

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction

The issue of parent involvement in education is important as it relates to education, which is the most powerful tool for producing a creative and successful generation. Obligations and responsibilities of parents towards their children are not restricted to the provision of food, clothing and shelter, but there are many other duties that rest on both parents. Some of the most important duties of parents are related to the education of their children.

There are many occasions where the holy Quran and Sunnah state the important role of parents in educating their children. For instance, it is stated in the Surah Luqman the story of Luqman Alhakim where he gave his son very useful advices in which they are related to many aspects of life (Al-Quran. Luqman 31: 12-19). In this story Allah praised the way that Luqman Alhakim offered advice to his son, which can be a very good example for every parent in commanding good and forbidding evil, which is the core of education.

Parental involvement in education is not a new issue; the roots of the current partnership practices can be traced as far back as prehistoric times. Parents have been the caregivers and nurturers of their children. Parents also have influenced their children's moral development by teaching social skills and moral values (Derrick-Lewis, 2001). Furthermore, Epstein states some important roles played by parents and religious leaders in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and how they controlled the actions of schools. They were responsible for hiring, firing school staff, and determining school calendar. These facts

prove that the issue of parental involvement in education is not a new phenomena (Epstein, 1986).

There is almost a complete certainty among educators that it is impossible to hand over the responsibility of educating children to the school alone or to the teachers. This is because educating children is a societal responsibility where all parties concerned in the educational processes are expected to share the obligation. Successful learning and motivation to learn are obtained through social interaction, which take place in the context of social relationships. Moreover, home and school are two important environments where children are socialized and educated (Epstein, 1986).

Based on these shared responsibilities, goals and interests, the cooperation and coordination of the two institutions are considered the most effective way to achieve the shared goals of family and school. Furthermore, without the collaboration with all those parties who can play important roles in educating children, the desired results might not be achieved in the most effective and efficient way. This is because schools cannot exist independently and work separately for the purpose they serve in the society (Derrick-Lewis, 2001). Therefore, many countries have stated clearly rules and regulations that entitle parents to involve in their children's education at the same time oblige school managers to establish a framework in which parents and schools can work together (Amin, 2015). For instance, the United States of America also has created laws that put family engagement at the forefront of national policy. The laws required schools to inform parents on how they can be involved in their children's education. These laws forced many schools who were receiving federal fund to change their practices to ensure that they are in compliance with the new rules (Barnyak, & McNelly, 2009). Epstein and colleagues (2002) have confirmed

that the educational policies in the United States have been increasingly including the goals and laws for school, family and community partnerships and sometimes the laws were going beyond general instructions about parental involvement to include explicit statements for leadership to assist all schools to develop comprehensive partnership programs that benefit all students (Epstein et al., 2002).

Departing from the fact that parental involvement increases academic achievement; the Swedish government enacted a legislative framework for parental involvement that requires families and schools to have a close relationship to create better conditions for the development and learning of young persons. The legislation also specified the responsibilities of school leaders to work with parents in developing both the curriculum contents and school activities. Furthermore, school leaders are required in this legislation to invite parents in school meetings to take their wishes as the starting point and inform them regularly on the developmental needs and study outcomes (Mohamoudd, 2013).

In the last few decades, the major concern of educators has been on how to involve parents in the educational system. Owing to this, several attempts have been made by different countries in the world to allocate budgets and other forms of resources so as to facilitate the participation of parents in the education of their children. For instance, the Minister of Education of the Canadian province of Ontario has established a Parent Engagement Office (PEO) to support parent involvement initiatives across school districts in the province. These initiatives were developed to promote learning opportunities and reduce achievement gaps among students by allowing all stakeholders to contribute (Dor, 2013).

According to Epstein and co-authors (2002), the field has been strengthened with the support given by federal and state policies. Many states in the United States of America have prepared policies and provided training to guide schools in developing systematic connections with families and communities. These policies make the implementation of parental involvement as a condition for schools to qualify or maintain state funding. Educational leaders make school visits to evaluate the progress of partnership practices. Based on these evaluations, schools are recognized and rewarded to motivate them to initiate and improve more partnership projects (Epstein et al., 2002).

In this regard, the roles of schools are no longer limited to the traditional roles of teaching children knowledge in classrooms. Hence, schools are expected to change those traditional roles to new roles that allow parents to practice their legal rights and contribute to the education of their children. Schools are also required to build bridges of cooperation that connect families and schools and encourage parent involvement by stating clearly the areas and the ways in which parents should be involved (Muwana, 2014).

Scholars also have developed frameworks, models, and theories relating to the issues of parental involvement. For instance, Epstein (1997) developed a framework of six types of involvement that could be used as a guide to meet the needs of students; parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Epstein also (1995) developed overlapping spheres of influence that indicate the positive effects of family-school collaboration on children's education. This concept illustrates a common mission that home, school, and community have in children's learning and development. More explanation of the six types of parental involvement, the

overlapping spheres of influence, and other models is presented in the literature review, particularly in theoretical framework section.

It is believed that a well implemented parental involvement is one of the best remedies for the difficulties facing by schools in the process of teaching children. According to Abdulrab Nawab (2012) parents can play essential roles in supporting their children to overcome many challenges. Parents' involvement and encouragement help children to learn faster, easier, and earn higher grades. This is because such learning usually occurs directly and without barriers. Moreover, parents' involvement also benefits schools by enhancing the learning and teaching practices. Graue (1999) states the importance of the collaboration between parents and teachers:

Families send children to school, where they hope their children will become learners with the tools they need to succeed in life. Schools take children and send them back to their families, where they assume the families will provide the support that children need to grow and learn. (Graue, 1999)

Somali parents have a glorious history in supporting children's education and working with the teachers of their children. The current president of Somalia, Hassan Mohamoud (2013), praised the historical role of Somali parents in education in his speech at the launching of the "Go 2 school" initiative. He mentioned the great contributions and practices of Somali parents towards education. In the past, Somali parents were cultivating teacher's farm. They were also collecting cattle from families of students for teachers in order to help teachers do their job better and enable them to give more time for teaching. Moreover, he expected parents and local communities to play their historical roles and to support the "Go 2 school" initiatives (Hassan, 2013).

The role of Somali parents towards education was not restricted to the past alone, they also played prominent and significant roles in education particularly when the central government of Somalia collapsed in 1991 and schools were closed. Somali parents took charge of providing education and hoped for better future by renovating and reviving abandoned schools (Nadeem, 2013). Abdullahi Abdinoor (2008) explains the significant role of Somali parents in education after the collapse of the Somali government where the Somali society realized that it is necessary to go back to the traditional role of managing *dugsi* (Quranic schools). It was easy for the Somali society to play such role as they have been taking care of Quranic schools for centuries without government involvement. Abdullahi Abdinoor states several reasons that emphasize the usefulness of the community role in the context of statelessness. The involvement of the community was vital for law enforcement, school financing, and conflict resolutions (Abdullahi Abdinoor, 2008).

Abdullahi Abdinoor (2008) developed two models that compare the role of different players in education before and after the collapse of Somali state. The first model illustrates the situation of education and the role each actor before state collapse, while the second model relates to the situation of education after the collapse and how various actors affected education. The models showed significant involvement the community in Quranic schools and modern schools after the collapse of state. However, the role of the community was limited to the Quranic schools before the civil war. The models also showed the dominant role of state in education before the collapse. However, this dominant role was confronted with total absence of any role for the state in education after the collapse of the government. NGOs and international aid agencies had no role in the education of Somalia before the

civil war, but become an important player in the education after the civil war and supported mainly modern schools.

figure 1. 1 Various Actors In Education Before The State Collapse (Adapted From Abdullahi Abdinoor, 2008)

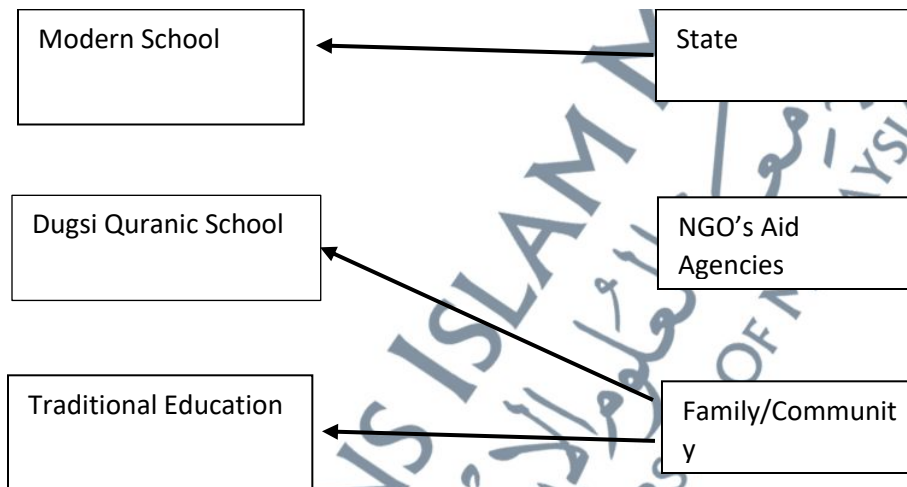
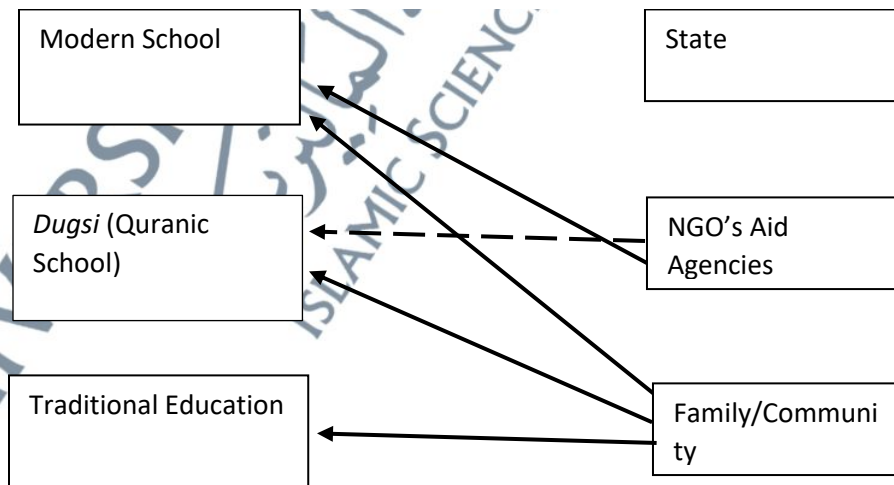


Figure 1. 2 Various Actors In Education After The State Collapse (Adapted From Abdullahi Abdinoor, 2008)



Somali parents have committed themselves to act as government in providing all the necessary materials for the schools to work. Some of them have donated their time to teach children and others clean up the school after work. Other parents donated money or land for school to be built. Some of the important roles that parents have been performing include organizing graduation and new academic year ceremonies. It seems that these various roles by parents have continued until now even with the presence of federal government of Somalia, which confirms the keenness of Somali parents to educate their children (Ruhl, 2013).

Many factors motivated Somali parents to play these important roles in the education of their children. One of these is the keen interest they have for education. According to the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare (n.d), most of Somali parents consider education as one of the basic needs of children, such as food and shelter. Moreover, the tasks of schools were not limited to teaching children lessons only particularly to those who grew up in war zone, but schools were considered “as a vehicle that can help restore a sense of normality and bring a message of calm and peace to children affected by war” (Cassanelli & Farah Sheikh, 2007:116).

The past and current commitment of Somali parents towards education shows how these parents are concerned about their children’s education and their willingness to be involved in their children’s education. Nevertheless, there are many researches that examined the involvement of Somali parents living in western countries. Many of these studies showed low levels of involvement of Somali parents in their children’s education. These studies have also disclosed the difficulties that Somali people faced in foreign

countries, which might be the possible barriers that prevented these parents to involve in their children's education successfully.

Abdul Diriye (2006) studied underachievement Somali children in the United Kingdom. He found that lack of parent involvement was the main reason for the low levels of academic achievement and poor grades. Abdul Diriye has pointed out the barriers that hindered the involvement of these parents in education. Somali parents in the United Kingdom had difficulties to understand how school systems work. Moreover, lack of English proficiency prevented these parents to assist their children in their studies. Low level of education was another barrier "It is here that the Somali children whose parents may have limited formal education and means of support are excluded by the system" (Abdul Diriy, 2006).

In 2010, Fowzia Mohamed conducted a study in Canada to examine the experiences of Somali parents whose children were placed in special education. According to Fowzia, special education graduates can only get unskilled jobs, poorly paid, or might remain unemployed in worst cases. Somali parents in Canada felt unable to negotiate with school personnel regarding their child's placement in special education. The inability to resist the placement in special education was caused by lack of English proficiency, cultural barriers, and insufficient information about the nature of special education (Fowzia Mohamed, 2010).

Another study conducted by Nderu (2005) investigated the parental involvement in education of Somali immigrants in the United States. According to Nderu (2005), in the United States the level of parental involvement is always assessed by how parents engage in voluntary activities, interact with school personnel, and attend parent-teacher

conferences and school performances. Somali parents were not visible in any of these activities and consequently, they are considered disinterested in their children's education. However, Nderu (2005) has also discussed the obstacles that prevented the active participation of Somali parents in education. Some of these obstacles are lack of knowledge about the expectations of their roles within the educational domain, cultural communication difficulties, and other pressures on their time and resources (Nderu, 2005).

Husom (2009) conducted a study investigating the challenges facing Somali parents in educating their children in the public schools in the United States. In the study, Somali families living in the United States expected to experience a better condition since they are no longer in war zone. They expected easiness to educate their children. However, they still experienced some problems in many aspects of life. Husom found that Somali families had trouble understanding the school culture of the United States. The result also indicated the breakdown in the relationship between Somali parents and their children (Husom, 2009).

A study conducted by Mohamoudd (2013), found that the lack of involvement in education by Somali parents living in Sweden was not because Somali parents were not interested in their children's education nor have conflict with the school. Nevertheless, these parents faced many challenges that resulted parents' disengagement from school and caused distrust towards school teachers. These challenges included; difficulties to understand Swedish school system, integration, methods of communication, and being excluded from major culture (Mohamoudd, 2013).

Kapteijns and Arman (2004) conducted a research on educating Somali immigrant youth in the United States. According to Kapteijns and Arman (2004), Somalis have had a positive attitude towards modern education. Somalis consider education as a way to escape

from poverty and to gain respect and reputation. However, when Somali immigrants arrived on American soil, they brought their skills and wisdom, but the skills have not benefited them in coping with the problems that they were confronted with in educating their children (Kapteijns & Arman, 2004).

Somali parents living at home are free from many of these difficulties that are faced by those Somali immigrants. For instance, they are familiar with the educational system of their country and they do not have problems of communication and cultural barriers, which their counterpart faces in abroad. It is impressive to conduct a research that examines the degree of involvement of Somali parents living in Somalia and what schools have done to increase the level of parental involvement, which have received less attention by researchers and educators. Therefore, it is the researcher's interest to conduct a research in Somalia that examines the perceptions of Somali parents and teachers about parental involvement.

## **1.2 Background: Brief History of Somali Education**

The education system in Somalia has gone through multiple stages and these stages were affected by several significant factors either positively or negatively. To facilitate better understanding of these stages, it is very important to give some attention to the educational institutions of Somalia in the past that started with the emergence of the Islamic faith in Somalia before the European conquest of Africa. According to Mohamoudd (2013), education in Somalia has gone through three main stages namely; traditional education (Islamic education), colonial education, and post-colonial education.

### **1.2.1 The History of Education in Somali Before and During the European colonial Period**

Islam entered in Somalia from the very early time, shortly after the second Hijra. One of the oldest mosques in Somalia is Masjid Al-qiblatayn dates to the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Muslim scholars have traveled in many cities and villages in Somalia to deliver the message of the Islamic religion. Hence, in a very short time, the Islamic faith spread throughout the country. Big cities such as Mogadishu, Berbara, and Zeila become the early centers of Islamic culture and learning in Somalia. Moreover, the educational system during that time was divided into two levels. In the first level, kids memorize the whole Quran. After memorizing the whole Quran, students move to the next level where they learn the Islamic law and the Arabic language (Mohamoud Abushaybah, 2014).

In the past, mosques were not a place for prayers only, but they were used as schools where Muslim scholars to deliver lectures to groups of students. Students move from one class to another class inside the mosque to learn different subjects from different scholars. The scholars were not charging fees, but they were doing this job for the sake of Allah and to transfer the responsibility of knowledge so that the knowledge will be transferred from one generation to another (Mohamoud Abushaybah, 2014).

According to Ilmi Tohaw (2014) this kind of education had no specific educational stages nor organized classes. Similarly, educational providers in this period were not conducting exams and therefore students were not offered certificates after they graduate. These facts are strong evidences that prove the existence of educational institutions in Somalia even before the colonial powers (Ilmi Tohaw, 2014).

With the arrival of colonial powers-Italy in south Somalia and British in north Somalia- in the nineteenth century 1884, the minds and the hearts of the local people were already

won by the Muslim leaders who were very influential with the new knowledge and the prayers they introduced. Therefore, foreign occupation encountered fierce resistance by the local people who rejected western educational policies (Sharif Aydurus, 1954). This is because western education was perceived to be against the Islamic principles and what the local people learnt from Muslim scholars of Islamic knowledge. As a result, many educational projects that were developed by the colony were abandoned (Net industries, 2014).

When local people confronted western education with rejection, colonial powers stepped a more provocative actions. For instance, in 1889 Italy colony established missionary schools in south Somalia. Due to an outrage to the conversion of Somali kids in western missionary schools, Mohamed Abdille Hassan, the most famous leader of Somali resistance to colonialism and other Somali leaders started a 21-year war against the colonial powers. During this long war, Somali resistance was able to wage a very bloody guerilla war that finally forced the colonial forces to withdraw towards the coast (Cassanelli & Farah Sheikh, 2007).

Another purpose of colonial powers was to use education as a tool to achieve their aim of colonization. According to Ali (1998) the purpose of colonial education was to fulfill their real objectives of imperialism. For instance, the Italians sought to train pupils to become farmers and low-level duties so as to minimize the use of Italians for these purposes. The British also established an elementary education system to educate Somalis for administrative posts. The highest level to achieve in their education was limited to grade 7. This is because a grade 7 education was sufficient to acquire the skills needed for

administration and low-level duties. Another reason was that the colonizers were avoiding producing educated people who can pose danger to the longevity of colonialism.

Whatever was the purpose of the European, Somali resistance opposed secular education. As a result, only a small number of natives was available to work in British Somaliland. Therefore, the colonizers hired staff from the neighboring countries such as Kenya (Chapin, 1992). This situation created a competitive environment between advocates of dual distinct educational models. The two educational models are the Islamic and western knowledge. Colonial powers continue their attempts to impose the new system of secular education on the local people to achieve their aims of colonization. However, Somali resistant also continued to oppose secular education with the support of the local people.

When colonial powers realized the strong resistance and the rejection of secular education by the local, Colonial powers used new strategies to calm local people who were very suspicious of the aim behind western education. They recognized the Islamic schools as formal education and started to give some grants on the condition that Islamic schools teach English and other subjects besides Islamic education. Moreover, protectorate authorities recruited in their schools were teachers from Islamic schools. Consequently, more students enrolled in western schools after these initiatives (Abdulaziz Mohamoud, 2017). Mohamoud Ahmed Ali, known as the father of modern Somali education in the British Somaliland, believed that “every Somali should be exposed to western education only after completing their Quranic schooling” (Cassanelli & Farah Sheikh, 2007:96). These initiatives also facilitated the coexistence of the advocates of Islamic and western education.

### **1.2.2 The State of Education in Somalia after Independence (1960 – 1990)**

After independence 1960, education was seen as a vital factor that can provide a broader foundation for nation-building and progress. Moreover, educated people were believed to have the ability to contribute to the processes of developing the country. Therefore, the prestige of being educated person has increased significantly. Despite the great challenges that was facing the country which was inherited from colonialism, heavy emphasis was placed on educating the people and the expansion of educational institutions (Shafie Abdulaziz, 2015).

All previous governments that have ruled Somalia after the independence in 1960s, particularly during the last military government under the rule of General Siad Barre, have given more priority to education. One of the famous sayings by General Siad Barre was “kids are the flowers of the nation and the leaders of the future” (Farah & Duale, 1973). During his administration, education was free and compulsory for children. Therefore, there were great achievements, improvements in education, and consequently, the literacy levels have risen (UNDP, 2001).

To educate Somali people and to eliminate illiteracy, the Siyad Barre government decided to introduce an official written form of Somali language and a massive literacy campaign. A lot of efforts were made by the government to accomplish these goals. For instance, in 1973, urban literacy campaign programs were launched followed by a rural literacy campaign in 1974. In this period, all state schools were closed and students as well as teachers were sent to the countryside to participate in the literacy campaigns (Ali, 1998).

These efforts were responsible for the subsequent educational reforms and many other developments of which Somali people appreciated. For instance, Somali education started to move to a new direction where primary school enrolment increased that resulted a sharp increase in the rate of literacy, as well as better school attendance (Shafie Abdulaziz, 2015).

Furthermore, the adaptation of an official script for the Somali language reduced the dependence on foreign manpower as the government was able to use Somalis in education and in administration even if they do not know English or Italian. Therefore, the use of Somali language was considered as a complete independence from colonialism (Cassanelli & Farah Sheikh, 2007).

These achievements were not sustained up to the 1980s as there were many obstacles that prevented the government from carrying out their improvement plans on education and other programs. According to Cassanelli and Farah Sheikh (2007) these obstacles include natural disasters such as long droughts, war with Ethiopia, and corruption in all agencies of government. Therefore, these obstacles were responsible for the collapse of the country's education system even before the collapse of the whole Somali state in 1991.

### **1.2.3 The State of Education after the Collapse of the Central Government of Somalia (1991-2018)**

By 1991, when the central government of Somalia has collapsed, education was one of the important services that were affected severely by the civil war. Internal conflicts created unsecured environment for students and teachers to go to school, schools were destroyed and other schools become home for displaced people. For almost two years there was a complete destruction of educational system in all states in Somalia (Anceschi et al., 2014).

The role of wars in devastating and obstructing educational institutions is profound. School buildings become the targets of military in conflict zones and they may use schools as military bases. Furthermore, fear of rape, abduction or being caught in crossfire make going to schools very dangerous and discourage families to send their children to schools. During wars the social and economic of societies have changed and the main goal is survival as some families may lose their beloved ones. Under such harsh situation families may not give schooling a priority (Sommers, 2002).

This explains the practice of some Somali parents who were doubtful about the possibility of restarting education and schooling in the absence of central government. Being doubtful, these parents did not bring their children to schools. To convince parents to enroll their children, international aid agencies provided food, clothes, and books for free. This was the beginning of restarting schools after the collapse of the central government. But when educational institutions proved that they can work and when parents realized that fact, schools started to impose tuition fees (Abdullahi Abdinoor, 2008).

When several attempts of reconciliation between the warring tribes failed, the hope for effective Somali government to provide the basic services such as education becomes elusive. Under such circumstances and the absence of government institutions, local people and donors showed their willingness to provide education service and reopen schools in order to save children from going astray. Ali Abdi (2003) states some of the problems that children can face when there is a lack of educational opportunities:

When there is a vacuum of educational and learning opportunities, the space may be immediately filled by the Horn of Africa's new merchants of death (or factional warlords) who, because they are more likely financially more solvent

than others, would recruit many young men into their so-called 'armies. (Ali Abdi, 2003: 195)

The full involvement of the local people in education in Somalia came late for two reasons. Firstly, Somali people did not assume that the war and the statelessness would last long. Instead, they expected that the state would be reestablished soon at which it will provide education and other public services. However, the problems continued for several years and children remained without schooling. When people realized that the crises could even last longer and several peace talks had failed, they arranged themselves to do what the state used to do for them. Another reason for the late involvement is that the Somali society has not experienced the culture of paying school fees and having close relationship to schools (formal education). The state was providing free education and parents were not participating in any form of school administration. Nevertheless, when the role of the state disappeared, they had to change their mindset and rely on themselves. But this change took place gradually as they had to learn it. At the beginning, the involvement started modestly and it was limited to defending education from militias, but later the community became members of school board and contributed in all developmental projects (Abdullahi Abdinoor, 2008).

Since the outbreak of civil war in Somalia, a large number of humanitarian organizations entered Somalia especially during the intervention of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM). These organizations included both Islamic organizations as well as western organizations. Together, all these organizations with the assistant from local communities started to restore access to education by launching some small educational projects (Saggiomo, 2011).

Under the military protection of UNOSOM mission in 1993, western and Arab NGOs continued to serve education in almost all states in Somalia. Many schools were reopened, others were rehabilitated, and school text books were reprinted. The outcome of these efforts was that students were able to go to schools and enrolment rates have increased. Abdullahi Abdinoor categorized the educational institutions that existed since outbreak of the civil war into six categories:

1. Charity assisted schools. These are schools that provide modern education with either Arabic or English as the medium of instruction. Although heavily subsidized, most of these schools charge nominal fees.
2. Schools owned and run by former public school teachers. These are self-sufficient schools that get no external support from charities or aid agencies. They also charge fees to maintain themselves.
3. Schools for poor students. These schools serve students who cannot afford the nominal fees charged by other schools. This type of school is common in rural areas and poorer neighborhoods in major cities.
4. Adult schools. These are private schools that charge fees and teach adult learners basic reading and writing in Somali, arithmetic, and foreign language literacy.
5. Vocational and technical schools. These schools train students in specific skills that will help them get gainful employment.
6. Schools supported by external aid. These are schools that are supported by international aid agencies. They mostly target poorer sections of the community. Among these agencies are Concern Worldwide, International Aid

Sweden-IAS and Save the Children Fund-UK. (Abdullahi Abdinoor, 2008. P.48)

Many schools which were established by western organizations were reclosed soon after the withdrawal of these organizations. However, Islamic NGOs continued to provide education service in the country. Therefore, the only schools that remained in existence such as Ahmed Gurey, Mahamud Harbi, Imaamu Shafie School, Abdullahi Isse, Umulquraa, Al-Fajr school and Usama Ibnu Zayd were those supported by the Islamic charities or the local people. "Following the withdrawal of UNOSOM in 1995, Western NGOs and UN Agencies were forced to abandon their operations in Somalia for security reasons and to relocate their regional bases to Kenya" (Saggiomo, 2011:56).

Islamic NGOs continued to operate in Somalia by recruiting the remaining Somali educators in the country. Those that remained include: Africa Muslims Agency, the Imam Shafi'i Foundation, Emirates Red Crescent, Zamzam Foundation, and the International Islamic Relief Organization. Almost all the accomplishments gained in education for the last two decades were responsible by these Islamic charities (Anceschi et al., 2014).

With the passage of time and lack of hope at achieving Somali's aspiration -at least in the near future- for effective government that can fulfill their needs for education, Islamic charities tried to act as the ministry of education in Somalia, especially in the South-Central Somalia where they operate. According to UNICEF, 52% of the available education in Somalia is in this area and almost all the education activities are supported by the Islamic charities (Cassanelli & Farah Sheikh, 2007).

Islamic NGOs not only tried to act as the ministry of education, but also they intended to produce graduates who can pursue further education anywhere in the world and can

compete in the world market by providing quality education. In the process of improving the quality of education, they formed a network of educational organizations called the Formal Private Education Network in Somalia Formal Private Education Network in Somalia (Anceschi et al., 2014).

In 1999, a group of Islamic charities agreed to establish an umbrella organization of Islamic charities working in the education sector with the purpose of expanding and improving the existing education system. Furthermore, this network intended to have a common curriculum and examination system for the schools affiliated to the member charities (saggiomo, 2011).

FPENS is a local umbrella organization established in December 1999 in Mogadishu, Somalia. It has various branches inside Somalia while under its umbrella; it has 98 associate members representing local NGO's having a stake in the education sector of our country. (Formal Private Education Network in Somalia, 2014)

The administrative structure of the Formal Private Education Network in Somalia comprises a general assembly, advisory board and an executive committee. The general assembly is the highest authority in the network and contains one representative from each member charity. Some of the tasks of the general assembly is to establish networks' guidelines, approve or reject educational policies, approve the annual budget and elect members of the executive committee. Members of the advisory board are also elected by the general assembly and their task is to facilitate decision-making process between the general assembly and the executive committee. Joining this network is subject to strict

procedures. New members are required to prove a minimum of two years of good performance (Saggiomo, 2011).

Formal Private Education Network in Somalia plays vital roles in providing quality education. It advocates educational concerns of Somalia at international and local conferences, establishes policies, and monitors implementations in the affiliated schools. In addition, it develops school text books, organizes teacher training through seminars and workshops, and issues school graduation certificates (Cassanelli & Farah Sheikh, 2007).

Even though Formal Private Education Network in Somalia is non-governmental, non-political and non-partisan, its activities faced constant threats from the warlords. However, Formal Private Education Network in Somalia managed to survive and enabled many Somali children to have access to education. Transitional National Government in 2000 and in 2005 appreciated the efforts of Formal Private Education Network in Somalia and on top of that they offer official approval to issue school certificates that are recognized both in Somalia and abroad (Cassanelli & Farah Sheikh, 2007).

Moreover, Formal Private Education Network in Somalia is connected to both local and foreign universities to obtain scholarships for the best performing Somali students. These universities are located in Arab countries such as Sudan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. As a result, many Somali students were able to continue their education in abroad “Thanks to this network, FPENS’ students can continue their education career abroad, as their school certificate is internationally recognized” Based on these facts, it is very clear that Formal Private Education Network in Somalia , not only saved education in Somalia, it is also responsible for the success achieved to date (Saggiomo, 2011: 59).

These great accomplishments in all stages of education have proven the efforts and the effective role of the Somali society towards education. However, it would be an exaggeration to say that the society have done their full responsibility in providing education. Access to schooling is still low and many school children are out of school. It is also unfair to compare the accomplishment of the Somali society to any other period of the Somali history or with other countries without taking into consideration the context of statelessness and insecurity in which the education has functioned for the last two decades. Therefore, the achievement of Somali society in education can be considered a great accomplishment if we consider the challenges and the difficult conditions in which the education worked for the past two decades (Abdullahi Abdinoor, 2008).

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

Most of the great achievements in education and other aspects of life that were made by previous governments were lost after the civil war in Somalia in 1991. The civil war has cost Somali people a lot as it caused all state structures to collapse. The impacts of state collapse on educational system has been far worse as schools were closed and demolished and educational infrastructure was looted. As a result, literacy rates have declined (Anceschi et al., 2014). In response to the absence of effective central government, various actors have stepped to fill the gap left behind by the collapsing state. Local communities have developed a variety of coping mechanisms including the age-old system to ensure that essential services such as education are made available to the public (Leeson, 2007). Therefore, a diverse range of actors including Somali local communities, the Somali diaspora, private sector, and foreign donors have made significant contribution to reopen

schools and rehabilitate school infrastructure (The Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, 2013). “With no central government to provide an education for the nation’s youngest, locally-managed Community Education Committees have stepped up to do the job. The committees manage schools financially, liaise with parents, and track students” (UNICEF, 2005).

Furthermore, “Somalis have been famous since the nineteenth century for their entrepreneurial spirit, and the risk-taking and innovation associated with it” (Kapteijns & Arman, 2004: 29). Therefore, private schools spread everywhere in the country. As a result of these initiatives by private sectors, as well as the efforts of communities and donors, there have been some progress in education with school enrolment rates that is similar to those in the pre-war period (UNDP, 2001).

There are numerous shortcomings and problems with the education that is provided by communities and donors. These problems include; lack of quality, lack of qualified teachers, and lack of attractive spaces for learning (Cummings & Tonningen, 2003). The problem with private schools is that many Somali parents are unable to pay the school fees. Consequently, a large number of school-age children are out of school.

To address these problems, the current government of Somalia, particularly the Minister of Human Development and Public Service with the support from UNICEF, has come up with an initiative called Go-2-school Initiative (2013-2016) to provide free education to 1 million children and youth who are currently out of school (Ministry of human development and public service, 2013).

The Go-2-school Initiative provides free education to children who have never experienced school environment. However, educating such children and supporting them

to cope with the school situation cannot be successful without the collaboration of children's families. According to Derrick-Lewis (2001) more meaningful support that will enhance children's performance at the school can be provided through the cooperation between teachers and parents (Derrick-Lewis, 2001).

School administrators and teachers need to get parents involve in the education of their children. One of the strategies of getting parents involved is to make parents appreciate the practice of teachers. Parents would support education if they are happy with the educators and the content of education being provided. "It is important to bear in mind that in order for the community members to support education, they must trust the institution that provides it and the educators who are in charge of it" (Abdullahi Abdinoor, 2008: 52).

There are three challenges that face the implementation of parental involvement in Somalia. The first challenge is a lack of qualified teachers who have the ability to create a healthy and productive partnership with parents. The second challenge is lack of government support to enact legislations that force both educators and parents and to allocate budgets and other forms of resources. The third challenge is lack of reliable studies about parental involvement in Somalia. The following paragraphs are elaborating these three problems that face parental involvement in Somalia. Firstly, lack of qualified teachers is a barrier for involving parents in education. The literature indicates that teachers' ability to relate well with parents depends to a great extent on the quality of training they received on working with parents. Hence, teachers who lack the required knowledge and skills may fail to engage families effectively (Share & Greene, 2011).

In the past few decades there have been many changes in the family and school relationships. Together with these changes, new demands and expectations towards

teachers have appeared. According to Epstein and Sanders (2006), teachers are required to work in collaboration with families and communicate them in planned, goal oriented partnership programs. Moreover, schools prefer to hire teachers with competencies in school, family, and community partnership. Therefore, teachers who are seeking employment must prove that they are talented professionals who have developed the skills to involve families in their children's education (Epstein & Sanders, 2006).

Following the outbreak of civil war in Somalia, many professionals left the country or changed their occupation and others were retired. This caused scarcity of trained teachers that forced many schools to hire untrained people with different specializations and levels of education. For instance, schools ignored the particular requirements for teaching positions, instead candidates were selected merely for their knowledge of the subjects in the curriculum (Cassanelli & Farah Sheikh, 2007). Abdullahi Sh. Adam (2015) states the shortage of qualified teachers:

While most teachers who took part in the study were educated to bachelor degree level, very few had studied education-related subjects and therefore lacked the formal teacher training experience necessary for the profession. This means that unqualified teachers without the necessary pedagogical and teaching skills are in classrooms. (Abdullahi Sh. Adam, 2015: 4)

Abdullahi Salad and Mohamed Muhumed (2015) conducted a study on teacher quality and student achievement at secondary level in Mogadishu-Somalia. They believe that the quality of Somali teachers is not up to the international standard (Abdullahi Salad and Mohamed Muhumed, 2015). This is because the workforce produced by local universities -including many of the current teachers at primary and secondary schools in Somalia- had

received low quality education from these universities as these universities suffered from low capacity of teaching staff (The Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, 2013). According to McIntosh there is a strong link between the performance of workforce and the kind of education they have received. Low quality education leads to low quality workforce performance (McIntosh, 2014). Therefore, the qualification and competence of graduates from these universities were affected by the low quality of education they had received. “The main challenges that the Somali education sector faces concerns quality, gender imbalances, low school enrolment, and low literacy rate” (Mohamoudd, 2013).

Teachers who lack the knowledge, skill, and training for the tasks they are expected to do will not perform well in doing these tasks. According to Hornby and Lafaele:

Teachers are often required to assume responsibility for tasks for which they have received little or no training, including working closely with parents, the result is that the gap between the assumptions held by parents and teachers contributes to the gap between the rhetoric and reality of parent involvement. (Hornby, & Lafaele, 2011: 46)

Hence, it is obvious that the practices of such untrained teachers can discourage parents from being involved in their children’s education.

Secondly, apart from the possible impact of the lack of quality teachers in Somalia, the lack of effective government role in the education system is another factor contributed to the lack of parent involvement. There is neither specific legislation nor government policies on parental involvement that require schools and teachers to involve parents in education.

According to Federal Government of Somalia, education is not one of the current priorities of Somali government. The top priorities of the Somali government are restoring security,

establishment of peace, and transforming Somalia from war-torn nation to functioning state (Federal Government of Somalia, 2014).

The literature reveals that government support for parental involvement is crucial. According to Epstein and colleagues (2002) the field has been strengthened with the support given by federal and state policies. These policies make the implementation of parental involvement as a condition for American schools to qualify state funding (Epstein et al., 2002). Similarly, Mohamoud (2013) states that Swedish government enacted a legislation framework for parental involvement that requires schools and parents to have close relationship. The lack of skills of Somali teachers in working with parents and the absence of effective government role in the educational system in Somalia can only limit the development of parent involvement practices and eventually prevent it completely.

Thirdly, lack of reliable studies is the third challenge that faces parental involvement in Somalia. This is because policy makers and educational leaders need information for their decisions in improving parental involvement. However, the existing studies provide only partial information about parental involvement that is outdated and contradicting. Parents' support for children's education includes the support parents provide at home and at school. However, previous studies reported the involvement of Somali parents at school only. For example, the literature reveals that Somali parents have played important role in supporting educational institutions in many occasions when the state could not fulfill its job for any reason. According to the model developed by Abdullahi Abdinoor (2008) the support of the previous Somali governments was limited to modern education. Hence, Somali parents were forced to run religious schools to educate their children with Islamic knowledge. Moreover, when the Somali government collapsed in 1991 and the role of

government in education have disappeared, parents realized that the statelessness could last long and they have to rely on themselves to provide schooling. Therefore, parents have played critical roles to reopen schools.

The role of parents which Abdullahi Abdinoor (2008) and other studies aforementioned in this chapter (Hassan, 2013, Nadeem, 2013, Ruhl, 2013 and Cassanelli & Farah Sheikh) are referring to is the role of Somali parents as a member in the community to support schools. These studies have not documented any role of these parents helping their children at home with homework and other schoolwork. Moreover, none of the previous studies is related to schools' support for promoting parental involvement. Therefore, the existing studies provide only partial and very limited information about parental involvement.

Previous studies also provide outdated information. For example, Mohamoudd (2013) investigated the involvement of Somali parents in Sweden. Comparing their current involvement in Sweden with previous involvement in Somalia, participants indicated that their involvement in Somalia was low "back in Somalia, our involvement revolved around paying school fees" (Mohamoudd, 2013 p.16). Similarly, Fawzia Mohmed (2010) investigated the experiences of Somali parents in Canadian schools. The participants stated that their involvement in education was low in Somalia "teachers in Somalia were responsible for the academic achievement of their child, so little parental involvement in the school was required" (Fawzia Mohamed, 2010 p. 57).

Several studies were conducted in some western countries investigating the involvement of Somali parents in education (Abdul Diriyar 2006, Fowzia Mohamed 2010, Nderu 2005, Husom 2009, Mohamoudd 2013, Kapteijns & Arman 2004). These studies

have documented low level and sometimes lack of parental involvement by Somali parents, which resulted children's low level of academic achievement and poor grades. However, it is inappropriate to generalize the findings of these researches to Somali parents and teachers living in Somalia. This is because there are various differences between the two populations and the situations in which they live in. For example, a study that examined the ways immigrant families in South Texas were involved found that these parents whose children were highly academically successful were involved in their children's education but in ways not traditionally recognized by educators of the host country such as attending at schools or volunteering (Lopez, 2001). "In order to understand differences in perspective, one must understand the underlying history and culture of the school and community organizations and the context in which they operate" (Jehl et al., 2001). The educational system in Somalia is not the same as the ones in western countries. Hence, there is a need for similar research to investigate the partnership practices of Somali teachers in facilitating parental involvement and its relation to the level of involvement by Somali parents in Somalia.

The preceding discussion shows that studies examining perceptions of Somali teachers and parents in Somalia on parental involvement in education is very rare. Generally, research activities in Somalia are very low in all fields. This is because higher education is the place where research is usually conducted, but the higher education of Somalia has very low capacity in conducting research. A study conducted by the Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (2013) on the state of higher education in Somalia found that none of the investigated 44 universities have involved in any research activities. Therefore, according to Sommers (2002), the only source of information for various aspects of life in Somalia is

to rely on some reports by NGOs that are based on interviews with few NGOs and UN agency leaders. However, in many cases these leaders have little or no interaction with the direct providers of educational activities such as community leaders, parents, and teachers. From these facts it is clear that there is a scarcity of reliable studies that researchers can depend on for literature review and this is one of the problems which this study is facing.

The absence of research capacity in educational institutions in Somalia is caused by several reasons. Universities do not receive any fund from the government of Somalia that facilitate and encourage research practices. Another reason is that these institutions have no collaboration with other international universities for research activities. Furthermore, the teaching staff of these universities lack the knowledge and the right skills for conducting research:

In the absence of regulation by governing authorities in all three regions and the low capacity of teaching staff, the quality of education has suffered considerably. An alarming 86% of surveyed HEIs complained about low capacity of teaching and administrative staff. (Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, 2013)

No doubt that Somali parents living in Somalia are free from cultural and language barriers which are faced by those living in foreign countries. What is unknown is the practices of schools in Somalia for promoting and facilitating parental involvement in education. It is also unknown if the school practices for parental involvement have effects on the level of parental involvement at home and at school. Lack of information about these issues can be an obstacle for policy makers and educational leaders to decide where and when to direct time and resources to solve the problems faced by parents and teachers in schools. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the partnership practices by schools in

Somalia for parental involvement. This study also aims to determine the relationship between school partnership practices and the level of parental involvement.

#### **1.4 Conceptual Framework**

Studies in the family and school connections have been developing over the last three decades. However, there is still a critical need to increase the use of theoretical models and conceptual frameworks that can push the research forward. This is because the existing body of research is still at an early stage of development. Jordan and colleagues (2001) state three characteristics that illustrate this fact: lack of linkage between research and theory, the limitation of methodology, and the disconnection between qualitative and quantitative research (Jordan et al., 2001).

According to many researchers, research would benefit substantially from a careful use of theory.

When you have a theoretical framework, it helps you understand specifically what factors you have to work on. You're not out there just fishing in the dark. And you have a way to do the research because your variables are identified and (what you're doing) is much clearer. (Hoover-Dempsey, 2008)

Several studies have explored the factors that have critical effects on parental involvement. After decades of research on parental involvement, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) formulated a model that consists of five levels. Level one of the model states three factors that influence parental involvement. The first factor is parents' personal motivation for involvement. The second factor is parents' perceptions of invitations, such as general invitation from school, specific invitation from teachers, and specific invitation from child. The third factor is life context variables, such as parents' skills, time, and energy

they have available for their involvement. Other researchers also found that these factors influence the level of parental involvement. One of these studies was conducted by Dauber and Epstein (1989) in which they found that families are more involved in their children's education if they perceived that schools encourage and welcome their involvement. Parent-teacher relationship is also an important factor influencing parental involvement. According to Faust-Horn (2003), successful collaboration between parents and teachers depends on the establishment of good relationship between parents and teachers. This is because strained relations between parents and teachers is a barrier for a healthy and productive partnership between parents and teachers (Lynn, 2006). Furthermore, studies found that some demographic characteristics of parents influence their level of involvement. For instance, the higher the parents' level of education, the more they can support their children's education (Githembe, 2009). Another demographic factor that influence parents' involvement in education is parents' gender. Nderu (2005) found that Somali fathers involved less compared to mothers' involvement in children's education.

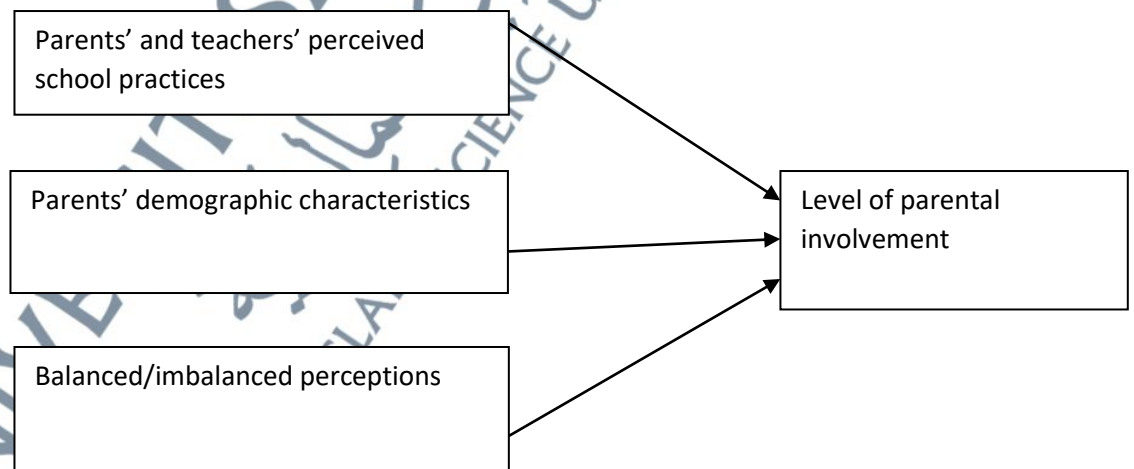
In this study, perceptions of teachers and parents towards school practices, balanced/imbalanced perceptions, and demographic factors (level of education and gender of parents) are the independent variables, while level of parental involvement (high/low) is the dependent variable.

Among the several models that were developed by researchers in this field, Epstein's model (1997) is the only one that has received much attention and has been cited widely in research. According to Ringenberg and colleagues (2009), this model is based on social organization and considers the relationship between family and school as dynamic where children's development is higher when school, family, and community work

collaboratively. The field has benefited from Epstein's framework. Researchers in the field of parental involvement agree that the components of this model are well-defined and offer useful guidelines for research.

This study employed Epstein's (1997) six types of involvement interactions as theoretical framework to understand parents' and teachers' views of their schools' partnership practices. This model allows the measuring of school practices for parental involvement, which is one of the independent variables of this study. The following six doctoral studies have used this model and found it suitable and useful for measuring school practices (Nderu, 2005, Smith, 2008; Taylor, 2006; Ogletree, 2010; Becker, 2010; Britten, 2009, Leila A. Farah, 2015 & Marie, 2006). This model outlines six types of family and school partnerships: 1. parenting. 2. Communication. 3. Volunteering. 4. Learning at home. 5. School decision making. 6. Collaborating with the community (Epstein et al., 1997).

*Figure 1. 3 conceptual Framework*



Besides using Epstein's model, this study used another theory called balance theory developed by Heider (1846). Therefore, both models were used as they are related to the

variables of this study but for different purposes. According to Batool and Malik (2010), strong relationships are based on similar attitudes and interests. The more individuals who have similar perceptions and feelings about a particular thing, the more they have closer relationships. “The notion of ‘birds of a feather flock together’ points out that similarity is a crucial determinant of interpersonal attraction”. Mosour and colleagues (1993) also believe that sharing similar attitudes is a critical factor for creating good relationships between individuals (Monsour et al., 1993). Since this study investigates the perceptions of parents and teachers, the researcher is interested to know if the perceptions of parents and teachers lead to a balanced relationship, and to do this, the researcher decided to use Heider’s Balance Theory (1946) as it allows to test the relationship between parents and teachers. Cartwright and Harary (1956) made improvement on the balance theory by removing the ambiguities of the theory in a way that it increases the applicability of the theory into a wider range of empirical studies. Therefore, the theory becomes an easy tool to make empirical tests concerning balance. For instant, balance theory was used to understand consumer behavior and designing effective marketing strategies (Woodside & Chebat, 2001). Futhermore, Taylor (2006) claimed that he is the first researcher who used the balance theory to test the perceptions of parents and teachers. Based on analysis that he made on several studies using this theory, he concluded that this theory can be used to test the relationship between any two groups/people and their perceptions and attitudes toward a common issue.

In the school environment, if there are similar perceptions or more agreement between parents and teachers on school partnership practices (a state of balance), that balance will probably lead to effective parent involvement and eventually more positive outcomes for

students. On the other hand, imbalanced relationships between parents and teachers always lead to conflict and strained relationships.

By using Heider's Balance Theory, a practice can be described as balanced or imbalanced depending on parents' and teachers' perceptions. The questionnaire for measuring school partnership practices of this study used a seven-point likert scale with one being 'very poor' and seven being 'excellent'. Therefore, low ratings (below mean) would suggest negative and high ratings (above mean) would suggest positive. If both participants perceive a practice as positive (above a mean score of four) or negative (below a mean score of four), then that relationship can be considered a balanced one. However, if one of the two participants perceives a particular practice as positive (above a mean score of four) and the other participant perceives the same practice as negative (below a mean score of four), then that relationship is an imbalanced relationship.

### **1.5 Research Hypothesis**

- 1) There is a statistically significant difference in the Mean of the perceived school practices scores for teachers and parents.
- 2) There is at least one significant difference in the perceived school practices among teachers varying on educational level (main effects for educational level).
- 3) There is at least one significant difference in the perceived school practices among teachers varying on age (main effects for age).
- 4) There is at least one significant interaction difference between qualification and age on the perceived school practices (interaction effects).
- 5) School practices and parents' demographic characteristics explain the variations in the level of parental involvement.

- 6) The most important predictor in explaining the variance of parents' perceptions towards their involvement is the schools' partnership practices as perceived by parents.

## 1.6 Research Objectives and Research Questions

The main purpose of this research is to investigate the perceptions of parents and teachers about parent involvement. This study focuses on the following objectives:

- (a) To investigate the perceptions of parents and teachers about schools' partnership practices for parental involvement.

RQ1a: How do parents and teachers of the selected primary schools perceive schools' partnership practices for parental involvement?

RQ1b: Is there a statistically significant difference in the Mean of the perceived school practices scores for teachers and parents?

RQ1c: Do parents and teachers' significant differences in practices lead to balanced or imbalanced relationships?

RQ1d: Are there significant differences in the perceived school practices for teachers varying on educational level and age? Do the effects of educational level on the perceived school practices vary depending on teacher's age?

- (b) To identify the level of parental involvement in the selected primary schools.

RQ2: What is the level of parental involvement in the selected primary schools?

- (c) To determine the variables that explain the variations in the level of parental involvement.

RQ3: What are the factors that are impacting parental involvement level?

## 1.7 Significance of This Study

This study is a significant original contribution to knowledge for several reasons. The researcher cited more than ten studies investigating parental involvement of the small number of Somali immigrants in western countries (Abdul Diriye 2006, Fowzia Mohamed 2010, Nderu 2005, Husom 2009, Mohamoudd 2013, Kapteijns & Arman 2004 Fatumo Osman et al., 2016, Abdullahi Ahmed 2015, Liela Farah 2015 and Daniels, 2017). While the small number of Somali immigrants in these countries received all these attention, the researcher found very few studies investigating parental involvement of the millions of Somali parents in Somalia. This is because research activities in Somalia are very low in all fields (The Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, 2013). It is the view of the researcher that studies similar to this study is very rare in Somalia and Somali parents living in Somalia have had very little opportunities to share their perspectives about their involvement in their children's education and how schools support parental involvement. It is hoped that this study will increase the limited information that is currently available about parent involvement in Somalia. Firstly, this study is providing practical knowledge. This study is offering a very useful information to policymakers and educational leaders in Somalia. The findings of this study indicated that most parents showed willingness to involve in education. However, parents faced some difficulties which limited their involvement. Moreover, this study showed the partnership practices of schools in Somalia and the factors that predict level of parental involvement. This information is useful for future implementation of parental involvement programs.

Secondly, this study contributes theoretically. Previous studies of parental involvement in Somalia showed only one factor that influences parental involvement at school.

However, the findings of this study showed factors that influence both home and school involvement. This study found that school partnership practices and parents' level of education as important factors that predict level of parental involvement at home and at school. By doing so, this study has extended the understanding of the factors that influence parental involvement in the Somali context. According to Epstein (1995), before educators come to school to teach, they must obtain the knowledge and skills that prepare them to work with families and communities productively. Hence, information from this study can be useful to encourage local universities to consider incorporating programs that enable school leaders and teachers to create positive partnerships between parents and schools.

Thirdly, this study contributes methodologically. The researcher has translated the two instruments that were used to collect data for this study into Somali language. The first survey is entitled School-Family-Community Partnership Survey. This instrument was developed by Epstein and Salinas (1993). The second survey entitled School and Family Partnership, which was translated, was also developed by Epstein and Salinas (1993). Hence, it is hoped that future studies about parental involvement in Somalia can utilize these translated questionnaires to collect data.

Fourthly, Because of the insecurity in Somalia and the difficulties that researchers might face, many Somali postgraduates who are studying overseas are avoiding basing their research in Somalia. However, this research was successfully conducted in Somalia. Hence, it is hoped that this will inspire Somali educators, particularly the researchers, to base their studies in Somalia as there is only few studies or even sometimes none in many areas, including on the education system of Somalia. Lastly, this study offers information to teachers, parents, as well as to head teachers about the schools' performance in relation to

parental involvement and what is needed to be done to promote and maintain parental involvement to bring quality education.

### **1.8 Operational Definitions**

Leech and co-authors (2005) offer one of the best definition of operational definition:

An operational definition describes or defines a variable in terms of the operations or techniques used to make it happen or measure it. When quantitative researchers describe the variables in their study, they specify what they mean by demonstrating how they measured the variable. (Leech, et al., 2005:1)

**Parent involvement:** Parent involvement was defined by schools and families differently. According to Xitao and Michael (1999), one of the major problems is that parent involvement was not defined uniformly by researchers. Similarly, Baker (2007) states a narrow and a broad definition for parental involvement:

Previously it has been stated that the scope of parent involvement can vary from a narrow perspective, defining parent involvement as parent involvement activities at school, to a broad perspective, also including parenting behaviors at home and parents' attitudes towards their child's schooling. (Bakker, 2007: 190)

In this study, parental involvement is referred to parents' behaviors and actions that are related to the learning and development of children whether these activities occur at home or at school.

**Schools' partnership practices for parental involvement:** Parents' decision to involve in education depends on the structure and the environment that has been created by schools and the parents' lives (Nechyba et al., n.d). Partnership practices for supporting parent

involvement are referred in this study to the behaviors and actions by the school that are intended to build positive partnership with parents in all aspects of children's learning.

**Perceptions:** beliefs, point of views, ideas, observations. Perceptions of parents and teachers toward parental involvement are referred in this study to parents' and teachers' feelings and attitudes about the level of parental involvement on how school personnel support the implementation of parent involvement.

### **1.9 Delimitation**

This study was limited to teachers and parents of ten primary schools in Mogadishu. Principals and other administrative staff will not be included. Moreover, teachers and parents are considered the right people to give views about schools' partnership practices for supporting parent involvement.

### **1.10 Limitation**

Schools under the Formal Private Education Network in Somalia (FPENS) are located in different cities in Somalia and travelling between these cities is not safe. Therefore, the researcher was not able to carry out the investigation on all the schools under this private organization due to the risk of movement from city to city, time constraint, and limited resources. Instead, the scope of this study was restricted to ten primary schools under this private organization that are located in Mogadishu. Furthermore, participants of this study were selected from private schools. Therefore, it might be inappropriate to generalize the findings and conclusions to other schools.

Another limitation of this study is that data are solely relying on the views of the parents and teachers (research participants) to assess parental involvement. This is because the Formal Private Education Network in Somalia was established after the collapse of the

central government of Somalia by local communities and some donors, hence it faces many challenges as it lacks important factors to fully function. Therefore, one cannot expect such organization to have all the details of record-keeping that can be used by researchers and other agencies. The only information source available about parental involvement in these schools is the views of parents and teachers.

### **1.11 Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one is about the introduction to the thesis, which begins with brief introduction of the study, followed by the background of the study, problem statement, research questions, research hypothesis, research objectives, significance of the study, definition of terms, delimitation, and limitation. The second chapter discusses the literature review, which deals with the variables connected to parent involvement in education and its relationship with children's success. Chapter three consists of research methodology that begins with an introduction, the research design chosen, followed by population, sampling and sample size, research instrument, validity, reliability, data collection, data analysis procedure, reliability check, and analytical methods. Chapter four presents both quantitative and qualitative findings of the research questions of this study and participants' demographic background. Chapter five presents discussion of the findings, implications, and conclusion.