



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



Community involvement and performance of secondary schools in Kassanda Town Council, Kassanda District

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Abstract

The purpose of study is to establish the ways of community involvement in management of secondary schools in Kassanda district. The study was conducted in Kassanda Town Council, Kassanda district, the study adopted a descriptive survey research designs based on both qualitative and quantitative research design. The data was collected from 50 respondents who were the parents and local leaders of Kassanda Town Council. The study findings reveal that whereas the community provides involvement in schools, the ways of participation are quite limited. The community makes some few contributions to the performance of the secondary schools and is limited by poverty of the communities and lack of policy for involving community in participating in schools. The study recommends that there is a need to orient and educate or the stakeholders on their responsibility of participating in decision making process in schools as well as ensure transparency and accountability of the funds they help to raise and that deliberate involvement of the community in affairs of the school. The study also recommends that policy formulation on matters on management of secondary schools should be all inclusive so that it can address the societal needs.

Keywords: Community; Involvement; Performance; Management Secondary; Schools

1. Introduction

Community' involvement can be defined as all activities done by parents that are intentionally associated with learning (Asiimwe & Nabitake, 2023; Asiimwe & Magunda, 2017). According to Alfred & Edward, (2020); Cohen, (2020); Karen and Warren (2022), conventional definitions are restricted to school related activities, unlike sociologists who draw a distinction between the home-based activities like helping children do homework, discussing their experiences at school, and the school-based activities like communication with the school and participating in school-based activities.

In this study, community' involvement was conceived as an independent variable perceived as the roles, responsibilities, and activities played by parents both at home and school in supporting education of their students, for example, provision of school requirements; school uniform, books, pens, feeding; supporting school management by participating in planning and decision making at school, involvement in school management through planning, decision making and participating in leadership. Supporting the child's learning giving students' encouragement, expectations and ensuring students' attendance to school to avoid absenteeism. Academic performance is defined as the outcome of education, the extent to which a pupil or teacher or institution has achieved their education goals (Ferguson, 2020; Asiimwe & Nabitake, 2023).

In this study, academic performance was assessed through the pupil's daily class scores and end of term exam scores which contributes to performance in the Uganda Certification Education (UCE) pass grades of Uganda National

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Examination Board (UNEB) in the order of first grade, second grade, third grade, fourth grade, up to Failure, as the worst academic performance grades and the student will not be allowed to join Post-Secondary Education. The researcher therefore used UNEB results for the last three years 2020 to 2022 in addition to the daily class work and end of term exams scores as a measure of academic performance. It was hoped that academic performance of students would depend on the extent of community involvement in supporting the education of their children both at home and in school and this has consistently been found to be related (Chuk, Asiimwe & Asiimwe, 2023; Maila & Asiimwe; 2024; World bank, 2019).

2. Related Literature

2.1. Provision of school uniform

Dressing of school uniform by students has become a norm in almost all schools in Uganda. Government of Uganda (2018) is of the view that parents, as a matter of obligation, provide their children with among other educational needs clothing. The students therefore are expected to dress in a school uniform provided by their parents as an obligation. This improves student's smartness, confidence and retention in schools (Dodd & Konzal, 2021; (Ferguson, 2020; Asiimwe & Nabitake, 2023). The researcher agrees with this position; however, it does not explain how it contributes to academic achievement of students. The role of parents' involvement in their children's education has become a crucial issue in educational policy and research.

Existing research findings suggest the existence of a positive relationship between parents' involvement and success in education. This study sought to extend frontiers of knowledge of the different parental practices in education and how they affect the academic performance of UCE students. Parents play a central role in the homes for example buying soap to wash these school uniforms and to ensure their children go to school clean. Generally speaking, to Henderson and Karren and Warren (2022), Asiimwe and Nabitake (2023) "parents' involvement is associated with children's higher achievements in language and mathematics, enrolment in more challenging programs, greater academic persistence, better behavior, better social skills and adaptation to school, better attendance and lower drop-out rates."

2.2. Provision of stationery

In this review the stationery requirements which were considered are provision of exercise books, pens and pencils. These will facilitate students learning and it is hoped that by parents providing them it will improve on their student's academic performance (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2018). Fun and Chen (2021); Chuk, Asiimwe & Asiimwe (2023); Maila & Asiimwe (2024); World bank (2019 reports that "[many] research findings have demonstrated that there is an overwhelming connection between literary resources in the homes and children's reading skills." The author is in agreement that Children whose parents are able to provide them with scholastic materials like books, pens, pencils to facilitate learning have a tendency to score higher than those that come to class without them. Students need books and writing pens and pencils to facilitate learning. However, this needs an investigation on how it can improve academic performance given the fact that there are parents who provide them but complain about poor performance of their children (Dodd & Konzal, 2021; (Ferguson, 2020; Asiimwe & Nabitake, 2023).

2.3. Provision of feeding

Food is important for human beings as well as students in school and is a part of education. The findings by Asiimwe and Nabitake (2023); Chuk, Asiimwe & Asiimwe (2023); Maila & Asiimwe (2024); World bank (2019 stated that "students need fuel to actually make them study well and be attentive and manage the responsibility of class. It has been discovered that skipping breakfast can adversely affect problem-solving tasks such as mathematics grades which require problem solving skills." Bray (2020); Chuk, Asiimwe & Asiimwe (2023); Maila & Asiimwe (2024); World bank (2019 observed that "education should develop moral aesthetic, physical and practical capacities not just cognitive knowledge organized in academic disciplines." There is need for community indeed to provide support to schools to have meals either packed or support the school to prepare meals for their students.

2.4. Involvement in planning

Fun and Chen (2021); Chuk, Asiimwe & Asiimwe (2023); Maila & Asiimwe (2024); World bank (2019 contend that "the effectiveness of parents, schools and communities working together has been documented in several studies." To promote these comprehensive partnerships, the schools must provide opportunity for school, families and the community to work together (Rutherford & Billing, 2016). These partnerships must be based on mutual respect and interdependence of a home, school and the community. Likewise, Karren and Warren (2022), Asiimwe and Nabitake (2023) notes that "schools enhance their connection to families by encouraging them to volunteer in school activities

and attend school events,” participate in planning and in decisions that affect the school; for example, attending PTA meetings and the BOGs meetings. It is argued that “families who volunteer in school activities grow more familiar and comfortable with their children’s schools and teachers.”

Epstein for instance argues that: Parents are likely to develop a greater appreciation for the work of teachers, develop their own skills, and grow increasingly comfortable in working with their children and interacting with others at school. Finally, teachers were able to pay more attention to individual students as a result of volunteer help. They are also likely to become more open to involving parents in varied ways and develop an appreciation for the parental talent base Chuk, Asiimwe & Asiimwe (2023); Maila & Asiimwe (2024); World bank (2019) recognized parent and community support as one of the key factors to determine school effectiveness in Sub-Saharan Africa. They identify five categories of parent and community support that are relevant to the region: (1) children come to school prepared to learn; (2) the community provides financial and material support to the school; (3) communication between the school, parents, and community is frequent; (4) the community has a meaningful role in school governance; and (5) community members and parents assist with instruction.

Chuk, Asiimwe & Asiimwe (2023); Maila & Asiimwe (2024); World bank (2019) argue that there are three models of Education and Community. The first one is traditional community-based education, in which communities provide new generations of young people with the education necessary for transmitting local norms and economic skills. In this model, education is deeply embedded in local social relations, and school and community are closely linked. The government, being of little use in meeting the specialized training needs of industrialized economies, plays a minor role, providing little basis for political integration at the national level. The second model is government-provided education, in which governments have assumed responsibility for providing and regulating education. The content of education has been largely standardized within and across countries, and governments have diminished the role of the community. However, a lack of resources and management incapability have proven that governments cannot provide the community with adequate the educational delivery, fully- equipped school buildings, and a full range of grades, teachers and instructional materials.

Communities can contribute to schools by sending respected community members, such as religious leaders or tribe heads, to the classrooms and talk about community history, traditions, customs, and culture, which have been historically celebrated in the community Chuk, Asiimwe & Asiimwe (2023); Maila & Asiimwe (2024); World bank (2019) are of the view that “several of the studies reviewed focused on middle and high school student achievement and attendance.” Additional studies have shown that early intervention procedures should be used to reduce student absenteeism to improve student attendance. Another study focused on students in the intermediate grades and student mobility and the negative impact on student achievement (Dodd & Konzal, 2021; (Ferguson, 2020; Asiimwe & Nabitake, 2023). The UCE focus of each of the studies shows that student attendance had a direct relationship with student achievement (Deal & Peterson, 2019). Chuk, Asiimwe & Asiimwe (2023); Maila & Asiimwe (2024); World bank (2019) therefore concludes that “even though the approach of the studies varied, the outcomes of all the studies justify the need to further address students’ school attendance and students’ achievement in the UCE schools.”

One of the major factors to ensure sustainability of programs is the availability of funds, whether from governments, private institutions, or donor organizations. In this regard, community participation in education cannot ensure the sustainability of schools by itself since communities oftentimes have to rely on external funding to keep the program sustained. However, involving community is a way to ensure that the benefits brought by a development program will be maintained after the external interventions are stopped. Chuk, Asiimwe & Asiimwe (2023); Maila & Asiimwe (2024); World bank (2019, for instance cites a series of studies published by researchers; the first, for example, found out “that parental involvement in form of checking homework, attending school meetings and events, discussing school activities at home has a more powerful influence on students’ academic performance than anything about the school the students attended.” The second study, according to Karren and Warren (2022), Asiimwe and Nabitake (2023) reported “that the effort put forward by parents (reading stories aloud, meeting with teachers) had a bigger impact on their children’s educational achievement than the effort spent by either teachers or the students themselves.” And the third study concluded “those schools would have to increase their spending by more than \$1,000 per pupil if they were to achieve the same results as are gained with parental involvement, something that’s too costly” (Ibid).

Thus, sustainability is dependent on the degree of self-reliance developed in target communities and on the social and political commitment in the wider society to development programs that support the continuation of newly self-reliance communities (Dodd & Konzal, 2021; (Ferguson, 2020 ; Asiimwe & Nabitake, 2023). Community members are expected to be actively involved in the process of interventions through planning, implementation, and evaluation. Furthermore, they expected to acquire skills and knowledge that will later enable them to take over the project or program. Community participation can contribute to preparing and improving home environment, by encouraging parents to

understand about the benefits of their children's schooling. A World Bank study (2019) which analyzed primary education in India, discovered that families aware of the importance of education can contribute much to their children's learning achievement, even in disadvantaged districts. It also shows that students from families that encouraged children's schooling, by allocating time at home for study, encouraging reading, and supporting their children's educational aspirations, scored significantly higher on tests of learning achievement (Asiimwe & Nabitake, 2023; Asiimwe & Magunda, 2017).

According to USAID/CSPP document, community may participate in school program through committee such as parent teacher association (PTA), School education and training board (SETB), School Management Committee (SMC), School improvement committee, etc. These committees may play in leadership and management and as intermediaries between the school and the community. Community members may participate directly in the school program decisions and evaluation during the parent teacher conferences. The community members can also participate directly as teacher aids, tutors, financial supporters (fundraising) as well as advisors. Therefore, the main objective of community participation in a school system is to improve the students' performance. To facilitate this, the Ethiopian Ministry of Education has issued a document MOE (2016) to decentralize educational management and to create the necessary condition to expand, enrich and improve the relevance, quality, accessibility and equity of education and training. According to this Document, involvement of the community was mainly limited to fundraising and contribution of labor for school construction.

Regarding the importance of community participation in school program, Dodd (2021) stated that "parents are both teachers of their children and mediators of the school". They have the right and obligation to make sure that children are well served by the schools they attended. In relation to this, World Bank (2019) has also noted that educational institutions may be accountable for their performance when households are more closely involved in the activities of the institutions. When parents involve in the affairs of a school, the students will more likely be satisfied and more importantly, this will help the education process to be more effective.

Fehrman (2021); Karren and Warren (2022), Asiimwe and Nabitake (2023) noted that students whose parents are actively involved in their education have better grades, test scores and long-term academic achievement. Students also attend schools more regularly, complete more homework and demonstrate more positive attitudes and behaviors than those with less involved parents. Similarly Karren and Warren (2022), Asiimwe and Nabitake (2023) also argued that parents are the child's first teachers and children respond better when they know their parents are behind them, and children are viewed as continuously learning both in school and in family (Asiimwe & Nabitake, 2023; Asiimwe & Magunda, 2017).

The World Bank (2019) also stated that communities can participate in school fund raising in forms such as cost sharing. In the case of Ethiopia, cost sharing starts at grade 11 and upwards. The reason for not asking parents to share costs of education of their children at lower grades is to provide basic education to all. Basic education at lower grades is considered to be the rights of the people. This encourages all the citizens of the nation, including those poor communities who cannot afford to make any contributions at all, to send their school age children to attend basic education. At higher grades, where cost sharing is mandatory, students can continue attending their classes through loans granted from the government for the cost sharing payment. But ultimately, the amount borrowed by the students will have to be repaid when the students get employed. Such loan arrangement from the government helps the students from poor communities, who cannot make outright contributions for the cost sharing to continue (Dodd & Konzal, 2021; (Ferguson, 2020; Asiimwe & Nabitake, 2023).

Fun and Chen (2021); Karren and Warren (2022), Asiimwe and Nabitake (2023) concluded that student commitment can be sustained and strengthened by collaborative teacher attitudes expressed in and through their practices and for that reason, strong connections with the home are essential to the success of the task. Teachers can facilitate and encourage parent-community collaboration through some simple practices all well-known but not implemented consistently in many schools. Most parents are conscious that much more could be done to help their children learn in the classroom and in the home as well. For consistency and preciseness about the role of parent-community involvement in schools; Karren and Warren (2022), Asiimwe and Nabitake (2023) undertook a study of school effectiveness and found that parental involvement practices represented one of the twelve key factors that differentiated effective from less effective schools. Some of the literature sources advised that the decision about the precise nature of parent involvement must take into account cultural, ethnic and class differences as well as variations related to the age and gender of learners.

3. Methodology and Results and Discussion

The study adopted a descriptive survey research designs. The study adopted this design to establish the influence of community involvement and performance of secondary schools. The focus was both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Qualitative research was conducted in a natural setting and involves a process of building a complex and holistic picture of the phenomenon of interest. Measured with numbers and analyzes using statistical techniques. The purpose of using the quantitative approach was evaluate objective data consisting of numbers with the aim of achieving high levels of reliability in terms of data analysis.

3.1. Community involvement in school management

Under this section, the question items were derived from the second objective measuring responses on community involvement in school management was put to the respondents. The items using the five-point Likert scale where code 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree and discussed based three questions which are statistically tabulated and presented in the Table 1 below with the frequencies and percentages according to the responses collected.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics on involvement in the school management

Indicators of involvement in the school management	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean
The school management ensures that parents are involved in the planning process and are consulted on key issues to be taken on especially regarding academic performance.	2 (1.9)	6 (5.8)	2 (1.9)	65 (63.1)	28 (27.2)	4.08
Parents participate in school meetings like BOGs, PTAs and annual general meetings where major decisions are made.	1 (1.0)	5 (4.9)	6 (5.8)	54 (52.4)	37 (35.9)	4.17
Parents participate in the selection and election of school associations and management leaders like PTA, BOG chairmen who represents them democratically	2 (2.0)	3 (2.9)	8 (7.8)	50 (49)	39 (38.2)	4.19
Mean of indicators on involvement in the school management						4.15

Source: Primary data, 2023

The relationship between community involvement in school management and students' academic performance of Schools in Kassanda Town Council, Kassanda District has been described and measured as indicated in Table 1. In question 3 for instance response is sought on whether students can better their academic performance when their parents get more involved in school management by participating in planning through PTA, BOG and other school meetings/activities where decisions are made. Responses show that 42 (41.6%) or agree while 52 (51.5%) with a mean score of 4.45. Indeed, these results confirm the assertion that involvement in school management by parents through planning positively affects academic performance.

Findings on the related aspect of whether students perform well academically when their parents participate in school leadership and take part in major decisions that are made for the improvement of academic performance equally reveal that 32 (32%) of the respondents agree, 63 (63%) of the respondents strongly agree all with a mean score of 4.57. This mean score suggest that respondents strongly confirm the assertion in the statement that students perform well academically when their parents participate in school leadership and take part in major decisions that are made for the improvement of academic performance. The first study was to determine the community involvement in the management of secondary schools in Kassanda Town Council, Kassanda District. To fulfill this, the study collected the data that is presented in table 1

The study above presents findings on the ways of community involvement in the management of secondary schools in Kassanda Town Council, Kassanda District, from the table above, 17 respondents strongly agreed that the community is involved in taking good care of school property 3 agreeing as well, while 4 respondents were recorded for not being sure, 21 disagreed and 5 strongly in disagreed and 20 respondents strongly agreed that there is effective community involvement in the disciplinary management for the students. 7 agreed 2 respondents were not sure, 8 disagreed and 3 strongly disagreed.

Table 2 Community involvement of the school management

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The community is involved in taking good care of school property.	17	3	4	21	5
There is effective community involvement in the disciplinary management for the students.	20	7	12	8	3
The community is effectively represented on the school management committee.	20	10	5	7	8
The community enable parents to help children with homework.	15	8	7	8	12
The community provide the labour in the construction of the schools.	25	5	0	9	11
The community provide careers guidance for improving students' performance.	25	4	4	5	16
Total	122	37	32	58	55
Percentage	40.6	12.3	10.6	19.3	18.3

Source: primary data, 2023

The community is effectively represented on the school management committee which had 20 respondents who strongly agreed, 10 agreed, 5 were not sure, while 7 disagreed and 8 strongly disagreed. The community enable parents to help children with homework and this had 15 who strongly disagreed, 8 agreed, 7 were not sure, 8 disagreed and 12 strongly disagreed. The community provide the labour in the construction of the schools had 25 respondents who strongly agreed, 5 agreed, none were not sure, 9 disagreed and 11 strongly disagreed. The community provide careers guidance for improving students performance had 25 respondents who strongly agreed, 4 agreed, none were not sure, while 5 disagreed and 6 strongly disagreed.

From table 2, the results indicate that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed on the ways of community involvement in the management of secondary schools in Kassanda Town Council, Kassanda district with 40.6% of the respondents followed by those who disagreed with 19.3% then those who strongly disagree with 18.3% and 12.3% agreed while 10.6% were not sure.

4. Conclusions

The study on the findings conclude: that there are different mechanisms of community involvement in the management of the schools though these are highly limited. The study further concludes that the community participates in performance of the schools through provision of land, funding and some school needs. There is limited degree of parent's awareness in the schools management, lack of policy requiring or supporting community involvement, lack of society mobilization by education institutions and limited performance dimension in the management of the education sector.

Recommendations

The study recommends that there is a need to orient and educate all the stakeholders on their responsibility of participating in decision making process in schools as well as ensure transparency and accountability of the funds they help to raise. Schools should give emphasis to community participation in the curriculum implementation in addition to fund raising. They should develop holistic plan for enhancing community participation in curriculum implementation and control of children's education.

This study recommends for the school administrators to take up the responsibility of creating a mutual understanding and partnership between schools and the community which would help teachers, parents and all community members to identify areas in which they can work together for the benefit of the students. It was also recommended that head teachers should equip themselves more with various administrative tools such as effective supervision, effective

leadership, effective communication and discipline in a bid to improve their level of effectiveness in the management of secondary schools in the sub-country. Head teachers should be exposed to seminars and workshops to equip them with modern tools of management. Increased efforts should also be made by the state ministry of education and its agencies at regular supervision and monitoring of schools for effective management.

Compliance with ethical considerations

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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