Owusu et al. (2018) provided a broad exploration of parental perceptions without specifying disability types or including teachers, the current study specifically targets parental involvement in DS education and includes perspectives from both parents and teachers. This method, along with a case study approach, provides a deeper and more contextually relevant insight into the elements affecting educational results for children with Down syndrome.

Finally, Mugote (2019) applied Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's socio-cultural and human capital theory to explore the barriers and facilitators of parental engagement in the education of children with disabilities in Wakiso District. According to the study, parents' capacity to assist with homework was significantly hampered by poverty, ignorance of Braille, and the severity of disability. In contrast, your study in Moroto District focuses specifically on children with Down syndrome (DS) and uses Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory. This targeted approach provides a more nuanced analysis of parental involvement for a specific disability type, addressing unique challenges and incorporating insights from both parents and teachers. This difference in theoretical frameworks and focus on particular disability type likely, result in distinct findings that better inform practices and support for children with DS.

2.4 Research Gap

While considerable research has been conducted on the role of parental involvement in the education of children with disabilities, this study aims to address some of the existing gaps. Unlike earlier studies primarily carried out outside Uganda—including those in Nigeria (Owusu et al., 2018), Saudi Arabia (Almalki et al., 2021), Ethiopia (Bariroh, 2018), Lithuania (Ruskus & Gerulaitis, 2010), and the United States (Lalvani, 2015)—the present investigation concentrates on two inclusive primary schools located in the Moroto District of the Karamoja sub-region. This specific context has not been examined previously. A related research effort in Uganda by Mugote (2019) explored the barriers and enablers related to parental involvement in the education of children with disabilities in the Wakiso District. In contrast to other studies like Oranga et al. (2022) and Dodge (2018), which used various frameworks like Bronfenbrenner's human development theory, Neal's networked systems theory, and the model put forth by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, this study made use of Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory.

Additionally, the current study used a case study design, which set it apart from the phenomenological and qualitative descriptive designs found in studies like Owusu et al. (2018) and Oranga et al. (2022), and it used a fully qualitative methodology as opposed to the quantitative approaches found in works like Bariroh (2018) and Almalki et al. (2021). Additionally, it included insights from both parents and teachers, offering a more holistic understanding compared to studies that focused solely on one participant group, such as Almalki et al. (2021) and Bagadood (2022). By tackling these gaps, the present study aims to enhance the existing literature regarding the different forms of parental involvement, their importance, and the factors that impede parents' engagement in the educational success of children with Down syndrome in inclusive primary schools in the Moroto District, Karamoja Sub-region, Uganda.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This research explored the role of parental involvement in the educational achievement of children with DS, driven by three primary aims: to identify various forms of parental involvement, to examine the benefits of this involvement on children's educational results, and to identify the hindrances that prevent parents from participating in their children's education. To meet these aims, this chapter details the research methodology, including the approach and design employed. It explains the study location, target population, sampling methods, and procedures. Furthermore, it outlines the research operations, as well as the methods for data collection and analysis, and discusses ethical considerations alongside the strategies used to ensure the reliability and validity of the study's results.

3.1 Research Approach

In this research, a qualitative methodology was utilized. This was deemed more appropriate as it connects with individuals' attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, opinions, experiences, and priorities of the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Qualitative research approach further focuses on gaining rich and complex understanding of people's experiences which cannot be easily quantified (Cohen et al., 2017). As a result, the insights of parents regarding their engagement in the educational activities of their children with DS would not be measured, but instead articulated through the narratives of the parents who conveyed their personal experiences related

to their involvement. This was made possible because of small number of participants a factor commended for better analysis through qualitative approach (Mittal et al., 2018).

3.2 Research Design

The research employed a case study design grounded in a qualitative approach. It focused on parents of children diagnosed with Down syndrome. Furthermore, two schools from a specific region in Uganda were included in the study. To explore the level of parental involvement concerning everyday activities at both home and school—an aspect that is effectively captured through case studies—a case study approach was deemed appropriate (Yin et al., 2014). Interviews were conducted alongside direct observations as part of an in-depth assessment of the case. As noted by Netalisile et al. (2021), a case study allows a researcher to focus on one or a few individuals with a specific condition, which aligns with the dynamics of parents of children with Down syndrome whose educational experiences are unique and complex.

3.3 Area of Study

The study was conducted at two inclusive primary institutions: Ki and Ra Primary Schools, both situated in Moroto District. This district can be found in the northeastern region of Uganda, within the Karamoja sub-region, bordered by Kenya to the east and bordered to the north and west by the districts of Kotido and Nakapiripirit, respectively. To get to Moroto from Kampala City, travelers typically cover around 380 kilometers northeast via the Kampala-Moroto Road, a journey that may take roughly 6 to 8 hours by car, depending on the state of the roads and traffic conditions. The socio-economic profiles of families in Moroto District are frequently associated with subsistence farming and livestock rearing, as many residents rely on agriculture as their main source of income due to the area's rural characteristics and lack of industrial development.

The education status in Karamoja, including Moroto District, is generally lower compared to other regions of Uganda, with challenges such as limited access to quality education, inadequate infrastructure, and lower literacy rates. Community values in Moroto District emphasize strong traditional norms, communal support, and respect for cultural practices, with a focus on collective well-being and customary roles, which often influence social interactions and educational priorities.

3.4 Study Population and Sample

The sub-sections that follow explain the population and sample size. The reasons for selecting the different groups are also shared.

3.4.1 Population

The study participants comprised parents of children with Down syndrome who were enrolled in selected inclusive primary schools, as well as the teachers instructing these children. A total of 90 individuals took part in the study, consisting of 25 parents and 65 teachers from two inclusive primary schools located in Moroto District. Ki Primary School had 15 parents and 41 teachers assisting seven children with Down syndrome, while Ra Primary School had 10 parents and 24 teachers serving five children with Down syndrome. Parents were included due to their vital role in supporting their children's education and their direct understanding of the challenges and opportunities present in the educational setting. Teachers were included because of their hands-on involvement in implementing educational strategies and their daily interactions with children with Down syndrome. Their perspectives were crucial for grasping the effects of inclusive practices on parental engagement and for pinpointing the essential support needed to enhance effective learning.

3.4.2 Sample and sample size

As noted by Wambiri and Muthee (2010), a sample refers to a small group of individuals selected from a larger population, recognized by scholars for its importance in delivering insights related to the subject under investigation. Indeed, a sample is an indicative segment of the target audience that has been meticulously chosen to reflect the entire population. For example, the desired sample size for this research comprised 35 participants, including 20 educators and 15 parents. However, 23 participants were actually involved in the study, which included 8 teachers and 15 parents. Among these parents, 4 were from Ki Primary School and 11 were from Ra Primary School as summarized in Table 1 same topics.

Table 1:

Sample Size selection

Category of participants	Population	Target sample	Actual sample	Sampling procedures	Data collection methods
Parents	25	15	15	Purposive	Interviews
Teachers	65	20	8	Purposive	FGD
Total	90	35	23	-	-

3.5 Sampling Technique and Procedure

The research utilized purposive sampling to select both parents and teachers involved in the study. Also known as judgment or homogeneous sampling, purposive sampling entails deliberately selecting participants based on their specific attributes and expertise. As a type of non-probability sampling, it depends on the researcher's discretion to identify individuals with relevant knowledge (Etikan et al., 2016), making it particularly effective for studies involving small groups. In this research, maximum variation sampling was employed to select parents of

children with Down syndrome enrolled in the two inclusive primary schools, as they had considerable experience in caring for such children. Additionally, expert sampling was applied to choose teachers with specialized knowledge in inclusive education and experience working with children with intellectual disabilities, ensuring that their insights would provide valuable information on educational practices and parental involvement.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

There are various methods used to gathering qualitative data, including FGDs, interviews, observations, and document analysis, among others. Nevertheless, this research utilized only two main methods for data collection: FGD and interviews.

3.6.1 Interview method

The researcher utilized an interview method to collect data from 15 parents of children with Down syndrome who were enrolled in two selected inclusive primary schools. Interviews typically involve direct interaction between the researcher and the participant (Kahn, 1986). The parents who were interviewed were approached either at their homes or in other locations where they felt comfortable participating. Responses from the interviews were recorded in a notebook and also captured using a smartphone, which were later transcribed for thorough analysis. The recordings were played back and reviewed at a later time. The investigator chose the interview method due to its flexibility for data collection, allowing for the use of both verbal and non-verbal communication channels (Cohen et al., 2017). This method was also selected because it delves deeply into issues to comprehend individuals' behaviors, opinions, and actions (Netalisile et al., 2021).

3.6.2 Focus group discussion

The researcher employed the FGD method to gather information from eight educators at two inclusive schools that catered to children with Down syndrome. This approach consists of group interviews spanning one to two hours, where participants with similar backgrounds or experiences come together to converse about a particular subject (Sim & Waterfield, 2019). With assistance from the Head Teachers of Ki and Ra Primary Schools, the researcher organized two FGDs. One FGD at Ki Primary School included four teachers, and another one FGDs at Ra Primary School, respectively, totaling eight teachers. Participants were purposively selected for informal and interactive discussions. Sim and Waterfield (2019) noted that FGDs encourage broad thinking about the subject. To gather accurate data for the research, the goal was to obtain thorough insights into parents' views and perspectives.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

After the research proposal was approved by the supervisors, the researcher secured an introductory letter from the Graduate School at Kyambogo University to seek permission to carry out the study in two inclusive primary schools located in Moroto District. The researcher contacted the District Education Officer, who granted official approval through the introductory letter. Following this, the head teachers of the two schools were approached to arrange interviews and focus group discussions with parents and teachers of children with Down syndrome. Before participation, all aspects of the study were thoroughly explained, and informed consent was obtained from every participant. The researcher personally conducted the interviews with parents and the FGDs with teachers, documenting the information using a smartphone and a notebook.

3.8 Data Presentation and Analysis

Data analysis, according to Cresswell (2013), entails the interpretation of information collected through qualitative techniques. The aim of qualitative data analysis is to generate detailed descriptions of human behavior and the motivations behind it (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Analysis can take place either through deductive or inductive reasoning. In this investigation, thematic analysis was utilized, which is a commonly employed qualitative method for recognizing, examining, and presenting patterns or themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was selected due to its efficacy in qualitative research and its capacity to sensitively capture content (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Elo & Kynga, 2008). The approach enabled a comprehensive investigation of the ways in which parents contributed to the academic achievement of children with Down syndrome, the benefits of such involvement, and the obstacles that hindered it in the Moroto District. Thematic analysis was carried out in six phases. Initially, the researcher immersed herself in the data by reading the transcripts from interviews and focus groups three times, noting preliminary thoughts. Significant portions of the data were then highlighted and coded to extract key concepts or experiences. Subsequently, these codes were categorized into wider patterns or potential themes. The themes underwent a review process against the data for precision, leading to some being revised, combined, or eliminated. Each final theme was distinctly articulated and given a title that represented its significance. At last, the results were compiled into a report, showcasing the themes with supporting examples from the data and connecting them to the research questions and existing literature. This approach ensured that the themes were firmly rooted in the participants' responses, offering an accurate and comprehensive insight into parental involvement in the education of children with Down syndrome.

3.9 Quality and Trustworthiness of the Findings

In this research, the integrity of the data was ensured by conducting a pre-test of the structured questions with a small sample of participants who were excluded from the main study. Feedback from this pilot helped clarify ambiguous questions, improve wording, and ensure that the questions effectively captured information aligned with the study objectives. Trustworthiness was further established through the criteria of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. After conducting focus groups and interviews, the researcher provided the results to participants for them to verify the accuracy of the interpretations in order to increase trust. This ensured that the data accurately reflected the experiences and viewpoints of the participants. Additionally, the researcher spent enough time in the field to establish rapport with participants and obtain a thorough grasp of the context, which made it easier to gather rich and detailed data. Dependability was addressed using the code-recode strategy, where data were initially coded, then re-coded after some time, and discrepancies were resolved with the research supervisor to ensure consistency. The confirmability of the findings was enhanced by discussions with other master's students and research supervisors, which helped ensure that interpretations were based on the data rather than individual biases. Transferability was achieved through purposive sampling, selecting participants most relevant to the research questions, which provided rich, detailed data from individuals with significant experience related to the phenomena under study.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The research was conducted in complete adherence to ethical guidelines, ensuring the protection of the integrity, rights, and confidentiality of all participants during the study. The ethical aspects are detailed below:

Honesty:

To ensure honesty in the reporting process, the researcher accurately presented the data gathered from interviews and focus group discussions without altering or selectively emphasizing information to align with any preconceived notions or hypotheses. This commitment to precision guaranteed that the findings genuinely reflected the experiences of the participants.

Consent:

Participation in the research was completely voluntary, with all subjects signing consent forms that detailed the study aim, duration, potential risks, and guarantees of confidentiality. Additionally, the consent form included an option for participants to withdraw from the study at any time they chose.

Confidentiality:

To uphold the strict confidentiality of the information shared by participants and safeguard their privacy, the researcher ensured that no individual's identity was revealed in the dissertation, using pseudonyms such as **P₁** and **T₁** in place of their real names. Furthermore, the audio recordings of the interviews and their corresponding transcripts were securely stored and protected in a locked location. Lastly, all authors whose information contributed to the study were acknowledged by citing them as sources.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research, along with an analysis and discussion structured around themes aligned with the study objectives and the theoretical framework guiding it. The research was directed by three primary objectives: to recognize the various forms of parental involvement in the educational success of children with Down syndrome, to examine the benefits of parental involvement in enhancing the educational outcomes of these children, and to identify the factors that prevent parents from participating in their children's educational achievements.

The purpose of this research was to explore how parental involvement affects the academic achievements of children with Down syndrome within two inclusive schools located in Moroto District. The presentation begins with an overview of the study participants before discussing the themes that align with the study objectives: the various ways that parental involvement influences children with DS's academic success, the benefits of parental involvement for these children's academic success, and the factors that prevent parents from actively participating in their children's academic success. The findings are presented with participants' own perspectives highlighted prominently under each theme.

4.1 Description of Participants

The study concentrated on the teachers and parents for pupils with Down syndrome at Ki Primary School and Ra Primary School, two inclusive primary schools. The expected total

number of participants was 35, made up of 20 teachers and 15 parents. However, the actual involvement in the study was limited to 23 participants, consisting of 8 teachers and 15 parents. Among these parents, 4 were from Ki Primary School and 11 were from Ra Primary School. This occurred because some teachers were also parents, preventing them from being interviewed twice on the same topics.

Teachers (T)

The research concentrated on teachers who engage with children with DS in two inclusive primary schools, both within and outside of classroom settings. The specific attributes of these teachers are outlined below:

T₁: She is a female Grade III teacher by qualification and teaching primary one that include one boy with DS. She has an experience of ten years.

T₂: He is a male Grade V teacher by qualification and teaching primary one that include one boy with DS. He has an experience of fourteen years.

T₃: He is a male Grade V teacher by qualification and teaching primary two that include one pupil with DS. He has an experience of ten years.

T₄: He is a male Grade V teacher by qualification and teaching primary four that include one pupil with DS. He has an experience of eight years.

T₅: She is a female teacher holding a Diploma in education and teaching primary one that include one pupil with DS. She has an experience of eleven years.

T₆: She is a female teacher holding a Diploma in education and teaching primary one that include one pupil with DS. She has an experience of eleven years.

T7: She is a female Grade III teacher and teaching primary one that include one pupil with DS. She has an experience of ten years.

T8: She is a female Grade III teacher and teaching primary five that include one pupil with DS. She has an experience of twelve years.

Parents (P)

The study sought insights from parents of children with DS, aiming to gather their knowledge and experiences in supporting their children that attend the two selected inclusive primary schools. Their individual characteristics are outlined below:

P1: He is a father of a boy child with DS in Primary four at Ki P/S.

P2: He is a father of a boy child with DS in Primary six at Ki P/S.

P3: She is a mother of a boy child with DS in Primary two at Ki P/S.

P4: He is a father of a boy child with DS in Primary two at Ki P/S.

P5: He is a father of a boy child with DS in Primary three at Ra P/S.

P6: She is a mother of a boy child with DS in Primary two at Ra P/S.

P7: She is a mother of a boy child with DS in Primary two at Ra P/S.

P8: She is a mother of a girl child with DS in Primary two at Ra P/S.

P9: He is a father of a boy child with DS in Primary three at Ra P/S.

P10: She is a mother of a boy child with DS in Primary one at Ra P/S.

P11: She is a mother of a boy child with DS in Primary three at Ra P/S.

P12: She is a mother of a boy child with DS in Primary one at Ra P/S.

P13: She is a mother of a girl child with DS in Primary one at Ra P/S.

P14: She is a mother of a girl child with DS in Primary one at Ra P/S.

P15: She is a mother of a boy child with DS in Primary one at Ra P/S.

4.2 Forms of Parental Involvement in Educational Achievements of their Children with DS

The purpose of the study was to get participant input on their experiences with parental involvement in their children with Down syndrome's academic success. The provision of individualized support for the child and the level of parental involvement in their children's education and were two important factors that were investigated.

4.3.1 Provision of individual support to children

Data were gathered from teachers via focus group discussions, while interviews were conducted with parents. The thematic analysis of findings revealed that parents support their children with DS by offering basic needs, emotional support, family learning and scholastic materials, nurturing of apprenticeship and life skills, and monitoring academic progress and school life.

This section offers details of such experiences as follows:

4.2.1.1 Offering basic needs

The qualitative data indicates a deep dedication among parents to meeting their children's fundamental needs. Fourteen participants mentioned that parents were dedicated to providing food, education, and medical care. Parents emphasized the importance of nourishment, understanding that regular, wholesome meals are crucial for their children's health, energy levels, and ability to focus and thrive academically. Moreover, they show a proactive stance in addressing health issues, from common illnesses to more serious conditions, ensuring their children receive the necessary medical attention and care. This analysis is illustrated by the transcripts of interviews and FGDs where participants narrated their experiences.

P₁ narrated that:

Even concerning basic needs, I make it a priority to provide my child with food, as well as any necessary medication or medical care he may require. By taking care of his physical well-being, I can ensure he is healthy, happy, and able to fully engage in his education and other activities.

Similarly, **P₈** shared that:

For me, aaah, when my child falls sick, I take it upon myself to provide him with the necessary care and treatment. This includes monitoring his symptoms, administering any prescribed medication, and providing comfort and support during his sickness. Whether it's a common cold or something more serious, I make sure to treat my child's sickness with the utmost care and attention.

Consistent with parents, **T₃** also expressed that:

Parents also meet fundamental needs like food and clothing for their child. They make certain that their child is nourished and dressed suitably for school and various activities.

In addition to the aforementioned, the study findings showed that parents were heavily active in various economic activities, including burning charcoal, in order to raise money and provide for their children with DS's fundamental needs. These activities are not merely sources of income but are intertwined with the parents' ability to provide essential items such as clothes, soap, and food. In this regard, **P₆** expressed that:

As our primary source of income, charcoal burning is a vital part of our livelihood. I work hard to produce and sell charcoal to provide for my child's basic needs. This includes buying clothes, soap, and food to ensure my child is well-clothed, clean, and nourished.

The above linkage highlights the intricate balance parents must maintain between their economic endeavors and the well-being of their children. The parents' efforts to secure financial stability

through hard work directly translate into the fulfillment of their children's basic needs, showcasing their resilience and dedication in the face of economic challenges.

Regarding the aforementioned, the results showed that parents work hard to guarantee that their children acquire education as one of the necessities. Parents during FGD revealed that they recognise education and its transformative power in their children's lives by not only providing access to academic knowledge but also to a broader support network comprising teachers, counselors, and NGOs: *"What I do to support my child is just sending him to school where he will meet his support like NGOs who will pay his fees"* (P14). These external supporters are crucial to the children's emotional and intellectual growth, guiding them through their education.

For example, P10 expressed that:

I send my child to school where they have access to a network of supporters, including teachers, counselors, and other staff members who are dedicated to their success. This enables my child to receive the academic and emotional support he needs to thrive in the classroom and beyond.

In a similar response, P13 narrated that:

As part of my commitment to my child's well-being and future, I ensure she receives an education by sending her to school. Education is the key to unlocking opportunities and empowering my child to reach her full potential so, by providing her with access to quality education, I am laying the foundation for her future success and happiness that one I know very well.

The findings underscore the strong dedication of parents to fulfilling their children's fundamental requirements, particularly regarding nutrition, education, and healthcare. Parents emphasize the importance of providing healthy meals and addressing health challenges to promote their children's well-being and academic achievement. To support these essential needs, they

participate in economic activities such as charcoal burning, reflecting their commitment, particularly for children with DS. Education is regarded as a powerful change agent, with parents working to secure access to academic resources and a network of teachers, counselors, and NGOs to support their children's educational and emotional growth. These findings align with Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory, indicating that parents' proactive involvement in meeting needs, fostering learning, and collaborating with schools and communities contributes to the academic, social, and emotional development of children with DS.

The results consistent with Mugote (2019), who revealed that parents were driven to assist their children's education by buying school supplies, helping with fees and meals, and escorting their children to and from school.

4.2.1.2 Offering emotional support

The findings of the study also showed that most parents provided a loving environment and emotional support to their children, particularly those who were dealing with particular difficulties. Eight participants revealed that parents see themselves as guides and counselors, providing essential emotional support, encouragement, and advice to help their children navigate life's challenges as one teacher noted: *“parents provide guidance and counseling to their children, offering emotional support, encouragement, and advice to help them navigate challenges and develop essential life skills”* (T₅). Similarly, a parent (P₂) also exemplifies this as he expressed that:

In the first place, I see myself as a guide and counselor for my child. I understand the unique challenges he may face in his educational journey due to his condition, so I

make it a point to provide him with the guidance and emotional support he needs to navigate these challenges effectively.

The above guidance is particularly critical for children with specific conditions, where the parent's support extends beyond traditional parenting to include tailored emotional and psychological support. Unconditional love and consistent affection are repeatedly emphasized as foundational elements. Parents believe that this kind of environment fosters a sense of security, confidence, and self-worth, all of which are critical for their children's academic success and overall development. Parents agreed, saying that:

Give my child unwavering love and support. As a parent, I understand how important it is to provide my child with a loving and supportive environment, especially given his condition. By showering him with love and affection, I hope to instill in him an aura of security, confidence, and self-worth that will serve as a basis for his educational journey (P4).

I always make an effort to express my love and concern for my child. I believe that love is a strong force that nurtures a sense of security and belonging and develops my child's spirit. By demonstrating my love in an open and consistent manner, I hope to create a kind and caring environment where my child feels appreciated, welcomed, and adored (P11).

The above expressions of love and care serve to create a supportive and nurturing atmosphere, ensuring that the child feels valued, accepted, and cherished.

In addition to emotional support, the findings also revealed that parents also take practical steps to ensure their children's well-being, even when they are not personally present. They demonstrate responsibility by leaving their children in the care of trusted individuals when attending to other responsibilities: *"There are times when I need to leave my child with someone*

else while I attend to other responsibilities. During these times, I make sure to leave my child in the care of someone I trust, who can provide him with the care and attention he needs” (P6).

This guarantees ongoing care and attention, strengthening the child's sense of stability and security. The findings show that parents provide their children's emotional and psychological needs equal weight with their physical wellness, showing a complete approach to childcare.

The core of the above findings indicates that parents emphasize a comprehensive approach to childcare, addressing not only their children's physical requirements but also their emotional and psychological health. They function as mentors and advisers, providing vital emotional support, motivation, and personalized guidance, particularly for children encountering specific challenges. The boundless love and ongoing affection they offer create a fundamental basis that nurtures a sense of security, confidence, and self-esteem essential for their children's growth and academic achievement. Moreover, parents take practical measures to maintain consistent care by entrusting their children to reliable individuals when needed, thereby bolstering stability and security. Parents' holistic care, including emotional support, guidance, and practical measures, exemplifies Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory, showing how active parenting and collaboration enhance children's security, confidence, and educational development.

The findings are consistent with those of Epstein et al. (2018), who stressed that parents should encourage their children's academic pursuits regardless of the economic endeavors required to make a living. Ensuring a better future for children with disabilities requires attending to their needs.

4.2.1.3 Family learning and scholastic materials

Responses from seven study participants revealed that parents also take active steps to ensure their children are involved in family learning and well-equipped with scholastic materials. This includes providing textbooks, stationery, uniforms, and any specialized tools or assistive devices needed for their studies. For example, one of the teachers expressed that: *“they [parents] often buy scholastic materials such as textbooks, notebooks, and other supplies needed for school. This helps ensure that their child has the necessary tools to participate in learning activities effectively”* (T₃). Furthermore, findings showed that parents understand how important it is to be ready for school and work to address these needs even in the absence of support from outside organizations like NGOs. This emphasizes the importance of having the right tools to fully participate in and benefit from educational activities. This analysis is substantiated by the following narratives:

I think that providing scholastic materials is also important for ensuring my child has the tools he needs to succeed in his studies. Whether its textbooks, stationery, or any specialized materials he may require, I make sure he has at least those things that I can afford for him to fully participate and engage in his learning (P₂).

I also take responsibility for ensuring my child has everything he needs for school, including books, textbooks, pencils, uniform, and other materials in case the NGOs did not provide. I understand the importance of being well-prepared for school to fully participate and engage in class (P₃).

According to the participants' responses, parents actively make sure their kids participate in family education and have access to the educational resources they need, including textbooks, stationery, uniforms, specialized tools, and assistive technology. This dedication endures even in the absence of outside support from non-governmental organizations, demonstrating the parents'

understanding of the significance of readiness and the appropriate resources for their children's successful involvement in educational activities. Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory, which shows how active at-home involvement and resource provision improve children's participation, learning, and overall educational achievement, is reflected in parents' provision of learning materials and support at home.

The results are consistent with those of Oranga et al. (2023), who emphasized crucial elements of parental involvement, including volunteering at the school, encouraging learning at home, keeping in regular contact with the school, taking part in school decision-making, offering educational resources, establishing conducive learning environments at home, and exhibiting positive behavior.

4.2.1.4 Nurturing apprenticeship and life skills

Another form of parental support to the children as highlighted by the study participants was nurturing apprenticeship and life skills. Responses from three parents highlight the strategy of integrating their children into their business endeavors as a means of support and skill development: *“One of the ways I support my child is by involving him in my own business endeavors” (P1)*. They believe that involving their children in their own entrepreneur activities instills a strong work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit from a young age: *“I understand the importance of instilling a strong work ethic and entrepreneur spirit in my child from a young age” (P4)*. By doing this, parents seek to give children the opportunity and support they need to develop critical life skills and realize their full potential. This method fosters holistic development that incorporates both academic and practical abilities while also improving hands-on learning opportunities and strengthening the bond between parents and children.

The findings are consistent with Bakken and Obiakor (2016), who discovered that parents support their children's successful learning by participating in both at-home and school-related activities.

4.2.1.5 Monitoring academic progress and school life

Findings showed that parents also help their children by keeping a close eye on their academic development and school life. Five respondents highlighted that parents often evaluate their children's schoolwork, attend parent-teacher conferences, and take part in school events and activities. Most participants said that by being educated about their children's strengths and areas for improvement, this involvement allows parents to offer tailored support and encouragement.

P₂ shared:

I'm also actively involved in checking my child's books and monitoring his progress. This allows me to stay informed about his strengths and areas that may need improvement, so I can provide additional assistance or resources as needed. By staying engaged with his schoolwork, I can ensure that he is receiving the appropriate level of support and encouragement to excel academically.

Similarly, another parent (**P₁₀**) said:

Also, I actively monitor my child's development, particularly while she is in school. I keep an eye on my child's academic progress and wellbeing, attend parent-teacher conferences, and speak with school personnel on a regular basis.

The main takeaway from the above findings is that parents actively help their kids succeed academically by attending meetings with teachers and school personnel, helping with academics, and taking part in school events. Through this involvement, parents may stay up to date on their

children's strengths and areas for growth, enabling them to offer individualized support and encouragement.

The findings contrast with those of Lorini and Moroni (2020), who observed that parents often do not meet their obligation to educate their children, especially those with DS. The findings also contradict those of Oranga et al. (2022), who found that there was a difference between the expected and actual levels of parental involvement because parents did not participate in school activities, volunteer, or communicate with the school about their children's academic progress.

4.2.2 Involvement in children's education

Teachers and parents provided information through interviews and FGDs respectively. The thematic analysis of the results showed that parents support their children's education in a number of ways, such as by investing in their education over the long term, meeting their basic needs, offering social and emotional support, and creating an engaging learning environment at home. This section details these experiences as follows:

4.2.2.1 Educational time investment

Parents often made an investment in their children's education by paying school fees, giving them safe transportation to and from school, advocating for their educational needs and rights within the school community, and teaching them important life skills. Thirteen of the parents disclosed that they contributed to the children's fees for school. This financial investment was perceived as a direct contribution to the children's future success and foundational development, underscoring the fundamental role education plays in shaping their prospects. Interview

transcript from two participants may illustrate sentiments from majority of the participants with similar view when they stated that:

One of the most fundamental aspects of our role is ensuring that our child has access to education by paying school fees. By paying school fees, we are investing in our child's future and providing her with the foundation she needs to reach her full potential (**P1**).

Me I know that we all understand the importance of paying school fees. Education is a fundamental right, and it's essential that children have access to it and as such, by paying school fees, we directly invest in these children's future (**P1**).

The aforementioned research highlights how important it is for parents to cover school fees in order to ensure that their kids can attend school.

In a similar situation, six participants emphasized that parents showed a significant dedication to their children's education by spending time traveling with them to and from school to guarantee their safe arrival. One of the parents, for instance, said: *“Accompanying the child to and from school guarantees that she arrives safely and on time because it not only shows one's dedication to the child's education but also gives her the moral support and motivation she needs to succeed academically.”* (**P1**). The results revealed that parents view escorting their children to school as a demonstration of their dedication to supporting their academic journey and providing them with the encouragement needed to succeed. For instance, **P4** said:

There is need to escort the child to school to ensure they arrive safely and on time, which not only demonstrates one's commitment to the child's education but also provides him with the support and encouragement needed to succeed academically.

This involvement extends beyond merely ensuring safe transit; it reflects a deeper commitment to removing barriers to education and fostering an environment conducive to learning: *“Parents also escort their children to school. This involves ensuring that their children arrive safely at school and is punctual for classes”* (T7). By accompanying their children to school, parents not only prioritize their safety but also demonstrate their active engagement in facilitating their access to educational opportunities. These findings highlight the responsibility parents have to make sure that their children get there safely and are ready to participate in educational activities.

The findings also demonstrated the proactive role that the school community should play in promoting children's rights and educational needs. This involvement goes beyond simply attending meetings; parents actively look for tools and services to help their children learn and work with a variety of stakeholders, such as educators, therapists, and professionals, to create customized lesson plans and accommodations, as demonstrated in the discussion that follows:

In order to assist their child's education, parents must actively engage with a variety of stakeholders. This entails speaking out for the child's needs in the classroom, locating and utilizing tools and services that improve learning, and cooperating with educators, therapists, and other experts to develop specialized lesson plans and any required adjustments (P2).

Moreover, parents engage in lobbying efforts, reaching out to relevant authorities, organizations, or community members to advocate for scholarships and other forms of support for children with similar conditions. The study highlights the cooperative approach parents take to obtain the resources and accommodations required for their children's education, underscoring the significance of parental lobbying in ensuring that children's unique needs are recognized and met by school officials.

P7 stated expressed that:

Lobbying should also be at the heart of a parent we share the same condition. In this place of ours, by lobbying I mean reaching out to relevant authorities, organizations, or community members to advocate for scholarships for these children.

A teacher expressed that:

In the educational system, parents must actively promote their children's needs and rights. This include taking part in school meetings and conversations, advocating for required modifications or support services, and making sure that school personnel recognize and attend to each child's unique requirements (T8).

The aforementioned analysis highlights parents' vital role as advocates within the school community by illuminating their proactive and resolute attempts to lobby for their children's educational rights and access to support resources.

The educational time investment also involved the integral role of teaching children with DS essential life skills, such as dressing themselves, practicing personal hygiene, and undertaking household chores. Three participants demonstrated how parents equipped the children with these skills to help them develop independence as well as a sense of accountability and self-assurance.

This is exemplified by the following expressions:

We are vital in helping the their children learn how to dress themselves, maintain good personal hygiene, and acquire other vital life skills that enable them to live freely and self-assuredly (P4).

Parents may assign their children with DS some light household chores or tasks to do at home. This not only helps teach the child valuable life skills but also instills a sense of responsibility and independence in them (T3).

The above expressions underscore the significance of parental guidance in equipping children with DS to navigate daily tasks and interact effectively within their environment.

The aforementioned study findings typically show how parents of children with DS assist their schooling in a variety of ways. In addition to providing financial assistance and guaranteeing secure transportation, parents actively promote their children's educational rights within school communities. This advocacy includes proactive interaction with educators and other professionals to get resources and accommodations. In addition, parents teach their children vital life skills through hands-on activities that help them become independent and self-assured. This is in line with Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory, which shows how active participation, decision-making, and teamwork improve educational chances and children's independence. Parents' advocacy, interaction with instructors, and teaching of life skills all support this idea.

The results are in agreement with those of Alnoaim and Alharbi (2023), who discovered that instructors' capacity to effectively connect with parents was influenced by their educational background. In accordance with Dahie et al. (2018), parental involvement in their children's education encompasses a range of activities such as registering them for school, helping them with their homework, and engaging with teachers. The results are consistent with those of Oranga et al. (2022), who found that parents provided behavior control, safe housing, transportation, and a few educational opportunities.

4.2.2.2 Provision of basic needs

One fascinating role parents play in their children's education is meeting their basic needs. Five participants gave examples of how parents provided for their children's basic needs, such as healthy meals, appropriate clothing, and a safe home: “*We also play a vital role in meeting our*

child's basic needs, such as appropriate clothing, healthy meals, and a secure and encouraging home environment” (P1). This involvement goes beyond simple provision; parents also make sure that their children fulfill school standards, such buying uniforms, which not only satisfy academic needs but also promote a feeling of identity and belonging within the school community: *“It is the parents' responsibility to purchase school uniforms for their children. In addition to being mandated by many schools, uniforms support students' sense of identification and belonging” (T3).* These statements highlight the all-encompassing approach parents take to raising their children, including recognizing that it is their duty to provide basic necessities like clothing, food, housing, and medical treatment. Additionally, the participants demonstrated how parents encourage their children's growth and development by giving them proper attire and balanced meals. This is illustrated in the following expression:

By simply serving balanced, nutrient-dense meals that promote their growth and development, parents ensure that their children are well-fed and obtain the right nutrients. It is the duty of parents to give their children suitable clothes and other necessities (T8).

This demonstrates that parents provide their children with a caring and encouraging atmosphere that meets their emotional and physical requirements.

The analysis of results revealed that eight participants placed a high priority on ensuring children's overall health and well-being and on providing medical care. By ensuring that their children have access to the therapies, treatments, and interventions they require to maintain their health, parents actively participate in fulfilling their medical needs, as three parents' interview responses showed. For example, P4 expressed that: *“To ensure that the children are healthy and able to fully engage in their education, we provide medical care and attend to their health*

needs.” This involvement extends to maintaining hygiene and cleanliness, providing personal care items, and attending to their children’s medical appointments as illustrated by **T₂** who expressed that: *“I also consider parents addressing their children’s healthcare needs which involve taking their child for medical appointments, ensuring they receive necessary medications, and monitoring their overall health and well-being”*. In addition, parents keep a close eye on their kids' health, take their prescriptions as directed, and encourage good behaviors like eating a balanced diet. Teachers expressed that:

In order to guarantee their children's health and wellbeing, parents are also essential. This include giving their children a healthy, balanced food to promote their development (**T₃**).

Additionally, parents are essential in keeping an eye on their kids' health and wellbeing. This includes making sure the children get frequent checkups, take their medications as directed, and stay healthy overall (**T₆**).

The aforementioned statements emphasize the crucial role parents play in protecting their children's health and their dedication to making sure children are healthy and capable of participating completely in their education as expressed by **P₄** that: *“To ensure that these children are healthy and able to participate fully in their education, we provide medical treatment and attend to their health needs.”* The analysis highlights the significance parents place on this part of parenting within the framework of their children’s educational journey and sheds light on the various ways parents actively support their children's health and well-being.

The main takeaway from the aforementioned research is how important it is for parents of children with special needs, like DS, to support their education and general wellbeing. They not only provide basic necessities like meals, clothing, and a safe home environment but also ensure

their children meet school requirements, fostering a sense of belonging at school. Furthermore, parents actively manage their children's healthcare needs, including treatments and medical appointments, which improves their physical health and prepares them to fully engage in their educational activities. In this sense, Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory is reflected in parents' attempts to provide healthcare, school supplies, and basic necessities, demonstrating how all-encompassing parental involvement fosters children's learning, health, and general academic performance.

Findings support the conclusions of Dahie et al. (2018), who claim that parental involvement in their children's education encompasses a range of activities, including enrolling them in school, helping them with their homework, providing basic necessities, and keeping teachers informed about their progress.

4.2.2.3 Social and emotional support

In another instance, the analysis of the findings showed that certain parents offered social and emotional support to their children. For example, P₃ mentioned engaging the child in activities with siblings, like singing rhymes together, which not only strengthened bonds and interactions but also cultivated essential skills such as communication, cooperation, and creativity. In her own statement, the participant expressed that:

There is also a role of fostering social and emotional development in the child. One way we do this is by involving the child in activities with their siblings, such as singing rhymes together. These activities not only promote bonding and interaction but also help develop important skills such as communication, cooperation, and creativity.

In a similar vein, three study participants disclosed that parents were guiding and counseling their children to help them deal with the difficulties they encounter in life and at school. *“We play a vital role in giving the kids guidance and counseling, which entails giving them support, encouragement, and guidance to help them navigate every obstacle they might encounter in school and in life” (P₃).* The participants also demonstrated that parents are essential sources of emotional support, building their children's self-assurance, resiliency, and coping mechanisms by providing guidance, support, and encouragement. Regarding this, a teacher stated that:

In addition, parents are supposed to give the children emotional support through counseling and guidance that includes listening to their worries, encouraging them, and assisting them in overcoming obstacles they may face in their everyday lives or at school (T₅).

These arguments underline the importance of parental participation in supporting their children's socio-emotional development, emphasizing their function as crucial sources of support and direction that nurture their development.

The aforementioned findings show that parents use a variety of strategies to provide their children with social and emotional support. Singing rhymes with siblings is one activity that improves communication, cooperation, and creativity while also strengthening family ties. Additionally, parents offer their children support, encouragement, and therapy that improves their emotional well-being and cultivates traits like resilience, confidence, and effective coping. Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory is reflected in parents' social and emotional support, guidance, and counseling, demonstrating how active involvement at home fosters children's confidence, resilience, communication skills, and overall emotional well-being.

The findings contrast with those of Lorini and Moroni (2020), who observe that parents often do not meet their obligation to educate their children, especially those with DS.

4.2.2.4 Creating an active home learning environment

The findings of the study also showed that parents actively participated in providing their kids with an engaging learning environment at home. According to six participants, parents prioritize giving their children the chance to participate in activities with their siblings at home, such reading aloud, playing games, or doing housework. This approach promotes both bonding and learning experiences, facilitating growth in a supportive and comfortable setting. For example, **P₁** expressed that:

In order to strengthen the links between his siblings and give him the chance to learn and develop in a comfortable and familiar environment, I also make sure to allow him to actively participate in activities at home with them, like reading, playing games, or doing housework.

Additionally, the findings showed that parents enlist the help of siblings, recognizing the benefits of supportive peer relationships in both academic and social aspects. One parent, for example, said, *“I also encourage my child's siblings to support and help him in his academics”* (**P₄**). They believe in giving their child hands-on experiences with materials and resources provided, enhancing their learning engagement and sense of ownership: *“I also believe in the importance of giving my child the opportunity to see and interact with the materials and resources I provide for her”* (**P₈**). Teachers also highlighted the value of parental participation by offering tools and information, such as instructional materials and advice, to promote learning at home. They believed that giving children the freedom to actively participate in their education and

encouraging them to share their experiences with their parents promotes a sense of involvement and ownership in children as well as parents. This is exemplified in the following expression:

One strategy is to give the child books or educational materials to bring home and share with their parents. By enabling the child to actively participate in their own learning and encouraging them to discuss their educational experiences with their parents, we aim to cultivate a sense of ownership and involvement for both the child and their parents (T4).

This cooperative approach involving parents, siblings, and teachers highlights how crucial family support and active participation are to fostering a child's educational path.

The aforementioned finding implies that parents are essential in providing an active learning environment at home, stressing the value of giving their children the chance to participate in activities like reading, playing games, and doing housework with their siblings. This approach not only promotes bonding but also facilitates learning and growth in a comfortable setting. Also, hands-on experiences with various materials and resources are provided to enhance learning engagement and a sense of ownership. Teachers encourage this by providing instructional resources and advice, emphasizing the value of parental participation. In order to foster learning, bonding, engagement, and a sense of ownership, parents create active home learning environments where children participate in activities, hands-on experiences, and supervised tasks. This is a reflection of Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory.

This is consistent with Gedfie and Negassa (2018), who discovered that parents actively participated in parenting activities that aided their children's intellectual and physical development.

4.3 Benefits of Parental Involvement in the Education Achievements of Children with Down Syndrome

The purpose of the study was to collect participant opinions regarding the beneficial effects of parental involvement for children with DS's academic success. The benefits of this involvement and the academic successes attained via it were its two main points of emphasis.

4.3.1 Benefits of parental involvement

Teachers as well as parents talked about the beneficial effects of parental involvement in their children's education through focus groups and interviews. Parental involvement influences children's education in a variety of ways, including identifying and meeting their unique educational needs, fostering collaboration between parents and teachers, fostering a sense of acceptance, and advancing the children's physical and mental development as per the thematic analysis of findings. Below are the detailed views of the participants:

4.3.1.1 Understanding and meeting children's unique needs

According to the study's findings, parents as well as teachers believe that parental participation in their children's education is advantageous. Ten individuals mentioned that this kind of involvement helps identify and meet these children's special educational needs. Parents stressed at FGDs how important it was for them to actively participate in order to track their children's progress and make sure their particular needs were satisfied. For example, they highlighted that their involvement allows them to advocate for appropriate support and accommodations, thus facilitating their children's success in the educational environment. P1 specifically notes the importance of treasuring their child to foster interest and support from others, indicating a deeper

emotional and social dimension to parental involvement. In his own words, the participant expressed that: *“Participating in my child's schooling is crucial, particularly in light of his impairment. This, in my opinion, guarantees that the child's requirements are successfully met in addition to aiding in progress monitoring”* (P₁).

In a similar vein, educators acknowledged the critical role parents play in their children's education, seeing them as the children's primary experts who offer invaluable insights into their needs, interests, and skills. Three educators in particular stressed the significance of family observations and feedback in customizing instructional strategies and interventions to successfully support children's learning and development. They asserted that a comprehensive approach that includes active parental involvement is essential to addressing individual needs and fostering holistic development. This analysis is illustrated by the following three expressions:

When parents actively participate in their children's education, we are better able to meet each child's unique needs. Since parents are the ones who know their kids the best, creating the optimal learning and support plans need their advice and observations (T₁).

Indeed, it is crucial since parents serve as their children's primary educators, establishing the foundation for learning and growth from an early age. Their involvement in school is very valuable since they have a unique understanding of their child's needs, interests, and strengths (T₄).

Parents have a unique perspective on their child's abilities, interests, learning style, and particular requirements because they are the child's first and primary caretakers. In order to best serve the unique needs of the children with disabilities, teachers must use this knowledge to customize their teaching strategies, accommodations, and interventions (T₆).

The findings show that parents' active participation in their children's education is crucial for fostering an emotional and social interest in their education, evaluating progress, and advocating for appropriate support. Teachers view parents as their children's primary experts, whose knowledge is essential for creating instructional tactics that work. According to Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory, parents must actively participate in their children's education in order to advocate for them, track their progress, meet their special needs, and foster their emotional and social development. Teachers should value parents' perspectives in order to develop effective teaching methods.

The results are in tandem with those of Epstein et al. (2018) and Lara and Saracostti (2019), who showed that parental participation and interest can boost and inspire children to improve their academic performance regardless of their social, educational, or ethnic origins.

4.3.1.2 Collaboration of teachers and parents

Collaboration between parents and teachers is another essential function of parental participation in children's education that has been frequently mentioned. Five parents repeatedly emphasized throughout FGDs that working together with instructors, going to school functions, and offering extra help at home were essential tactics for guaranteeing the achievement of their children. For example, one parent expressed that: *"I know that my involvement serves as vital for promoting the child's academic and personal growth, whether it is working closely with teachers to develop customized approaches or providing additional support at home"* (P7). This involvement fostered a supportive learning environment tailored to each child's unique needs, enhancing their academic progress and overall well-being. Three teachers corroborated this perspective, noting that parental involvement sends a strong message that education is valued, which boosts

children's motivation and engagement. For example, one teacher was quoted during interview that: *"A strong message that education is important and appreciated is sent when parents actively participate in their child's education. The child's motivation, engagement, and eventually academic success can all be increased by this support and encouragement"* (T3). Frequent communication between educators and parents enables active involvement in decision-making procedures, guaranteeing that each child's unique demands are successfully satisfied.

The crux of the above findings is that parental involvement in education fosters collaboration with teachers through active engagement, attending school meetings, and providing home support, crucial for children's success. This collaboration produces a customized, encouraging learning environment that improves wellbeing and academic achievement. It also signifies the value of education, boosting children's motivation and engagement.

The findings are consistent with Lalvani (2015), who demonstrated that active parental involvement is crucial for improving school attendance, social skills, and academic performance for special needs students. This relationship makes it possible for parents and educators to collaborate successfully on issues pertaining to children's education and development.

4.3.1.3 Development of a feeling of acceptance

The study also found that by addressing their emotional and social difficulties, particularly feelings of loneliness and isolation, parents' engagement helped children with impairments develop a sense of acceptance. Three participants stated that parents who actively engage in the education of their children and daily lives offer vital support and stability. For example, T5 expressed that: *"the presence of supportive parents can provide a sense of security and*

encouragement that fosters the child's confidence and self-esteem". In addition, T₃ expressed that:

Parental involvement helps to reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation that children with disabilities may experience. Children's self-esteem and emotional health can suffer greatly when they feel abandoned or excluded.

This involvement helps foster the children's confidence and self-esteem, mitigating the negative impact of feeling neglected or excluded. Similarly, the findings showed that the consistent support and presence of parents sent a powerful message of motivation and encouragement, significantly influencing the children's willingness to attend school and engage in learning activities: *"Parents' involvement sends a powerful message of support and encouragement that can significantly impact the child's motivation to attend school"* (T₇). Thus, encouraging the general well-being and academic achievement of children with disabilities requires the emotional and motivational support of involved parents.

The findings imply that by tackling emotional and social problems like loneliness, parental involvement in their children's schooling increases acceptance for people with disabilities. It provides crucial security and encouragement, boosting children's confidence and self-esteem, counteracting feelings of neglect or exclusion. Moreover, consistent parental support sends a strong motivational message, positively impacting school attendance and engagement in learning activities. Similarly, Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory assumes that parental involvement enhances children's acceptance and inclusion, addressing emotional and social needs, building confidence and self-esteem, and motivating consistent school attendance and engagement in learning activities.

These results corroborate those of Lalvani (2015), who noted that despite a variety of obstacles, children who experience unconditional love and support from their parents are inspired to pursue high academic standards.

4.3.1.4 Physical and mental growth

Although not mentioned by many participants, parental involvement was also reported to support physical and mental growth. Participant T₅ highlights that through involvement in diverse activities such as classroom interactions, sports, arts, and extracurricular pursuits, children with disabilities can notably enhance their cognitive abilities, fine and gross motor skills, and overall physical well-being. In her own statement, the participant narrated:

Parents can assist their children's mental and physical growth by participating in educational activities. Children with disabilities can improve their cognitive ability, fine and gross motor skills, and general physical well-being by engaging in extracurricular activities such as sports, the arts, and school activities.

Based to this research, parents' active participation in their children's schooling creates a welcoming atmosphere where kids with disabilities can reach their full potential, develop new abilities, and take part in rewarding activities that enhance their general development and wellbeing.

These findings are consistent with Afolabi (2014), who demonstrated that including parents in their children's education encourages early disability detection and enables the timely use of intervention strategies to support them both psychologically and physically.

4.3.2 Education successes through parental involvement

In the study, both parents and teachers used interviews and FGDs respectively, to share their perspectives on the educational achievements children achieved through parental participation. The results of the thematic analysis showed that children's accomplishments, such as greater organization and responsibility, social development, and cognitive progress, were greatly influenced by parental participation. Below are the detailed views of the participants:

4.3.2.1 Cognitive development

According to the study, parental involvement boosted children's cognitive development by fostering a love of learning, strengthening literacy abilities, boosting numeracy skills, and accelerating academic advancement. Thanks to the combined efforts of parents and encouraging teachers, ten participants emphasized the importance of parental involvement in the development of reading and numeracy skills. Parents took great delight in their children's reading and writing development, seeing these successes as important turning points. For example, parents expressed:

My child can now read and write, which is a significant achievement and a credit to his diligence, hard work, and teachers' support and guidance. He can also read numbers, which demonstrates his developing literacy and numeracy skills as well as his will to learn and do well in school (**P1**).

The fact that my child is now able read and write is what I consider to be my success. Seeing my child develop these fundamental skills has been incredibly rewarding. It's a testament to his hard work, the dedication of her teachers, and our collaborative efforts in supporting her learning (**P8**).

These cognitive skills demonstrate the children's perseverance as well as the success of parent-teacher collaboration in fostering a positive learning environment. Teachers corroborate these successes, noting significant strides in literacy development, such as identifying letters, reading digits, and improving language proficiency. This is exemplified in the following two expressions from teachers saying that:

Our involvement in her learning journey has led to some remarkable achievements that I'm incredibly proud of. One of the most notable successes has been her progress in language development. When she first joined our classroom, she had limited English proficiency. However, through targeted instruction and individualized support, she's made significant strides in her ability to speak, read, and write in English (T₃).

Their improvement in literacy abilities is, in my opinion, the most impressive accomplishment. They might have had difficulties with reading and writing when they first started school. However, they have improved their reading and writing skills thanks to individualized assistance and a supportive learning atmosphere (T₈).

The personalized support and targeted instruction have been crucial in helping these children overcome initial challenges, fostering their academic growth and engagement with educational content. In general, the results highlight how crucial a comprehensive, encouraging approach is to helping children with impairments reach basic academic milestones and skills.

Parental involvement also fostered children's interest in learning. Six participants noted increased enthusiasm and engagement with learning activities, crediting parental support and a nurturing educational environment. Parents expressed joy in witnessing their children eagerly participating in classroom activities, mimicking teachers during lessons, and showing a growing interest in academic subjects. These findings demonstrate that children's confidence and sense of

community in the classroom are improving, highlighting the beneficial effects of parental participation on their academic development. In this regard, one parent expressed that:

Moreover, I'm happy to see that my child is happy and enthusiastic about learning. His positive attitude and willingness to continue working in school are a reflection of his growing confidence and enjoyment of the learning process. It's incredibly rewarding to witness his joy and eagerness to learn, and it motivates me to continue supporting him (**P1**).

P10 also expressed that:

I'm proud that he has developed the ability to identify medical books from home which demonstrates his growing awareness of different subjects and his eagerness to learn beyond the classroom.

Moreover, teachers highlighted the children's active participation in group projects, sharing ideas with peers, and contributing to the learning environment, underscoring the children's enhanced engagement and collaboration skills: "*She now eagerly participates in group projects, shares her ideas with friends, and contributes to the learning environment in meaningful ways*" (**T3**). These findings imply that children's excitement for learning and active engagement in class activities are fostered by parental support and a conducive learning environment, which eventually contribute to their academic growth and development.

In a similar vein, parental involvement was found to be a crucial element in children's noteworthy educational achievements, as seen by changes noted by both parents and teachers. As a direct result of his active involvement in his child's education, participant **P5** felt delight in his child's advancement to the following class: "*I proudly say that there have been some noticeable successes in my child's education as a result of my active involvement I know that. For example,*

he has successfully progressed to the next class". This highlights a tangible achievement linked directly to parental involvement, emphasizing its significance in fostering academic advancement and educational milestones.

The implication of the above findings is that parental involvement significantly boosts children's cognitive development by improving literacy skills, fostering a passion for learning, enhancing numeracy abilities, and supporting academic progress. Parents and supportive teachers were instrumental in nurturing these skills, which parents viewed as major achievements. Teachers confirmed advancements in literacy, including letter recognition and reading comprehension. Parental engagement also ignited children's enthusiasm for learning, evident in their active participation in classroom activities and interest in academic subjects. Teachers observed enhanced engagement and collaboration skills among children, demonstrated through group projects and sharing ideas with peers.

These findings are consistent with Ruskus and Gerulaitis (2010), who demonstrated that individual education planning fosters a common understanding of objectives, fosters teamwork, utilizes internal resources, establishes a new institutional culture, validates parental expectations, and prepares educators and parents for new challenges.

4.3.2.2 Social growth

The study findings demonstrated that parental involvement further improved kids' social development. Twelve study participants from focus group discussions and interviews said that the social relationships and emotional growth of children with disabilities have much improved, highlighting the critical importance of parental and educational involvement. In this sense, parents saw significant gains in their children's social skills at home and at school, highlighting

improved behavior, less shyness, and more self-assurance. For example, **P₃** expressed that: *“I’m proud to see that my child is learning how to interact and be with other children”*. Another parent expressed that: *“...she is no longer as shy as she used to be. She now feels more comfortable expressing herself and interacting with others”* (**P₁₂**). Teachers corroborated these observations, noting that structured interventions and inclusive classroom practices facilitated these advancements:

...his social development has flourished as a result of our involvement in his learning. Initially, he could struggle to socialize with his peers due to barriers such as communication difficulties or sensory sensitivities. However, through targeted interventions and inclusive classroom practices, he’s now able to interact with his classmates more confidently and effectively (**T₂**).

...her ability to share and interact with friends is a testament to her growing social skills and emotional development. We have developed positive relationships among kids and promoted empathy, cooperation, and friendship by establishing a welcoming and inclusive classroom atmosphere. Seeing her actively engage with her peers and form meaningful connections brings me immense joy and pride (**T₃**).

The inclusive environment and targeted support have enabled children to form meaningful relationships, engage actively in classroom activities, and develop essential social skills. These findings demonstrate how important it is for parents and teachers to collaborate in order to assist the social development of children with DS and ensure that they are valued members of the school community.

In addition, the analysis of findings revealed a positive transformation in the children’s behavior, marked by a newfound respect for others. Four parents during FGDs showed that they observed their children displaying courteous and polite behavior towards others, including greeting people

warmly and showing appreciation. For example, P₂ expressed that: *“I’m pleased to see that my child has developed a newfound respect for others. He’s become more courteous and polite, greeting people warmly and showing appreciation for their presence”*. This demonstrates the children’s understanding of social norms and manners, indicating growth in interpersonal skills and respect for authority figures.

The essence of the above findings is that parental involvement significantly enhances children’s social growth, with notable improvements in their interactions with peers noted by parents and supported by teachers. Children showed increased confidence, reduced shyness, and improved behavior both at school and home. Teachers attributed these positive changes to structured interventions and inclusive classroom practices. Additionally, parents observed a positive transformation in their children’s behavior, including heightened displays of respect and courtesy towards others. Epstein’s Parental Involvement Theory posits that active parental involvement promotes children’s social development, enhancing peer interactions, confidence, behavior, and respect, with teachers and parents observing positive changes supported by inclusive classroom practices.

The findings are in agreement with Washington (2011), who revealed that parental involvement can foster high learning motivation, which goes beyond improving academic achievement and is critical for children with DS.

4.3.2.3 Organization and responsibility

Lastly, the analysis of findings revealed that parental involvement resulted in enhanced organization and responsibility among children with disabilities, particularly those with DS. According to seven participants in focus groups and interviews, children's everyday life skills

and hygiene practices significantly improved when parents were included. Parents expressed satisfaction in their children's increased independence and responsibility, such as managing everyday tasks like changing clothes and maintaining cleanliness by avoiding dirty facilities. **P2** exemplified this by stating:

I'm pleased to report that my participation in my child's educational path has resulted in a number of noteworthy achievements. One of the noticeable achievements is that my child has become much smarter in handling day-to-day tasks. For instance, if his clothes get dirty, he's learned to take them off, although sometimes he may still throw them around.

P7 also expressed that:

My girl is becoming more responsible and helpful at home. She picks out books for hospital visits and again, she takes the initiative to sweep the compound, which means that she is growing sense of responsibility and willingness to contribute to household chores.

These successes reflect the children's growing sense of autonomy and capability, fostered by parental guidance and encouragement. Moreover, parents highlighted their children's improved appearance and self-care habits, indicating a sense of pride and individuality in dressing: "*One of the most noticeable successes is that my child has become smart in the way she dresses. She takes pride in her appearance and demonstrates her creativity and individuality through her clothing choices*" (**P13**). These findings imply that parental participation is essential for developing children's everyday life skills as well as a sense of accountability and self-assurance in handling household chores and personal cleanliness.

The results are consistent with those of Afolabi (2014), who discovered that early detection and prompt intervention for disabilities are made possible by active parental participation, which also greatly enhances educational outcomes for children with DS.

4.4 Factors that Hinder Parents' Involvement in the Education Achievements of Children with DS

Participants in the study were asked what keeps parents from helping their children with DS succeed academically. It focused on two areas: the obstacles to involvement among parents and the ways to overcome them.

4.4.1 Hindering factors to parental involvement

All participants provided information on the barriers to parents' involvement in their children's education through FGDs and interviews, respectively. The thematic analysis revealed several factors, including attitudinal factors, socio-economic factors, insecurity, and communication gaps along with ignorance. This section details the participants' views on these factors:

4.4.1.1 Attitudinal factors

A range of emotions and difficulties were reflected in the analysis of findings, which revealed a variety of parental perspectives toward involvement in their children's schooling. Parents shared their experiences and expressed both positive and negative opinions about their involvement in helping their children learn. Some parents acknowledged the importance of working with teachers to provide the required resources and assistance, and they indicated strong dedication and hope. They viewed education as a transformative force and believed in their children's

potential to succeed despite any obstacles they might face. This sentiment is illustrated by the following two expressions:

As for me, well, I'll be honest—I sometimes struggle with the financial aspect of it all. Providing support and resources for a child with disabilities can be expensive, from therapy to educational programs. I remind myself that every child should have the opportunity to study, develop, and realize their full potential via education, despite the uncertainties and financial burden (P₂).

Conversely, other parents revealed feelings of overwhelming doubt and uncertainty about their involvement roles. The challenges associated with raising children with disabilities, including financial strain and societal stigma, could sometimes overshadow their optimism and confidence. These parents perceived their involvement as burdensome, particularly when faced with additional responsibilities and complexities within the educational system:

Some parents feel ashamed of their children because they're different and don't fit into society's idea of 'normal,' which is heartbreaking because every child deserves to be loved and accepted. Others see it as a wastage of money, wondering if support is worth it. But for us, we've accepted our child with DS completely and only care about his well-being, progress, and happiness (P₃).

For me anyway, I can say that parents generally feel bad that is the truth of the matter, but then that doesn't mean that we don't love our children, we do love them and for that matter, I think every parent is positive about it only that when you reach a time and you find that you can't provide, its automatic that you will feel somehow negative about supporting the child yes (P₁₃).

Furthermore, seven participants conveyed profound disappointments and discouragement due to cultural beliefs and societal prejudices that sustained social exclusion, discrimination, and a lack of assistance for people with disabilities. The study found that parents were discouraged and

stigmatized not only by members of their own group but also by other parents and even some teachers who had misconceptions about the ability of children with disabilities and questioned the legitimacy of speaking out for their needs. For example, T₃ expressed that:

In addition, some parents may believe that the school is ineffective for children with disabilities, questioning the quality or relevance of the education provided, especially if they feel that the school does not adequately address their children's specific needs. Some parents may act cruelly because of personal struggles or difficulties in their own lives; such negative attitudes can lead them to disengage from their children's education and refrain from participating in school activities.

Maybe they feel overwhelmed by the demands of raising a child with special needs, or maybe they've had negative experiences with the education system in the past. Whatever the reason, they might be less involved or even resistant to the idea of actively involving in children's schooling (P₂).

Further, some parents' unfavorable attitudes toward their children's involvement in schooling were exacerbated by issues like poor literacy or information access, underscoring the need for specialized support and tools to enable them in their roles:

Parents are more likely to support their children's education and collaborate effectively with instructors to ensure their success if they are aware of their health and educational needs. However, parents who don't understand or know much about impairments may be afraid or uncomfortable about the educational system and struggle to figure out how to support the education of their children (T₆).

The implication of the above findings is that whereas some parents demonstrate a strong sense of commitment and optimism, valuing the transformative power of education and actively collaborating with teachers, others are burdened by feelings of overwhelm, doubt, and frustration. The additional challenges of raising children with disabilities, financial strain,

societal stigma, and limited access to resources often exacerbate their struggles. These parents face not only practical difficulties but also discouragement and prejudice from their communities and some teachers. Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory highlights that while some parents actively collaborate and value education, others face challenges like financial strain, societal stigma, and limited resources, affecting their engagement in children's learning.

These results are consistent with those of Owusu et al. (2018), who found that many parents had misconceptions about the needs and skills of children with intellectual disabilities, leading them to believe that these children are less likely to benefit from education. Similarly, the findings concur with Gedfie and Negassa (2018), who found that few parents provided home learning support, with most unable due to time constraints, misconceptions, and lack of skills.

4.4.1.2 Socio-economic factors

The study also discovered that parental involvement in their children's schooling was restricted by socioeconomic variables such as food insecurity and poverty. Nineteen participants responded to this issue by describing the parents' severe financial difficulties, which made it difficult for them to give their kids' educational needs first priority. The participants stated that these families found it difficult to pay for the necessary resources and support services for their children's academic success due to the high costs of specialized therapies, adaptive equipment, transportation, and school supplies. The following two expressions serve as examples of this analysis:

When a family is barely able to cover basic needs, spending time, effort, and money on their children's education can feel impossible. With urgent needs like food,

shelter, transport, and school supplies to worry about, poverty can make it very hard for families to focus on their child's learning (P1).

Financially struggling families frequently struggle to pay for daycare for other children, transportation to school, or necessary learning tools like books, instructional materials, and technology that assist their children's education at home (T1).

Moreover, the study demonstrated how poverty, especially in Karamoja, sustained a cycle of restricted opportunities and access to education for children with DS. Families that were struggling financially frequently put their children's education ahead of their urgent needs, such as food and shelter. *“Many households in the Karamoja region face difficulties due to poverty and financial issues. Parents who are having a hard time making ends meet prioritize their urgent needs—such as food, shelter, and medical care—over their children's education”* (T8). This prioritization reflects a struggle for survival, where parents must navigate the harsh realities of poverty while grappling with the desire to provide their children with a quality education: *“Families facing financial difficulties find it difficult to pay for necessities, which restricts their access to medical care, transportation, and educational resources, making it more difficult for parents to provide for their children”* (T4).

Families still have to deal with crippling financial difficulties that prevent them from fully participating in their children's education, despite efforts to address these issues, such as requests for help from NGOs and outside support: *“First and foremost, money is a problem. I feel overburdened and powerless when the expenses of specialized therapy, adaptive equipment, and other educational resources mount up”* (P8).

In a similar setting, two participants identified hunger and food insecurity as significant barriers to parental participation in their children's schooling. They noted that the primary concern of

families facing food poverty is providing for their basic nutritional needs, which frequently takes precedence over priorities for schooling. They have little mental and emotional capacity to concentrate on their children's educational demands since they are constantly preoccupied about finding the next meal. The participants expressed that:

There's the issue of hunger. When you're struggling to put food on the table, when every meal is a question mark, it's incredibly difficult to focus on anything else, let alone my child's education. The constant gnawing feeling of hunger, the worry about where the next meal will come from—it consumes every aspect of our lives and makes it hard to prioritize anything else (P9).

Children's learning and parents' ability to participate in their education are both compromised by hunger and food instability. Priorities for schooling may be subordinated to more pressing issues of survival and well-being when families are struggling to put food on the table (T8).

The aforementioned results demonstrate the significant influence that socioeconomic factors—particularly poverty and food insecurity—have on parents' involvement in their children's schooling. Financial constraints hinder parents from prioritizing educational needs due to the high costs of specialized therapies, equipment, transportation, and supplies. In regions like Karamoja, poverty limits educational access, as families prioritize survival over education. The constant struggle to meet nutritional needs further consumes parents' mental and emotional capacity, reducing their focus on education. Despite NGO efforts, these financial and nutritional barriers continue to keep parents from fully engaging in their children's schooling. In this sense, Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory illustrates how socioeconomic problems, such as poverty and food insecurity, limit parents' ability to engage in their children's education, affecting their access, support, and involvement.

The findings agree with Mugote's (2019) identification of poverty as a significant obstacle to parental engagement. Parental participation is frequently lower in families with little financial means or supportive family structures, according to Mathatha and Ndhlovu (2017). In impoverished areas, reliance on social grants can lead to frustration among parents, as these funds typically cover only basic household needs. Given that this region is known for its high poverty levels, a study in more affluent areas of Uganda might yield different results. Future research could explore such contexts to validate the current findings.

4.4.1.3 Insecurity

The analysis of findings also showed that a significant barrier to parental involvement in their children's education is insecurity, which results from fear of violence, large distances, and wildlife. Two participants stated that families in conflict-affected areas like Karamoja worry about their children's safety and welfare, which keeps parents from attending to their educational needs. The persistent feelings of fear and anxiety linked to insecurity result in reduced engagement in school activities, as families prioritize safety concerns over educational pursuits.

The participants for instance observed that:

Another major obstacle that prevents me from actively participating in my child's schooling is insecurity. Living in an area plagued by insecurity like this, where violence and crime are all too common, creates a constant sense of fear and anxiety. It's hard to focus on my child's education when I'm worried about their safety and well-being every time they leave the house. And then there's the challenge of earning a living (P8).

Insecurity in the area due to factors such as cattle rustling also impacts parental involvement. Families living in areas affected by conflict or violence prioritize safety over education, leading to decreased participation in school-related activities (**T4**).

In a similar vein, three study participants noted that parental involvement in their children's education is hampered by long commutes to schools or educational facilities. They noted that families in rural or isolated locations have logistical difficulties because getting to school is sometimes expensive, time-consuming, and exhausting. Additionally, the distance makes it more difficult for parents to efficiently work with teachers and school personnel, attend significant meetings and activities, and actively engage in their children's education. For instance, participant **P2** conveyed that:

Many families, including mine, face the challenge of living far from specialized schools or educational facilities for children with DS. Parents may find it challenging to actively participate in their child's education or to attend significant school meetings and events due to the exhausting, costly, and time-consuming nature of the long trip.

Another participant expressed that:

The distance to school may also hinder parental involvement. Families that live distant from schools in remote or rural locations may find it difficult to attend parent-teacher conferences, school events, or seminars. When parents are deterred from taking an active role in their children's education because of the time and cost of traveling such distances, there are less opportunities for collaboration between the home and the school (**T2**).

Further, the results showed that the presence of wild animals, which could seriously jeopardize families' safety when going to and from school or taking part in school-related events, reduced the involvement of parents from rural or distant places. Because of the constant fear of encountering predators or traveling through snake-infested areas, parents are reluctant to send their kids to school or actively engage in their education. This fear could also extend to teachers and school staff, impacting their ability to engage with families and pupils in those remote communities. In this regard, the participants conveyed that:

Living in a rural or remote area means we have to contend with the presence of wild animals, which can pose real dangers to our safety when traveling to and from school or attending school-related activities. This constant threat adds an extra layer of fear and stress, making it even more difficult to prioritize my child's education (**P6**).

In certain rural or remote areas, the presence of wild animals can pose a real threat to our safety when traveling to and from school or participating in school-related activities. Whether it's the risk of encountering predators or navigating through snake-infested terrain, the fear and anxiety that come with this constant danger can make it challenging for me to feel comfortable sending my child to school or being actively involved in their education (**P7**).

The main findings show that parents' capacity to prioritize their children's education was severely hampered by insecurity brought on by fear of violence, long commutes to schools, and the presence of wild animals. Families in conflict areas like Karamoja are constantly worried about their kids' safety, which takes their attention away from issues related to schooling. Additionally, parents' active participation in school activities and engagement with instructors were limited by the logistical difficulties of traveling to distant schools and the accompanying expenses. Furthermore, the threat posed by wildlife exacerbated parents' reluctance to send their children to school or actively participate in their education. According to Epstein's Parental Involvement

Theory, parents' capacity to participate in making choices, communicating, volunteering, at-home learning, and school-community collaboration is hampered by insecurity, vast distances, and safety concerns.

The results are consistent with those of Almalki et al. (2021), who discovered that many parents of children with disabilities, including those with DS, experience severe financial difficulties. This frequently keeps them from providing for their kids' educational needs, like safe transportation to school, which can cause parents to become disengaged from the education of their children.

4.4.1.4 Communication gaps and ignorance

The analysis showed that ignorance and communication barriers prevented parents from becoming involved in their children's education. Inadequate communication between parents and instructors was cited by two participants as a major barrier. They emphasized how crucial good communication is to encouraging parental participation. They did, however, voice their dissatisfaction about alleged communication breakdowns that left parents feeling cut off and ignorant of their children's development, difficulties, and educational requirements. Language problems also made it more difficult for parents to communicate their concerns and preferences and to comprehend their children's educational needs. During an interview with a parent who exemplifies similar emotions, it was observed that:

Inadequate communication between educators and parents is another significant obstacle. In order to keep parents informed and active in their child's education, effective communication is essential. However, parents may feel cut off from their child's development, difficulties, and needs in the school if there are frequent communication breakdowns (**P₂**).

Such sentiments were corroborated by observations from teachers, where a communication was severally mentioned by majority of teachers during FGDs as may be illustrated by FGD transcript that:

Many parents of children with DS face language hurdles while interacting with teachers and school personnel, which leads to communication problems. This makes it difficult for them to properly communicate their own concerns and desires as well as to completely understand their children's educational needs and rights (T₈).

The study also showed that parents' involvement in their children's schooling was hampered by their lack of understanding or awareness of DS and its educational ramifications. Three participants emphasized that parents may have misconceptions, anxieties, or doubts about how to successfully assist their child's learning if they don't have appropriate information or resources concerning their condition. This knowledge gap can discourage parents from actively participating in their children's education by making them feel overburdened or inadequate. Furthermore, parents may be reluctant to devote time and energy if they feel that teachers are not totally devoted to meeting their children's needs. Participants stated in their own words that:

Parental involvement may be hampered by a lack of knowledge about DS. Parents' capacity to properly support their children's learning and actively engage in their education may be hampered by misconceptions or feelings of uncertainty and overwhelm in the absence of accurate information (T₁).

One significant obstacle is the belief held by some parents that instructors do not provide adequate assistance at school. Parents may be reluctant to devote time or resources to their children's education if they believe that teachers are not totally dedicated to helping them. This emotion is frequently caused by inadequate communication, a lack of resources, or teachers who don't fully comprehend or empathize with kids with Down syndrome (T₅).

Hoo! There is ignorance on that matter. Some parents have misconceptions, anxieties, or uncertainties about how to best support their children's learning because they are unaware about DS and its effects on children (T₆).

The findings show that poor communication between educators and parents can cause families to feel cut off from and ignorant of their children's needs and academic achievement. Parental engagement problems are made worse by language challenges, which make it more difficult for parents to completely comprehend and support their children's educational demands. Furthermore, parents' confidence and capacity to actively support their children's learning are impacted by their lack of knowledge regarding illnesses like DS.

The results support Chisembe's (2017) finding that communication barriers between parents and schools affect students' participation in school activities. Additionally, misconceptions and questions resulting from a lack of knowledge about conditions like Down syndrome may undermine parents' confidence and ability to assist their children's learning. The results are in line with those of Gedfie and Negassa (2018), who found that parents often perceive their children's learning difficulties as overwhelming and believe that neither they nor others can sufficiently support their learning. People with disabilities are neglected in comparison to their peers without disabilities because of these incorrect ideas, which are caused by a lack of information about disabilities and their impacts.

4.4.2 Suggested strategies for mitigating the hindering factors

Through FGDs and interviews, parents and educators discussed ways to address the barriers to parental involvement in their children's education. Thematic analysis identified three key

strategies: holding regular meetings, fostering collaboration among stakeholders, and implementing awareness campaigns. Below are the detailed opinions of the participants:

4.4.2.1 Regular meetings

The analysis of the results showed that setting up frequent meetings between parents and teachers is the most often suggested method to increase parental involvement in their children's education. During these occasions, parents ought to be fed, included in school activities, and given a say in choices pertaining to their children's education. Eight participants stressed that these regular get-togethers give parents a crucial opportunity to interact with teachers and school staff, discuss their children's development, express concerns, and work together on strategies to support their children's learning and development. For example, participants expressed that:

In my opinion, the school ought to start hosting frequent parent meetings. At these gatherings, parents can discuss their child's development, voice concerns, and collaborate with educators to enhance their learning (**P4**).

Parental meetings are crucial. By organizing these events, schools can update parents on their child's progress, talk about any problems or challenges, and work together to find ways to support the child's education and development. This open communication keeps parents informed and active in their child's education, strengthening the bond between the family and the school (**P6**).

Of course. As parents, we work as a team. We support one another's endeavors. When one of us is unable to attend a meeting, the other takes over. We share our expertise with the group if one of us excels in a certain area. It all comes down to working together and helping one another (**P5**).

In order to ensure that parents feel informed and active in their children's educational path, some participants also emphasized the need of open communication and partnership between home

and school, which are made possible by these sessions. Additionally, they stressed the need for ongoing follow-up and communication beyond meetings to sustain parental engagement:

Informing parents about their children's development and educational needs is insufficient; we also need to follow up with them on a regular basis to guarantee continued involvement. Regular meetings, phone conversations, or emails can be used to inform parents on their child's academic progress, answer any queries or worries they may have, and get their opinions (T₁).

Frequent parent meetings help foster cooperation, partnership, and communication between parents and school personnel. These gatherings allow parents the opportunity to discuss any issues or difficulties, stay informed about their kids' development, and provide input on their schooling (T₃).

According to the report, meetings should motivate parents to take part in school activities and volunteer opportunities. This strategy promotes a sense of ownership and belonging among parents while strengthening the relationship between parents and the school. In response, five participants stated that it is advantageous to encourage parents to provide their resources, expertise, and information in order to support the school and improve every student's educational experience. For example, P₁₄ expressed that: *“I believe the school should call all of us who have children with Down syndrome for our own meetings to discuss our children and involve us parents in school activities”* Participants also recommend planning special days for parents of kids with DS, giving them a forum to talk about their children's unique requirements, make objectives, and feel empowered to take an active role in their education. The following expressions support this:

Involving parents in school events fosters a sense of pride and belonging. Schools enable parents to actively influence their children's educational experiences by

allowing them to participate in committees, events, and decision-making processes (T₂).

I think parents of children with Down syndrome should have special days. Parents would have the opportunity to meet with teachers and school personnel on these designated days to discuss their children's unique needs and establish goals. Establishing a space specifically for these discussions ensures that parents feel respected, listened, and empowered to take an active role in their children's education (T₅).

Further, the results showed that giving parents food or drinks during school meetings increases their participation in their children's education. Offering meals or refreshments during meetings, according to two participants, might help parents feel more valued and appreciated by reducing some of the stress and difficulty related to attendance. By increasing participation and engagement, this small gesture hopes to strengthen the relationship between parents and schools in promoting children's education. Additionally, by fostering a friendly and encouraging atmosphere for all parties, these programs promote greater parental involvement and improved cooperation with schools. The participants stated in their own words that:

Parents' participation might be increased by providing food at school meetings. Attending meetings can seem like a hardship for many parents who have obligations and difficulties outside of school. Giving parents a lunch or refreshments can ease their tension, make them feel important, and motivate them to attend meetings, all of which build the relationship between parents and schools in supporting their children's education (P₅).

Providing refreshments to parents during meetings can encourage their participation. Due to their hectic schedules, parents may find it difficult to attend meetings. When schools serve food or beverages, it facilitates attendance at meetings and makes

parents feel valued, which increases their willingness to participate in their child's education (**P6**).

The results highlight the importance of setting up frequent meetings between educators and parents as a means for parents to engage with educators, talk about their children's development, resolve issues, and jointly develop learning strategies. These meetings place a strong emphasis on open communication and cooperation between the family and the school to help parents feel informed and active in their children's educational journey. Additionally, promoting parental involvement in school events and volunteer opportunities builds a feeling of community ownership and promotes the parent-school relationship. Parents are more equipped to advocate for their children with Down syndrome when they get specialized support, such as days set aside for talking about their unique needs and objectives. Providing meals or refreshments during meetings is seen as a meaningful gesture that enhances parental engagement by making attendance more accessible and enjoyable. According to Epstein's Parental Involvement Theory, parents are empowered, partnerships are strengthened, and their active involvement in their children's education is increased through frequent parent-teacher conferences, open communication, volunteer work, and school-community collaboration.

These results are in line with Adams et al. (2018), who highlighted that cooperative efforts between educators and parents can improve parental involvement in the education of children with DS. This collaboration allows for the planning of individualized care, sharing of information on learners' strengths and weaknesses, and providing meaningful support.

4.4.2.2 Stakeholders collaborations

The significance of stakeholder collaboration as a tactic to involve parents in their children's education was also emphasized by two study participants. They underlined how important it is to push for more funding, resources, and support services that are specifically designed to meet the needs of children, especially those with DS. Participant P4 emphasized the importance of lobbying efforts in obtaining the education and assistance these kids need to succeed. Similarly, P5 echoed the importance of partnering with NGOs to access crucial resources and services. In own statement, the participant conveyed that:

It's also critical to advocate for more assistance for such children. In order to meet the unique requirements of children with Down syndrome, schools should advocate for more funding, resources, and support services. This could entail working with governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other interested parties to get the resources and support required to guarantee that these kids receive the instruction and help they require to thrive (P4).

Two participants also stressed the significance of motivating parents to participate in activities that generate revenue. They felt that empowering parents through small companies or entrepreneurship would help them overcome financial obstacles and improve their capacity to successfully satisfy the requirements of their children. This approach was viewed as a means to reduce financial strain and bolster parental support for children. Furthermore, the participants supported this strategy by advocating for lobbying efforts to secure assistance from development partners, with the goal of economically empowering parents and thereby enhancing their ability to support kids' education.

Another important tactic is to encourage parents to participate in income-generating activities. Many parents of children with Down syndrome may experience financial challenges that influence their capacity to provide for their child's needs. We can lessen financial stress and increase parents' ability to meet their children's needs by helping them launch small enterprises or other entrepreneurial endeavors (**P4**).

Lobbying for support from development partners to assist parents in starting income-generating activities is another effective strategy. Economic empowerment can help parents better meet their children's educational requirements and reduce financial stress (**T6**).

The results highlight the significance of economic empowerment and stakeholder engagement in increasing parental involvement in their children's education. Through lobbying and collaborations with NGOs, participants emphasized the necessity of advocating for additional resources, financing, and support services tailored to children's particular needs. Furthermore, it was believed that empowering parents through revenue-generating ventures like small enterprises or entrepreneurship was an essential tactic to reduce financial difficulties and enhance their capacity to meet their children's educational demands.

These results run counter to those of Bariroh (2018), who contended that NGOs frequently fail to provide substantial support to families with children with impairments and may unintentionally encourage dependency rather than independence.

4.4.2.3 Awareness campaigns

The significance of awareness efforts to increase parental involvement in their children's education was highlighted by the analysis of the results. This approach includes family visits, back-to-school marketing, and knowledge empowerment. Six participants emphasized the importance of teaching parents about their responsibilities and equipping them with the

information and abilities necessary to successfully meet the special needs of their children. They emphasized organizing workshops, seminars, and informational sessions on topics such as behavior management and accessing support services. This is exemplified in the following expressions:

It's also critical to educate parents about their responsibility in their children's education. Many parents might not completely comprehend their role or the significance of participating. By offering guidance and information on the benefits of parental involvement, schools can help parents become more active in their children's education (**P11**).

It is crucial to teach parents how to properly care for children with DS. Workshops, seminars, or sessions on behavior control, communication strategies, and getting help could be part of this. Parents are empowered to be effective advocates and collaborators in their child's education when they are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to satisfy their child's needs (**P2**).

Moreover, highlighting the benefit of education for all, regardless of their differences, and informing parents about the negative effects of child labor are crucial steps in encouraging parental involvement and emphasizing the value of education over economic difficulties. For instance, **T₂** expressed that:

Educating parents about the dangers of child work is also beneficial. Child work may be seen by many low-income families as a way to make ends meet, but it frequently comes at the expense of their child's education. Therefore, we can assist parents in making decisions that promote their children's long-term development by increasing awareness of the detrimental effects of child work and the significance of prioritizing education.

Four participants also emphasized the importance of back-to-school initiatives for including parents and increasing their involvement in their children's education. At the beginning of the school year, these campaigns provide an opportunity to greet parents, inform them about the school's programs, resources, and expectations, and emphasize the value of parental involvement. Two participants, for instance, echoed this sentiment, stating:

One of the best ways to include parents and promote their involvement is through back-to-school programs. These campaigns can offer parents options to support their child's education, volunteer opportunities, and information about forthcoming events. Schools may promote a feeling of community and motivate parents to participate by generating enthusiasm and buzz about returning to school (**P12**).

Back-to-school initiatives are a good way to get parents involved in their kids' education. In order to welcome parents, educate them about the school's programs and resources, and encourage their involvement in school events and activities throughout the year, these campaigns plan events and activities at the beginning of each academic year (**T1**).

Additionally, three participants stated that home visits by school officials, particularly teachers, would increase parental involvement in their children's education. According to the participants, these visits help teachers and school personnel better understand the child's unique requirements, family dynamics, and home environment so they can adjust their support and interventions. The participants expressed that:

Parents of children with Down syndrome may benefit greatly from home visits. They make it easier for educators to comprehend the home setting and spot any obstacles or difficulties. Additionally, the relationship between parents and the school is strengthened by these visits, which foster rapport and confidence (**P2**).

Another helpful approach for increasing parental participation is home visits. We may interact with parents on a personal level, learn more about their cultural background and family dynamics, and develop rapport and trust by going to their homes. Additionally, it gives us the chance to watch the child at home and adjust our interventions and support as necessary (T₁).

Frequent follow-up visits to children's homes can improve these bonds and offer insightful information about the child's needs, family dynamics, and home environment (T₂).

The results highlight the necessity of raising awareness in order to increase parental participation in their children's education. This involves educating parents about their vital role, providing skills through workshops and informational sessions, highlighting the importance of education and the dangers of child labor, re-engaging parents through back-to-school campaigns, and conducting home visits to build trust and offer personalized support in a cooperative educational setting.

The findings concur with Arapi and Hamel (2021) and Bartnikowska et al. (2022), who concluded that effective communication and positive parent-teacher relationships can resolve misunderstandings or mistrust between parents and teachers.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter encapsulates the study findings, offers conclusions, and proposes recommendations aligned with its core objectives. It further suggests avenues for future investigations. The overview encompasses the following objectives: pinpointing the diverse forms of parental involvement in the educational achievements of children with DS, examine the benefits of this involvement for their educational achievements, and identifying factors that hinder such participation. The summary spotlights the primary discoveries tied to these aims.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The major findings from the previous chapter are summarised below. This overview also sheds light on the extent to which the study's established objectives were met.

5.1.1 Forms of parental involvement in the educational achievements of their children with DS

Two primary facets of parental involvement in the education of children with DS were identified by the study. First, the forms of parental support and the roles parents play in the education of their children with DS. Regarding parental support, the study found that parents are committed to providing basic needs like food, education, and medical care for children with DS.

Parents in the study extended support beyond basic needs; ensuring children met school requirements and felt a sense of belonging. They actively managed healthcare needs, including

treatments and medical appointments, promoting children's physical health and readiness for educational involvement.

The study revealed that parents supported their children socially and emotionally through activities that strengthen family bonds and develop crucial skills like communication and cooperation. They provided guidance, counseling, and emotional support, nurturing qualities such as confidence, resilience, and effective coping strategies. This all-encompassing strategy emphasizes how important it is for parents to support their children's social and emotional growth.

Finally, the study showed that parents played a role of creating an active home learning environment through activities like reading, playing games, and doing chores with siblings, fostering bonding and learning. They provided hands-on experiences with materials to enhance engagement and ownership in learning. Teachers supported this effort by offering educational materials and tips, highlighting the crucial role of involvement of parents in the education of their children with DS.

The study also showed that parents prioritized a holistic approach to childcare, attending to the emotional, psychological, and physical needs of children with special needs like DS. They provide essential emotional support, encouragement, and tailored advice, fostering security, confidence, and self-worth crucial for developmental and educational success. Practical steps like leaving children with trusted individuals ensure continuous care, reinforcing stability and security in their upbringing.

Moreover, the study revealed that parents actively participate in their children's education by ensuring engagement in family-based learning and providing essential academic resources,

including textbooks, stationery, school uniforms, and specialized aids or assistive technologies. This dedication endures without support from NGOs, underscoring parents' understanding of the vital role that proper preparation and appropriate equipment play in enabling their children's complete involvement and achievement in school.

5.1.2 Benefits of parental involvement towards the education achievements of children with DS

The study revealed that parental involvement proves beneficial in securing appropriate accommodations, tracking advancement, and addressing children's distinctive requirements, all while fostering emotional and social engagement in their schooling. Educators viewed parents as the foremost authorities on their children, with their perspectives essential for crafting impactful teaching approaches. Such engagement fostered partnerships with educators via regular attendance at school conferences and delivering reinforcement at home, thereby establishing a tailored and nurturing educational setting that advanced scholastic achievement and holistic development. Furthermore, this involvement heightened societal acceptance and emotional backing for children with disabilities, bolstering their self-assurance, sense of worth, and drive.

The educational successes achieved through parental involvement included significant boosts in children's cognitive development, such as improved literacy, numeracy, and a passion for learning, demonstrated through achievements like letter recognition, reading comprehension, and active classroom participation. Social growth was also enhanced, leading to better peer interactions, increased confidence, reduced shyness, and improved behavior. Moreover, parental involvement fostered enhanced organization, responsibility, and daily life skills, particularly among children with DS, reflecting growing independence and capability. These improvements

in self-care and autonomy were attributed to consistent parental guidance and encouragement, contributing positively to the children's overall growth and well-being.

5.1.3 Factors that hinder parents' involvement in the education achievements of their children with DS

The research pinpointed various hindrances to parental involvement in their children's education, including attitudinal factors where some parents were overwhelmed and frustrated due to financial strain, societal stigma, and limited resources. Socio-economic challenges like poverty and food insecurity significantly impacted engagement, with financial constraints and survival priorities hindering access to essential educational support. Insecurity from violence, long distances, and wildlife threats further restricted participation, while communication gaps and lack of awareness about disabilities like DS contributed to parental disconnect and uncertainty. These factors together hinder meaningful parental participation in their children's schooling.

To enhance parental involvement, the research proposed multiple strategies, such as scheduling consistent meetings between teachers and parents to review advancement and devise aid plans, promoting parents' active role in school events, and delivering targeted assistance for families of children with DS, including refreshments at gatherings. It stressed the value of coordinated efforts among stakeholders and financial strengthening, advocating for extra funding and revenue-building initiatives to ease monetary burdens. Moreover, the study underscored the necessity of public education drives to inform parents about their responsibilities, impart practical abilities via training sessions, and tackle concerns like child exploitation, alongside initiatives to reconnect families through enrollment promotions and individualized household outreach.

5.2 Conclusions

The following conclusions were thus reached based on the study objectives and analysis of its findings:

5.2.1 Forms of parental involvement in the educational achievements of their children with DS

The findings underscored that, beyond supplying monetary aid, medical care, and learning supplies, parents are pivotal in cultivating a nurturing atmosphere that advances the emotional, social, and education development of children. They engage deeply in their children's education, champion their entitlements, and integrate them into household and business endeavors to cultivate autonomy and competency. Via their devoted and customized initiatives, parents not only drive their children's scholarly triumphs but also instill resilience, assurance, and a robust self-regard. This all-encompassing parental engagement is vital for elevating the general welfare and academic accomplishments of children with intellectual disabilities.

5.2.2 Benefits of parental involvement towards the education achievements of children with DS

From the findings, it is inferred that parental involvement significantly enhances the learning path and outcomes of children with DS. By deeply engaging in their children's education, parents effectively champion customized assistance, track scholastic advancement, and cultivate vital emotional and social growth essential for holistic wellness. This collaborative approach with teachers fosters a supportive learning environment that enhances academic outcomes, including improved literacy, numeracy, and cognitive skills. Moreover, parental involvement

contributes significantly to social growth, promoting enhanced peer interactions, confidence, and responsible behavior. It also cultivates essential life skills and independence, empowering children to navigate daily tasks with pride and autonomy. Thus, parental support not only enhances academic performance but also fosters a feeling of acceptance, identity, and self-worth in children with disabilities, underscoring the transformative potential of inclusive and supportive learning environments backed by engaged parents.

5.2.3 Factors that hinder parents' involvement in the education achievements of their children with DS

The findings also indicated that parental involvement in the education of children with Down syndrome is hindered by major factors stemming from attitudinal, socioeconomic, and logistical challenges. Attitudinal barriers such as parental overwhelm and societal stigma compounded by practical difficulties like poverty and food insecurity, hinder active involvement in educational support. Insecurity concerns in conflict zones and communication gaps further restrict parental participation, impacting children's educational outcomes. Nevertheless, the research offers practical measures to strengthen parental involvement, underscoring the essential function of transparent meeting between educators and parents, promoting community involvement via school programs, and implementing targeted aid along with financial empowerment schemes. These approaches seek to surmount obstacles and enable parents to champion their children's learning requirements robustly, emphasizing the significance of joint initiatives and educational outreach in cultivating welcoming and encouraging scholastic settings.

5.3 Recommendations

These recommendations are made in light of what was found and conclusions reached.

5.3.1 Forms of parental involvement in the educational achievements of their children with DS

1. To help parents of children with disabilities focus more on their children's educational needs, the government should offer financial assistance and programs that generate money.
2. To guarantee ongoing assistance and resources, parents of children with DS should fortify their alliances with government initiatives and non-governmental organizations. They would be able to completely fund their children's educational demands as a result.
3. Partners in development of Moroto District should educate parents on advocacy techniques and provide resources to help them engage more effectively with school communities and professionals.

5.3.2 Benefits of parental involvement towards the education achievements of children with DS

1. Government and school counselors should provide comprehensive training and resources for parents on holistic childcare approaches, including strategies for emotional and psychological support.
2. Parents should receive training from community development officers and other pertinent government representatives on how to engage their children in entrepreneurial endeavors in a way that promotes their education and skill development without resulting in child labor. To give

parents the knowledge and resources they need to assist their children's education at home, schools and community organizations should provide workshops and other materials.

3. To give learners with disabilities more emotional and social support, those in charge of inclusive primary schools in the Moroto District should establish peer support groups and school-based counseling services.

5.3.3 Factors that hinder parents' involvement in the education achievements of their children with DS

1. The administrators in inclusive schools should actively encourage and facilitate parental participation by organizing inclusive school events and providing flexible meeting schedules to accommodate different parents' availability.

2. The government should implement income-generating projects and social safety nets to alleviate financial burdens, enabling parents to better focus on their children's education.

3. The government should enhance security measures around schools and providing safe transportation options to address fears of violence and logistical challenges. Additionally, schools should establish multilingual communication platforms and regular parent-teacher meetings to bridge communication gaps.

5.4 Key Areas for Further Research

Further investigation is required in the following fields:

- The socio-economic factors affecting parental involvement in the education of children with DS.
- The influence of parental advocacy on the education achievement of children with DS.
- The effect of parent-teacher collaboration on the academic performance of children with DS.
- The effect of economic empowerment program on parents' participation in the education of children with special needs.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Consent Form

I am fully aware that I can choose whether or not to take part in this study, and that I can stop participating at any moment without repercussions. I have consented to participate in the interview with the researcher. I understand that the interview will take about 25 minutes, and I will be paid for my time. For reference, I am also allowed to bring a copy of the interview guide home. I agree to participate on the explicit understanding that my name and integrity will be protected by the researcher. I am conscious, though, that the institution cannot guarantee participants' total confidentiality. I am also aware that any data gathered for the study may be published by the researcher. I can reach the researcher at **Tel No. 0775065143 (also via WhatsApp)** if I have any queries, comments, or worries before to, during, or following the study. My consent to take part in the study is confirmed by my dated signature below.

Name of participant.....Signature/Thumbprint.....Date.....

Name of interviewer.....Signature.....Date.....

Appendix 2: Interview Guide For Teachers of Learners with Down Syndrome

Introduction

I'm Stella Ajumo, a master's student at Kyambogo University. Parental involvement in the education of children with Down syndrome in Moroto District primary schools is the subject of my research. The results of this study may influence stakeholders' attitudes and promote increased awareness of and support for the education of children with Down syndrome. Additionally, they might reaffirm that children with intellectual disabilities are entitled to receive education. My master's dissertation will benefit from the findings. Your name will not appear in the study, and any information you submit will be kept completely private and used exclusively for academic purposes.

Section A: Interviewee Profile Information

Name Sex..... Experience (In yrs.)
Qualification Area of specialty disability issues Class managed
Class of CWID.....

Section B: Comment on the support parents of children with Down syndrome give to their children.

1. How do parents help their children with Down syndrome?
2. How do you get your child or children with Down syndrome ready to include their parents in educational activities?
3. What do you consider to be the parent or family's role in their children with down syndromes education?

Section C: Importance of parental involvement in the education process of their CWID

1. How frequently do you speak with parents of kids who have intellectual disabilities?
2. In your opinion, is it necessary for parents to be involved in the education activities of your CWDS?

3. Share with me the education successes CWDS have registered as a result of your involvement in their learning.

4. How can the school handle the communication and participation difficulties while assisting parents in strengthening their role in their child's education?

Section D: Factors affecting parents' involvement in education of their CWDS

1. How do parents view their engagement in CWDS education?

2. What barriers affect parent's involvement in education of their children with Down syndrome?

3. Which strategies should schools use to improve on parents' involvement in the education of their children with Down syndrome?

END

Thank you

Appendix 3: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Parents of Learners with Down Syndrome

Objectives

1. To establish the ways in which parents are involved in supporting their children with DS in achieving academic success.
2. To examine the benefits of parental involvement in the education of their children with DS.
3. To assess the factors that hinder parents' involvement in the education of their children with DS.

Introduction

My name is Stella Ajumo, and I am pursuing a Master's degree at Kyambogo University. I am currently conducting research on the involvement of parents in the education of their children with Down syndrome in primary schools located in Moroto district. The findings of this study may influence the viewpoints of all parties involved and motivate them to acknowledge the significance of aiding the education of children with Down syndrome. It might also promote awareness that children with intellectual disabilities are entitled to an education. The results could form the basis of my master's thesis. You can be sure that any information you submit will be kept private and used only for educational purposes. The study will keep your name anonymous.

Section A: Interviewee Profile Data

Name of parent Sex of parent Age of parent
Name of CWDS..... Sex of CWDS..... Age of CWDS.....
Type of intellectual disability..... School attended by CWDS

Section B: Comment on the support parents of children with DS give to them

1. What support do you give to your children with Down syndrome?
2. What do you do to prepare your children with Down syndrome to do well?
3. How do you see the role of the family or parent in a children with DS education?

Section C: Benefits of parental involvement in the education process of their children with DS

1. How often do you communicate with the teachers about the progress of your child with Down syndrome?

2. In your opinion is it necessary for you to be involved in the education activities of your CWDS?
3. Share with me the education successes your CWDS has registered as a result of your involvement in their learning.
4. How can the school handle the communication and participation difficulties while assisting parents in strengthening their role in their child's education?

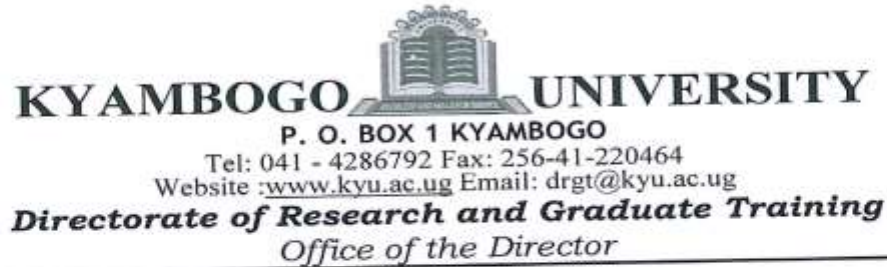
Section D: Factors affecting parents' involvement in education of their CWDS

1. How do parents view their engagement in CWDS education?
2. What barriers affect parent's involvement in education of their children with Down syndrome?
3. Which strategies should schools use to improve on parents' involvement in the education of their children with Down syndrome?

END

Thank you

Appendix 4: Introductory Letter



APPENDIX 8

Date: 04/04/2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: AJUMO STELLA

Dear Sir/Madam,

This is to introduce to you the above named student Reg: No **21/U/GMSN/13985/PE** Pursuing Master in Special Needs Education, Department of Intellectual Impairment, Kyambogo University.

She intends to carry out research on **Parental Involvement in the Education Achievement of Learners with Down syndrome** in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the award of Master in Special Needs Education.

The purpose of this letter therefore is to request you to grant her permission to carry out her study in your institution.

Any assistance rendered to her will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,


Prof. Bosco Bua
AG. DIRECTOR

