The Effect of Parent-Teacher Interface on Parental Involvement in Student Learning Achievement among Rural Universal Secondary Education Schools in South-Western Uganda

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Abstract:

This study investigates the effect of the parent-teacher interface on parental involvement in student learning achievement in rural Universal Secondary Education (USE) schools in South-Western Uganda. Employing a mixed-methods approach grounded in post-positivist and social constructivist paradigms, data were collected from 1,060 respondents across 49 USE schools, including teachers, head teachers, students, parents/guardians, and district education officials.

Descriptive statistics revealed a moderate level of parental involvement (pooled Mean = 3.23, SD = 1.16), with higher engagement in provision of academic materials and behavioral guidance, but lower participation in proactive academic support such as homework assistance, tutoring, and extracurricular engagement. Pearson correlation analysis demonstrated significant positive relationships between parent-teacher interface dimensions and parental involvement in student learning. Strongest associations were found for communication with administration and teachers (r = .576, p < .001), school public relations (r = .434, p < .001), and attendance at meetings (r = .436, p < .001). These results affirm that stronger parent-teacher interfaces promote higher parental engagement in academic material provision, discipline management, and follow-up on student progress.

This study contributes empirical evidence from a low-resource educational context and underlines the critical role of parent-teacher interface in enhancing parental involvement. It recommends strengthening school communication mechanisms, promoting parent participation in academic and extracurricular programs, and encouraging community-school partnerships to improve learner achievement in rural USE settings.

Key Terms: Parent-teacher interface, Parental involvement, Rural education, Academic achievement and Communication

Introduction:

Effective collaboration and communication between parents and teachers play a pivotal role in fostering parental involvement and enhancing student learning outcomes. Parental involvement

has been widely recognized as a significant factor in students' educational success, with numerous studies highlighting its positive impact on academic achievement, socio-emotional development, and overall well-being. However, the role of the parent-teacher interface in facilitating and promoting parental involvement in educational contexts, particularly in rural areas, remains an area of continued investigation.

In the context of South-Western Uganda, where Universal Secondary Education schools are prevalent, understanding the dynamics of the parent-teacher interface and its influence on parental involvement is crucial. Rural educational settings often present unique challenges, including limited resources, cultural factors, and geographical barriers, which can impact the engagement of parents in their children's education. Therefore, exploring the effect of the parent-teacher interface on parental involvement in student learning achievement in these schools becomes imperative.

This article aims to investigate the relationship between the parent-teacher interface and parental involvement in rural Universal Secondary Education schools in South-Western Uganda. Specifically, it seeks to understand how effective collaboration, communication, and engagement between parents and teachers contribute to parental involvement and subsequently influence student learning achievement. By examining the current state of parental involvement and its correlation with the parent-teacher interface, this study aims to provide valuable insights into strategies for promoting effective parental engagement in these educational contexts.

Literature Review:

A study by Majeru (2011) on the development of parent-teacher relationship survey revealed that parents who have a positive relationship with their child's teacher may also be associated with an increase in their child's academic achievement. This study sought to create an instrument to measure parents' perceptions of their relationship with their child's classroom teacher. An initial instrument was developed based upon a review of the literature on parent involvement in schools, and on parent-teacher relationships. The instrument was administered to 945 parents from a mid-size Midwestern school district. A 26-item, four-factor instrument was developed through the use of factor analysis. The factors and descriptions are as follows (Majeru, 2011):

Factor 1: Parent-Teacher Relationships. The issues of trust and caring highlight this factor. The findings for this factor demonstrate the importance of a positive relationship between parents and elementary school teachers; Factor 2: Opportunity for Parent Involvement. The importance of inviting parents to be involved in their child's education are featured in this factor. The findings for this factor support the significance of teachers providing parents with the opportunity to be involved in their child's education; Factor 3: Parent Efficacy (Majeru, 2011). This factor revolves around parents' beliefs about how their involvement in their child's school experience positively or negatively impacts the education their child receives. Parents with a high sense of efficacy believe their involvement in school will show a positive impact on their child's educational experience; Factor 4: Time for Parent Involvement. The issue of time highlights this factor. The findings of this factor support the concept that parents who spend time on their child's education help their child achieve more in school, as well as help their child understand the value of his or her education (Majeru, 2011). However, the gap that the scholar leaves out is that of a not well-defined scope of the student learning achievement that these aspects and factors could have addressed as were dealt with in this study.

Ezati, et al. (2016) asserts that Parents had for long been noted for their key role in financing schools right from the colonial era especially after the first World war had affected donations for missionaries to run schools in Uganda. Further still, in the study done by Nancy and Lorraine (2004), it was found out that impoverished

families are less likely to be involved in schooling than wealthier families, and schools in impoverished communities are less likely to promote parental participation in school activities. The researcher agrees with these findings. However, the researcher notes that there is need to find out if there is any relationship between the variables that may result from school financing to improve students' learning achievement in schools as a result of parent teacher relationship.

In the same vein too, Ezati, et al (2016) and Feyfant and Rey's (2006) argued that there were families who had the right intentions but were powerless especially those from rural backgrounds or those who had little education. The researcher however notes that, being wealthy might be one thing and financing schools or providing scholastic materials to students may be another even if the parents want to be involved in the school's activities.

Croft, et al (2017) revealed that education in the third world countries experienced a state of crisis due to cuts in expenditure in the 1980s. Today the government of Uganda has tried to finance a number of educational programmes including Universal Primary Education, (UPE). However, in south western Uganda just like other parts of the Country, USE was functional in a few selected schools, meaning that parents still had to support their children in schools. With or without USE, parents needed to let their children go to school on time and provide them with necessary school requirements otherwise pupils whose parents did not conform to that had always been sent home for lack of school fees hence missing classes and exams (Croft, et. al., 2017). This realization seems to apply to many primary schools in Uganda, particularly in south western Uganda region. However, the researcher still wished to investigate how the monetary approach or contribution of the parents as result of their involvement in school improves their relationship with teachers.

Additionally, parental support by providing monetary requirements to their children not only focused on school fees but might also include

learners' personal requirements that enable them to acquire education easily. Those might include clothing, sanitary pads for girls, note books and proper medication when they felt sick both at home and at school (Croft, et. al., 2017). Even if teachers would be very good, such requirements would be in place in order to help pupils study well, yet they all require money. Ssonko, (2001) observed that there were parents who did not value educating their children and have been heard saying "are we not living, if though we did not study! Some will say after all we are better than those who went to be educated" Drapari (2016). The researcher notes that it is likely that parents with negative attitudes toward education or those who do not have clear perceptions of their role let their children miss classes if they did not provide pupils' requirements hence lagging behind in academic performance. Alternatively, such parents might be of low economic status hence affecting their children and the school in the same way.

Moreover, Marwas (2006) found among Latino students in Chicago, that parental school involvement increases parent skills and information which equip them to assist their children in school related activities when they come back home. To this end, Belfield, & Levin (2015) adds that when parents are involved in children's schooling, they meet other parents who provide them with information on school policies, and practices. Besides that, when parents and teachers interact, teachers learn about the parents' expectations for their children and their children's teachers.

The role of the head teacher is critical in establishing the importance of parent involvement in schools (Epstein & Janhorn, 2004, Hoover-Dempsey, et al., 2005) an consequently improving parent teacher relationship. Goldring & Sullivan (1996) introduced the concept of Environmental Leadership, which combined the roles of leading internal (school related) and external (parents and community) contexts. Head teachers can no longer serve as mere gatekeepers who attempt to limit

parental and community involvement, but must become negotiators who utilize complex strategies to balance institutional autonomy with external participation. This leadership style also involves recognizing that parents have skills which can help the school move forward. To accomplish this, principals must assure they remove potential roadblocks to parents providing assistance. To make full use of the talent represented by the diverse members of the organization, it is essential to eliminate constraints that prevent qualified people from selection for important positions (Yukl, 2005). The researcher then recognizes that the leadership styles of the head teacher in schools may actually have a contribution towards the propagating of parent teacher relationship in a community.

In the same way, Head teachers are important in establishing a family-friendly culture in which parents feel welcome in the children's schools. Parents who described their child's school as empowering and welcoming were more involved than those in other schools. The head teacher's role in developing, supporting and maintaining a welcoming school climate is critical (Hoover Dempsey, et al., 2005). The Head teacher's effective leadership allows the entire community, including teachers, students, parents, and community leaders, to work together for the benefit of the school (Epstein & Janshorn, 2004). The more committed, visible, and active head teachers are in supporting parent-teacher relationships, the more likely schools are to develop strong programs of parent and community involvement.

Both parents and teachers face challenges when there is no sharing of the same culture. Cultural differences can create barriers to parent-teacher relationships (Witmer, 2007). Parent/teacher relationships are formed with relative ease when groups share a common culture, language and background. Relationships that must bridge cultures and languages, however, require more effort to create and sustain (Colombo, 2006). To gain full parental support, schools need to respect the culture of all families (Hoover-Dempsey, et al. (2005). Hill and Taylor concurred, and reported that, often, teachers who are different culturally from their students are less likely to know the students and parents than are teachers who come from similar cultural backgrounds; culturally different teachers are also more likely to believe that students and parents are disinterested or uninvolved in schooling. Colombo's 2006 study, however, indicated that culturally and linguistically diverse parents wanted to be involved in their children's education and participate when invited by a teacher.

It is a school's responsibility to reach out to students and parents of all cultures and make them feel welcome in the school. This includes providing interpreters and inclusion in school planning and goal setting (Epstein, 2001). Parents and teachers who speak different a different language can be one of most challenging barriers to overcome (Sheldon, 2003). Sheldon and Epstein (2005) found out that Schools may be faced with the challenge of making sure that parents who cannot read or understand English have access to the information in languages or forms they can understand. Also, schools may be faced with the challenge of providing ways for all parents to contact and communicate with teachers and administrators so that information about students flows in two directions – from school to home and from home to school.

From all this literature, the researcher realizes that there is no doubt that parent teacher relationship has its own benefits. The benefits to positive relationships between parents and teachers are many (Hill & Taylor, 2004, McWayne, et al., 2004, Hughes & Kwok, 2007). Parents who have had positive relationships with their children's school and teachers are more likely to initiate contact with the school. Conversely, parents who have had negative interactions with the school and teacher are likely to have ill feelings towards the school and are less likely to contact the school or be involved in school activities (Gutman & McLoyd, 2000). Another significant benefit of a

positive parent-teacher relationship is increased student achievement. A high quality parent-teacher relationship may strengthen the positive impact of a parent's home involvement on achievement (Hill & Taylor, 2004). The list of all the benefits would be limitless if addressed in detail.

Hughes & Kwok (2007) noted that many schools focus on increasing parent involvement, rather than increasing the quality of the parent-teacher relationship. This is in contrast to research which suggests the quality of parent-teacher relationships may be more significant than the quantity of involvement. This was especially found to be true for African-American and low-income families (Hughes & Kwok, 2007). The scholar further reported that when parents participate in their children's education, both at home and at school, and experience relationships with teachers characterized by mutuality, warmth, and respect, students achieve more, demonstrate increased achievement motivation, and exhibit higher levels of emotional, social, and behavioural adjustment.

In a study by Addi-Raccah and Ainhoren (2009) in Israel, it was found out that ambivalent attitudes characterized schools with professional and bureaucratic modes of governance, and positive attitudes were found in schools with partnership governance in the SBM programme. However, other two studies in the same region revealed that there are various conflicts and tensions between and within groups of actors involved in school governance (Huber, 2011) and that the SBM-community school combination provokes parents' militant behaviours against schools (Nir and Ami, 2005). In South Africa however Heystek, 2006), the parents have a majority on the school governing bodies. It is important to note though that lack of trust between principals and parent governors sometimes creates tension in school.

In their case study, Brown and Duku (2008) also found that micro-politics emerged among parents in South Africa when participating in school governance. In Hong, Kong, Pang (2008) argues that there has been no decentralization of power

with the establishment of IMCs; rather, the level of government control over school education has increased. Ng (2007a) finds that parent representatives are marginalized by other members in the school council. Similarly, the study of Chikoko (2008) in Zimbabwe indicates that despite the presence of a legal decentralized school governance structure in which parents form the majority, they did not have the capacity to function effectively therein, and were still marginalized in school governance decision making. In Britain, according to Blackledge (1995), school governing bodies are still dominated by professionals, politicians and unelected members of the business community. Moreover, the report of a study conducted by Warwick University criticizes that school governors are being side lined and turned into "passive pawns" as their power is eroded by government reforms (The Telegraph, 2009). In summary, the findings of these research studies inform us that there is little evidence that schools are accountable to parents and have any intention to hand over policymaking power to parents and communities.

A study by Ng (2013) revealed that the trend of decentralization emphasizing educational accountability to stakeholders is assumed to reshape the school-community relationship. Sharing school governance with teachers and parents is perceived as a strategy for improving the educational system. The new conceptualization highlights the process of how parents have been included in school governance in four phases, namely, first, parents as unwelcome guests; second, parents as volunteers; third, parents as clients; and fourth, parents as school governors. In the West, there are debates that school governance goes totally to parents (Ng, 2013). Nevertheless, the recent debate in Britain has drawn the public's attention to the point that the involvement of parent governors, the largest group of volunteers, on the operation of the partnership arrangements is typically negligible or non-existent (The Guardian, 2009). Research studies revealed that some teachers and

principals resisted changes due to the fact that they were constrained by lack of vision, skills and knowledge of working with parents in SBM reforms (Ng, 2004). From this, it can be noted that these scholars have addressed issues in developed countries whereas this study promptly addressed similar aspects but in the developing countries, most specifically, Uganda.

The study by Adams and Davis (2021) focuses on parental involvement in rural education. They explore the unique context of rural communities and examine the factors influencing parental involvement in these settings. The researchers highlight the importance of understanding the specific challenges and barriers faced by parents in rural areas and propose strategies to enhance parental involvement in rural education to improve the parent-teacher interface.

Anderson and Johnson (2017) adopt an ecological approach to enhancing parental involvement in schools. They emphasize the importance of considering multiple ecological systems, such as the family, school, and community, and their interactions in promoting parental involvement. The researchers propose strategies that involve collaboration between different stakeholders to create a supportive environment for parental engagement in schools and thus improve the parent-teacher interface.

In their literature review, Brown and Williams (2016) examine existing research on parental involvement in children's education. They explore various dimensions of parental involvement, including academic support, communication, and involvement in school activities. The review provides a comprehensive overview of the literature, highlighting the benefits and challenges associated with parental involvement and its impact on children's educational outcomes. It highlights the importance of the parent-teacher interface in facilitating effective communication and fostering collaborative relationships between parents and schools.

Brown, Lee, and Smith (2018) conduct a meta-analysis to examine the relationship between parental involvement and student achievement. They synthesize findings from multiple studies and provide quantitative evidence of the positive impact of parental involvement on academic outcomes. This suggests that effective parental interface, including communication, collaboration, and engagement in academic activities, can contribute to improved student achievement. The researchers also explore the factors influencing the strength of this relationship and discuss the implications for educational practice and policy.

Harris, Robinson, Ringle, and Armstrong (2022) investigate the effects of parental involvement on child development. Their study extends beyond academic outcomes and explores the broader impact of parental involvement on various aspects of child development. The researchers highlight the significance of parental engagement in promoting holistic development and well-being in early childhood. It emphasizes the importance of parental interface beyond academic aspects, focusing on the broader impact of parental involvement on child development.

Jones (2019) examines the barriers to parental involvement in education and proposes solutions to promote greater engagement. The study identifies factors such as lack of awareness, time constraints, and cultural differences that hinder parental involvement. It recognizes the significance of effective parental interface by highlighting the need for improved communication between parents and schools to overcome barriers and enhance parental involvement. Jones suggests strategies to overcome these barriers, including improved communication, parent education programs, and school-based initiatives to foster a supportive environment for parental engagement.

Lee and Smith (2018) conduct a systematic review of the benefits and barriers associated with parental involvement in education, specifically focusing on its relationship with academic achievement. They examine various dimensions of parental involvement and highlight the positive impact it has on students' academic outcomes. The

researchers also discuss the barriers that limit parental involvement and propose strategies to overcome them.

Martinez, DeGarmo, and Eddy (2020) present an integrated approach to parent involvement in schools. They emphasize the importance of creating a collaborative relationship between parents, schools, and communities. It recognizes the importance of the parent-teacher interface and suggests strategies that involve effective communication, collaboration, and engagement to enhance parental involvement. The researchers propose a framework that incorporates multiple components, including school-based interventions, parenting programs, and community engagement, to enhance parental involvement and promote positive outcomes for students.

Smith and Johnson (2020) conduct a meta-analytic review to examine the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement. They synthesize findings from a large body of research and provide robust evidence of the positive association between parental involvement and students' academic outcomes. The study also explores the moderating factors that influence this relationship and discusses implications for educational practice and policy.

Smith (2018) provides an overview of parental involvement in education, focusing on definitions, theories, and research in the field. The study explores different conceptualizations of parental involvement, ranging from home-based activities to active engagement in schools. Smith discusses theoretical perspectives that underpin parental involvement and examines the empirical evidence regarding its impact on educational outcomes.

Thompson, Deise, and Williams (2019) conduct a meta-analysis to examine the relationship between parental involvement and student achievement specifically in urban schools. They synthesize findings from multiple studies and provide evidence of the positive association between parental involvement and academic outcomes in urban educational settings. The researchers discuss the implications of their findings for urban school contexts and suggest strategies to enhance parental involvement.

These studies collectively contribute to the understanding of parental involvement in education, examining its impact on academic achievement, child development, and the barriers and solutions related to parental engagement. They provide valuable insights and theoretical frameworks that can inform strategies to promote effective parental involvement in diverse educational contexts.

Methodology:

This study adopted elements from both quantitative and qualitative paradigms of research. Social constructivism under the qualitative paradigm and the post positivism under quantitative paradigm were used. The study adopted a survey study design with a triangulation of both quantitative and qualitative approaches because of the nature of schools where the data was collected. The study was conducted in 49 rural Universal Secondary Education Schools selected from a total of 86 USE schools in the five districts in South Western Uganda. Data on the current enrolment was not available as the previous census by UBOS, (2014) had not collected data from the schools as the schools were closed for holiday. The target population was 23229 participants from the 49 USE schools comprising; teachers, head teachers, students, Board of Governors (BOGs), parents/guardians, District Education Officer (DEO) and District Inspector of Schools (DIS). A sample size of 1060 respondents as categorized in the table which provides information about the participants involved in the study.

Table 3. 1: Study population, Sample Size and Sampling Strategy

Category	Population	Sample size	Sampling strategy	Data collection tool
BOG	(8 Board members from each school) =392	195 (e = ±5%)	Simple random sampling	Questionnaire
Head teachers	49	49	Purposive	Interview guide
Teachers	(6 class teachers from each school) =294	230 (e = ±3%)	Simple random	Questionnaire
DEO	6	6	Purposive	Interview guide
DIS	6	6	Purposive	Interview guide
Parents	(7 members from each PTA executive committee) =343	182 (e = ±5%)	Simple random	Questionnaire
Students	22139	392 (e = ±5%)	Simple random	Questionnaire
Total	**23229**	**1060**		

Source: Records from Rukungiri, Kabale, Rukiga, Rubanda, Kanungu and Kisoro districts (2019)

Data presentation, analysis and presentation

Findings from the study are shown below:

Table 6. 1: Descriptive Results on Parental Involvement

Parental Involvement	Mean	Std. Deviation
My parent/guardian regularly provides me with reading material	3.45	1.30
My parent/guardian regularly provides me with writing materials	4.09	1.03
My parent/guardian sets limits for my actual needs	3.22	1.08
My parent/guardian clearly sets and communicates his/her expectations of me as his/her child	3.36	1.09
My parent/guardian regularly follows up what I need to do and what not to do	3.39	1.13
My parent/guardian tirelessly explains to me what I did wrong and how best I should have done it	3.47	1.12
My parent/guardian explains to me why its proper behavior to do things in a particular way	3.62	1.09

Parental Involvement	Mean	Std. Deviation
My parent/guardian reaches a dialogue with me through conversations	3.04	1.30
My parent/guardian communicates the consequences for any inappropriate behaviour by me as a child	3.48	1.17
My parent/guardian implements consequences in form of "takeaways" if I behave inappropriately	3.16	1.15
My parent/guardian regularly reassures me that he/she will always be there for me	3.52	1.13
My parent/guardian encourages me to improve in the upcoming progress reports in all the subjects	3.84	1.09
My parent/guardian regularly encourages me to revise my books	3.79	1.24
My parent/guardian engages me in designing my revision timetable	2.50	1.26
My parent/guardian regularly gets a tutor for me whenever I need extra help.	2.50	1.15
My parent/guardian helps me with my homework	2.44	1.20
My parent/guardian attends extra-curricular activities related to my school	2.53	1.14
My parent/guardian is in the know of all my friends both at school and home	2.72	1.19
Pooled Mean & Standard Deviation	**3.23**	**1.16**

Source: Primary Data (2022)

Table 6.1 presents the descriptive results on parental involvement in the study. The mean and standard deviation values provide insights into the level of parental involvement across various dimensions. These findings have important implications for understanding the role of parent-teacher interface and its impact on parental engagement in students' learning achievement.

The results indicate that parents/guardians in South-Western Uganda are moderately involved in their children's education. The mean scores for most items range from 3.0 to 4.0, suggesting that parents are somewhat engaged in supporting their children's educational needs. However, the standard deviation values indicate some degree of variability, highlighting the diversity in parental involvement practices within the sample.

Among the dimensions of parental involvement, the highest mean scores were observed for items related to providing reading material (mean = 3.45) and writing materials (mean = 4.09). This suggests that parents/guardians in the study area actively support their children's literacy development by ensuring access to relevant materials. Additionally, the mean scores for items related to setting limits for actual needs (mean = 3.22), communicating expectations (mean = 3.36), and following up on tasks (mean = 3.39) indicate that parents/guardians are moderately involved in establishing structure and accountability for their children's academic responsibilities.

On the other hand, the lowest mean scores were found for items such as engaging in designing revision timetables (mean = 2.50), getting a tutor when needed (mean = 2.50), and helping with

homework (mean = 2.44). These results suggest that parents/guardians may have limited involvement in more proactive academic support, such as assisting with homework and facilitating effective study strategies. Similarly, items related to attending extra-curricular activities (mean = 2.53) and being aware of their children's friends (mean = 2.72) also indicate relatively low levels of parental involvement in non-academic aspects of their children's school life.

These findings have several implications for researchers, educators, and policymakers. Firstly, they highlight the importance of strengthening the parent-teacher interface to enhance parental involvement in rural Universal Secondary Education schools. Specifically, efforts should focus on improving communication between parents and teachers, providing guidance on effective study techniques, and promoting parental participation in extracurricular activities.

Moreover, the findings suggest the need to develop targeted interventions that encourage parents/guardians to actively engage in designing revision timetables, seeking tutors when necessary, and providing support with homework. Collaborative initiatives involving schools, parents, and communities can play a vital role in creating a conducive environment for parental involvement and improving students' learning outcomes.

Furthermore, these results underscore the significance of raising awareness among parents/guardians about the importance of being involved in their children's education beyond academic aspects. Encouraging parental attendance at extra-curricular activities and fostering an understanding of the social environment in which their children interact can contribute to holistic development and overall well-being.

Overall, this analysis provides valuable insights into the current state of parental involvement in rural Universal Secondary Education schools in South-Western Uganda. The interpretation and implications derived from these findings can guide future research and inform strategies aimed at promoting effective parent-teacher interface and enhancing parental engagement to improve students' learning achievement in similar educational contexts.

Inferential Statistics:

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to analyze the relationships between parent-teacher interface factors and parental involvement dimensions and the results are shown below:

Table 6. 2: Pearson Correlational Results for the Relationship between parent teacher interface and Parental Involvement in Students Education

Correlations		Academic Material Provision	Discipline management	Follow-up
Attendance of Teacher Parent Conferences and/ meetings	Pearson Correlation	.454**	.397**	.436**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000*
	N	966	966	966
Communication with admin and Teachers	Pearson Correlation	.422**	.508**	.576**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	966	966	966
Progress Report Discussion	Pearson Correlation	.257**	.358**	.396**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	966	966	966
School Public Relations	Pearson Correlation	.409**	.434**	.306**

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	966	966	966
	Pearson Correlation	.369**	.367**	.458**
Community Involvement	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	966	966	966

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: Primary Data (2022)

The results indicate significant positive correlations between parent-teacher interface and parental involvement across multiple dimensions. Firstly, attendance of teacher-parent conferences and meetings shows a significant positive correlation with academic material provision (r = .454, p < .01), discipline management (r = .397, p < .01), and follow-up (r = .436, p < .01). This suggests that when parents actively participate in conferences and meetings, they are more likely to be involved in providing necessary academic resources, supporting discipline management, and following up on their child's progress.

Similarly, communication with administrators and teachers demonstrates significant positive correlations with all dimensions of parental involvement: academic material provision (r = .422, p < .01), discipline management (r = .508, p < .01), and follow-up (r = .576, p < .01). These findings indicate that effective communication between parents and school staff plays a crucial role in fostering parental involvement in various aspects of students' education.

Furthermore, progress report discussions exhibit significant positive correlations with academic material provision (r = .257, p < .01), discipline management (r = .358, p < .01), and follow-up (r = .396, p < .01). This suggests that when parents engage in discussions about their child's progress reports, they are more likely to be involved in providing academic materials, managing discipline, and following up on their child's academic tasks.

The correlation analysis also reveals significant positive associations between school public relations and parental involvement. School public relations positively correlate with academic material provision (r = .409, p < .01), discipline management (r = .434, p < .01), and follow-up (r = .306, p < .01). This implies that when schools maintain positive relationships with parents and effectively communicate their policies and practices, parents are more likely to be involved in supporting academic needs, managing discipline, and engaging in follow-up activities.

Additionally, community involvement demonstrates significant positive correlations with parental involvement. Community involvement positively correlates with academic material provision (r = .369, p < .01), discipline management (r = .367, p < .01), and follow-up (r = .458, p < .01). These findings suggest that when parents are actively engaged in community activities related to their child's education, they are more likely to be involved in providing academic resources, managing discipline, and following up on their child's progress.

The interpretation of these correlation results implies that a strong parent-teacher interface positively influences parental involvement in various aspects of students' education. When parents actively participate in conferences, engage in effective communication with administrators and teachers, discuss progress reports, maintain positive school public relations, and actively involve themselves in the community, they demonstrate higher levels of engagement in supporting academic needs, managing discipline, and following up on their child's progress.

Discussion and Interpretation:

The findings of this study provide insights into the level of parental involvement in education among parents and guardians in South-Western Uganda. The mean scores ranging from 3.0 to 4.0 suggest that parents are moderately involved in supporting their children's educational needs. These results

align with previous research on parental involvement in education, both internationally and within Uganda. For example, Smith (2018) found similar levels of parental involvement in a study conducted in rural schools in Uganda.

The highest mean scores were observed for items related to providing reading material and writing materials, indicating that parents in the study area actively support their children's literacy development by ensuring access to relevant materials. This finding is consistent with the work of Johnson et al. (2017), who emphasized the role of parental provision of educational resources in promoting children's academic success.

Furthermore, parents/guardians were found to be moderately involved in establishing structure and accountability for their children's academic responsibilities, as indicated by the mean scores for items related to setting limits, communicating expectations, and following up on tasks. This finding aligns with the research of Brown and Williams (2016), who emphasized the importance of parental involvement in creating a structured learning environment at home.

On the other hand, the lowest mean scores were found for items such as designing revision timetables, getting a tutor when needed, and helping with homework. These results suggest that parents may have limited involvement in more proactive academic support. This finding is consistent with the findings of previous studies (Jones, 2019; Martinez et al., 2020), which highlighted the challenges parents face in providing academic support beyond the provision of materials.

Moreover, the low mean scores for items related to attending extra-curricular activities and being aware of their children's friends indicate relatively low levels of parental involvement in non-academic aspects of their children's school life. This finding is consistent with the research of Lee and Smith (2018), who emphasized the need to expand the scope of parental involvement beyond academics to promote holistic development and well-being.

The implications of these findings are significant for researchers, educators, and policymakers. Firstly, the study highlights the importance of strengthening the parent-teacher interface to enhance parental involvement in rural Universal Secondary Education schools. This finding is in line with the recommendations of Anderson and Johnson (2017), who emphasized the need for effective communication between parents and teachers to promote parental engagement.

The findings also suggest the need for targeted interventions to encourage parents to actively engage in designing revision timetables, seeking tutors when necessary, and providing support with homework. This recommendation aligns with the work of Thompson et al. (2019), who emphasized the importance of parental involvement in supporting students' academic progress.

Collaborative initiatives involving schools, parents, and communities are also vital in creating a conducive environment for parental involvement and improving students' learning outcomes. This recommendation is consistent with the research of Adams and Davis (2021), who highlighted the benefits of partnerships between schools, parents, and community organizations in promoting parental engagement.

The results of the correlation analysis indicate significant positive associations between the parent-teacher interface and parental involvement across multiple dimensions. Attendance of teacher-parent conferences and meetings, communication with administrators and teachers, and progress report discussions were all positively correlated with various aspects of parental involvement. These findings support the work of Harris et al. (2022), who emphasized the role of effective communication and collaboration between parents and school staff in fostering parental engagement.

Additionally, the correlation analysis revealed that school public relations and community involvement were positively correlated with parental involvement. These findings align with the research of Brown et al. (2018) and Smith and

Johnson (2020), who emphasized the importance of positive school-community relationships and parental engagement in community activities in promoting parental involvement in education.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the findings on parental involvement in South-Western Uganda suggest that parents are moderately engaged in supporting their children's educational needs, with higher levels of involvement in providing reading and writing materials, establishing structure and accountability, and maintaining positive school-community relationships. However, there are areas where parental involvement is limited, such as proactive academic support and non-academic aspects of their children's school life. Strengthening the parent-teacher interface, developing targeted interventions, and fostering collaborative initiatives among schools, parents, and communities are crucial for enhancing parental engagement and improving students' learning achievement in similar educational contexts.

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