

Challenges facing stakeholders' participation in improving teaching and learning process in public secondary schools in Rorya District, Mara, Tanzania

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Abstract

Stakeholder participation is crucial for the success and well-being of any organization. The study aimed to explore challenges facing stakeholder's participation in improving teaching and learning process in public secondary schools. The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed method design under a mixed research approach where the information was collected through questionnaires, interview guides and documentary reviews. The sample size of this study was 195, and simple random sampling, stratified sampling and purposive sampling techniques were applied to choose the respondents. Quantitative data were analyzed through SPSS version 20, while qualitative information was analyzed thematically. Again, the results of the study show that political interference, lack of awareness, poverty, negligence of some parents, lack of transparency and poor relationships with parents were the major challenges identified to affect stakeholders in supporting teaching and learning process. The study recommended that parents and other stakeholders should be enlightened about their duties and responsibilities in education to enhance their participation in supporting education issues. Additionally, a government should prepare a good policy that clearly states parents' roles and duties in education to be aware of what they are required to contribute to supporting students' learning.

Keywords— Education, Learning, Student, Teacher

I. INTRODUCTION

Stakeholder participation is crucial for the success and well-being of any organization. To promote good change and improve education systems, it is essential to involve key stakeholders such as educators, legislators, community leaders, and families. Equally, to attain success, an organization must possess a clear and well-defined vision that is developed through a robust strategic planning process involving stakeholders (Oneye, and Onyango, 2021). Moreover, a genuinely successful strategic plan or marketing plan can only be formulated by actively engaging and collaborating with stakeholders. According to Onyango (2020), stakeholder participation and engagement in education play a crucial role in transforming stakeholder requirements into school objectives and serve as the basis for developing effective strategies. Identifying mutual interests or collective motivation allows the school and stakeholders to come to a

conclusion and ensures a valuable investment in educational results and learning attainment.

Multiple studies have identified many methods to engage stakeholders in the delivery of high-quality teaching and learning in schools. A school regularly engages with several stakeholders, such as its employees, customers, shareholders, suppliers, government entities, and local community organizations (Torres, 2021). In addition, Kanana (2015) has observed that efforts to improve organizational performance have involved stakeholders in the corporate governance of the company. According to Cheng and Cheung (2003), efforts to enhance students' academic achievement have included the use of stakeholder participation. This can be accomplished by implementing an education strategy that facilitates collaboration between the government and relevant parties to address educational matters. Gestwicki (2015) highlighted that involving stakeholders in government partnerships decreases the government's operational costs

for educational initiatives. Furthermore, he stated that the primary objectives of involving education stakeholders, including parents, were to facilitate their understanding of their children's needs and to offer support accordingly. Moreover, as stated by Kopweh (2014), for schools to achieve success, they require the support and involvement of various education stakeholders, such as parents, students, school board members, instructors, community leaders, and non-Governmental organizations.

Historically, stakeholders' engagement in the teaching and learning process has been viewed differently in a variety of contexts, from local to global. Enormous efforts have been made in the USA to ensure that everyone has access to high-quality basic education. The Government of North America decentralized the educational system and appointed chief executive officers to improve the standard of teaching and learning process in schools in 1980 (Brown et al., 2016). On the other hand, inequalities remained despite the United States of America's massive efforts to guarantee that everyone had access to high-quality basic education, according to the Coleman Report on Equal Educational Opportunities (Coleman, 1966). In the Republic of Czech Republic, Hungary, Sweden and New Zealand, competent school administrators are crucial for achieving quality education through teaching and learning activities. School leaders in these nations have an impact on the standard of education by encouraging professional development and upholding student discipline (Fitzgerald, 2014). Furthermore, research conducted at public schools in the Philippines discovered that strong stakeholder participation in corporate governance strengthens the democratic approach, which gives individual schools more control over planning and decision-making and produces excellent academic results (Mutwiri, 2015). Additionally, Werf, Creemers, and Guldenmond (2001) assert that parental involvement has been the most effective strategy in Indonesia for improving academic standards in general and that the amount of parental participation positively affects children's academic performance.

In several African countries, the matter of stakeholder engagement in education has been given significant attention; however, the outcomes have not met the anticipated level of advancement. In Nigeria, education policy places importance on the participation of stakeholders in educational affairs, while its implementation is limited. This demonstrates the inadequate engagement of stakeholders in educational affairs, resulting in a deceleration of educational progress (Obayopo, 2017). Adeyemo (2005) stated that there is an ineffective relationship between teachers' efficiency and students' academic advancement in public schools, which

ultimately impacts students' results. According to Msila (2014), the Task Team Report emphasizes that the new education policy in South Africa promotes the involvement of various stakeholders, such as parents, school committees, and other parties, to enhance the delivery of services in a more efficient and effective manner. Gastic, Irby, and Zdanis (2008) contended that for schools to achieve success, it is imperative for other stakeholders, including parents, teachers, guardians, and community leaders, to provide their support.

In Ruangwa, Tanzania, Mhagama's (2020) study revealed that the government's efforts to introduce new programmes (BRNED) were not aligned with education implementers, who were also lacking guidance on programme implementation. This has an impact on the instruction and acquisition of knowledge by students, which in turn leads to subpar academic performance among learners in public secondary schools. In his book on Local Government in Tanzania, Onyango (2020) clarified that the purpose of decentralizing education to local authorities is to enhance educational endeavours by empowering local authorities, including parents, community members, and school board members, to strategize, make decisions, and execute educational activities. This endeavour has been impeded by numerous obstacles, including political interference, a lack of people, and undisciplined staff. These factors have had an impact on the execution of education, consequently impeding students' academic progress in public secondary schools.

Furthermore, the research conducted by Jonas and Mkulu (2022) investigated the influence of the School Management Team on the scholastic achievement of students at community secondary schools situated in Tabora Municipality. The study revealed that a considerable proportion of community secondary schools in Tabora municipality demonstrate subpar performance in national tests, namely, in form four examinations, as reported by the National tests Council of Tanzania (NECTA, 2020). Furthermore, it was noted that certain schools in the region were listed as some of the lowest performing schools based on NECTA's (2020) rankings. Furthermore, these issues arose due to a lack of assistance from the community, students' misconduct, limited funding, and a scarcity of educational resources.

In research conducted in Musoma Municipality by Rawle et al. (2017), it was found that the government worked together with donors to launch multiple projects aimed at enhancing students' learning. The programmes mentioned, such as the Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDP), Education Quality Improvement Programme (EQUIP), Big Results Now (BRN), and Free

Secondary Education Programme (FSEP), were designed to enhance the teaching and learning environment and offer in-service training for teachers to improve students' performance. However, despite these efforts, student performance has persistently remained at a low level. Furthermore, Oneye and Onyango (2021), in their study in Rorya District, observed that school-home distance slows down students' performance, as it makes students become tired and bored, hence lacking concentration in the learning process.

The Tanzanian government implemented a free education initiative in 2015 as a component of the Education and Training Policy of 2014, with the aim of achieving the Tanzania Development Vision of 2025. Although free education has been implemented in Tanzania, the involvement of stakeholders in the teaching and learning process remains unconvincing due to consistently poor performance in the form of four examinations in public secondary schools in Rorya District. This fact was explicitly highlighted in the national examination results from 2019 to 2022. After extensively reviewing multiple books and papers, the researcher became interested in investigating the influence of stakeholders' involvement in the teaching and learning process on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rorya District.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In reviewing literature, various studies have identified. Torres (2021) found that impersonal school environment is a challenge for the stakeholders' involvement in education issues. This means that the impersonal school environment is among the challenges that affect the level of parental participation in supporting education activities, which also affects students' achievement. Therefore, a conducive school environment that reconnects both parents and teachers in supporting education is needed for students' achievement in the learning process.

Dookie (2013) showed that parents typically played a significant role in raising the academic achievement of their children. However, the study also discovered that in other instances, instructor quality was a causative factor in some areas. This showed that when the relationship between parents and teachers was not good, it affected students' learning. Thus, to improve teaching and learning activities, both parents and teachers need to work as a team to improve student learning activities.

Yaro, Salleh and Arshad (2018) observed that incorporating education stakeholders into different education issues by the government is a challenge for education stakeholders to participate effectively in education matters. The lack of proper and enough

information to stakeholders about their participation in education issues is a challenge for them in their participation. Therefore, the majority of the education stakeholders failed to be efficiently involved in education issues due to a lack of information on what they could participate in and a lack of cooperation. Bekoe and Quartey (2013) revealed that despite the value of involving the community in school concerns, the community still faces a variety of challenges. The author showed that farming activities, parents' low understanding of education, poor communication and unrecognized opinions of others served as challenges for the community to participate effectively in education issues. From the above concern, educational leaders needed to value and work on the educational advice or opinions given by community members for improvement, but ignoring them could affect their engagement in supporting academic issues.

Aryeh-Adjei (2021) revealed that guardians and parents do not appear to be concerned with anything pertaining to the school. Also, the author recommended that they lack knowledge of the community and other education stakeholders on the significance of involvement in education issues affecting the student learning process. In this scenario, it was real that most of the parents and other education stakeholders failed to be involved in education issues due to their ignorance of the importance of involving themselves in education issues, which affected their contribution to the teaching and learning process. Thus, there is a need to keep parents aware of the significance of involving themselves in education issues to enhance learners' success. Polycarp (2021) revealed that in stakeholders' perceptions of the benefits and obstacles to school-community partnerships in seed secondary schools, there are different challenges recognized that hinder the participation of stakeholders in education issues. The author exposed that negative attitudes towards education, the low level of parents' education, lack of accountability, parents' low socio-economic status and irregular parent meetings are the challenges that hinder community participation in education issues. By referring to the above comments, parents' low participation is tied to a lack of awareness of the role of engaging in education issues. Thus, using parents' regular meetings, education administrators might have a chance to announce, advertise and educate parents how to handle and implement various education activities and show them their roles in improving the teaching process.

Gichohi (2015) revealed that embracing stakeholder involvement in school issues is a challenge for the whole process of teaching and learning in schools. Likewise, the author commented that there is a need to involve

stakeholders to monitor students' performance. Therefore, for a school to be successful, it needs support from parents and other stakeholders, which can be achieved through conducting regular parent meetings. This was helpful in sharing ideas, advice and techniques for implementing effective education and hence improving students' teaching and learning. Kambuga (2013) revealed that in different areas around the world, particularly in Tanzania, the involvement of different stakeholders faces different challenges, including poverty, lack of transparency and accountability and political affiliations. Based on the above discussion, it is true that the extent of stakeholder engagement in education activities interferes with the issues that have emerged from social, political and economic perspectives. Thus, teachers' transparency and commitment are needed because they might create trust among them and hence enhance their involvement in supporting students' learning activities to improve performance.

Nyandwi (2014) revealed that the factors that have been found to have an impact on low academic attainment in public secondary schools include low parental income, inadequate laboratory apparatus, inadequate teaching and learning resources, a shortage of instructors, a lack of library facilities, a lack of English language competency, and long walking distances to school. Based on the above comment, English is a language that helps students understand other subjects. Failure to know this language affects students' learning. Therefore, understanding English subjects very well might assist students in learning other subjects. Lauwo and Mkulu (2021) found that the major obstacles to community involvement in education include ignorance, bad school administration, poverty, political intervention, unfavourable attitudes and behaviours and a lack of communication between the school and the community. This implies that poor communication between the school and parents affects community members' ability to provide their support in teaching and learning, which also affects students' performance. Thus, a school is required to enhance

communication with parents in education institutions to improve students' learning. Oneye and Onyango (2021) observed that school-home distance and inadequate student safety and time are the challenges that affect education stakeholders, including parents and teachers, in improving education activities. Thus, students walking a long distance to school in public secondary school have been an issue since it makes a pupil tired, bored or not concentrating in a lesson; this slows down the learning process and hence results in poor performance. Therefore, the question is how stakeholders' participation in teaching and learning processes improves students' performance.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used explanatory sequential research design under the mixed method approach. The design was chosen and used because it allowed a researcher to gather data from each approach individually. Also, explanatory sequential research design was applied because one data source might not be enough to provide a needed results as the weakness of one part can be covered by other part. In this design, the qualitative data used to explain the initial quantitative data results. The researcher opted to use the Rorya District council because Rorya District is one of the areas that have many public secondary schools, and it performed poorly in the national examination results; this was stated clearly in the national examination results of 2019 - 2022 (NECTA Reports, 2019–2022). Data analysis was done with the assistance of statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 20 where data were coded and entered in to SPSS software for analysis. Qualitative data were transcribed, recorded and cleaned to determine the major themes given by the respondents and then analyzed thematically.

Findings of the Study

Challenges hindering parents' participation

Teachers were requested to mention the significance criteria used by local authorities in the distribution of learning resources in public secondary schools.

Table 2: Students responses on the challenges hindering parents' participation

Variables	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Poor provision of income and expenditure report by Head of school affect parent to supporting school activities.	11	11	9	9	4	4	22	22	53	54
Poor relationship between parents and school leader affects parent's contribution of funds for building school laboratories.	3	3	3	3	3	3	33	33	57	58
Poverty affects parents' contribution in	3	3	-	-	2	2	28	28	66	67

renovation of school furniture.

Inadequate of parent’s meetings affects their contribution of funds for students’ meals.	7	7	8	8	2	2	24	24	58	59
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Source: Field data 2023

Poor provision of income and expenditure report

From Table 2, the results indicate that 75(76%) of the respondents (students), agree that poor provision of income and expenditure reported by the head of school on the construction of the classroom is a challenge that affects parents’ ability to support school activities, and 20(20%) of the respondents (students), disagree with this statement. Despite the agreement, 4(4%) of the respondents (students) were neutral. This implies that a lack of financial reports tends to affect parents’ participation in supporting education.

The quantitative findings supported the qualitative findings obtained during the interview. When the interviewees asked to identify the challenges affecting parents’ participation in teaching and learning processes, one of the interviewees argued that:

“In reality, teachers are not giving us financial reports; this is due to lack of transparency. The provision of this report is important since it enables us to know how the funds received for the construction of school projects were used. This encouraged parents to support education activities.”
 (Interviewee, July 2023)

The quoted information means that some of the educational leaders are not transparent to the issues occurring in their education sector. If the report is not provided, it made most of the parents fail to know how funds were utilized. This affected the implementation of education activities. These results are in line with what was exposed by Kambuga (2013), who commented that many schools are affected by a lack of openness in providing information to stakeholders, which reduces their cooperation. This made parents lack essential information related to students’ academic progress, which in turn affected their participation and hence the poor performance of students.

Poor relationship with parents

Also, the findings in Table 2 specify that 90(91%) of the respondents (students), agree that poor relationships between parents and teachers are a challenge affecting parents’ contribution of funds for constructions of school laboratories, and 6(6%) of the students, disagree with this

statement. However, 3(3%) of the respondents (students), were neutral. This implied that ineffective cooperation among teachers and parents affects their contribution. Similarly, another interviewee asked about the challenges affecting stakeholders’ participation. The interviewee quoted commenting that:

“Parents and teachers in this school are not integrating well in the issues pertaining with teaching and learning process. This is due to the poor relationship between them. This is a challenge because many parents are not ready to support teaching and learning activities and hence interrupt students’ academic development in this school.”
 (Interviewee, July 2023)

This means that the integration of parents and teachers as well as the school leader might influence the involvement of parents in education issues. Poor correlation between teachers and parents tends to destroy their unity. This caused them to fail to work together, hence affecting their involvement in the implementation of learning activities. In the same vein, Bekoe and Quartey (2013) claimed that the level of stakeholders’ participation can be affected by poor relationships between parents and teachers. This implies that if parents do not match teachers, it becomes difficult for them to perform their duties, hence affecting the performance of students.

Poverty

Moreover, Moreover, the findings from Table 2 indicate that 94(95%) of the respondents (students), agree that poverty is a challenge that affects parents’ contribution to the renovation of school furniture, and 3(3%) of the respondents (students), disagree with this statement. However, 2(2%) of the students were neutral. This implied that the poor economic ability of parents has an effect on parents’ participation in supporting the learning process. Additionally, the qualitative information obtained during the interviewee supported that poverty is one of the challenges in the involvement of education issues. The interview, when asked about the challenges affecting stakeholders’ participation, quoted the following remark:

“In my school, most of the parents do not participate thoroughly well in teaching and learning processes, which

might be because of the ineffective income of the parents. This caused the students to lack learning materials such as books and exercise books. This demotivating student to learn, hence end up with poor academic results.” (Interviewee, July 2023)

The quoted information means that the existence of poverty to different education stakeholders is a challenge that affects the involvement of parents in different education issues. Low income has made some parents fail to contribute anything to improve the teaching and learning process of their children. This situation contributes greatly to affecting parents' involvement in supporting education activities in secondary schools. These factors cause children to miss learning materials such as books and exercise books, which is very important in the learning process. This finding corresponds with the information provided in the study conducted by Nyandwi (2014), who commented that low parental income has a negative impact on enhancing students' academic achievement which affected teaching and learning activities of students.

Inadequate parental meetings

Furthermore, the findings show that the findings in Table 2 show that 82(83%) of the respondents (students), agree that inadequate parental meetings are a challenge that affects parents' contribution of funds for students' meals, and 15(15%) of the students, disagree with this statement. Despite the agreement, 2(2%) of the respondents (students) were neutral. The findings supported the qualitative information provided during the interview. The interviewee quoted stated that:

“In this school, one of the problems that parents face is the shortage of parent meetings. We do not have enough time to meet and discuss issues pertaining to students' academic progress and school development in general. We are invited only if the head of school needs the contribution of funds for a certain activity. This affected parents' participation, which also affected students' learning.” (Interviewee, July 2023)

This implied that there were insufficient parents gathering in that school. In this situation, the support of parents and other stakeholders in the learning process was ineffective. According to the reviewed documents, the results from the study showed that the majority of the parents were not willing to attend school meetings. This affected planning

and decision making since decisions were made by few parents and their implementation became difficult. In this situation, the support of parents and other stakeholders in the learning process was ineffective. The findings match those of Yaro et al. (2018), who observed that incorporating education stakeholders into different education issues by the government is a challenge for education stakeholders to participate effectively in education matters. Therefore, inadequate parental meetings are the challenge for stakeholders' involvement in education issues. In the same vein Polycarp (2021) supported this statement by arguing that in school-community partnership in seed secondary schools-Uganda, negative attitudes towards education, the low level of parents' education and irregular parent meetings are the challenges that hinder community participation in education issues. Lack of parent meeting could deny a leader a chance to advertise and educate parents how to handle and implement various education activities and show them their roles for improving teaching process. This might made most of them ignoring involvement in education issues hence disturb students learning.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the study concluded that political interference, lack of awareness, poverty, negligence of some parents, lack of transparency and poor relationship with parents are the major findings that were stated by respondents as the challenges affecting stakeholders' participation in improving teaching and learning of students. These factors contribute greatly to affect parents' participation in teaching and learning processes, which also affects students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rorya district, Tanzania.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusion, the study recommended that Seminars and workshops should be prepared and provided several times to parents to educate them to be aware of their roles in enhancing teaching and learning processes for their children. Also a government should prepare a good policy that clearly states parents' roles in improving teaching and learning processes to enable them to know their responsibilities in the academic development of their children and hence participate in fulfilling their responsibilities. Moreover, School leaders should ensure that there is an effective relationship between parents and teachers since this enhances their unity and improves their cooperation in supporting education issues.

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