Assessment of Strategies to Enhance Teacher-parent Relationships: A Case of Selected Primary Schools in Dodoma, Tanzania

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Abstract: This study is about strategies that enhance collaboration between teachers and parents. Interviews were employed for gathering data using a qualitative methodology, and the results were subjected to a thematic analysis. The findings demonstrate the significance of communication in fostering stronger teacher-parent connections, which are bolstered by meetings, technological improvements, and cultural observance. It has been determined that shared responsibility between educators, parents, and students improve academic performance and engagement. The report also highlights the necessity it is for educators to receive continuing education to provide them the skills they need to establish trusting bonds with parents. Policies that promote organized interactions and involvement by parents in school activities were also shown to be essential elements for improving education. These results aid in the development of methods of instruction that improve student learning and, in the end, provide a more positive and friendly learning environment.

Keywords: Strategies, teacher parent relationship, student participation and engagement, pupil's achievements, primary schools.

1. Introduction

Good relationships between parents and educators have been shown to be essential to pupil achievement in school for overall development (Epstein, 2018; Fan & Chen, 2001). Effective collaboration between educators and families increases children' performance in school as well as their behavior, confidence, and engagement (Casey, 2025). Strong society, school, and family participation in particular give pupils a strong support network that improves their wellbeing and commitment (Hanover Research, 2025). The foundation of this partnership is successful communication. Trust, common objectives, and better academic results are created through open, mutual communication between teachers and parents instead of one-way communications.

This research looks at ways that improve student academic performance and foster greater teacher-parent engagement. The main method of collecting information was interviews, allowing participants to offer rich and in-depth insights into their views and experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Kothari, 2006). Recurring patterns and themes were found by thematically analyzing the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Teacher-Parent Relationships and Student Development

In order to assist pupils' academic and non-academic development, teacher-parent relationships are essential (Epstein, 2018). Meaningful relationships between educators and parents foster a climate which encourages students' overall growth. The significance of training sessions and conferences that give parents and teachers communication skills and positive involvement tactics is emphasized by Henderson and Mapp (2002). These programs improve the educational setting by strengthening the bonds between the home and the school (HakiElimu, 2017; Kraft & Rogers, 2015).

2.2 Student Participation and Engagement

Improving focus on the learning process, positive teacher-parent relationships are strongly linked to learner involvement (Mbuta & Mwakalinga, 2025; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Involving parents in their children's education makes them feel encouraged, which increases motivation and enhances academic achievement (Epstein, 2018). The foundation of strategies that increase learner's involvement in and out of the classroom is an awareness of how teacher-parent collaboration works. Learners' emotional and academic needs are met by these strategies' integrated support networks (Kraft & Rogers, 2015).

2.3 Educational Policy and Institutional Frameworks

At the national, district, and institutional levels, teacher-parent relationships further impact educational policies (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Initiatives that promote organized interaction, cooperation, and shared decisions between educators and families may benefit from the results of research (Epstein, 2018; Kraft & Rogers, 2015). Maintaining positive relations requires policies that legally establish parent-teacher conferences, cooperative school activities, and open lines of communication.

2.4 Parental Involvement and School Culture

Even while parental engagement is universally accepted, it is sometimes misinterpreted or executed poorly (Letswalo, 2023). Parents' involvement must be actively encouraged and supported by the programs that schools and legislators create. Numerous meetings between parents and educators, seminars, and school functions offer opportunities for cooperation, which improves kids' academic and personal growth (Epstein, 2018; Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Teachers' growth as professionals is also influenced by their interactions with their parents. Training programs that prepare educators to address the various needs of parent's foster teamwork and foster positive learning environments (Kraft & Rogers, 2015).

Parents, educators, and students are all valued as participants in education in a supportive school culture. These cultures promote inclusivity, collaboration, and respect for one another, all of which have a favorable effect on student achievement (Epstein, 2018; Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

2.5 Statement of the Problem

Parents' and teachers' cooperation has a big influence on students' academic achievement, social development, and general development (Epstein, 2018; Fan & Chen, 2001; Mwakalinga, 2024). A sense of shared responsibility for learning is reinforced when parents and teachers communicate effectively. Parents are especially important in creating supportive school settings because they are involved in more than just academic help; they also provide emotional support and reinforce positive behavior (Christenson & Reschly, 2010; Hornby, 2011).

Research indicates that teacher-parent collaboration still faces enduring obstacles in spite of its accepted significance. Cultural barriers that impede mutual understanding, unstructured and irregular interactions, ineffective communication practices, and a lack of professional development that gives teachers the tools to effectively engage parents are some of the most important (Garbacz et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2020). Teachers and parents are unable to collaborate in ways that completely support children's academic and personal growth because of these hurdles, which lead to gaps in involvement.

In accordance with early findings from the Dodoma region, the relationship between teachers and parents varies and is not uniform among schools. Sometimes parents show little interest in their children's intellectual development, which reduces their level of participation in classes and their access to academic support at home. However, time restrictions, a lack of training, and a lack of institutional assistance are some of the challenges teachers face in trying to build positive and effective ways to communicate with families. The attempt to establish a strong support system

for pupils is hampered by the disparity between the two settings, which may also lead to poorer academic achievement, less motivation, and weakened connections between the school and the community.

2.6 Objectives of the study

General Objective:

To assess strategies that enhance collaboration between teachers and parents in selected schools in Dodoma region.

2.6.1 Specific Objectives

I. To examine the role of communication in strengthening teacher-parent relationships.
II. To explore how collaborative responsibilities among teachers, parents, and pupils influence academic involvement and pupils' performance.
III. To identify culturally sensitive strategies that foster inclusive and supportive teacher-parent partnerships.

General study Question

What strategies enhance collaboration between teachers and parents in selected schools in Dodoma region?

2.6.2 Specific study Questions

I. How does communication strengthen teacher-parent relationships?
II. In what ways do shared responsibilities among teachers, parents, and pupils influence students' academic involvement and performance?
III. How can culturally sensitive strategies be implemented to promote inclusive and supportive teacher-parent partnerships?

3. Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research approach, which is widely recognized as suitable for exploring participants lived experiences and understanding complex social phenomena in depth (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Qualitative inquiry enables researchers to capture nuanced perspectives and contextual factors that cannot be adequately addressed by quantitative methods (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A case study design was used because it offers a detailed examination of a particular phenomenon in the context of actual life (Yin, 2018). In education research, case studies are especially useful because they enable a comprehensive analysis of social

processes and the relationships between many stakeholders (Stake, 1995; Baxter & Jack, 2008). To comprehend how teacher-parent partnerships affect students' academic achievement and overall development in the Dodoma region, this approach was suitable.

3.1 Study Population and Sampling

Twenty people participated in the study, including ten children who had a direct connection to the problem being studied, five parents, and five teachers. This choice made sure that different points of view were represented. Purposive sampling was used because it enables researcher to specifically choose individuals with particular expertise and experience related to the study's goals (Palinkas et al., 2015). Because it optimizes the data's richness and relevance, purposeful sampling is particularly useful in qualitative research (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

3.2 Data Collection Methods

Interviews, which are frequently advised in qualitative research due to their capacity to maintain consistency across participants while providing flexibility to examine new concerns, were used to gather data (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Participants were able to provide in-depth, intimate insights into their experiences and opinions of teacher-parent collaboration through semi-structured interviews, which also gave the researcher the opportunity to delve further when needed (Adams, 2015). With the participants' permission, each interview was audio recorded and then transcribed for analysis.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed through thematic analysis, a flexible and rigorous method for identifying, organizing, and interpreting recurring patterns in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is particularly useful in educational research, as it highlights both explicit content and underlying meanings within participants' narratives (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017).

The analysis process involved the following steps:

➢ Familiarization with the data through repeated reading of transcripts.

➢ Coding to capture significant features of the data systematically.

➢ Categorization of codes into broader concepts.

➢ Theme development, where recurring patterns were synthesized into themes representing the central issues raised by participants.

The MAXQDA program was used for data organization, coding, and retrieval in order to guarantee rigour and transparency. Software improves the reliability of results and lessens researcher bias in qualitative analysis (Silver & Lewins, 2014).

4. Results and Discussion

The main topic that arose from the investigation was used to present the findings. The results are in line with the study's goals, and the participants' opinions were reflected thanks to this theme presentation. By establishing interpretations in the participants' own words, the use of exact quotes further increased credibility (Patton, 2015). Below is the presentation and the discussion of the results

4.1 Results

Communication was frequently mentioned to be the main link of the teacher – parent relationship followed by meetings, enhancing cultural norms and the use of technology together with mobile phones. Below is the presentation.

4.1.1 Enhancing communication

In enhancing communication respondents declared that parents as well as the teachers must make sure that they have active means of communication below are the anchor examples:

> *Parents must make sure that they have active ways of communicating with the school administration, again schools must make sure that there is a personal responsibility for communication especially with the parents. (Interview 3, Pos. 9)*

4.1.2 Collaborative responsibilities

In seeking who will be responsible for what, respondents in the interview showed that collaborative responsibilities must be earmarked so as to develop positive developments to the intended students.

> *Collaborative responsibilities make everyone responsible, teachers playing their part, students playing their part and parents playing their roles make learners successfully. (Interview 5, Pos. 3)*

4.1.3 Involving technology in order to simplify communication

Respondents disclosed that technology is unavoidable in simplifying communication, as the world changes and adopt technological advancement teachers, parents as well as students must use the current technology.

> *Nowadays things are simple there is no success in education if there is no team work, we need to have meetings frequently these meetings can be organized using social media so we cannot always meet physically this makes the learner feel like parents are always closer to his or her learning process. (Interview 1, Pos. 5)*

> *Interview 6, Pos. 2Communication is easy because as parents we can receive the report on what is going on at school through the use of normal messages shared though mobile phones. If there is any kind of an emergence at school we can have online meeting through Google. (Interview 6, Pos. 2)*

4.1.4 Enhancing cultural norms and traditions

Cultural norms and traditions were identified as important aspect in the interview whereby respondents showed the importance of having different cultural activities at school which will enhance maintenance of culture.

> *There should be arrangements whereby parents visit schools and see how the students behave, dress, dance, perform academic activities, and other cultural practices for them to give suggestions on how to shape the students. (Interview 4, Pos. 8).*

> *"...The school collects learners from different cultures, so it is essential to educators to understand different orientation of the cultural differences and accommodate them" "Interview 20, Pos 6"*

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Enhancing Communication in Schools

> For learners to succeed there must be outstanding interaction between teachers, parents, and the school management. In a variety of interviews, respondents stressed the value of creating and preserving open lines of communication. The results of the study from those who participated in the interview indicate that a diverse strategy for increasing communication requires acknowledging cultural norms and practices, technology use, shared responsibility, and direct interaction. Open communication between parents and school administration is crucial to ensuring that all parents are aware of and actively involved in their children's education. This can be anchored by the following example from the field:

> *"Parents must ensure they have active ways of communicating with the school administration.*

Schools must ensure there is a person responsible for communication, especially with the parents."(Interview 3, Pos. 9)

"The communication must be open because child rearing is a shared responsibility". **"Interview 15, Pos 3"**

"...The school collects learners from different cultures, so it is essential to educators to understand different orientation of the cultural differences and accommodate them" **"Interview 20, Pos 6"**

This emphasizes two crucial duties:

1. Parental Engagement: In order to stay informed about their children's development and any potential problems, parents must take the initiative to contact the school and ask for information. Regular meetings, phone conversations, emails, and involvement in school functions can all be part of this.

2. School Accountability: Schools are required to appoint a liaison or communication officer who will be in charge of making sure parents are informed in a timely and correct manner. To close any communication gaps and make sure that parents feel a part of the school community, this position is essential. By defining these roles and duties, a structured framework for efficient communication is established, guaranteeing that crucial information is sent on time and that parents are informed about their children's Education.

4.2.2 Collaborative Responsibilities

In education, effective communication involves more than just sharing knowledge; it also involves working together to support pupils. The statement "Collaborative responsibilities make everyone accountable" (Interview 5, Pos. 3) emphasizes this. The success of the pupils is influenced by the roles that parents, teachers, and students play (Letswalo, 2023. Teachers, Learners and parents are essential elements to make up collaboration in education:

To achieve the shared objective of student success, collaborative duties guarantee that all parties involved are cooperating. Students benefit from a network of support created by this shared accountability, which improves their education (Hoover et al, 1997: Hoover et al, 2005).

4.2.3 Involving Technology to Simplify Communication

Currently, technology offers innovative solutions to simplify and enhance communication in education. Respondents in the interviews emphasized the significance of leveraging technology to facilitate communication among teachers, parents, and students. Interview 1, Pos. 5 notes, "Nowadays, things are simpler. There is no success in education without teamwork. We need to have frequent meetings, which can be organized using social media, so we don't always have to meet physically. This makes the learner feel like parents are always closer to his or her learning process (Mwaibingila and Mwakalinga,2022)."

The integration of technology into educational communication can be explored through several avenues:

Social media and texting apps: Teachers and parents can create groups on Twitter, WhatsApp, and Facebook to exchange updates, homework, and crucial announcements. As long that there are no network issues, these types of networks always facilitate rapid and successful communications.

Virtual Meetings: as long as there is a network, parents may attend virtual parent-teacher meetings with less difficulty thanks to the development of meeting systems like Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams. This flexibility makes it easier to plan timely and ongoing conversations regarding how students are doing and any potential issues. W*eb Portals and Apps*: Schools can provide parents with accessibility to their children's behavior, academic records, and various other pertinent data through specialized web portals or mobile apps.

Interview 6, Pos. 2 further supports this by stating, "Communication is easy because, as parents, we can receive reports on what is going on at school through normal messages shared via mobile phones. If there is any kind of emergency at school, we can have online meetings through Google platform."

The use of technology not only simplifies communication but also enhances transparency and accessibility, ensuring that parents are always in the loop and can support their children's education effectively.

4.2.4 Enhancing Cultural Norms and Traditions

Cultural norms and traditions play a significant role in shaping students' identities and values (Mwibilicha and Mwakalinga, 2022). Respondents highlighted the importance of incorporating cultural activities in schools to maintain and promote cultural heritage. Interview 4, Pos. 8 emphasizes this by stating, "There should be arrangements for parents to visit schools and see how the students behave, dress, dance, and perform academic activities, and other cultural practices, so they can give suggestions on how to shape the students."

Promoting cultural norms and traditions in schools can be achieved through several initiatives:

Cultural Activities or Events: Schools may organize festivals, art displays, and cultural days in which pupils can showcase their heritage through traditional attire, artwork, and performances. Children get the opportunity to learn about and admire different cultures through these occasions.

Participation of Parents: Fostering an awareness of belonging and reverence is achieved by encouraging parents to participate in cultural activities and share their customs and customs with students.

Curriculum Integration: By integrating cultural learning into the school curriculum, pupils have the opportunity to gain understanding of both themselves as well as other people's cultural history. Social sciences, literature, art, and history classes that promote inclusiveness and promote cultural diversity may be included in this category.

Enhancing cultural norms and traditions in schools helps in fostering a sense of identity and belonging among students. It also promotes respect for diversity and encourages students to appreciate and celebrate different cultures.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The findings of this study show how important it is for teachers and parents to work together to improve pupil achievement in school and general development. The primary component in creating solid connections was good communication, which was made possible by live meetings, technology, and conscious attempts to keep parents informed and active in their kids' education. Clear and regular lines of communication help parents become more aware of the growth of their kids and improve the sense of shared responsibility.

To enhance learning, instructors, parents, and students all play distinct but complementary responsibilities. This study also emphasizes the importance of shared accountability. A supportive learning environment that promotes student achievement is facilitated by this kind of group responsibility. In situations where in-person interactions are scarce, technological integration—through digital portals, online meetings, and messaging platforms—has also shown to be a workable alternative, guaranteeing ongoing parent-school involvement.

Another important component that improved inclusivity and a sense of community was the respect and integration of local customs and traditions. Schools that respect cultural norms are more likely to build confidence and trust, which increases collaboration. In the study's overall

findings, effective communication, cooperative duties, technology integration, cultural sensitivity, professional development, and supporting legislation are all necessary for maintaining the good teacher-parent partnerships that are critical to learners' academic achievement.

5.2 Recommendations

To promote parent-teacher relationships for pupil's achievement, the study suggests the following;

1. Policymakers and educational authorities should invest in improving communication channels, encouraging shared responsibility, utilizing technology, honoring cultural norms and customs, improving teacher professional development, and putting supportive policies into place.

2. Policy makers should think of creating policies that mandate regular and transparent communication between schools and parents. Policies should include guidelines for the use of technology, frequency of communication, and responsibilities of school communication officers.

3. Teachers should maintain regular and open communication with parents through meetings, phone calls, emails, or digital platforms (e.g., school apps, WhatsApp groups).

4. Parents should attend parent-teacher meetings, school events, and academic discussions to stay informed about their child's progress.

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