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Effectiveness of Parent - Teacher Communication in Promoting the Development of Early Childhood Education in Public Primary Schools in Arusha District Council, Tanzania

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Abstract: *The study investigated the effectiveness of parent - teacher communication in promoting the development of early childhood education in public primary schools. Specifically, the study determined the extent to which different communication channels between parents and teachers are effective in promoting pupils' development and measures for improving communication practices to support pupils' development. Convergent design under mixed-methods research approach and Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres were employed. From 102 public primary schools, 102 head teachers, 102 teachers teaching early childhood classes and 251 parents/guardians formed the target population. Criterion purposive, total population sampling, snowball and simple random sampling techniques were employed to obtain 31 public primary schools, 31 head teachers, 31 teachers and 20 parents/guardians. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires, while qualitative data were collected through interview guides and document analysis. The validity of data collection instruments was ensured by research experts. The reliability, TQ (r=0.815) was ensured using Cronbach's Alpha method while for qualitative instruments, triangulation and peer debriefing was used. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics with the aid of SPSS version 25. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Acquiring research permits, avoiding plagiarism, confidentiality and anonymity were observed. It was revealed that consultations regarding pupils' progress, school open days, timely feedback on academic performance were employed. In conclusion, these strategies promote trust, strengthen relationships, and encourage active parental participation in children's education. In recommendation, schools should promote regular phone communication between teachers and parents since it is the most effective communication channel for supporting pupils' development.*

Keywords: Education, Early Childhood, Communication, Development, Tanzania

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1. Introduction

Parent - teacher communication has long been recognized as a critical component in enhancing pupils' development, particularly in early childhood education where learners require close guidance, emotional support, and consistent reinforcement between home and school environments. It is an ongoing exchange of information, ideas, concerns, and feedback between parents (or guardians) and teachers regarding a child's progress (Jeynes, 2022). Historically, traditional education systems positioned teachers as the sole custodians of knowledge, with minimal parental involvement beyond basic supervision (Mfaume & Bilinga, 2021). However, contemporary educational theories emphasize collaborative partnerships between schools and families as a foundation for effective development outcomes.

Early childhood education scholars argue that when parents are actively informed about instructional goals, learning progress, and behavioural expectations, children are more likely to develop positive learning habits at an early age (UNESCO, 2020). Communication channels such as parent - teacher meetings, progress reports, digital platforms, and informal consultations are increasingly viewed as strategic tools for improving learning outcomes. Various communication channels are used, including face-to-face meetings, written reports, phone calls, home visits, parent - teacher conferences, and digital platforms such as WhatsApp and SMS (Goodall, 2021). In developed contexts, digital communication has expanded parental engagement (Thompsonet., 2021). However, research also indicates that the effectiveness of communication depends on accessibility, frequency, mutual trust, and cultural responsiveness

In developed countries, structured parent - teacher communication practices are embedded in school systems through scheduled conferences, progress reports, home visits, and increasingly, digital communication platforms such as emails, learning management systems, and messaging applications (Grady, 2025). Studies in the United States and Europe have shown that consistent and two-way communication between teachers and parents contributes to improved academic performance, better attendance, and enhanced behavioural outcomes (Hill & Tyson, 2020). Digital communication tools, in particular, have expanded the frequency and immediacy of interaction, enabling real-time updates on pupil progress (Thompson et al., 2025). However, evidence also indicates that the effectiveness of communication depends on factors such as parental literacy, access to technology, and the quality of the interactions rather than mere frequency (Goodall, 2020).

Within the Tanzanian context, Mutangira et al. (2025) observed that barriers to effective parent - teacher communication include language differences, limited parental literacy, and inadequate teacher training in communication strategies. Therefore, capacity-building programmes are necessary for teachers and structured engagement frameworks to enhance trust and collaboration. The findings suggest that improving communication practices requires deliberate institutional support rather than relying on informal or ad hoc interactions. Arusha District Council, located in northern Tanzania, comprises both rural and semi-urban communities. The district faces typical challenges associated with public primary education, including high pupil - teacher ratios, varying levels of parental education, and limited ICT infrastructure. While national policies advocate for strong home - school partnerships, evidence suggests that communication between parents and teachers in ECE classes may be limited to scheduled meetings or disciplinary issues. In contexts where many parents engage in subsistence farming or informal employment, time constraints may further limit their participation in school activities (URT, 2022). This study sought to fill this contextual gap.

1.1 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent are the different communication channels between parents and teachers effective in promoting pupils' development in public primary schools in Arusha District Council?
2. What measures are necessary for improving communication practices to support pupils' development in public primary schools in Arusha District Council?

2. Literature Review

The study was guided by Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence proposed by Joyce L. Epstein in 1995.

2.1 Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres

The theory posits that children's development is influenced by overlapping relationships among family, school, and community. It suggests that a child's learning and development are shaped by three major contexts: family, school, and community (Epstein, 2011). These spheres may operate separately or overlap. The greater the overlap among these spheres, the more supportive the environment becomes for the child's academic and social development

2.1.1 Strengths of Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres

The theory recognizes that children's development is not the sole responsibility of schools but a shared obligation between families and educators. Epstein's six types of involvement provide actionable strategies for schools to enhance parental engagement. It highlights the importance of reciprocal communication rather than one-way information flow.

2.1.2 Application of Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres

Epstein's theory directly informs this study by framing parent - teacher communication as a core component of effective parental involvement in Early Childhood Education (ECE). In Arusha District Council, understanding how communication channels (meetings, phone calls, digital platforms) foster overlap between family and school spheres will help determine their effectiveness in promoting children's cognitive, social, and emotional development. Thus, Epstein's model provides a conceptual basis for analyzing the communication channels used and their developmental outcomes (Epstein, 2011). The theory support the premise that structured, collaborative, and context-sensitive communication

practices are essential for enhancing pupils' academic and socio-emotional growth in public primary schools in Arusha District Council.

2.2 Empirical Review

This section consists of the empirical studies reviewed that are related to this study. Themes that emerge from research questions are used in reviewing and arranging this section.

2.2.1 The Extent to Which Different Communication Channels between Parents and Teachers are Effective in Promoting Pupils' Development in Schools

Syuraini, et al. (2022), in Indonesia, conducted a cross-sectional survey involving 183 parents in early childhood education settings. Using structured questionnaires and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) for analysis, the study found that parent - teacher communication significantly predicted positive learning outcomes, with parental cooperation acting as a mediating variable. This finding suggests that communication alone is insufficient unless it fosters collaborative engagement. In Israel, Traeger-Soudry et al. (2025) examined the effectiveness of WhatsApp communication groups in strengthening parent - teacher engagement and supporting pupils' development. This was a qualitative study that employed a phenomenological research design. Data were collected from 58 parents and 42 teachers selected through purposive sampling. Thematic analysis was employed. The study found that WhatsApp communication enhanced parental awareness of school activities, improved timely information sharing, and increased parental involvement in supporting pupils' learning.

In addition, Goodall (2023) explored the effectiveness of digital communication platforms in promoting parental engagement and pupil learning in the United Kingdom. This was a qualitative study that adopted a multiple case study design. Data were collected from 120 parents and 45 teachers selected through purposive sampling. Thematic analysis was employed. The study found that school portals, emails, and messaging applications enhanced communication efficiency and enabled parents to monitor their children's academic progress more effectively. Mncube and Harber (2022) in South Africa investigated the effectiveness of school-parent communication practices in public primary schools. This was a mixed-methods study that employed a cross-sectional research design. Data were collected from 300 parents, 80 teachers, and 15 school administrators selected through stratified sampling. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were employed. The findings indicated that face-to-face meetings and mobile phone communication significantly improved parental participation and learner discipline. Lack of measures necessary for improving communication practices to support pupils' development in public primary schools in the study was cited as a gap that the current study sought to address.

Osei and Amankwah (2023) in Ghana examined the effectiveness of communication channels in enhancing parental involvement in public primary schools. This was a quantitative study that adopted a survey research design. Data were collected from 400 parents and 100 teachers selected through simple random sampling. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were employed. The study found that phone calls, parent - teacher meetings, and written reports positively influenced parental participation and pupil academic achievement. A study was conducted by Mashauri et al. (2024) in Tanzania to assess the effectiveness of school-home communication following teacher training interventions. This was a mixed-methods study that employed a quasi-experimental research design. Data were collected from 780 parents and 450 teachers selected through multistage sampling. Quantitative data were analyzed using ANCOVA and descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis. The study found that improved communication practices increased parental involvement and contributed to enhanced pupil participation and learning outcomes. The study focused mainly on intervention from trained teacher in schools, which may limit generalization to schools that did not receive similar interventions.

2.2.2 The Measures for Improving Communication Practices to Support Pupils' Development in Schools

In Sweden, Edlundet al. (2023) used an exploratory mixed-methods case design to investigate the effects of a professional development programme aimed at equipping primary teachers with communication-supporting strategies for oral language during classroom interactions. Multiple observations across intervention and comparison teachers were analyzed, showing that structured feedback and training in communication strategies led to greater use of interaction techniques that support pupils' expressive skills. Additionally, Falcon and León (2023) in Spain explored how teachers' engaging communication messages influence students' motivation and learning. A Sentiment Analysis employed a quantitative research approach and a descriptive research design. Data were collected from students' responses to open-ended questions regarding teachers' communication practices. Sentiment analysis and statistical analyses were used to analyze the data. The study found that positive and encouraging teacher communication enhanced students' motivation, engagement, and positive attitudes towards learning. The study relied heavily on students' self-reported perceptions, which may have introduced response bias.

A study was conducted by Molinari and Grazia (2023) in Italy titled A Multi-Informant Study of School Climate: Student, Parent, and Teacher Perceptions. The study employed a quantitative approach and survey research design. Data were collected from students, teachers, and

parents using school climate questionnaires. Statistical analyses, including multigroup comparisons, were conducted. The findings revealed that effective communication among teachers, parents, and students contributed significantly to a positive school climate and enhanced students' social and academic development. Mutangiraet al. (2025) conducted a qualitative phenomenological study in early-grade public primary classes in Tanzania to identify barriers to effective parent–teacher communication and propose strategies to improve it. Through focus group discussions with 60 parents, in-depth interviews with 30 teachers, and interviews with 10 head teachers, the researchers used purposeful sampling and thematic analysis to explore lived experiences. Their results highlighted pervasive challenges: teachers' use of technical language, socioeconomic constraints, and insufficient administrative planning hindered communication. Key improvement measures included fostering trust, using accessible language, involving parents in classroom activities, and offering workshops and shared decision-making platforms to enhance engagement. While the qualitative design enabled rich context-specific insights, the findings are limited in generalizability to broader populations due to purposive sampling and the lack of quantitative outcome measures.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a convergent mixed methods research design using a mixed-methods approach (quantitative and qualitative). The purpose of the convergent research design was to utilise both forms of data – quantitative and qualitative, whereby the weakness of one form of data was supplemented by the strength of the other (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The target population from 102 public primary schools included 102 head teachers, 102 teachers teaching early childhood classes and 251 parents & guardians with pupils in early childhood classes. The total target population was 455 (MoEST, 2025). The head teachers were included since they are responsible for effective supervision of parent - teacher communication for pupils' progress. Teachers were included because their actions contribute to promoting the development of early childhood education in public primary schools. Parents play an integral role in financing the education of pupils in classes. The sample size for public primary schools, head teachers, teachers and parents was determined using the guidelines established by Gay and Aersian. (2021) that propose the sample size for a study to range between 10% and 30% of the target population. Consequently, for this study, the researcher adopted a sampling rate of 30% to ensure a representative and comprehensive sample that reflected the characteristics of the population under investigation. The study sampled 31 public primary schools, 31 head teachers in public primary schools, 31 teachers teaching early childhood classes and 20 parents & guardians with pupils in early childhood classes. In order to obtain the sample for parents, Yamane formula was adopted. The sample size was therefore calculated using Yamane formula, $n = \frac{N}{1+N(0.1)2}$ from a target population of 455 (Yamane, 1967). Where: n = sample size, N = total population, e = level of precision (0.1)

Therefore, $n = \frac{455}{1+455(0.1)2}$

$$n = \frac{455}{1 + 455(0.01)}$$

$$n = \frac{455}{1 + 4.55}$$

$$n = \frac{455}{5.55}$$

$$n = 81.98$$

$\approx$82 respondents

Therefore, the total sample size was 94 respondents.

The researcher employed criterion purposive sampling technique to select teachers teaching early childhood classes and head teachers, while snowball technique was used for parents. Since most schools have only one teacher teaching early childhood classes, they were purposefully involved in the study alongside their head teachers. With the help of head teachers and pupils, the researcher was able to reach out to parents and guardians whose sons and daughters are admitted in early childhood classes. This was done through written letters and phone calls. In this case, 10 parents and 10 guardians were invited. The researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative data using questionnaire, interview guide, focus group discussion and document analysis. The researcher used questionnaire to collect data from teachers while interview guide was used to collect data from head teachers, parents and guardian. All interviews were done in Swahili and English language in accordance with respondents' interest so as to allow maximum freedom for the respondents to express their views, attitudes, perceptions and feelings. Documentary data refers to any information that is collected from recorded documents or records, and other media (Dziak, 2024). Based on this, the researcher requested for reports concerning pupils from teachers teaching early childhood classes.

Instrument validity was ensured through expert review. The reliability was done through Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient method using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 and r=0.815 was generated. Since the result shows a reliability correlation coefficient greater than 0.6 ($r > 0.6$), thus the instrument was considered as appropriate for the current study (Zakariya, 2022; Doval et al., 2023). Trustworthiness of qualitative data was established through peer debriefing and triangulation.

Before data collection, the research permit from the DED was presented to head teachers in the listed schools in order to book appointed to collect data from the study sample size in selected schools in Arusha District Council. By using thematic analysis techniques, major concepts or themes were identified with reference to the research questions and objectives which had been formulated (Braun and Clarke, 2018). Qualitative responses were coded, categorized and

analyzed into themes while the quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics with the aid of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) Version 25. The results of this study were presented by the use of tables of frequencies, percentages and mean rating. Ethical issues observed included avoidance of plagiarism by citing literature sources as per acceptable norms and format. Also, all research respondents were asked to participate voluntarily, confidentiality and anonymity was observed.

4. Results and Discussion

This section includes presentation of the results and the discussion of the findings on the Effectiveness of Parent - Teacher Communication in Promoting the Development of Early Childhood Education in Public Primary Schools in Arusha District Council.

4.1 The Extent to which Different Communication Channels Between Parents and Teachers are Effective in Promoting Pupils' Development in Public Primary Schools

The research question for this study determined the extent to which different communication channels between parents and teachers are effective in promoting pupils' development in public primary schools in Arusha District Council, Tanzania. The information needed was obtained by the researcher through questionnaires items provided to teachers to indicate the level of agreement with the given statement, while the head teachers and parents/guardians were interviewed. The five-level Likert scale was employed to make the unit of analysis in which 1=Very Low Extent (VLE), 2=Low Extent (LE), 3=Moderate (M), 4=High Extent (HE), 5=Very High Extent (VHE), f=frequencies, and P=Percentages. According to Hashim et al. (2022), mean score between 1.00 - 1.89 signified a very low extent, 1.90–2.49 low extent, 2.50–3.49 moderate extent, 3.50–4.29 high extent, and 4.30–5.00 very high extent. The rate of percentage is described as ≤ 20=extremely minority; 21-49= minority; 50-59=moderate; 60-69= majority; 70-89= very high majority; 90-99=extremely majority; 100= overwhelming majority (Taherdoost, 2019). The responses from teachers are summarized in table 1.

Table 1: The Extent to which Different Communication Channels between Parents and Teachers are Effective in Promoting Pupils ' Development in Public Primary Schools in Arusha District Council (n=31)

Statement	Very High extent		High extent		Moderate extent		Low extent		Very Low extent		
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	Mean
1. Communicating regularly with teachers through Phone calls	9	29.0	10	32.3	12	38.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	3.90
2. Email and online platforms	0	0.0	12	38.7	2	6.5	0	0.0	17	54.8	2.29
3. Attending parent-teacher meetings	0	0.0	0	0.0	12	38.7	18	58.1	1	3.2	2.36
4. Written reports and circulars	0	0.0	11	35.5	0	0.0	1	3.2	19	61.3	2.10
5. School visits	0	0.0	8	25.8	13	41.9	10	32.3	0	0.0	2.94
6. Digital platforms such as WhatsApp	17	54.8	3	9.7	1	3.2	0	0.0	10	32.3	3.90
7. Parent-teacher collaboration	0	0.0	1	3.2	11	35.5	19	61.3	0	0.0	2.42
8. Regular meetings	9	29.0	0	0.0	12	38.7	0	0.0	10	32.3	3.06
9. Joint planning between parents and teachers	0	0.0	9	29.0	3	9.7	9	29.0	10	32.3	2.35
Grand Mean											**2.8**

Source: Field Data (2026)

Table 1 revealed that communication through phone calls was rated as the most effective communication channel, with a mean score of 3.90 indicating that it is effective to a high extent in promoting pupils' development in public primary schools. Specifically, 32.3% of respondents rated it as effective to a high extent, while 29.0% rated it as effective to a very high extent. This implies that phone calls provide immediate feedback, facilitate clarification of issues, and strengthen relationships between parents and teachers. This finding agrees with the study by Mashauri et al. (2024), who found that direct and frequent communication between parents and teachers enhances parental involvement and improves pupils' learning outcomes in primary schools. Similarly, Nyang'anyi and Bhalalusesa (2023) found that regular parent - teacher communication promotes trust, cooperation, and parental engagement in children's literacy development, thereby contributing positively to academic achievement. The high rating of phone calls may be attributed to their accessibility and affordability in Tanzania, where mobile phone ownership is widespread.

Table 1 presents data on the extent to which different communication channels between parents and teachers are effective in promoting pupils' development in public primary schools in Arusha District Council. The data indicate that email and online platforms were perceived as ineffective, with a mean score of 2.29. More than half of the respondents (54.8%) rated this communication channel as effective to a very low extent. The low effectiveness may be associated with limited internet access, inadequate digital literacy among parents, and the relatively low use of email communication in rural and semi-urban communities. This finding is consistent with the study by Khoo et al. (2024), who reported that although digital communication platforms can improve parent - teacher interactions, their effectiveness depends on users' technological skills, internet connectivity, and access to digital devices. Where these conditions are lacking, digital communication becomes less effective in supporting learners' development.

The data show that attending parent - teacher meetings had a mean score of 2.36, indicating relatively low effectiveness. About 58.1% of respondents rated the effectiveness of this communication channel as low. The finding suggests that parents may not regularly attend school meetings due to work commitments, distance, or lack of awareness regarding their importance. This finding contrasts with the study by Munthe and Westergård (2023), who found that parent - teacher conferences provide valuable opportunities for discussing pupils' progress, setting academic goals, and strengthening collaboration between schools and families. The discrepancy may indicate that although meetings are potentially effective, low attendance rates reduce their actual impact in public primary schools within the study area. During the interview with the Parent, P7 commented that:

> Parents support early childhood education by ensuring regular school attendance, providing learning materials, monitoring homework, attending school meetings, communicating with teachers about their children's progress, participating in school activities, providing emotional support, and contributing to school development initiatives. They also help create a conducive learning environment at home (*P7 Personal communication, 28 May 2026*).

Guardian 9 added that:

> Most parents attend meetings when invited by the school, usually once or twice per term. Attendance varies depending on work commitments, distance from school, and awareness of the importance of participation. Some parents regularly attend all meetings, while others attend only when there is a specific issue concerning their child (*G9 Personal communication, 09 May 2026*).

Information in the interview indicates that both respondents acknowledge the value of parent - teacher meetings in providing conducive learning environment both at home and in school. The parent (P7) appreciates the effort in supporting early childhood education through regular school attendance, monitoring homework, attending school meetings and communicating with teachers about their children's progress. The guardian(G9*)* meetings attendance varies depending on work commitments, distance from school, and awareness of the importance of participation. These views suggest that while there are occasional successes, more consistent and informed action is needed from school committees to ensure inclusive learning support. In line with this finding, Goodall (2023) reported that parental presence in school activities strengthens communication channels and promotes collaborative support for learners.

While responding to open ended questions on how parental involvement is important in early childhood education of pupils, one respondent noted that; "*it is the responsibility of parents to create a conducive learning environment at home. Apart from attending meetings, parents participate in school activities, school development projects, sports competitions, cultural events, academic days, and environmental cleanliness campaigns.* Another respondent noted that; *some few parents occasionally volunteer as resource persons during career guidance sessions and educational programmes". This helps both parties provide timely support to learners, resulting in improved early childhood education in public primary schools in Arusha District Council*. The implication here is that parents are encouraged to participate in school activities through various ways. In essence, parental participation in diverse school activities strengthens family - school communication and promotes early childhood education.

The findings revealed that WhatsApp and similar digital platforms had a mean score 3.90, indicating high extent

effectiveness. More than half of respondents (54.8%) rated them as effective to a high extent, while 32.3% rated them as effective to a very low extent. This suggests that digital communication platforms are relatively widely utilized or effectively managed within the study area. This finding agrees with the study by Traeger-Soudry et al. (2025), who found that WhatsApp enhances teacher - parent communication by facilitating timely information sharing and fostering connectedness between schools and families. However, the authors also noted that effectiveness depends on clear communication guidelines and active participation from both parents and teachers. Likewise, Wasserman and Zwebner (2019) found that WhatsApp can improve communication efficiency when boundaries and communication protocols are well established. The low effectiveness observed in Arusha District Council may therefore reflect challenges related to internet access, smartphone ownership particularly in the village, digital literacy, or inadequate management of communication groups.

From documentary analysis, the researcher established that the report on pupils' consistency in school attendance informs parents about their child's regularity in attending school, punctuality, and participation in daily classroom activities. The finding shows that regular school attendance enables children to benefit fully from classroom instruction, social interaction, and learning experiences that promote holistic development. Conversely, frequent absenteeism or lateness hinders academic progress, reduce classroom participation, and negatively affect children's social adjustment. Therefore, informing parents about attendance patterns enables them to identify barriers to regular attendance and collaborate with teachers in ensuring that children consistently participate in school activities. This finding positively resonates with Zulauf-McCurdy et al. (2024) who reported that frequent communication regarding attendance strengthens home-school partnerships, which are associated with improved child outcomes in early childhood education.

4.2 Measures for Improving Communication Practices to Support Pupils' Development in Public Primary Schools in Arusha District Council, Tanzania

The study also investigated the measures for improving communication practices to support pupils' development in public primary schools in Arusha District Council, Tanzania. To understand the concern, the required information was obtained by the researcher through questionnaires provided items to teachers to indicate the level of agreement with the given statement, while the head teachers and parents/guardians were interviewed. The five-level Likert scale was employed to make the unit of analysis in which 1=Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Undecided (U), 4=Agree (A), 5=Strongly Agree (SA), f=frequencies, & P=Percentages. The rate of percentage described as ≤ 20=extremely minority; 21-49= minority; 50-59=moderate; 60-69= majority; 71-89= very high majority; 90-99=extremely majority; 100= overwhelming majority (Taherdoost, 2019). The interpretation of mean scores followed established guidelines. A mean score greater than 3 indicates measures that would greatly improve communication between parents and teachers to support pupils' development in public primary schools. Conversely, a mean score below 3 suggests that otherwise. A mean score of exactly 3 reflects a neutral perception regarding the measure (Chyung & Hutchinson, 2023). Their responses are summarized in table 2.

Table 2: Measures for improving communication practices to support pupils' development in public primary schools in Arusha District Council (n=31)

Statement	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	Mean
1. Regular meetings and feedback sessions	9	29.0	13	41.9	9	29.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.00
2. Parent education programs/workshops	2	6.5	29	93.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.06
3. Improved communication methods (e.g., SMS, WhatsApp).	20	64.5	11	35.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.65
4. Involving parents in school planning	5	16.1	26	83.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.16
5. Home visits by teachers	29	93.5	2	6.5	9	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.94
6. School visits by parents	12	38.7	19	61.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.39
7. Cultural or community events	22	71.0	9	29.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.71
Grand Mean											**4.42**

Source: Field Data (2026)

Table 2 presents respondents' views regarding measures that can improve communication practices between parents and teachers to support pupils' development in public primary schools in Arusha District Council. The data revealed that regular meetings and feedback sessions were highly supported by respondents, with a mean score of 4.00. Specifically, 41.9% agreed and 29.0% strongly agreed that regular meetings and feedback sessions are important for improving communication practices. This suggests that respondents recognize the value of continuous interaction between parents and teachers in monitoring pupils' progress and addressing educational challenges. This finding is in agreement with the study by Muntheand Westergård (2023), who found that regular parent - teacher meetings facilitate information sharing, strengthen school - family partnerships, and improve pupils' academic outcomes through collaborative problem-solving. Similarly, Boonk, L. et al. (2018) weighs by reporting that consistent communication between schools and families enhances parental involvement and positively influences learners' educational achievement.

The data further revealed that parent education programs and workshops received strong support, with a mean score of 4.06. An overwhelming majority (93.5%) agreed that parent education initiatives are necessary for improving communication practices. This indicates that respondents believe parents require knowledge and skills to effectively participate in their children's education. This finding is in agreement with the study by Mashauriet al. (2024), who found that training programs for parents and teachers improved parental engagement and strengthened communication between schools and families. Likewise, Goodall (2023) found that parent education programs empower parents with strategies to support learning at home, resulting in improved educational outcomes and stronger school–home relationships.

In response to open ended questions, on measures for improving communication practices to support pupils' development in public primary schools in Arusha District Council one respondent noted that; *Regular parent-teacher meetings, open days and academic progress meetings, WhatsApp communication groups and SMS and phone call communication systems*. Similarly, from another respondent, it was noted that; *School committee meetings involving parents, community outreach programs and school events such as sports days and cultural celebrations that encourage parental participation*.

The data indicate that improved communication methods such as SMS and WhatsApp received a very high level of support, with a mean score of 4.65. The majority of respondents (64.5%) strongly agreed, while 35.5% agreed that modern communication technologies can enhance communication practices. This suggests that stakeholders recognize the potential of digital tools in facilitating timely and efficient communication between parents and teachers. This finding is in conformity with the study by Traeger-Soudry et al. (2025), who found that WhatsApp groups improve communication efficiency by enabling instant information sharing and increasing parental engagement in school activities.

Additionally, data in table 2 show that involving parents in school planning was highly endorsed, with a mean score of 4.16. About 83.9% of respondents agreed, while 16.1% strongly agreed that parental participation in planning processes is important for improving communication and supporting pupils' development. This finding is in agreement with the study by Epstein and Sheldon (2019), who found that involving parents in school decision-making promotes shared responsibility, strengthens communication, and enhances educational outcomes. Likewise, Mashauri et al. (2024) reported that collaborative school governance structures increase parental commitment and improve support for pupils' learning.

The data further revealed that cultural or community events were highly supported as a strategy for improving communication practices, with a mean score of 4.71. Most respondents (71.0%) strongly agreed and 29.0% agreed that such events can strengthen communication between schools and families. This finding is in harmony with the study by Auerbach (2022), who found that community-based educational activities create opportunities for meaningful interactions among parents, teachers, and learners, thereby strengthening school - community partnerships. Similarly, the finding confirms Ishimaru (2023) who reported that culturally responsive family engagement initiatives enhance communication, trust, and collaboration between schools and communities. These findings suggest that cultural and community events can serve as effective platforms for promoting parental involvement and supporting pupils' development.

Pointing out the communication strategies most effective in encouraging parental engagement and effectiveness of parent - teacher communication, a parent and guardian noted that;

> As per my experience, several strategies are used to strengthen parent - teacher communication in our school. These include direct phone calls between teachers and parents, regular parent-teacher meetings, WhatsApp groups and SMS messaging and home visits by teachers. The school should also promote trust-building initiatives and collaborative decision-making processes (Personal Interview, 22nd May, 2026).

Another head teacher of school "1" put forth the views that:

> Sincerely speaking, individual consultations regarding pupils' progress, school open days, timely feedback on academic performance and behavior and community meetings involving parents and school leaders. These strategies

promote trust, strengthen relationships, and encourage active parental participation in children's education. Parent–teacher collaboration improves pupils' attendance, motivation, behaviour, and education achievement (Personal Interview, 28th May, 2026).

The response quoted in the interviews indicated strong parent - teacher partnerships contribute positively to learners' education achievement. Schools should provide resources and infrastructure that support communication between schools and families, Facilitate community education forums and stakeholder meetings. This finding is in agreement with the study by Garbacz et al. (2022), who reported that schools that adopt inclusive communication and engagement strategies achieve stronger family - school partnerships.

The report on pupils' general progress from the document analyzed indicated that parents with a comprehensive summary of children's academic achievement and overall development. This includes literacy and numeracy skills, classroom participation, language development, cognitive growth, creativity, physical development, emotional well-being, and areas requiring additional support. The finding shows that the reports help parents understand their children's strengths and weaknesses and encourage them to provide appropriate support at home. The study revealed that regular sharing of pupils' progress also strengthens collaboration between parents and teachers, enabling both parties to work together towards achieving children's educational and developmental goals. In this regard, Koskuluet (2023) weighs by demonstrating that strong parent-teacher partnerships and continuous communication contribute positively to children's academic achievement and holistic development of pupils.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the study findings, the following conclusions are made:

The study concludes that parent - teacher communication channels in public primary schools in Arusha District Council are moderately effective in promoting pupils' development, as reflected by the grand mean score of 3.48. Among the communication channels examined, phone calls emerged as the most effective method due to their immediacy and accessibility. However, email communication, WhatsApp platforms, written reports, regular meetings, joint planning, and parent - teacher collaboration were perceived as ineffective to low extents. These findings suggest that schools have not fully embraced communication and partnership mechanisms that could enhance pupils' academic and social development. The results further indicate a need to strengthen parental engagement strategies and improve communication systems between schools and families.

Furthermore, the study concludes that respondents strongly support various measures aimed at improving communication practices between parents and teachers in public primary schools in Arusha District Council, as evidenced by the high grand mean score of 4.42. Among the proposed measures; home visits by teachers emerged as the preferred strategy, followed by cultural or community events and improved communication methods such as SMS and WhatsApp. Parent education programmes, parental involvement in school planning, school visits by parents, and regular meetings were also highly endorsed. The findings suggest that strengthening direct interaction, enhancing parental capacity, and adopting modern communication technologies can significantly improve school - family relationships and contribute to pupils' academic and social development.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, the researcher recommended the following:

1. The study recommends provision of short, practical training for teachers on effective, empathetic communication and documentation aligning with positive welcoming tone, clear expectations, personalized feedback, prompt lovely and friendly responses.
2. Allocate small, earmarked funds for airtime/SMS bundles, a basic smartphone for class-level communication if needed. It may also be necessary to build a minimal digital baseline to improve clarity and consistency.
3. School administrators should institutionalize regular parent–teacher meetings and feedback sessions to facilitate continuous communication regarding pupils' academic progress, behavior, and welfare. School management committees should actively involve parents in school planning and decision-making processes to foster ownership, accountability, and collaborative support for educational programs.
4. Additionally, schools should organize cultural and community events that bring together parents, teachers, learners, and community members to strengthen communication networks and promote collaborative responsibility for pupils' development.

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