European Journal of Special Education Research
ISSN: 2501 - 2428
ISSN-L: 2501 - 2428
Available on-line at: www.oapub.org/edu

DOI: 10.46827/ejse.v12i1.6505 Volume 12 | Issue 1 | 2026

IDENTIFYING THE FACTORS INFLUENCING PARENTS' DECISIONS TO CHOOSE ENGLISH-MEDIUM SCHOOLS OVER BILINGUAL SCHOOLS IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract:
This study aimed to identify the factors influencing parents' decisions to choose English-medium schools over bilingual schools. This study applied Katz's function-of-attitude theory to understand parental attitudes and Cummins' threshold theory to highlight the significance of learning a second language. A correlational research design was employed to examine the relationship between parents' attitudes towards BLP and children's literacy performance. The study was conducted in both BLP and EIP pre-primary schools in Embakasi East constituency, Nairobi County, focusing on parents and pre-primary children. Schools were grouped into BLP and EIP using stratified sampling, and a stratified random sample was then drawn from each group. Random sampling was then used to select pre-primary children from each school, whose parents were also included in the study. Data was collected using questionnaires, interview schedules, and document analysis. The qualitative data were analyzed thematically, while the quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results were presented in tables and charts. The findings revealed that the majority of parents perceived Kiswahili as less beneficial for academic achievement and integration into the education system. In contrast, English was viewed as vital for professional growth and integration in both urban and global settings. Many parents expressed apprehension that bilingual programmes might confuse their children or hinder English learning. The study concluded that there is a tension between parents' appreciation of Kiswahili as a cultural identity and their view of English as a tool for academic and professional success, coupled

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with limited trust in public schools' capacity to deliver effective bilingual education. The study recommended that educational stakeholders, including school administrators, teachers, and policymakers, design sensitization programmes and workshops to address misconceptions about bilingual education, thereby helping reduce parents' fear and resistance to it.

Keywords: bilingual literacy programmes, bilingual schools, children's literacy skills, English-medium schools, parental attitudes

1. Introduction

The ability to communicate in two languages, either through formal instruction or from an early age, is known as bilingualism (Wu *et al.*, 2020). It encompasses speaking, listening, reading, and writing in both languages at age-appropriate levels (Grosjean, 2010). Research indicates that bilingual exposure enhances children's cognitive development, strengthens problem-solving, fosters cultural awareness, and boosts their sense of self. As a result, bilingual students often outperform their monolingual peers in these domains (Grosjean, 2015). In general, language is recognized as an essential tool for children's development. It facilitates interactions outside the classroom and supports communication and instruction between students and teachers (Wanjohi, 2014). Additionally, it gives children the chance to express themselves and develop their sociocultural identities (Cummins, 2000). Given the importance of language in shaping children's development, selecting a language programme is one of the most important decisions parents must make. These decisions are heavily influenced by parental attitudes, which reflect culturally shaped beliefs, feelings, and past experiences. In this educational context, parents' perceptions of BLPs often determine how much they support or discourage their children's engagement in bilingual literacy, which, in turn, influences their motivation and achievement (Chou, 2005; Ramos, 2007).

In today's globalized era, many parents seek early English-language education for their children, often attributing this to the belief that English provides access to international opportunities and global interactions (Yashima, 2002). In Malaysia and Indonesia, for example, parents increasingly favour English-immersion schools, even when this reduces their children's exposure to their mother tongues (Lin & Chen, 2016; Humairah *et al.*, 2019). In Egypt as well, despite Arabic being their heritage language, many parents choose international schools where instruction is conducted solely in English. Children in these settings, hence, often use Arabic less frequently, which has raised concerns about cultural identity and the loss of the local language (Mona, 2014). Similar concerns have also been noted in Tanzania, where English-medium schools are expanding rapidly. Although the country's national language is Swahili, these schools use English as the primary language of instruction from an early age, regardless of learners' proficiency in Swahili. This, in turn, poses comprehension challenges for both children and teachers, many of whom may not be adequately trained to teach in English

(Mwalongo, 2016). These examples, among many others, both globally and regionally, highlight how parental preference for English places pressure on bilingual or local-language programmes, often at the expense of heritage-language preservation and practical learning.

In Kenya, these dynamics are even more pronounced because of the country's rich linguistic diversity. With over 68 languages spoken across regions, the country reflects both the diversity and complexities of bilingual education. Kiswahili and English serve as the official working languages for legal and administrative purposes. In education, however, the question of which language to prioritize has long been debated. To address this concern, the Gachathi Commission of 1976 established a language-in-education policy. It is recommended that children begin their early schooling in the catchment-area language, gradually introducing English, and then transition fully to English by grade 4. In linguistically heterogeneous areas, referred to as peri-urban or urban areas, Kiswahili was advised for use during the initial three years of primary education (Mose, 2017).

Although this policy was rooted in the importance of early learning in a familiar language, many parents continue to push for English, which has now become the dominant medium of instruction in many schools (Nyaggah, 2016). For most, English carries prestige, is linked to better opportunities, and is seen as the pathway to global integration (Kimega, 2021). Nonetheless, research increasingly shows that BLPs offer significant benefits. These include improving children's literacy and cognitive development, preserving cultural identity, enhancing creativity, and expanding opportunities later in life (Rauenaud, 2009; Nord Anglia Education, 2025).

The concern in Kenya is that the significant rise in parental preference for EIPs is accelerating the decline of local languages. Many argue that vernacular languages are no longer relevant, and this problem is gradually extending to Kiswahili as well (Kimega, 2021). This inclination towards English is also undermining efforts to build effective BLPs, as many parents are abandoning or downplaying bilingual initiatives altogether because they are viewed as less prestigious compared to EIPs. As a result, language-in-education policies have weakened, limiting the advancement of Kiswahili and other indigenous languages and hindering children's balanced language development.

Although these policy gaps are clear, most studies in Kenya have mainly focused on children's literacy and language development, mainly in areas such as early reading acquisition, challenges, and interventions related to literacy among learners (Mwoma, 2017; Ngure, Mwoma, and Yattani, 2019; Mwoma, On'ang'a, and Mwoma, 2020). While these studies offer valuable insights into classroom-based literacy outcomes and the difficulties learners face, they overlook the role of parents' attitudes and choices in shaping language programmes. Despite existing evidence on policy challenges and growing parental preference for English, little is known about how these attitudes directly shape the demand for BLP and EIP and how that, in turn, affects children's literacy development. This gap underscores the rationale for conducting this study.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

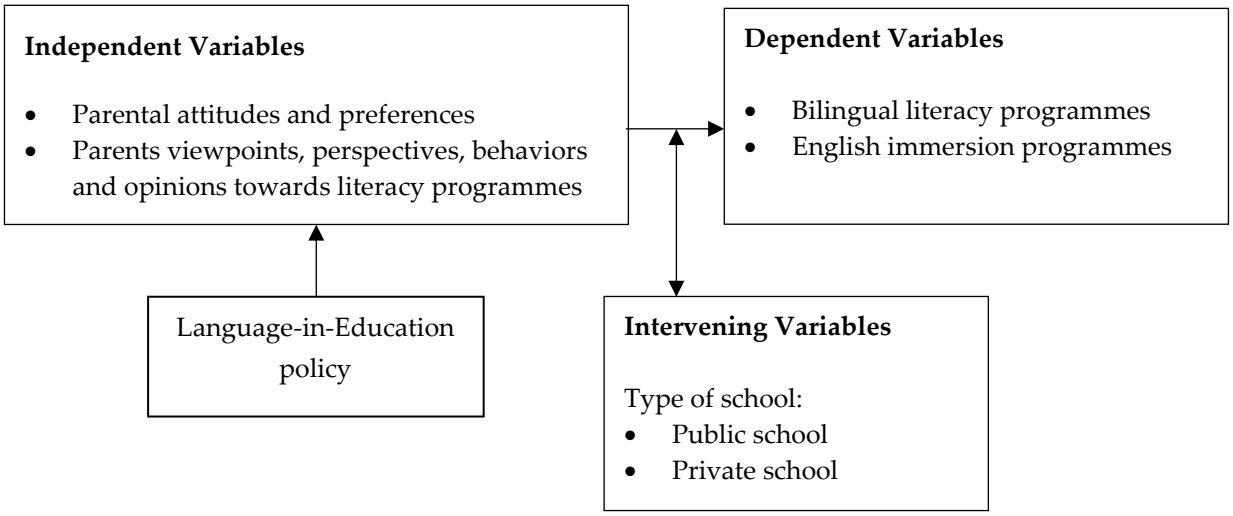
With globalization, English has become a necessity, as many nations use it as a common language for communication and economic survival. In several countries, including Kenya, the language is increasingly seen as a gateway to opportunities, opening doors to education, careers, and social mobility. Because of this perception, there has been a rapid growth of EIPs in Kenya, often at the expense of BLPs. Parents play a central role in this trend. Their beliefs about a language directly shape their children's exposure, motivation, and performance (Chou, 2005; Ramos, 2007). While some parents still value Kiswahili for its cultural and unifying role, many are gradually dismissing the language, citing that it is irrelevant for their children's academic and professional success. The 1976 language-in-education policy recommended using the catchment area language for the first three years of schooling, followed by instruction in English thereafter. However, studies show that only a few schools in Kenya currently follow this policy (Murundu, 2010). Instead, parental demand and pressure for English have pushed many schools to adopt immersion programmes from the earliest years. This has, as a result, created a disconnect between policy and practice, where bilingual education remains undervalued and under-implemented in many schools, despite its proven benefits. It is therefore important to understand why English has become more dominant than Kiswahili among Kenyan parents, leading many to favour EIP over BLP, since these parental views not only drive school demand but also influence children's literacy outcomes, which depend on the support and commitment provided at home.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to identify the factors influencing parents' decisions to choose English-medium schools over bilingual schools.

1.3 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored in Katz's functions-of-attitude and Cummins' threshold theories. Katz's theory suggests that attitudes fulfil four primary functions. First, they provide knowledge and help us understand the world, making it more predictable and manageable. Second, they allow us to express our personal values, beliefs, and identity, thus reinforcing our sense of self. Third, they support us in adapting to different situations and environments, as well as fitting into a social group. Lastly, attitudes serve an ego-defensive function by protecting our self-image and self-esteem. This theory is relevant because it examines parental attitudes towards BLP. In this context, many parents serve the adaptive function, as they hold attitudes towards children's language programmes they perceive as socially, culturally, or professionally rewarding.

The threshold theory, proposed by Jim Cummins (1996), focuses on different levels of language proficiency and their relationship to cognitive outcomes. This theory emphasizes that for optimal cognitive development, learners should have a solid foundation in at least one language before studying a second language. Cummins's theory, as explained by Pananaki (2015), identifies three threshold levels: lower, middle, and higher thresholds, which provide a detailed description of learners' varying degrees of bilingualism. This theory suggests that acquiring proficiency in the native or home language first lays the foundation for successful second-language learning and stronger cognitive outcomes. It is often applied in transitional bilingual education, where children begin learning in their home language before gradually moving into instruction in the majority language.

2.2 Parental Factors Influencing Language Programme Choice

Bilingual education is an instructional approach in which learning occurs in two languages, usually the learner's native language and a second language. Its goal is to help learners develop literacy in both languages while also supporting their cognitive, social, and cultural development (Baker & Wright, 2021). Parental attitudes play a central role in determining the language programmes their children experience. Attitudes encompass parents' behaviours, perceptions, beliefs, and opinions regarding critical aspects of their children's education and well-being (Craig, 1996). These attitudes strongly influence the language environment at home and the choices parents make when enrolling children in schools.

Many parents encourage their children to use English exclusively, believing it reflects modernity, intelligence, and social advancement (Waithaka, 2017). These parents often argue that Kiswahili and vernacular languages are irrelevant for career opportunities in the current global economy. Others fear that exposing children to multiple languages may "confuse" and hinder their learning. However, research shows that this "confusion" is a myth, as mixing words between languages is a normal stage in

multilingual development, and children naturally learn when and how to use a particular language as they grow (Byers, 2013; Kimega, 2021).

These parental attitudes reveal a deeper perception that, in Kenya, education is more about mastering English to achieve the status of being "educated" than acquiring knowledge (Waruingi, 2009). As a result, pride in Kiswahili has diminished, with the language often viewed as secondary or unnecessary compared to English. This belief has also fuelled a significant rise in private schools, including kindergartens, which offer English immersion and international curricula since 2018 (Sinnema *et al.*, 2020).

Proficiency in English is highly valued across business, academia, medicine, science, technology, banking, and law. In Kenya, this proficiency is often required in job interviews and is the dominant language in many professional sectors. This emphasis on English gives learners from EIPs a clear advantage, which explains why many parents choose such schools in hopes of securing their children's future prospects (Wecham, 2016). At the same time, global markets increasingly value multilingualism. Employees who speak multiple languages tend to adapt more easily to multicultural environments and have an edge in international opportunities (Prasinska, 2016).

A recent report by Cowling (2024) noted that over a quarter of Kenyans continue to use Kiswahili as the primary language in their households. This shows that Kiswahili continues to hold cultural and practical significance in everyday life. However, most Kenyan parents, despite being fluent in Kiswahili and their mother tongue, increasingly prefer their children to speak only English. This preference is evident in many urban households where children grow up speaking English almost exclusively, often regarding Kiswahili as a school subject rather than a language of daily communication.

3. Methods

3.1 Study Locale

The study was carried out in Embakasi East, one of the most populous sub-counties in Nairobi County. Embakasi East covers approximately 64.70 km and has five electoral wards: Embakasi, Upper Savannah, Lower Savannah, Utawala, and Mihango. The area is home to diverse people with various ethnic backgrounds, a diversity that was crucial for examining factors such as bilingual pride and cultural attitudes. The region's mixed socio-economic nature, encompassing high-, middle-, and low-income earners, provided an ideal context for analysing how parental attitudes vary with socio-economic status. Although other sub-counties in Nairobi share some of these characteristics, Embakasi East was specifically selected because it has experienced rapid population growth in recent years, resulting in a high concentration of public and private schools offering different literacy programmes. This diversity of schools enabled comparisons of BlP and EIP learners and their parents within the same locality. The area is also entirely urban, with Kiswahili serving as the primary language of everyday communication.

3.2 Study Design

A mixed-methods correlational approach was used in this study to examine how parental attitudes toward BLPs relate to children's literacy development. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were combined to gain a detailed understanding of how parents' views on language programmes affect different aspects of their children's literacy growth. This design also allowed for quantitative analysis of how these perceptions are linked to the demand for BLP and EIP schools in Embakasi. Overall, this approach offered deeper insight into the dynamics of language education programmes and their impact on children's literacy outcomes.

3.3 Study Population, Sampling Techniques, and Sample Size

The study focused on parents of children in both BLP (public) and EIP (private) schools within the Embakasi East area. These parents were integral to the study's success, as their perspectives and experiences offered valuable insights into understanding their attitudes toward BLP and EIP. Understanding these attitudes was crucial for gaining insight into how they may impact their children's literacy skills development, as well as the demand for schools offering both programmes. According to the critical period theory, a child's early years are crucial for language development. If meaningful language input is delayed beyond this stage, the child may struggle to fully master it.

The study adopted a three-step sampling approach. First, schools in Embakasi East were stratified into two categories: those offering the BLP and those offering EIP. From these groups, a stratified random sampling method was used to ensure proportional representation of both schools. Next, within the selected schools, a random sampling technique was used to choose pre-primary children from each school, ensuring fair representation. The parents of these selected children were then interviewed and asked to complete questionnaires to share their views on language learning programmes.

Embakasi East constituency comprises 245 primary schools, of which 17 are public and 228 are private. Given this disproportionate distribution, a representative sample was selected. The study included half of the public schools (8) and 5% of the private schools (11), for a total of 19 schools. From each school, two pre-primary pupils and their parents were randomly selected for data collection. In total, the study involved 38 parents and their pre-primary children. Tables 1 and 2 summarize the distribution of the sample across the two school categories.

Table 1: Strata Sample Size

Group	Population	Sample	Sampled schools
BLP (public schools)	17	0.5	8
EIP (private schools)	228	0.05	11
Total	**245**		**19**

Table 2: School Sample Size

Group	Sampled schools	Parents/pre-primary children per school	Parents/children sample size
BLP	8	2	16
EIP	11	2	22
Total	**19**		**38**

3.4 Research Instruments

Data was gathered through questionnaires, structured interviews, and document analysis. Each instrument provided distinct yet complementary insights, strengthening the reliability of the findings. Questionnaires allowed parents to express the intensity of their views and enabled the capture of more nuanced perspectives on BLP and EIP, which were analyzed quantitatively. Interviews provided richer insights that the questionnaire alone might not have captured and helped clarify any misunderstandings in the survey responses. Document analysis involved reviewing class books and progress reports to evaluate core literacy skills, including reading, writing, listening (through dictation), and speaking. The analysis provided concrete evidence of children's literacy development and allowed the researcher to examine whether parental attitudes toward language programmes influenced these outcomes. Therefore, by integrating these records with the questionnaire and interview findings, the study generated reliable data to support its conclusions.

3.5 Piloting

Pilot testing was carried out before the main data collection phase. Its goal was to check the clarity, reliability, and practicality of the research tools. The pilot helped ensure that the questionnaires and interview guides were responsive and applicable before being used with the larger population (Saxena, 2024). Two schools, one offering BLP and the other EIP, were selected for this stage. Parents of pre-primary children at these schools completed the questionnaires and participated in the interviews. This process provided useful feedback about the research environments, identified practical issues, tested assumptions, and assessed the clarity of the question areas.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of the Research Tools

Conducting a pilot study allowed the researcher to make any necessary adjustments to yield precise, sufficient data relevant to the study's objectives. Establishing reliability was vital to ensure that the research instruments consistently yielded accurate outcomes. The study applied the test-retest method during the pilot phase to check reliability. This involved administering the pre-test multiple times at selected schools to assess whether the instruments yielded consistent responses. When parents gave similar answers across both rounds, it confirmed strong test-retest reliability. To further strengthen reliability, the same procedures were followed for every measurement, with close attention to detail. For example, the interview questions were phrased uniformly for all participants, thereby reducing the risk of bias or inconsistencies.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

Questionnaires were distributed to parents of pre-primary children through their respective teachers. Parents were given sufficient time to complete the questionnaires, which the researcher later collected, ensuring that all items were addressed. Afterward, survey forms were delivered to the class teachers, who facilitated their delivery to parents or guardians. These forms included essential information, such as the date and details of upcoming interviews, scheduled to coincide with the school's parent-teacher meetings. A formal request letter was also included, asking parents to confirm their willingness to participate in the interviews. The discussions were conducted at agreed-upon times and adhered to effective interview protocols.

Once the questionnaires were collected and interviews completed, the final stage of data collection involved document analysis. This process focused on reviewing children's progress reports and literacy books to assess their performance in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. All collected data was securely stored in an encrypted, password-protected database for later analysis. Finally, insights from all data collection tools were compared to ensure consistency and establish a systematic approach for data analysis.

3.8 Data Preparation and Analysis

The data gathered from the instruments were analysed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative analysis, based on questionnaires and document analysis reports, focused on numerical data. The qualitative analysis, derived from interviews, examined the content and themes of the recorded data. The qualitative analysis aimed to identify trends in parents' attitudes towards bilingual programmes, particularly their perspectives on bilingual pride, language fluency, job opportunities, and cultural attitudes. Descriptive statistics also played an important role in the quantitative data analysis process. Mean scores were used to summarize children's literacy skills across all domains (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) in both English immersion and bilingual programmes. Quantitative analysis was also used to examine parents' views on literacy programmes and how they influenced the demand for BLP and EIP schools, providing insight into the relationship between parental perceptions and school choice. These data analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), while NVivo supported the thematic analysis.

4. Results

4.1 General Characteristics of the Sample

The findings were presented and discussed under the following sub-sections.

4.1.1 Response Rate

Table 3 summarizes the study's response rates across the sampled categories.

Table 3: Response Rate

Category	Sample Size	Participant (s)	Percentage (%)
Parents	38	35	92.11
Total	**38**	**35**	**92.11**

As shown in Table 3, of the projected sample of 38 parents, 35 participated in the study, yielding a 92.11% response rate. This level of participation was deemed sufficient to proceed with data analysis, being consistent with Mugenda and Mugenda (2009), who recommended a minimum response rate of 70% or higher for valid outcomes.

4.1.2 Parents' Gender

Parents indicated their gender as presented in Figure 2 below.

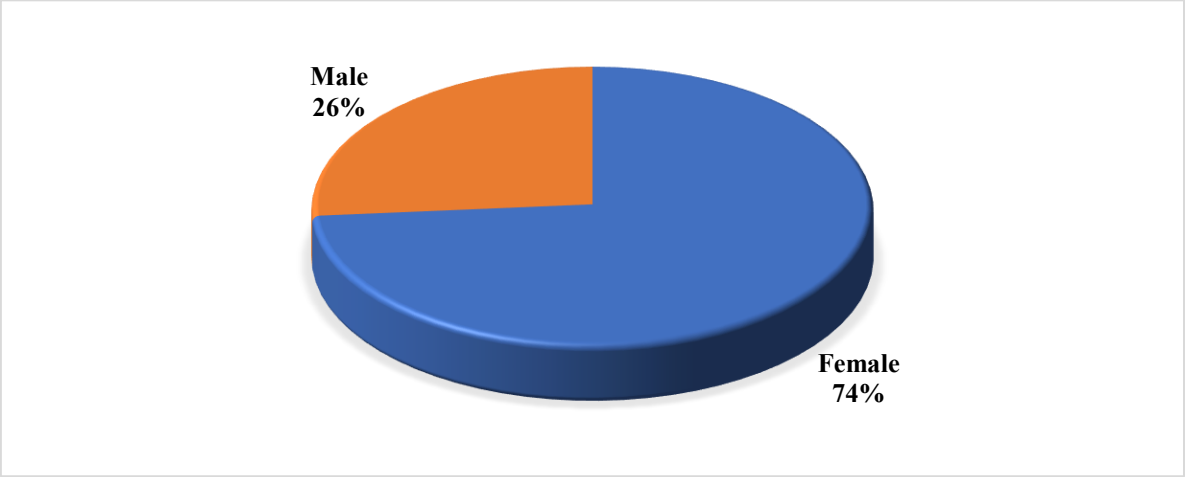


Figure 2: Distribution of Parents by Gender

Figure 2 shows that the majority of the parent respondents were female, comprising 26 (74%) of the sample, while only 9 (26%) were male. This suggests that, in many families, mothers often take the lead in supporting their children's education, either because of cultural expectations or family circumstances such as single parenthood. These findings align with a recent study that found that mothers in urban Kenyan households were significantly more involved in early childhood literacy activities than fathers (Mose *et al.*, 2023).

4.1.3 Parents' Age Range

The findings are depicted in Figure 4.2 below.

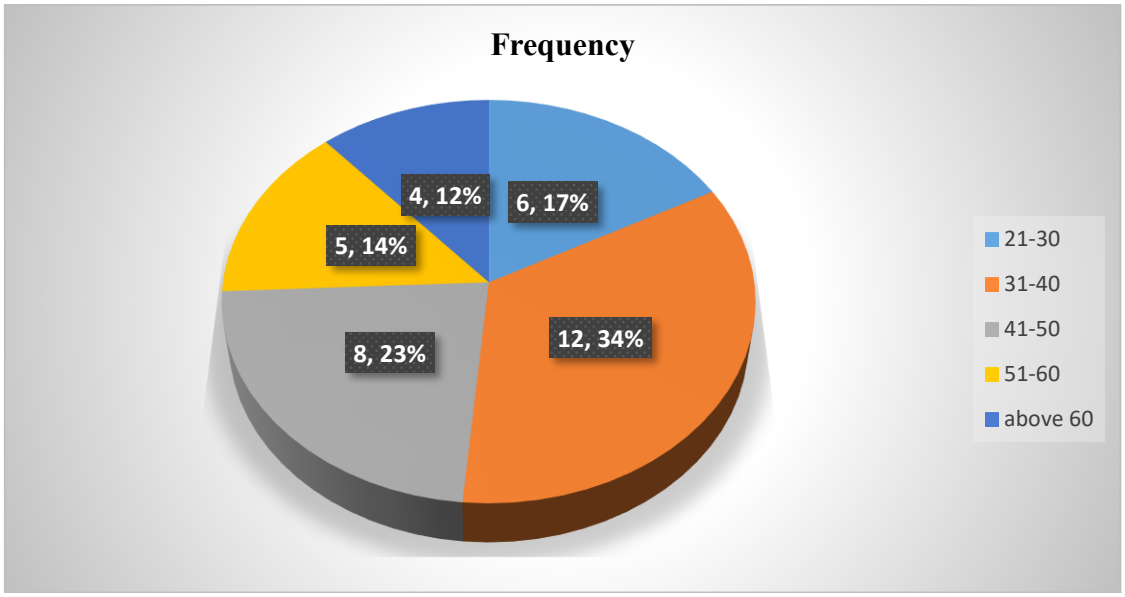


Figure 3: Parents' Age Range

Figure 3 indicates that the largest proportion of parents (34%) were aged 31-40 years, followed by 23% aged 41-50 years, 17% aged 21-30 years, 14% aged 51-60 years, and 12% aged 61+ years. This means that most participants were middle-aged, a stage often associated with active parenting and involvement in children's education. Age differences may also shape attitudes towards language programmes.

4.1.4 Parents' Level of Education

The data is presented in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4: Distribution of Parents by Level of Education

Qualifications	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Certificate	3	8.57
Diploma	4	11.43
Degree	20	57.14
Master's Degree	8	22.86
Total	**35**	**100.0**

As shown in Table 4, most parents (20, 57.14%) held a Bachelor's degree, followed by 8 (22.86%) with a Master's degree, 4 (11.43%) with a Diploma, and only 3 (8.57%) with a certificate. This suggests that most parents in this study region have attained relatively high levels of education, which may explain their strong involvement in their children's language learning. Research indicates that parents with higher levels of education often provide substantial support for children's literacy development and are more likely to value bilingual learning opportunities (Baker, 2011; Benson, 2005; Odawo, 2013).

4.2 Parents' Decision to Choose English-medium Schools over Bilingual Schools

The analysis began with an examination of the frequency distributions of various parental views derived from questionnaire responses. The findings are summarized in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Parents' Decision to Choose English-medium Schools over Bilingual Schools

Statement		F	Percentage (%)
Bilingual education is important for children's academic achievement	Strongly Disagree	4	11.4%
	Disagree	14	40%
	Neutral	2	5.7%
	Agree	11	31.4%
	Strongly Agree	4	11.4%
Learning both Kiswahili and English is important in our education system.	Strongly Disagree	3	8.6%
	Disagree	15	42.9%
	Neutral	1	2.6%
	Agree	12	34.3%
	Strongly Agree	4	11.4%
I am fluent in Kiswahili and would like my child to be fluent in the language as well.	Strongly Disagree	5	14.3%
	Disagree	10	28.6%
	Neutral	1	2.6%
	Agree	12	34.3%
	Strongly Agree	7	20%
Having a strong command of the English language is essential for excelling in the professional world.	Strongly Disagree	5	14.3%
	Disagree	6	17.1%
	Neutral	4	11.4%
	Agree	10	28.6%
	Strongly Agree	10	28.6%
English will help my child to fit in better in urban or global environments.	Strongly Disagree	3	8.6%
	Disagree	2	5.7%
	Neutral	2	5.7%
	Agree	11	31.4%
	Strongly Agree	17	48.6%
Bilingual programmes may confuse children and hinder their English learning.	Strongly Disagree	5	14.3%
	Disagree	10	28.6%
	Neutral	1	2.6%
	Agree	16	45.7%
	Strongly Agree	3	8.6%
The quality of education in public schools is declining.	Strongly Disagree	2	5.7%
	Disagree	1	2.6%
	Neutral	2	5.7%
	Agree	10	28.6%
	Strongly Agree	20	57.1%

Table 5 shows that 14 parents (40%) disagreed with the statement that bilingual education is vital for children's academic achievement, while 15 parents (42.9%) disagreed that it is essential in our education system. These findings suggest that parents harbor skepticism about its effectiveness and lack consensus on the importance of balanced bilingualism in

educational settings. At the same time, 12 parents (34.3%) also reported fluency in Kiswahili and wanted their children to attain the same. This suggests that parents continue to hold the cultural and communicative value of Kiswahili. However, many still showed a contrasting inclination toward English immersion. For instance, 10 (28.6%) parents agreed, and 10 (28.6%) strongly agreed, that having a strong command of the English language is essential for excelling in the professional world. Similarly, 11 parents (31.4%) agreed, and 17 (48.6%) strongly agreed that English would help their children fit better in urban and globalized environments. These perceptions reflect global trends in which English is viewed as crucial to higher education, international networks, and white-collar jobs, thereby shaping parents' preferences for English-immersion programmes (Crystal, 2003).

Interviews reinforced this data as one parent noted:

> *"English is a global language… It is used as the testing language in schools from lower to higher education levels."*

Suggesting that the institutional dominance of English drove their choice of school. Another parent also shared,

> *"We want our child to have a strong command of English because of the plans we have for her future, which do not align with speaking Kiswahili."*

Such comments suggest that, for some parents, personal aspirations and global orientation are more important than cultural or linguistic preservation. However, scholars caution that this emphasis may undermine local languages and contribute to cultural and linguistic erosion (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000).

Despite the preference for English, some parents acknowledged the cultural significance of Kiswahili. One parent shared:

> *"Smooth communication with family, especially with the older generation... is important, and to boost relationships with people from other cultures."*

These diverging views highlight a tension among parents between cultural preservation and global integration, demonstrating the complex role of language in shaping both personal ambitions and shared identity. Concerns about the effectiveness of bilingual programmes were also shared, with 16 parents (45.7%) agreeing that bilingual programmes may confuse children and hinder their English learning. This belief appears to discourage enrollment in bilingual schools, despite research evidence indicating that bilingual education can enhance cognitive flexibility and literacy acquisition. In addition, 20 parents (57.1%) strongly agreed that educational quality in public schools is declining, highlighting broader concerns about under-resourcing, overcrowding, and teacher shortages. Such dissatisfaction may drive parents' resistance

to educational reforms, including bilingual education, as they may view the system as incapable of handling more complex instructional demands.

Overall, the data reveal a complex interplay between cultural identity, language utility, and educational quality. Although there is an emotional and cultural appreciation for Kiswahili, parental preference for EIP schools is heavily driven by the perception that English proficiency facilitates socioeconomic progress. Furthermore, skepticism toward BLP seems rooted not in factual evidence but in distrust of institutional capabilities. These attitudes ultimately shape children's exposure to and proficiency in languages, with long-term implications for literacy development and cultural identity.

5. Conclusion

The study concludes that there is a tension between parents' appreciation of Kiswahili as a cultural identity and their view of English as a tool for academic and professional success. This is coupled with limited trust in bilingual schools' capacity to deliver effective bilingual education. This highlights the need for renewed efforts to build trust in bilingual education and promote bilingual awareness, which could help parents make more informed decisions.

Acknowledgement

I am deeply grateful to my supervisor, Professor Teresa Mwoma, for her invaluable guidance, encouragement, and thoughtful feedback throughout this journey. Your expertise and patience have helped shape my thesis, my growth, and my journey as a scholar.

To my family, I owe the deepest appreciation. To my husband Åge, thank you for your unwavering support, patience, and belief in me. To my sons, Amari and Aryan, your love and joy have been my greatest source of motivation and strength. To my siblings, I am grateful for your constant encouragement and presence, which constantly reminded me that I was never alone in this process.

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank all the participants and institutions that contributed to this research. Without your time, cooperation, and willingness to share, this work would not have been possible.

Conflict of Interest Statement
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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