The Impact of Parental Confidence in Using Technology on Parental Engagement in Children's Homeschooling during COVID-19 Lockdowns: Evidence from Ethiopia, Ghana, and Tanzania and Zanzibar

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic caused many changes to society, and many temporary changes like lockdowns and school closures have lasting effects on education and learning. School closures temporarily moved the education of children to the home where parents had to take responsibility for homeschooling. Technology became an essential tool for supporting learning during the COVID-19 lockdowns and school closures. This study examines the impact of parental confidence in using technology on parental support for children's homeschooling during the first COVID-19 lockdown, focusing on Ethiopia, Ghana, and Tanzania and Zanzibar.

Researchers and educational officers from 23 countries conducted an online survey from May to July 2020, namely, the International COVID-19 Impact on Parental Engagement Study (ICIPES) 2020. They collected data from 4,568 parents with children 6–16 years old. In African countries, 171 parents from Ethiopia, 142 parents from Ghana, and 58 parents from Tanzania participated in this study. Data were analyzed quantitatively using simple tabulation, correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression.

The results showed the number of electrical devices per household also had more households with a computer per child. Compared with the other countries, electronic devices were not widespread in three African countries. Countries where more households had internet access at home were more satisfied with internet speed. However, this tendency was not found in three African countries. Parents spending time for a child at home was shorter in three African countries than in the other countries.

There was a relationship between parental support for children's homeschooling and parental confidence in using technology in all participating countries. Furthermore, the data indicated that in almost all participating countries, parental confidence in using technology greatly impacted parental engagement in children's homeschooling even when socioeconomic status was included in the analysis. These results contribute to the discussion on education and school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic.