



EXTENT TO WHICH HOME BACKGROUND DETERMINES TRANSITION FROM PRIMARY TO SECONDARY SCHOOL IN RONGO SUB COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract:

There are still disparities in transition in different parts of the country, reflecting existence of salient factors that determine transition in education other than policy or statutes. In Rongo Sub County transition has dwindled at about 42%, being notably lower than the national, county, sub-counties' level. Specifically, the study set out to assess home background factors that affect transition of pupils from primary to secondary schools. The study employed descriptive survey research design to collect data. Data was collected from a sample size of 405 respondents. The mean ratings of 4.288, 4.276 & 3.97 from the response of secondary principals, primary school head-teachers and parents respectively show that family background was a determinant of transition of pupils from public primary to secondary schools.

Keywords: home background; education; primary; secondary; transition

1. Introduction

According to Geda *et al.* (2001), since their independence, the nations of Sub-Saharan Africa have invested heavily in education. For instance, the current state of Education in Kenya is that primary education is free. Parents are only required to take their children to school as the government meets most of the costs including paying teachers' salaries, buying books, providing stationary, school maintenance and sports equipment. This is done in recognition of the role of education in enhancing productivity, reducing poverty, increasing individual earnings, the spill over benefits to the society resulting from educating individuals, enhancing democracy and good governance.

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Limited success in early schooling can be traced to several family background characteristics. Specific factors, such as having a mother who did not complete primary school (Bianchi & McArthur, 1993), living in a single-parent home (McLanahan & Sandefur, 2004), living in a low-income or welfare-dependent household (U.S. Department of Education, 1995), and having parents who speak a language other than English in the home (Kao, 1999; Rumberger and Larson, 2007) place children at risk of not succeeding academically (Pallas, Natriello, and McDill, 2002). These broad indicators, several of which are interrelated, do not necessarily predict that a student is destined for school failure. However, students whose families have combinations of these factors are more likely to have difficulty in school. Children from poor backgrounds completing their class eight education are disproportionately from families with good family background.

Jones, Harper, & Watson (2011) note that parents' education and family interaction patterns during childhood linked more directly to the child's developing academic success and achievement - oriented attitudes. In the general social learning and social - cognitive behaviour is shaped in part through observational and direct learning experiences. Those experiences lead to the formation of internalized cognitive scripts, values, and beliefs that guide and maintain behaviour over time (Anderson & Broche-Due, 2003).

Simion (2015) targeting 31 secondary school principals and 5 education officers in Kuria West Sub County sought to establish strategies to improve transition rate to secondary schools for girls in primary schools in Kuria West Sub County. He collected both primary and secondary data. He analysed the qualitative data thematically by the research questions while quantitative data descriptively. The study results showed that costs reduction, school infrastructure, quality of education and advocacy and awareness campaigns are factors that have a great influence on transition rates of girls from primary schools to secondary schools.

Access to education in Kenya has not been evenly distributed across sexes, regions and social groups (Ali, C. 2007). According to EFA monitoring Report (2012), Kenya is one of the countries where the secondary enrolment has significantly increased together with Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Congo, Niger, Tanzania among others. The government of Kenya, in 2003, launched Free Primary Education (FPE) which was followed by Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) in 2008. The developments resulting in the implementation of free basic education began in 2003, during the National Conference on Education and Training. However, regional disparities have continued to prevail in transition with some regions showing drastic drops in their transition.

Data on Table 1 shows that transition from primary to secondary schools in Rongo Sub County has been below that of the National average of 70.30. It has also remained at more or less at 48.2% despite the increase in national transition. This suggests that there are persistent determinants in access to secondary education in the Sub County, despite rapid increases in form enrolments in recent years. There are still concerns about who accesses to secondary schools in Kenya, despite increases in overall numbers.

Table 1: National and Rongo Sub County Transition Rates from 2013 to 2016

Year	Percentage (Nationally)	Percentage
2013	70.34%	48.20%
2014	71.45%	48.20%
2015	71.98%	48.10%
2016	73.58%	48.30%

Source: County Director of Education, Migori County.

Table 2: Transition in Rongo Sub County and the neighboring Sub-Counties

No.	Sub County	2013	2014	2015	2016
1.	Awendo	48.95	49.15	49.05	49.56
2.	Migori	49.01	50.15	49.85	49.54
3.	Rongo	48.20	48.20	48.10	48.30
4.	Uriri	48.88	48.95	49.01	50.25
5.	National	70.34	71.45	71.95	73.58

Source: County Director of Education, Migori County.

Data on Table 2 show that transitions are lower from public primary schools to secondary schools in Rongo Sub County compared to her neighbors. Rongo is one of the sub counties in Migori County with an average transition of 48.2% compared to the neighboring sub counties whose combined average is 49.39. This therefore calls for a study to identify the actual causative factors

2. Literature Review

One of the most important factors in primary secondary transition is pupil's home background. In Nigeria, a study has shown that parents leave homes very early in the morning and come back at dust weary to attend to their children's academics or social well-being because of their professions (World Bank, 2003). This always continues and forms the life pattern of such families. Home environment has more influence on transition than intelligence. It is true that home is the origin of a child, hence the origin of performance (Wagacha, 2009). Home based factors are associated to student's family background, their surroundings, peers, religion, among others. On family social class, Wagacha (2009) discovered a relationship between the family's social classes to children's learning experiences. He found that lower class families have lower aspirations for their children than upper class families; hence the lower-class families do not motivate their children to take interest in their school work. It was also noted that child labor is a rampant practice. This is a big contributor to poor performance and transition as children are drawn to different interests outside the school. Child labor leads to increase in poor KCPE performance in primary schools (Wagacha, 2009).

Mathia (2015) has shown that pupils from more educated parents are more likely to be enrolled and more likely to progress further through education. WHO, (2011) found that, mother's education was significantly related to children's performance in school compared to children whose mothers were less educated. Werunga *et al.*, (2011) found

that home chores contribute to pupils' failure in academic performance and transition to the next level of schooling. The reasons are that the greater demand made on pupils by their families in connection with household duties the more time it consumes for the learners, hence lead to absenteeism and poor performance in school. Basic economic activities like sand harvesting affect boys' while household chores often affect girls' opportunities to learn by taking away valuable time that they would spend on their education (UNICEF, 2007).

In Kenya macro-economic analysis indicate that about 50% of Kenyans live below the poverty line and therefore children are unable to access basic education (Republic of Kenya, 2003). Many parents especially in rural areas and semi-arid regions and slums in urban centres have been unable to provide their children with necessary educational requirements. In such circumstances children whose parents cannot afford the costs of school uniforms and other expenses tend to be absent in schools and finally drop out of schools. Most girls and boys from poor families spend substantial amount of time running household chores such as caring for siblings, fetching water, collecting firewood and in some cases cooking at home (World Bank, 2004; UNESCO, 2004).

The relationship between socio-economic background and educational outcomes has been well documented internationally. Pupils from lower income and minority ethnic groups have been found to be potentially more at risk of not making a successful transition to post-primary school (Gutman & Midgley, 2000). Apart from socio economic characteristics parental support has been found to be a crucial factor in facilitating children's transition into post primary education (Anderson *et al.*, 2000). The nature of authority structures within the family also influences the transition process. According to Eccles *et al.*, (2013) and Lord *et al.*, (2014) young people who report to democratic family environment tend to have higher self-esteem and more successful adjustment to the new school: the quality of the affective relationship in providing opportunities for their children outside of the home. Parents felt that transfer was a time of significance for their children but differed in their ability to mobilize resources to support children through this challenging time.

As highlighted in the various studies, this study investigated the home background factors that affect transition of pupils from primary to secondary schools in Rongo Sub County. The foregoing makes it imperative to have an investigation on salient factors that influence transition in the Sub County so that solutions to this trend could be established. This study therefore focused on the perceptions of determinants of transition of pupils from public primary to secondary schools in Rongo Sub County. Previous research on factors that cause transition in Rongo is on socio-economic factors. None has given a comprehensive assessment of home background as a determinant of transition from public primary to secondary schools.

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Research design is the research process that involves the overall assumptions of the research to the method of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2009). This study will adopt a descriptive research design. A descriptive research design determines and reports the way things are (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008). The design has been as it portrays the characteristics of a population fully (Chandran, 2004). Creswell (2003) observes that a descriptive research design is used when data are collected to describe persons, organizations, settings or phenomena. The design also has enough provision for protection of bias and maximized reliability (Kothari, 2008).

3.2 Area of the Study

The study was carried out in Rongo Sub County, Kenya. Rongo Sub County was carved out of the larger Migori District and forms one of the 7 Sub Counties. Its borders Gucha to the East, Awendo to the South and Homa Bay to the West and has a population of 85,066 as at the 2009 national population census with 12,355 in the urban core (2009 National Census). With a land area of 2085.9 km², its economy revolves around agriculture with residents growing sugarcane, tobacco, maize, beans, coffee, groundnuts and vegetable. Livestock farming is also undertaken in small scale basis. With some mineral resources available in the Sub County, there is a nascent but growing mining industry particularly gold mining that many residents have taken up.

3.3 Population of the Study

The target population for the study will comprise of 1 SQASO, 68 primary and 29 secondary head-teachers, 1335 class eight parents whose children did not transit to secondary school, from Rongo Sub County.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample is subset of a population Mugenda & Mugenda, (2008). 1 SQASO, 66 primary and 27 secondary head-teachers were selected using saturated sampling, and a sample of 308 class eight parents whose children did not transit to secondary school using Yamane formula (1967).

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

This study used questionnaires, to collect data. Orodho (2005) states that questionnaire is a written set of questions that are cheap to administer to respondents scattered over a large area and convenient for collecting information from a large population within a short space of time. The questionnaire has one section seeking be to establish the effect of the determinant of transition rates from primary to secondary school in Rongo Sub County.

4. Results and Discussion

The study sought to establish how home background determine transition from primary to secondary schools in Rongo Sub County.

4.1 Students Home Background (Secondary Schools Principals' Response)

The respondents were asked numerous questions. Table 3 show details of their response.

Table 3: Students Home Background (Secondary Principals' Response)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Total	M	S.D.	
Parents with stable economic backgrounds motivates their children to attend educational programs	1 (3)	2 (7)	3 (10)	10 (33.3)	14 (46.7)	30 (100)	4.26	0.918	
Pupils from a stable background have got higher self-esteem	0	5 (17)	7 (23)	10 (33.3)	8 (26.7)	30 (100)	4.11	0.860	
Parents with a stable economic backgrounds are able to mobilize resources to support children during challenging time.	1 (3)	2 (7)	3 (10)	10 (33.3)	14 (46.7)	30 (100)	4.97	6.012	
Parents having a stable economic background support their child's adjustment to the new school	1 (3)	2 (7)	3 (10)	10 (33.3)	14 (46.7)	30 (100)	3.93	1.026	
Pupils home background influence their transition from primary to secondary school	3 (10)	1 (3)	2 (7)	10 (33.3)	14 (46.7)	30 (100)	4.17	1.021	
Mean							4.288		

Source: Field Data.

The study shows that parents with stable economic backgrounds motivate their children to attend educational programs. 46.7% of head-teachers from secondary schools very strongly agreed while 33.3% strongly agreed. This amounts to 80% of head-teachers agreed that parents from good economic background supports students' education. However about 13% moderately agreed or disagreed that parents from stable economic background supported education. The mean rating was 4.26. The interpretation was that parents from high economic background were effective in supporting education of students. This is consistent with the findings of Kean (2005), who suggested that more highly educated parents actively encourage their children to develop higher expectations of their own. He further pointed out that students perform better in school if their parents as well as mothers are actively involved in their education. The home environment provides environment for learning and is an element of the basics for students' life that can affect academic performance. Providing opportunities to learn outside the school helps to facilitate student's success in the school environment as reported by the University of Minnesota extension.

Pupils with stable economic backgrounds have got higher self-esteem. 26.7% of head-teachers from secondary schools very strongly agreed while 33.3% strongly agreed.

This amounts to 60% of head-teachers agreed that parents with stable economic backgrounds supports students' self-esteem. However about 40% moderately agreed or disagreed that parents from good economic background help students' self-esteem. The mean rating was 4.11. The interpretation was that parents with stable economic background were highly effective in supporting self- esteem of students. Nalukwago (1995) identified the influence of parents' attitude, social economic background, cultural attitudes which affect the performance of students in Uganda and pointed out the role of parents like catering for children's school needs like textbooks, exercise books, uniforms and paying fees. According to (Ajira et al., 2007), the state of the home affects the individual since the parents are the first socializing agents in an individual's life. This is because the family background and the context of the child affect her reaction to life situations and his level of performance.

Parents with stable economic backgrounds are able to mobilize resources to support children during challenging time. 46.7% of head-teachers from secondary schools very strongly agreed while 33.3% strongly agreed. This amounts to 80% of head-teachers agreed that parents with a stable economic background mobilizes resources to support children's education. However about 20% moderately agreed or disagreed that parents with a stable economic background supported mobilization of resources for education. The mean rating was 4.97. The interpretation was that parents with a stable economic background were very effective in resource mobilization and supporting education of students during challenging times.

Parents with stable economic backgrounds support their child's adjustment to the new school. 46.7% of head-teachers from secondary schools very strongly agreed while 33.3% strongly agreed. This amounts to 80% of head-teachers agreed that parents from well up background supports students' adjustments to new schools. However about 20% moderately agreed or disagreed that parents with good economic background supported adjusted of their students in new school. The mean rating was 3.93%. The interpretation was that parents with a stable economic background were highly effective in supporting students adjusted to new schools.

Pupils home background influence pupils' transition from primary to secondary school. 46.7% of head-teachers from secondary schools very strongly agreed while 33.3% strongly agreed. This amounts to 80% of head-teachers agreed that pupils home background influence transition from primary to secondary. However, about 20% moderately agreed or disagreed. The mean rating was 4.17. The interpretation was that pupils' home background had influence on pupils' transition from primary to secondary schools. These findings were consistent with the belief of Uwaifo (2008) asserts that parents and the individuals experience at home play a tremendous role in making the child what he or she is.

In conclusion, the secondary schools principal average mean rating of 4.288 indicate that pupils home background had an effect on the transition rates from primary to secondary schools. However this finding contradict the findings of Birtch et al. (2006) analyses that the relationship between parental involvement and students' academic

achievement and states that family background tend to be a negative association with the academic success whereas parental engagement like volunteering in most cases should be positive correlations. Similarly, the relations between families and academic achievement also need to consider children’s family structure. A mother does homework with her children and it is generally acknowledged that family environment is the most powerful influence in determining the child’s academic motivation and achievement.

4.2 Pupils Home Background (Primary Head-teachers Response)

Table 4 shows response from primary school head-teachers.

Table 4: Students Home Background (Primary Head-teachers’ Response)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S. D
Parents with a stable economic background motivates their children to attend educational programs	1 (1.4)	2 (2.9)	9 (12.9)	22 (32.9)	32 (48.6)	4.97	6.012
Pupils from stable economic background have got higher self-esteem	2 (2.9)	4 (5.7)	14 (21.4)	25 (37.1)	21 (32.9)	3.91	1.018
Parents with a stable economic background are able to mobilize resources to support children during challenging time.	2 (2.9)	1 (1.4)	11 (15.7)	22 (32.9)	30 (45.7)	4.14	1.026
Parents stable economic backgrounds support their child’s adjustment to the new school	0 (0.0)	4 (5.8)	13 (20.3)	21 (31.9)	28 (42.0)	4.10	0.926
Pupils home background influence pupils’ transition from primary to secondary school	1 (1.4)	0 (0.0)	13 (18.6)	22 (31.4)	30 (48.6)	4.26	0.863
Mean						4.276	

Parents with stable economic backgrounds motivates their children to attend educational programs. This is true from the perspectives of the head-teachers in primary school. 48.6% of primary head-teachers from secondary schools very strongly agreed while 32.9% strongly agreed. This amounts to 81.5% of primary head-teachers agreed that parents from good economic background supports students’ education. However about 4.3% moderately agreed or disagreed that parents with stable economic backgrounds supported education. The mean rating was 4.97. The interpretation was that parents from high economic background were effective in supporting education of pupils in primary schools.

Pupils from stable economic backgrounds have got higher self-esteem. 32.9% of head-teachers from primary schools very strongly agreed while 37.1% strongly agreed. This amounts to 70% of headteachers agreed that parents from well up background supports students’ adjustments to new schools. However, about 21.4% moderately agreed or disagreed that parents from good economic background supported adjusted of

their students in new school. The mean rating was 3.91%. The interpretation was that parents from well economic background were highly effective in supporting students adjusted to new schools. These findings are consistent with the opinion of Wolpin (2006), who used the exogenous variation in family background to determine the causal relationship between family background and the child's academic performance. (Ichado, 2008) concluded that the environment in which children come from can greatly influence his or her performance at school since the family lays the psychological moral and spiritual foundations of the child. Parents from good economic background are able to mobilize resources to support children during challenging time. 45.7% of head-teachers from primary schools very strongly agreed while 32.9% strongly agreed. This amounts to 78.6% of primary head-teachers agreed that parents with a stable economic background mobilizes resources to support children's education. However about 15.7% moderately agreed or disagreed that parents with a stable economic background supported mobilization of resources for education. The mean rating was 4.14. The interpretation was that parents with a stable economic background were very effective in resource mobilization and supporting education of students during challenging times.

Parents with a stable economic background support their child's adjustment to the new school. 42% of head-teachers from primary schools very strongly agreed while 31.9% strongly agreed. This amounts to 73.9% of primary head-teachers agreed that parents from well up background supports students' adjustments to new schools. However, about 20.3% moderately agreed or disagreed that parents with a stable economic background supported adjusted of their students in new school. The mean rating was 4.10%. The interpretation was that parents with a stable economic background were highly effective in supporting students adjusted to new schools. Becker (2005) explained the empirical regularity that families with higher income have fewer children. He said that as income raises individuals may choose to increase the average quality and reduce quantity while correlation between income and family size is clear.

Pupils home background influence pupils' transition from primary to secondary school. 48.6% of head-teachers from primary schools very strongly agreed while 31.4% strongly agreed. This amounts to 80% of primary head-teachers agreed that pupils home background influence pupils' transition from primary to secondary school. However about 20% moderately agreed or disagreed that pupils home background had an influence on pupils' transition from primary to secondary schools. The mean rating was 3.93%. The interpretation was that pupils home background influence pupils transition rate from primary to secondary school. These findings are consistent with findings of Bernistuern (2008), who stated that high income enables parents to give their children the advantages of that money can buy.

According to Jenks (2008), many students from low income homes are kept away or sent out from schools or excluded from certain activities or lack of money to provide the prescribed equipment or materials. They suffer from stigma of being isolated during break, meals because of poverty.

In conclusion, the primary schools head-teacher average mean rating of 4.276 indicate that pupils home background had high effect on the transition rates from primary to secondary schools.

4.3 Parents Response on Students Home Background

Parents living within the school community were also given questionnaire to seek their opinion on various aspects affecting students home background in relation to academic performance.

Table 5: Students Home Background (Parents Response)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D
Parents with a stable economic background motivates their children to attend educational programs	10 (3)	12 (4)	40 (13.1)	90 (29.3)	156 (50.5)	4.20	1.020
Pupils from stable economic backgrounds have got higher self-esteem	0 (0)	6 (2)	94 (30.6)	119 (38.8)	88 (28.6)	3.94	0.823
Parents with a stable economic background are able to mobilize resources to support children during challenging time	0 (0)	6 (2)	59 (19.2)	121 (39.4)	121 (39.4)	4.16	0.804
Parents with a stable economic background support their child's adjustment to the new school	6 (2)	12 (4)	107 (34.7)	101 (32.7)	82 (26.5)	3.78	0.958
Pupils home background influence pupils' transition rates from primary to secondary	0 (0)	6 (2)	90 (29.3)	115 (37.4)	97 (31)	3.79	0.940
Mean						3.974	

Parents with stable economic backgrounds motivates their children to attend educational programs. 50.5% of parents very strongly agreed while 29.3% strongly agreed and 13.1% agreed. This amounts to 92.9% of parents who agreed that pupils home background influence pupils' transition from primary to secondary school. However, about 7% disagreed or strongly disagreed that pupils home background had an influence on pupils' transition from primary to secondary schools. The mean rating was 4.20%. The interpretation was that pupils home background had high effect on pupils' transition from primary to secondary school.

According to parents, pupils from stable economic backgrounds have got higher self-esteem. 28.6% of parents very strongly agreed while 38.8% strongly agreed and 30.6% agreed. This amounts to 98% of parents who agreed that pupils from good background have got higher self-esteem. And this has effect on transition from primary to secondary

school. However about 2% disagreed that pupils good background had no effect on pupils' transition from primary to secondary schools. The mean rating was 3.94%.

Parents with stable economic backgrounds are able to mobilize resources to support children during challenging time. 39.4% of parents very strongly agreed while 39.4% strongly agreed and 19.2% agreed. This amounts to 98% of parents agreed that pupils' home background and especially those from stable economic background are able to mobilize resources to support their children education during challenging times. This also has effect on transition from primary to secondary. However, about 2% disagreed that pupils' strong economic home background had an effect on pupils' transition from primary to secondary schools and ability to mobilize resources. The mean rating was 4.16%. The interpretation was that pupils' strong economic backgrounds had very high effect on pupils' transition from primary to secondary school. Becker (2005) explained the empirical regularity that families with higher income have fewer children. He said that as income raises individuals may choose to increase the average quality and reduce quantity while correlation between income and family size is clear.

The study shows that parents with stable economic backgrounds support their children's adjustment to the new school. 26.5% of parents very strongly agreed while 32.7% strongly agreed and 34.7% agreed. This amounts to 93.9% of parents who agreed that pupils well up home background supports pupils' transition from primary to secondary school through child's adjustment to new school. However about 6.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed that pupils from stable economic backgrounds had effect on pupils' transition from primary to secondary schools and pupils' adjustment to new school life. The mean rating was 3.78%. The interpretation was that pupils' from economically stable home backgrounds had high effect on pupils' transition from primary to secondary school and adjustment to new school. The findings are also consistent with the findings of Dubey (2011), who believes that in terms of material circumstances or environmental, parents of the relatively high class are able to supply their children with more opportunities to learn those things which will aid their learning in school.

The study also revealed that parents are also in agreement that Pupils home background influence pupils' transition rates from primary to secondary school. 25.3% of parents very strongly agreed while 37.4% strongly agreed and 29.3% agreed. This amounts to 92% of parents who agreed that pupils' home background had effect on pupils' transition from primary to secondary school. However about 8.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed that pupils home background had an effect on pupils' transition from primary to secondary schools. The mean rating was 3.79%. The interpretation was that pupils home background had high effect on pupils' transition from primary to secondary school.

In conclusion, the parents of pupils in primary school average mean rating of 3.97 indicate that pupils home background had an effect on the transition rates from primary to secondary schools.

5. Conclusion

The secondary schools principal average mean rating of 4.288 indicate that pupils home background had an effect on the transition rates from primary to secondary schools. The Primary schools head-teacher average mean rating of 4.276 indicate that pupils home background had high effect on the transition rates from primary to secondary schools. The parents of pupils in primary school average mean rating of 3.97 indicate that pupils home background had an effect on the transition rates from primary to secondary schools. The findings are consistent with the findings of Ogulu (2004), who states that the high socio-economic status parents are able to provide their children with books and toys to encourage them in their various learning activities at home. Drudy & Lynch (2013) stated that a high income enables parents to give their children the advantages of that money can buy. A high-income parent provides their children with household equipment like educative video, text books, good schools which can equip them in academic performance. However this finding contradict the findings of Birtch et al. (2006), analyses that the relationship between parental involvement and students' academic achievement and states that family background tend to be a negative association with the academic success whereas parental engagement like volunteering in most cases should be positive correlations. Similarly, the relations between families and academic achievement also need to consider children's family structure. A mother does homework with her children and it is generally acknowledged that family environment is the most powerful influence in determining the child's academic motivation and achievement.

6. Recommendations

There should be more resource mobilization to support children who may be from unstable economic background; There is need to improve on economic capacity of parents and guardians; Enhance guidance and counselling in schools to help children build their self-esteem; school administrators can also enhance more inspirational talk sessions in their schools to help children identify with successful role models that can motivate them; there is need for improved social structures in the homes to help motivate children and make the build their self-esteem.

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