

The Contribution of Community Involvement to the Quality of Education in Secondary Schools

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Abstract : This study examined the contribution of community involvement to the quality of education in secondary schools in Mpwapwa District, Dodoma Region, Tanzania. The study was guided by Social Capital Theory, which emphasizes the importance of trust, social networks, shared norms, and cooperation in improving educational outcomes. A mixed-methods research approach employing an explanatory research design was used. Study participants involved 99 students who were obtained through simple random sampling, 52 teachers through stratified sampling, 10 parents through snowball and purposive sampling was used to obtain, 6 heads of schools, 6 Ward Education Officers, and 1 District Education Officer making a total of 174 participants. Data were collected using likert scale questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS Version 26 through descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The reliability of the questionnaire was established through Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.776 for 20 items, indicating acceptable internal consistency. The findings revealed that community members participated substantially in school activities, with 94.9% of students confirming their participation. Community involvement was particularly evident in monitoring students' academic progress, attending school meetings and events, motivating students to study, supporting school infrastructure, promoting discipline, and enhancing school accountability and transparency. However, the findings also showed limited community assistance with homework and school projects, largely due to parents' limited educational backgrounds and socioeconomic constraints. Furthermore, community involvement did not always translate directly into improved academic performance, suggesting that its effectiveness depends on the nature, quality, and structure of participation as well as other factors such as teaching quality and availability of learning resources. The study concludes that meaningful school-community partnerships are important for improving educational quality when participation is structured, purposeful, and supported by effective school leadership. The study recommends strengthening school-community communication, establishing structured community participation mechanisms, providing parent education programmes, promoting community-supported academic assistance, and strengthening accountability structures to enhance the contribution of community involvement to quality education.

Keyword : Community involvement, school-community partnership and quality of education

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INTRODUCTION

Education is an important instrument for individual and national development, and its quality depends not only on what takes place inside classrooms but also on the support provided by families and the wider community. Community involvement refers to the participation of parents, community leaders, local government authorities, school boards, non-governmental organizations, religious organizations, private organizations, and other stakeholders in supporting school activities and students' learning. Community involvement may include participating in school management, attending school meetings, monitoring students' progress, contributing financial and material resources, supporting school infrastructure, and collaborating with teachers to address students' educational needs. Iyengar (2021) argues that community participation is important in creating locally responsive education systems, particularly because communities possess knowledge, resources, and experiences that can strengthen educational processes. Similarly, Lema and Mwila (2022) explain that community involvement in school activities can promote accountability, encourage resource provision, and improve the quality of learning in secondary schools.

Community involvement in education has developed from the understanding that schools cannot effectively provide quality education

without the support of the communities they serve. Historically, schools were often viewed as institutions mainly responsible for teaching learners, while parents and community members were expected to provide support from outside the school. However, contemporary education emphasizes partnerships in which schools, families, and communities share responsibilities for learners' educational development. Such partnerships involve parents participating in school programmes, communities supporting school development, and teachers communicating with families about students' academic and social progress. Iyengar (2021) emphasizes the importance of rethinking community participation as a collaborative process in which local stakeholders contribute to educational planning and implementation. In the same way, Lema and Mwila (2022) found that community participation in school management can increase the acceptance of educational programmes because it allows local people to contribute their views and resources to the education process.

Globally, community involvement is increasingly used as a strategy for improving the quality of education in different countries. In South Africa, for example, parental involvement has been associated with improved learner discipline and academic achievement, although challenges such as ineffective

communication and parents' limited participation in school governance remain (Ndwandwe, 2023). In China, family-school-community partnerships have also been identified as important for improving students' academic achievement, with teachers' involvement beyond classroom instruction contributing positively to learners' educational outcomes (Zhang et al., 2024). Similarly, research involving secondary school students has shown that appropriate parental involvement can have positive relationships with academic achievement, particularly when parents provide supportive rather than controlling assistance (Teuber et al., 2023). Therefore, globally, community involvement is increasingly understood not simply as an additional activity but as an important component of school improvement, student support, resource mobilization, and educational quality.

In African countries, community involvement is particularly important because many schools continue to experience challenges related to inadequate educational resources, infrastructure, parental participation, and school-community communication. Community members can contribute to addressing these challenges by providing labour, financial support, learning materials, infrastructure, and guidance to students. In South Africa, Ndwandwe (2023) reported that parental involvement contributed to learner

discipline and achievement, although ineffective communication and limited participation in school governance constrained effective involvement. In Tanzania, Lema and Mwila (2022), in their study of public secondary schools in Hai District, found that community involvement increased accountability for learning outcomes and school resources while encouraging communities to provide human, material, and financial resources. These findings suggest that African communities can make an important contribution to educational quality when their participation is properly coordinated and integrated into school development activities.

In Tanzania, the government has continued to recognize the importance of involving parents and communities in improving the provision and quality of education. Community participation may take place through school boards, parents' meetings, school development projects, monitoring of students' attendance and discipline, provision of learning resources, and participation in decisions concerning school improvement. Recent evidence from Tanzania indicates that parental involvement is positively associated with students' learning outcomes. For example, a study conducted in high-performing public secondary schools in Tanzania found a strong positive relationship between parental involvement and students' academic performance, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.639$, $p < .01$ (2025

study). Likewise, Marwa and Mabagala (2025) found a significant relationship between parental involvement and students' academic performance in selected public secondary schools in Kongwa District, particularly through financial support, motivation, and follow-up of students' learning. However, despite these efforts, some secondary schools continue to experience inadequate community participation, limited parental engagement, insufficient resources, and weak collaboration between schools and surrounding communities. Therefore, the researcher intends to investigate the contribution of community involvement to the quality of education in secondary schools, with particular attention to how community participation supports school development, teaching and learning, resource mobilization, accountability, and students' educational outcomes.

Theoretical Review

Social Capital Theory underpins this study by emphasizing the importance of relationships, trust, networks, shared norms, and cooperation in improving educational quality. The theory guides the study in examining how collaboration among parents, teachers, community members, and schools contributes to supportive teaching and learning environments, student discipline, engagement, and school performance. In rural secondary schools, community involvement can help address resource

shortages through support for infrastructure, learning materials, mentorship, and student welfare, while shared accountability can strengthen school governance and teacher commitment. Through collective action, school-community partnerships can also address challenges such as absenteeism, dropout, and poor academic performance. Therefore, Social Capital Theory provides an appropriate framework for understanding how trust, communication, cooperation, and shared responsibility between schools and communities contribute to improving the quality of education in secondary schools in Mpwapwa District.

Empirical Literature Review

Täschner et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review of studies on community involvement in school processes and its contribution to student success. The review found that different forms of community involvement, including parental support with homework and discussions about educational goals, were positively associated with students' academic achievement and helped reduce educational disadvantages. Although the review provided important evidence on the relationship between community involvement and student success, it covered different levels of education and did not collect primary data directly from secondary schools.

Therefore, the present study addressed this gap by collecting primary data from secondary school stakeholders to examine how community involvement contributes to the quality of education.

Lim (2021) examined the contribution of community involvement and parents' educational background to students' academic achievement in the United States. The study adopted a descriptive quantitative design and collected survey data from middle school students and their parents in eight urban areas. The findings showed that supervising school-related activities, helping students with homework, and maintaining communication with teachers significantly contributed to students' academic success. Community involvement was also found to enhance students' motivation regardless of parents' educational background. However, the study focused mainly on academic achievement and did not sufficiently examine broader dimensions of educational quality, including the school environment and stakeholder collaboration. Therefore, the present study focused specifically on secondary schools and examined the wider contribution of community involvement to educational quality.

Hakim (2020) investigated how community participation could improve the quality of education in Indonesia. The study employed a qualitative multi-case study design and found that community participation

could take advisory, supportive, supervisory, and legislative forms. Such participation contributed to the development of effective educational programmes and helped schools respond to community needs. However, the study relied exclusively on qualitative data, which limited the possibility of generating broader quantitative evidence and may have increased the influence of researcher interpretation. Therefore, the present study employed a mixed-methods approach to integrate quantitative and qualitative evidence and provide a more comprehensive assessment of community involvement in secondary schools.

Ndwandwe (2023) investigated the relationship between community involvement and academic achievement in secondary schools in South Africa using a cross-sectional survey design. The findings indicated that community involvement was positively associated with students' academic performance. However, socioeconomic challenges, long working hours, and poor communication between schools and homes limited effective community participation. The study recommended flexible communication strategies to improve parental and community engagement. Despite its contribution, the study used a predominantly quantitative approach and therefore provided limited qualitative explanations of why and how community involvement influences

educational outcomes. Hence, the present study employed an explanatory mixed-methods approach to obtain both numerical evidence and detailed stakeholder perspectives.

In Nigeria, Oni (2024) examined community involvement in Lagos Education District IV using a quantitative descriptive survey design. The findings showed that community engagement contributed to improved student discipline, school management, and learning achievement. Nevertheless, parents experienced challenges related to limited time and economic constraints, which reduced their participation in school activities. The study recommended flexible meeting schedules and capacity-building programmes to encourage greater involvement. However, the study did not sufficiently examine the perspectives of different education stakeholders, including school heads and district education officers. Therefore, the present study incorporated teachers, parents, school heads, and education officers to obtain diverse perspectives regarding community involvement and educational quality.

Azeh et al. (2025) examined the role of community involvement in promoting student discipline in Cameroon using a mixed-methods approach involving 391 teachers. The findings indicated that community involvement contributed to reduced student absenteeism and improved the school climate. However,

communication difficulties and socioeconomic pressures were identified as major barriers to effective participation. The study recommended parent workshops and structured mechanisms for community participation. Although the study provided useful evidence on the contribution of community involvement to discipline and school climate, its respondents were predominantly teachers, limiting the perspectives of other stakeholders. Therefore, the present study included diverse stakeholders to provide a more balanced understanding of how community involvement contributes to the quality of education.

In Tanzania, Lema and Mwila (2022) examined community involvement in school activities and its effectiveness in promoting quality learning in public secondary schools in Hai District, Kilimanjaro. The study employed a mixed-methods approach using a convergent parallel design. The findings revealed that community members participated in activities such as constructing school infrastructure, contributing to student meals, attending school meetings, and addressing disciplinary issues, although the overall level of involvement was moderate. The study concluded that strong relationships between schools and communities were essential for achieving quality educational outcomes. However, the study was conducted in Hai District, which has different social and

educational contexts from other districts in Tanzania. Therefore, the present study extended the investigation to Mpwapwa District to establish how community involvement contributes to the quality of education in its secondary schools.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a mixed research approach with an explanatory research design, in which quantitative data were collected first through questionnaires and followed by qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions to explain and deepen the quantitative findings. The study was conducted in Mpwapwa District, Dodoma Region, due to its rural and semi-urban characteristics, educational challenges, and existing school-community initiatives. The target population comprised 8,811 individuals, including students, teachers, heads of schools, parents, Ward Education Officers (WEOs), and the District Education Officer (DEO), from which a sample of 174 participants was selected. Simple random sampling was used for students, stratified sampling for teachers, purposive sampling for heads of schools, WEOs and the DEO, and snowball sampling for parents. Data were collected using likert scale questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions. The validity of the instruments was established through expert and supervisor review, while

reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, which produced a coefficient of 0.776 for 20 questionnaire items, indicating acceptable internal consistency. A pilot study involving 10 students was conducted in a school outside the main sample to improve the instruments before data collection. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS Version 26 through descriptive statistics and presented in tables, charts, and narratives, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically through coding, categorization, and development of themes. Ethical considerations included obtaining research permission, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, and proper acknowledgement of sources.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study sought to examine the contribution of community participation to the progress towards the provision of quality education in secondary schools. In order to gain an understanding of the objective, the research asked two questions as follows:

Community Participation in School Activities

This question presents findings on the extent to which community members participate in school activities. Students were asked whether community members participate in various school activities. The responses were collected through closed-ended

questionnaires, and the findings are presented in Figure 1.

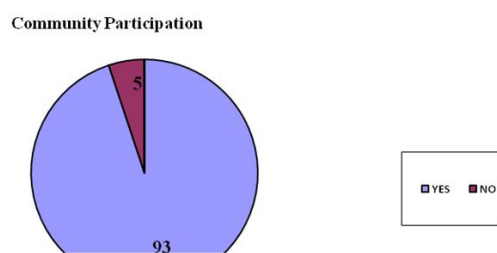


Figure 1. Students' Responses on Community Members' Participation in School Activities

Source: Field Data (2026)

Figure 1 presents students' responses on community members' participation in school activities. The findings reveal that 93 students (94.9%) responded Yes, indicating that community members participate in school activities. In contrast, only 5 students (5.1%) responded No, indicating that community members do not participate in school activities. The quantitative findings were further supported by information obtained from parents during the interviews. Parents acknowledged that they regularly participate in various school activities because they believe that education is a shared responsibility between schools and the community. One parent explained:

"As parents, we make every effort to participate in school activities whenever we are invited. We attend parents' meetings, contribute to school development projects, discuss

students' academic progress with teachers, and collaborate with school leaders to address challenges facing the school. Our participation helps us understand what is happening in the school and enables us to support our children more effectively both at home and at school." (Interview, P 1 May, 2026)

The imply that community participation in school activities is an important component of effective school-community partnerships. Through active participation in meetings, development projects, and decision-making processes, community members contribute to creating a conducive learning environment that supports students' academic achievement and overall school improvement. These findings are consistent with the views of Parji and Prasetya (2020), who argue that strong partnerships between schools, families, and communities contribute significantly to students' educational success by creating a supportive learning environment. Similarly, Nishimura (2020) contends that parental and community involvement enhances communication between schools and families, promotes student motivation, and improves educational outcomes. Furthermore, Kamau et al. (2021) emphasize that active community participation in school activities strengthens accountability and supports the implementation of

programs to improve educational quality.

Therefore, the high level of community participation reported by students indicates strong school-community partnerships in secondary schools in Mpwapwa District. This partnership can contribute to the provision of quality education by improving accountability, enhancing resource mobilization, and increasing support for students' academic and social development. However, the small proportion of respondents who reported a lack of community participation suggests that there is still a need to encourage consistent involvement of all community members in school affairs to maximize the benefits of school-community partnerships.

The Contribution of Community Involvement to the Quality of Education in Secondary Schools

This is the second question of the study, which examined the contribution of community involvement in students' academic progress towards the provision of quality education in secondary schools. Community involvement contributes to the quality of education by creating a supportive environment that enhances teaching and learning. Community members, including parents, local leaders, school committees, religious organizations, and other stakeholders, contribute by participating in school decision-making, mobilizing resources

for infrastructure development, providing learning materials, monitoring students' attendance and discipline, supporting teachers, and encouraging students to remain in school. Their participation also strengthens accountability, improves communication between schools and families, promotes student motivation, and helps address challenges affecting teaching and learning. As a result, effective community involvement can improve students' academic performance, increase school attendance and retention, and enhance the overall quality of education in secondary schools. Data were collected from students through questionnaires and from heads of schools, parents, Ward Education Officers (WEOs), and the District Education Officer (DEO) through interviews. The responses were intended to establish how community involvement in students' learning activities contributes to educational quality and academic achievement. The data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Students' Responses on Community Participation in Provision of Quality Education (n = 98)

Statements		SD F (%)	D F (%)	N F (%)	A F (%)	SA F (%)
i.	Community members regularly check my academic	8 (8.2)	6 (6.1)	13 (13.3)	37 (37.8)	34 (34.7)

		c progress.				
ii.	Commu nity members attend school meetings or events wheneve r possible.	0 (0.0)	11 (11. 2)	13 (13. 3)	38 (38. 8)	36 (36. 7)
iii.	Commu nity helps me with homewo rk and school projects.	24 (24. 5)	31 (31. 6)	14 (14. 3)	10 (10. 2)	19 (19. 4)
iv.	I feel more motivate d to study when the commun ity are involved in my educatio n.	6 (6.1)	6 (6.1)	7 (7.1)	30 (30. 6)	49 (50. 0)
v.	Commu nity involve ment improve s my academi c perform ance.	23 (23. 5)	28 (28. 6)	11 (11. 2)	7 (7.1)	29 (29. 6)

Source: Field Data (2026)

Table 1. presents students' responses on the contribution of community participation to their academic progress and to the provision of quality education. The findings indicate that most students acknowledged the importance of community involvement in their educational development. The detailed discussion is presented below, organized by each thematic point.

Community members' monitoring of students' academic progress

The findings show that a majority of students, 37 (37.8%), agreed and 34 (34.7%) strongly agreed that community members regularly check their academic progress, giving a combined agreement of 72.5%. Only 8 (8.2%) strongly disagreed, and 6 (6.1%) disagreed, while 13 (13.3%) were neutral. This suggests that community involvement in monitoring students' progress is substantially present in the schools studied and that most students perceive this oversight as a positive element of their educational experience. During the interviews, respondents consistently affirmed that community monitoring contributes significantly to students' academic commitment and performance. One of the respondents argued that:

“When community members, especially parents and local leaders, regularly ask about a student's performance, that student feels accountable. They cannot afford to be lazy because they know someone beyond the school gates is watching their progress and will hold them responsible.” (HoS B, May 2026)

This statement implies that community monitoring creates a culture of accountability among students. When students are aware that their academic progress is being tracked not only by teachers but also by community members, they internalize

a sense of responsibility that motivates consistent effort. Social Capital Theory, as advanced by Bourdieu (1986) and extended by Coleman (1988), holds that social networks, trust, and shared norms between schools and communities create structural conditions that support student learning. Coleman's concept of social closure, in which adults in a community collectively monitor and reinforce the same expectations, is directly demonstrated when community members track students' academic progress. This collective oversight constitutes a form of social capital that supplements institutional resources. Empirically, Täschner et al. (2021) confirmed that different forms of community involvement are positively correlated with student achievement and can help reduce educational disadvantages. Similarly, Lim (2021) found that supervising school-related activities and maintaining regular communication with teachers had a significant positive effect on students' academic success. In Tanzania, Lema and Mwila (2022) found that community participation, including attending school meetings and addressing disciplinary matters, fostered strong relationships that are essential for quality education outcomes.

Community attendance at school meetings and events

The results show that 38 (38.8%) of students agreed and 36 (36.7%)

strongly agreed that community members attend school meetings or events whenever possible, yielding a high combined agreement of 75.5%. No student strongly disagreed, while 11 (11.2%) disagreed and 13 (13.3%) were neutral. This strongly indicates that community members in the study area are relatively engaged in school events, which students interpret as a mark of investment in their education. Interview data provided qualitative texture to this finding, as demonstrated in the following responses:

"I believe every parent should attend school meetings without fail. When we come together, we understand the challenges our children face, and we can find solutions together. Absence from school meetings means absence from your child's future." (Parent 1, May 2026)

The quote above suggests that parental attendance at school meetings is seen as an active investment in students' futures. When parents publicly articulate this norm, it strengthens community-wide expectations of participation, reinforcing Social Capital Theory's emphasis on shared norms and reciprocal obligations.

The Social Capital Theory by Bourdieu (1986) is highly relevant here. When community members participate in school events, they strengthen the social bonds between home and school, creating trust and shared

responsibility, core elements of social capital. Putnam (1993) further argued that social cohesion and connectedness strengthen institutions by enhancing accountability and the flow of information, precisely what occurs when community members regularly attend school events. Barrera-Osorio et al. (2021) found that community involvement programs that included actionable monitoring tasks enhanced student attendance and, in some settings, improved academic achievement. Ndwandwe (2023) similarly found in South Africa that community involvement positively correlated with academic performance, though socioeconomic constraints, such as long working hours, sometimes hindered consistent attendance.

Community assistance with homework and school projects

The findings on community assistance with homework and school projects are notably mixed. As many as 24 (24.5%) students strongly disagreed, and 31 (31.6%) disagreed, for a combined disagreement of 56.1%, indicating that the majority of students do not receive homework support from community members. Only 10 (10.2%) agreed, and 19 (19.4%) strongly agreed, while 14 (14.3%) were neutral. This finding reveals a significant gap in direct academic support at the household and community levels. As one respondent argued that:

"Many parents in this area have limited formal education

themselves. They want to help their children with schoolwork, but they do not have the academic knowledge to do so. This is a real barrier that we must address through community adult education programs." (Interview, D, May 2026)

This quote above implies that community members' inability to provide academic support is not rooted in indifference but in educational limitations. This calls for policy interventions such as adult literacy programs and community learning centers that equip parents with the knowledge to support their children's schoolwork meaningfully. Furthermore, another respondent claimed that:

"I try to help my child at home, but up to Standard Seven I could assist, and now that they are in secondary school, the subjects are too advanced for me. I feel helpless sometimes. What I can do is ensure they have time to study and that they are not burdened with domestic work during exam periods." (Parent 3, May 2026)

The quotation implies that while parents' educational levels may limit direct academic assistance, indirect support such as creating conducive home study environments and managing domestic responsibilities remains a meaningful contribution. Schools should communicate clearly

with parents about these alternative forms of support. These findings reflect the limitations of Social Capital Theory as noted by Mond (2022), who argued that the theory can overestimate community capacity, particularly in contexts marked by poverty or low educational attainment. Not all communities possess the intellectual capital to provide homework support. However, Social Capital Theory still applies in recognizing that communities mobilize different forms of resources: even where direct academic support is absent, social capital manifests in moral encouragement, domestic arrangements that facilitate study, and informal networks of community volunteers. Empirically, Lim (2021) found that forms of community involvement, such as helping with homework, had a significant positive effect on academic success, underscoring the importance of addressing the skills gap that prevents many parents from providing this support. Hakim (2020) further identified that community participation can take supportive and advisory roles even beyond direct academic assistance, contributing to the development of strong educational programs.

Community involvement and student motivation to study

An overwhelming majority of students felt motivated to study when their community was involved in their

education: 30 (30.6%) agreed, and 49 (50.0%) strongly agreed, yielding a combined agreement of 80.6%. Only 6 (6.1%) strongly disagreed, and 6 (6.1%) disagreed, while 7 (7.1%) were neutral. This is among the strongest findings in this objective, suggesting a robust motivational link between community engagement and student academic effort. Interview respondents elaborated on the nature of this motivational relationship by saying that:

"Students respond deeply to being seen and valued by their community. When elders attend school events, when parents ask about their results, when local leaders come to speak at school assemblies, students feel that their education matters. That sense of mattering is incredibly powerful for motivation."
(HoS D, May 2026)

This implies that community presence serves as psychosocial reinforcement, deepening students' intrinsic motivation. Educational administrators should therefore prioritize community visibility in school life as a deliberate strategy for improving student engagement and reducing dropout rates. Another respondent claimed that:

"I once interviewed students who had improved their performance significantly, and almost all of them mentioned a community member, a relative, a neighbor, a local leader who

had encouraged them or whom they did not want to disappoint. The community is the invisible classroom.” (W 2, May 2026)

The phrase 'the invisible classroom' powerfully captures the motivational influence of community beyond formal instruction. This implies that motivation is not solely a product of teacher-student interaction but is deeply embedded in students' broader social environments. Schools should view community engagement as an extension of the learning environment. In support of this finding, one parent claimed that:

“When I told my child that I had spoken to the head teacher about their progress and that the community group had pledged to support their education, they changed immediately. They became more focused and stopped skipping classes. Knowing that the community cares makes students take themselves more seriously.” (Parent 4, May 2026)

This implies that community involvement functions as a form of social accountability that translates directly into behavioral change. When students internalize community investment in their education, they adopt greater self-discipline and commitment, outcomes central to academic success.

Social Capital Theory (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 1993) posits that the social networks and trust established between communities and schools create conditions conducive to learning. Motivation is a key mechanism through which this operates: students embedded in supportive social networks are more likely to see education as a valued enterprise and to persist through challenges with greater resilience. Putnam (2000) specifically argued that communities with high levels of social connectedness tend to yield better educational outcomes, and that motivational enhancement is one pathway through which this occurs. This is empirically reinforced by Lim (2021), who found that active community engagement improved students' motivation and enhanced the overall quality of education. Ndwandwe (2023) in South Africa similarly found a positive correlation between community involvement and academic performance, with motivation functioning as a critical mediating variable. In Tanzania, Guo et al. (2025) confirmed that community involvement patterns significantly influence students' engagement with schooling.

Community involvement improves academic performance.

The findings on this statement revealed a mixed response pattern. While 29 (29.6%) strongly agreed that community involvement improves

their academic performance and 7 (7.1%) agreed, the majority, 23 (23.5%), strongly disagreed, and 28 (28.6%) disagreed, suggesting that more students perceive community involvement as not directly translating into better academic performance. Eleven (11.2%) remained neutral. This finding points to an important distinction between community participation as a source of motivation or support and its measurable impact on academic outcomes. Interviewees offered nuanced interpretations of this finding by claiming that:

"Community participation alone does not automatically improve grades. What it does is create the conditions for improvement, build motivation, ensure discipline, and provide moral support. But without quality teaching, adequate learning materials, and student effort, community involvement cannot substitute for these academic essentials."
(D, May 2026)

This implies that community participation is a necessary but not sufficient condition for academic improvement. Its impact is mediated by other school-quality variables such as instructional quality and resource availability. Policy therefore needs to address community engagement as part of a broader, multi-dimensional strategy for educational improvement rather than as a standalone

intervention. In addition, another respondent argued that:

"Some students' performance is very poor despite their parents being very involved. The involvement needs to be the right kind, not just attending meetings, but actively following up on schoolwork, ensuring a study environment at home, and communicating with teachers about specific challenges."
(Teacher FGD, May 2026)

This implies that the quality and nature of community involvement matter as much as its frequency or form. Schools need to guide community members, particularly parents, on how to engage in academically meaningful ways that target specific learning needs rather than merely fulfilling participation in formal school events. These nuanced findings align with Mond's (2022) critical assessment of Social Capital Theory, which noted that social capital alone cannot guarantee improved educational quality without supportive policies, adequate school resources, and effective leadership. The theory's strength lies in highlighting relational foundations, but its limitations emerge when community participation is disconnected from structured academic goals. Täschner et al. (2021) found that different forms of community involvement are positively correlated with student achievement, but that structured and purposeful forms yield

stronger results. Oni (2024) in Nigeria found that community engagement improved students' discipline, school management, and learning achievements, but that socioeconomic constraints limited the depth of this impact. Barrera-Osorio et al. (2021) similarly found that community involvement programs that included specific academic tasks produced stronger effects than informational-only approaches, further confirming that purposeful, structured engagement is key to academic outcomes.

Through the interview, respondents explained other different contributions of community involvement in the provision of quality education, as they argued:

Community contribution to the enhancement of school infrastructure

The findings suggest that community participation promotes school infrastructure development through various contributions, for instance, to build old roads. During the interviews, respondents consistently emphasized that community support in infrastructure development creates a conducive environment for teaching and learning. One of the respondents argued that:

"Our school has benefited greatly from the support provided by community members. Through financial contributions, provision of building materials, and

voluntary labor, parents and local leaders have helped us construct new classrooms and renovate old buildings. These improvements have reduced overcrowding and provided students with a more comfortable environment for learning, which has positively influenced both teaching and academic performance." (HoS C, May 2026)

This statement implies that community participation in school infrastructure development directly improves the physical learning environment. Adequate classrooms and improved facilities reduce congestion and create conditions that enhance students' concentration, participation, and academic achievement. Furthermore, such support complements government efforts to address the infrastructural challenges facing public secondary schools. These findings are consistent with Social Capital Theory as advanced by Bourdieu (1986) and extended by Coleman (1988), which emphasizes that social networks, trust, and collective action generate resources that can be utilized for community development. The collaborative efforts of parents, local leaders, and other stakeholders in constructing and maintaining school facilities demonstrate how social capital can be mobilized to improve educational quality. Through shared responsibility and cooperation, communities provide valuable resources that strengthen schools'

capacity to deliver quality education. In addition, Täschner et al. (2021) found that community engagement in school development initiatives significantly improves educational facilities and learning environments. Similarly, Epstein (2018) reported that effective school-community partnerships support the provision of safe, supportive, and resource-rich learning environments that enhance students' educational experiences. In Tanzania, Lema and Mwila (2022) established that community participation in classroom construction, school maintenance, and resource mobilization plays a crucial role in improving infrastructure and promoting quality education outcomes in public secondary schools.

Community contribution to the promotion of student discipline

The findings revealed that community involvement plays a significant role in promoting student discipline in secondary schools. Students reported that parents, local leaders, and other community members actively participate in monitoring student behavior, addressing cases of misconduct, and reinforcing school rules. Such involvement helps create a supportive environment where students are encouraged to uphold acceptable standards of conduct both within and outside the school setting. During the interviews, respondents consistently emphasized the role of community members in shaping students' behavior

and reinforcing discipline. One of the respondents argued that:

"I have observed that schools located in communities where parents and local leaders actively participate in monitoring student conduct tend to experience fewer disciplinary challenges. Community members help enforce positive values and discourage behaviors that interfere with learning. Through regular communication with schools and parents, they ensure that students remain focused on their studies and respect school regulations." (WEO 3, May 2026)

This implies that community engagement extends the influence of school disciplinary systems beyond the school compound. The active participation of community stakeholders creates a supportive social environment that reinforces positive behavior and discourages actions that may negatively affect students' academic progress. Furthermore, it demonstrates the importance of partnerships between schools and communities in addressing disciplinary issues effectively.

Social Capital Theory, as advanced by Bourdieu (1986) and further developed by Coleman (1988), emphasizes that social relationships, trust, and shared norms facilitate collective action for the benefit of individuals and communities.

Community involvement in student discipline reflects the operation of social capital through shared expectations and collective supervision of young people. Coleman's concept of social closure is particularly relevant as community members work together to monitor behavior and reinforce acceptable standards of conduct. This collective oversight contributes to the development of disciplined learners and supports positive educational outcomes. Also, Barrera-Osorio et al. (2021) found that community participation in students' educational and behavioral development contributes positively to school discipline and academic achievement. Similarly, Nadeem (2020) reported that strong school-family-community partnerships help create safe and orderly learning environments by promoting positive student behavior and reducing disciplinary problems. Therefore, community involvement in monitoring student conduct and addressing behavioral challenges strengthens school discipline and contributes to the provision of quality education in secondary schools.

Community contribution to increased school accountability and transparency

The findings revealed that community involvement significantly enhances accountability and transparency in secondary schools. Students indicated that parents, school board members, community leaders,

and other stakeholders actively participate in monitoring school operations, attending meetings, and following up on the utilization of school resources. Such participation promotes openness in decision-making processes and ensures that school administrators remain accountable to the communities they serve. During the interviews, respondents consistently emphasized that community oversight strengthens accountability and promotes trust between schools and stakeholders. One of the respondents argued that:

"When parents and community representatives participate in school meetings and development committees, school management becomes more transparent. Major decisions regarding the use of funds, project implementation, and resource allocation are discussed openly. This builds confidence among stakeholders because everyone understands how resources are being used and can provide recommendations when necessary. As a result, there is greater accountability in the management of school affairs."
(HoS E, May 2026)

This statement implies that community participation serves as a monitoring mechanism that promotes transparency in school administration. By involving stakeholders in important decisions, schools reduce the likelihood of resource mismanagement and

strengthen public confidence in educational leadership. Open communication also encourages shared responsibility for school development and performance. The Social Capital Theory, as advanced by Bourdieu (1986) and extended by Coleman (1988) emphasizes that trust, social networks, and collaborative relationships facilitate collective action for mutual benefit. Community involvement in school governance demonstrates how social capital can be mobilized to enhance accountability and transparency. Through regular interaction, information sharing, and collective oversight, stakeholders create mechanisms that promote responsible leadership and effective management of educational resources. Coleman's notion of social closure is evident in community members collectively monitoring school operations and reinforcing expectations of integrity and accountability among school leaders. In addition, Hakim (2020) found that community participation in school committees and development activities enhances accountability in resource management and significantly contributes to the provision of quality education in public secondary schools.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that community involvement contributes positively to the quality of education in secondary schools in Mpwapwa District by promoting student

motivation, academic monitoring, discipline, infrastructure development, and school accountability. However, limited parental educational backgrounds and socioeconomic challenges restrict some forms of participation, particularly homework support. Therefore, effective community involvement requires strong communication, shared responsibility, and well-organized participation supported by quality teaching and adequate learning resources.

Recommendations

The study recommends that schools and education authorities strengthen school-community communication and establish structured opportunities for parents and community members to participate in student monitoring, discipline, school development, and decision-making. Parents should also be provided with guidance on how to support students' learning, while community members should be encouraged to contribute resources, mentorship, and academic assistance. School leaders should promote transparency and accountability, and education officers should monitor and support effective school-community partnerships.

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