



EXPLORING THE EFFECT OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT: *Studies have often investigated the factors affecting students' academic performance, identifying factors such as school infrastructure, instructional quality, student-teacher involvement and students' learning habits. Yet the extent to which school-community interaction influences students' academic performance has received relatively less academic attention. This study examines how school-community relationships impact students' academic achievement, focusing on community engagement in school management and its influence on Junior High School (JHS) students' academic performance. Utilizing a qualitative case study design with 60 participants, data was collected through focus group discussions and interviews. The findings indicate low community involvement in school management, largely due to ineffective communication, insufficient funding, and poor school leadership. The study contributes to the theoretical understanding of school-community partnerships by emphasizing their direct impact on academic outcomes. The study recommends prioritizing policies that encourage community involvement, improving communication between schools and communities, and securing adequate resources for school projects.*

KEYWORDS: School, Community, Students, Academic Performance.



INTRODUCTION

The school-community relationship is a dynamic and multifaceted interaction that significantly influences educational outcomes and community development. According to Stefanski et al. (2016), effective collaboration between schools and communities enhances student learning, social development, and civic engagement. The nature of this relationship is built on mutual support, where schools rely on community resources to enrich the educational experience, while communities benefit from the academic and social contributions of well-educated citizens (Casto, 2016; Valli et al., 2016). Community involvement in schools can take various forms, including volunteer programs, partnerships with local businesses, and parental engagement, all of which contribute to creating a supportive learning environment (Epstein & Sanders, 2002). This symbiosis is particularly relevant in fostering a sense of belonging and shared responsibility, thereby addressing broader social issues such as inequality and community cohesion (Gross et al., 2015).

In the Yendi Municipality, the school-community relationship, particularly at the basic school level, has deteriorated considerably. This decline is marked by increasing issues of land encroachment on school properties, leading to conflicts over school boundaries (Anlimachie et al., 2023). Disagreements between School Management Committees (SMCs) and school leadership have exacerbated tensions, resulting in a lack of cohesive governance (Mfum-Mensah & Friedson-Ridenour, 2014). Furthermore, there has been a significant withdrawal of community support for teacher initiatives, such as volunteer teaching and provision of learning materials (Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah, 2009). Vandalism of school infrastructure and theft of educational resources are also on the rise, further undermining the learning environment (Pryor, 2005). The diminishing involvement of parents in school activities and decision-making processes has led to a disconnect between schools and their communities, impacting student attendance and performance negatively (Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah, 2011). These challenges signify a poor school-community relationship that hampers educational progress in the municipality.

Studies have explored various aspects of the school-community relationship, focusing on its nature, significance, and impact on different educational components. Essuman and Akyeampong (2011) investigated the detrimental effects of limited community participation in school management, emphasizing the necessity for active involvement in ensuring well-functioning school operations. Adam (2005) examined the importance of harmonious governance between School Management Committees (SMCs) and school leadership, illustrating how conflicts can disrupt teacher posting and transfers, thereby hindering effective staffing decisions. Donkor and Waek (2018) analysed the withdrawal of community support for teacher initiatives, such as volunteer teaching and the provision of learning materials, underscoring the vital role of community involvement in maintaining educational quality. Emmanuel and Asah (2019) studied the impact of vandalism and theft on school infrastructure, linking these issues to broader community disengagement and its negative effects on the learning environment. Wedam et al. (2015) focused on the declining quality of teacher-student relationships and overall community relationships, demonstrating how these disconnects adversely affect student attendance and performance. These studies collectively highlight the complex dynamics and crucial importance of maintaining strong school-community partnerships to support effective teacher posting and transfers and enhance teacher-student and community relationships.



While these studies offer insightful perspectives on the school-community relationship, they were least focused on the direct relationship between school-community interaction and students' educational outcomes. This oversight denies us crucial knowledge about how community involvement specifically impacts student educational success. Understanding this link is essential for developing targeted strategies to enhance educational outcomes through community engagement. This study aimed to address this gap by investigating how the quality of school-community relationships influences students' academic achievement, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the benefits of strong school-community partnerships. To achieve this, the study raises two questions: (1) What is the level of community involvement in school governance and support initiatives in the Yendi Municipality of Northern Region? (2) How does a school-community relationship influence teaching and learning activities in Yendi Municipality? Answers to these questions will not only contribute to existing knowledge on the influencing factors of students' academic performance but will also provide a framework for policy formulation aimed at improving school-community relationship for enhanced educational outcomes.

This article is structured into six sections. Section One contains the introduction; Section Two reviews relevant theoretical and empirical perspectives on school-community interaction and educational outcomes. Section Three contains the methodology that was developed to conduct the study; Section Four contains the results. Section Five discusses the results and Section Six concludes the report and offers policy recommendations.

Theoretical Underpinning

Ecological Systems Theory, proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), provides a comprehensive framework for understanding human development within the context of multiple interacting systems. At its core, the theory emphasizes that development occurs through the dynamic interaction between an individual and their environment, which consists of various interconnected systems. These systems include the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem, each influencing individuals differently but collectively shaping their development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The microsystem is the immediate environment in which an individual lives, such as family, peers, and school. It directly impacts a person's daily experiences and interactions, including their academic performance and social development within school settings. For instance, positive relationships with teachers and peers can foster a supportive learning environment conducive to academic success (Härkönen, 2001).

The mesosystem refers to the interconnections between different microsystems, such as the linkages between home and school environments (Hansen & Kosiara-Pedersen, 2017). Bronfenbrenner emphasized the importance of these connections in influencing developmental outcomes, suggesting that cohesive school-community relationships can enhance educational experiences by aligning support from both settings (Hansen & Kosiara-Pedersen, 2017; Härkönen, 2001). This interaction is crucial as it can either reinforce or disrupt learning experiences based on the degree of coordination and collaboration between microsystems. Moving outward, the exosystem includes settings that indirectly influence an individual's development, such as parents' workplaces or community organizations. In the context of education, the exosystem might encompass local government policies affecting school funding or community initiatives impacting educational resources. These external



factors can significantly shape educational opportunities and outcomes by influencing the resources and support available to schools and students (Guy-Evans, 2020a).

At the broadest level, the macrosystem encompasses cultural values, societal norms, and broader social structures that influence development across multiple contexts. This includes educational policies, cultural beliefs about education, and socioeconomic factors that shape educational access and equity (Darling, 2007). For example, disparities in educational resources and opportunities between urban and rural areas can be attributed to macrosystemic influences that impact funding allocations and policy decisions. Bronfenbrenner also introduced the concept of the chronosystem, which acknowledges the dynamic nature of development over time. This system highlights how changes in any of the ecological systems—microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem—can influence development trajectories. For instance, shifts in educational policies or economic conditions can have long-term effects on educational outcomes, demonstrating the importance of considering developmental processes within their historical and temporal contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The Ecological Systems Theory, therefore, provides a nuanced understanding of how educational outcomes are shaped by interactions between individuals and their environments at multiple levels. By examining these interconnected systems, educators, policymakers, and researchers can better identify factors influencing student development and design interventions that promote positive educational experiences and outcomes across diverse contexts.

Ecological Systems Theory has been widely applied across various disciplines to understand and improve human development in diverse contexts. In education, this theory has informed policies and practices aimed at fostering supportive learning environments (Guy-Evans, 2020b). Schools have utilized the theory to strengthen family-school partnerships by recognizing the interconnectedness between students' home and school lives, thereby enhancing academic success through collaborative efforts (Elliott & Davis, 2020). Community-based interventions have also leveraged this framework to address educational disparities by considering how environmental factors influence learning outcomes, particularly in underserved areas (Guy-Evans, 2020b). In psychology and social work, Ecological Systems Theory guides interventions aimed at promoting resilience among children and adolescents by emphasizing the influence of multiple systems—such as peer groups, neighbourhoods, and societal values—on their development (Zwemer et al., 2022). Within healthcare settings, practitioners apply this theory to understand patients' health behaviours within the context of their communities and cultural backgrounds, tailoring interventions that account for these broader influences (Zwemer et al., 2022).

Ecological Systems Theory has faced several criticisms despite its widespread application and utility. One critique is its emphasis on the static nature of developmental contexts, which some argue overlooks the dynamic and evolving nature of relationships and environments (MacGregor et al., 2024). Critics also point out that the theory's hierarchical structure, with its focus on nested systems, may oversimplify the complexities of human development by failing to adequately account for the interactions and feedback loops between systems (Stroink, 2020). Additionally, the theory has been criticized for its limited attention to cultural and contextual diversity, potentially overlooking how cultural variations and historical contexts shape developmental outcomes differently across populations (Tanhan &



Strack, 2020). Furthermore, some scholars argue that Ecological Systems Theory places less emphasis on individual agency and personal choice, which are critical in understanding how individuals actively navigate and shape their environments (Navarro & Tudge, 2023). Despite these criticisms, the theory remains influential, prompting ongoing refinements and adaptations to better capture the complexities of human development across diverse settings and populations.

In this current study, Ecological Systems Theory is highly relevant as it provides a conceptual framework to examine the intricate relationships between schools and their surrounding communities in the Yendi Municipality. By applying this theory, the study acknowledges the interconnectedness of various systems—such as the microsystem (individual schools and their immediate environments), mesosystem (interactions between schools and communities), and exosystem (external influences impacting educational settings)—in shaping educational outcomes (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This framework allows for a comprehensive exploration of how community involvement, governance structures, and external factors influence student engagement and academic performance within local schools. Moreover, Ecological Systems Theory guides the study's focus on understanding how these interactions and systems contribute to the quality of school-community partnerships, thereby informing recommendations for strengthening educational practices and policies tailored to the specific context of the Yendi Municipality. By employing this theory, the study aims to offer nuanced insights into the dynamics of school-community relationships and their impact on educational outcomes, contributing to both theoretical understanding and practical interventions in educational settings.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A case study design was chosen to explore the complexities and dynamics of these relationships in depth. A case study design is defined as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2018). This approach involves intensive, detailed exploration of a specific case or cases over time, using multiple sources of evidence to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. The case study design was selected for several reasons that align with the research objectives and the nature of the study. Firstly, it allows for a holistic examination of school-community relationships within a specific geographical and socio-cultural context. By focusing on a single municipality like Yendi, the case study design enables in-depth exploration of the unique interactions, dynamics, and challenges that characterize these relationships, which may not be adequately captured through broader, quantitative approaches. Secondly, the case study design facilitates the exploration of contextual factors and their influence on educational outcomes and community engagement. In studying school-community relationships, understanding the local context, cultural norms, socio-economic conditions, and historical factors is crucial for interpreting the findings accurately. The case study approach provides the flexibility to gather rich, qualitative data through methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis, which are well-suited for capturing the nuances and complexities inherent in these relationships.



Target Population

The target population comprised members of the School Management Committees (SMCs), traditional leaders, school heads and classroom teachers, and students. This selection was justified based on the roles and perspectives these stakeholders hold within the educational system and the community. SMC members play a pivotal role in school governance, policymaking, and resource allocation, making their insights crucial for understanding the dynamics of school-community relationships and decision-making processes (UNESCO, 2019). Their involvement ensures that community perspectives are integrated into educational planning and implementation, fostering transparency and accountability. Traditional leaders were included due to their influence and cultural authority within the community, providing insights into community norms, values, and expectations regarding education. Their perspectives are essential for understanding how cultural practices and traditions intersect with educational goals and initiatives, influencing community support and engagement in educational activities (Beck & Perkins, 2014).

School heads and teachers were targeted because of their direct involvement in daily educational practices and interactions with students and parents. Their perspectives offer valuable insights into the operational aspects of school-community relationships, including challenges, successes, and strategies for collaboration. Teachers, in particular, provide frontline perspectives on student engagement, academic performance, and the impact of community support on educational outcomes (Piekkari & Welch, 2018). Students were included as they are central beneficiaries of educational initiatives and policies. Their voices provide essential perspectives on their educational experiences, needs, and aspirations within the community context. Understanding students' perceptions of school-community interactions and their impact on learning outcomes is crucial for developing inclusive, student-centred approaches to education (Creswell & Hirose, 2019). By targeting these diverse stakeholders, the study aimed to capture a comprehensive range of perspectives and experiences that contribute to school-community relationships in Yendi Municipality. Their participation ensures that the research findings reflect multiple viewpoints and inform recommendations for strengthening collaborative efforts between schools and communities to enhance educational outcomes and community engagement effectively.

Sampling

Purposive sampling was employed to select participants for this research. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where researchers deliberately choose participants who have specific characteristics or experiences relevant to the research questions and objectives (Mesek, 2023). This approach ensures that the sample includes individuals who can provide rich, detailed insights into the phenomenon under investigation, thereby enhancing the depth and relevance of the study findings. The use of purposive sampling was justified based on the specific aims of the study and the nature of the research questions. Given the focus on exploring school-community relationships within a specific socio-cultural context, selecting participants who have direct involvement and expertise in these relationships—such as members of School Management Committees (SMCs), traditional leaders, school heads, teachers, and students—ensured that the data collected were comprehensive and contextually grounded. These stakeholders possess first-hand knowledge and perspectives that are essential for understanding the dynamics, challenges, and opportunities associated with school-community interactions in Yendi Municipality.



Data Sources and Instruments

Data collection for this study involved a combination of secondary and primary sources. Secondary data was gathered through documentary review, which included reports and official documents obtained from schools. These documents provided valuable background information on educational policies, school-community initiatives, and historical contexts relevant to understanding school-community relationships in the study area. Primary data, on the other hand, was collected from the field through interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). Interviews were conducted with key stakeholders such as members of School Management Committees (SMCs), traditional leaders, school heads, teachers, and students. These interviews allowed for in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives, experiences, and insights regarding school-community interactions, challenges, and collaborative efforts. FGDs were also conducted to facilitate group discussions among stakeholders, encouraging interaction and the exchange of ideas on enhancing school-community relationships and supporting educational outcomes in Yendi Municipality. This methodological approach ensured that the research captured both contextual nuances and diverse stakeholder perspectives, thereby contributing to a robust analysis and informed recommendations for strengthening collaborative partnerships between schools and communities to promote positive educational outcomes and community development.

Data Collection Procedures

The study started with a community entry which commenced with a respectful approach to local protocols and authorities. The researcher first reported to the Paramount Chief of Yendi Traditional Area to seek permission to conduct the study. This step was crucial to obtain community endorsement and respect local governance structures, acknowledging the paramount chief's role as a key cultural and administrative leader whose approval is essential for conducting research within the community (Hirose & Creswell, 2023). Additionally, permission was sought from the management of the Ghana Education Service (GES) and heads of selected schools involved in the study. This ensured transparency, cooperation, and support from educational authorities, facilitating access to schools and participants for data collection.

Data collection spanned three weeks and involved both focus group discussions (FGDs) and individual interviews. Seven FGDs were conducted, each consisting of approximately nine members, providing a platform for group interaction and collective perspectives on school-community relationships. These discussions typically lasted an average of 1 hour and 30 minutes, allowing for in-depth exploration of shared experiences, opinions, and challenges related to educational practices and community involvement. Additionally, 15 individual interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including SMC members, school heads, teachers, and community leaders. These interviews, averaging 45 minutes each, provided a deeper understanding of participants' personal experiences, insights, and perspectives on the dynamics of school-community interactions and their impact on educational outcomes. These efforts supported a comprehensive analysis and the development of informed recommendations to strengthen collaborative partnerships between schools and communities for the benefit of educational quality and community development.



Trustworthiness of the Research

Before commencing the main data collection, a pilot study was conducted to test the interview guides and FGD protocols. This pilot study allowed for refining questions, clarifying instructions, and identifying any ambiguities or logistical challenges that could affect data quality (Creswell, 2021). Feedback from participants in the pilot study provided valuable insights into the comprehensibility and relevance of the instruments, enabling necessary adjustments to enhance their effectiveness in capturing meaningful data. Furthermore, to strengthen the reliability and validity of the instruments, they were reviewed by experts in the field of educational research and qualitative methods. Expert reviewers provided critical feedback on the clarity of questions, alignment with research objectives, and appropriateness for capturing the intended constructs and variables of interest (Piekkari & Welch, 2018). Incorporating expert feedback ensured that the instruments were robust and methodologically sound, capable of generating reliable data that could withstand scrutiny and contribute to credible findings. Reliability of the instruments was ensured through measures such as inter-coder reliability (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Data Analysis

A thematic content analysis was employed to analyze the qualitative data collected from interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). Thematic content analysis is a method used to identify, analyse, and report patterns or themes within data, providing a structured approach to interpret qualitative information (Jones, 2013). The procedures for conducting thematic content analysis involved several systematic steps. Initially, all interviews and FGDs were transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy and completeness of the data. These transcripts were then reviewed multiple times to become familiar with the content and to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives and experiences regarding school-community relationships.

Next, an initial coding process was undertaken where meaningful units of data, such as phrases or sentences, were assigned descriptive codes that captured key ideas, concepts, or recurring patterns related to the research objectives (Creswell & Hirose, 2019). This process involved both inductive coding, where codes emerged directly from the data, and deductive coding, guided by predefined themes based on the study's theoretical framework and research questions. Subsequently, codes were organized into potential themes by grouping similar codes together and exploring relationships between them. This iterative process of theme development was guided by constant comparison, where themes were refined and revised through continuous engagement with the data to ensure they accurately represented the breadth and depth of participants' narratives (Hirose & Creswell, 2023)

Once themes were finalized, a thematic map or matrix was created to visually represent the relationships between themes and sub-themes, providing a structured framework for interpreting and reporting findings (Piekkari & Welch, 2018). Finally, excerpts from the transcripts were selected to illustrate each theme, demonstrating how they were grounded in participants' voices and experiences. By adhering to these rigorous procedures for thematic content analysis, the study aimed to uncover nuanced insights into the dynamics of school-community relationships in Yendi Municipality. This methodological approach facilitated a systematic exploration of the factors influencing educational outcomes and community



engagement, offering valuable implications for educational policy, practice, and future research endeavours.

RESULTS

The study included 60 participants, comprising 35 males and 25 females, to capture a diverse range of perspectives on school-community relationships (Table 1). Gender diversity allowed for insights into how male and female teachers, students, and parents may differ in their challenges, engagement, and expectations, enriching the understanding of effective school-community partnerships. The age distribution spanned from 13 to over 54, with younger participants (13-23) primarily students and young teachers, offering perspectives on peer interactions and immediate educational experiences. Those aged 24-33, including early-career teachers and parents, provided insights on teaching practices and early parental involvement. Middle-aged participants (34-43) and the older groups (44-53 and 54+) included experienced educators and parents, contributing long-term views on evolving school-community dynamics. Participants were further categorized into 10 students, 20 parents, and 20 teachers, each offering unique perspectives: students on school policies and engagement, parents on community support and parental involvement, and teachers on school management and the teaching environment.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable	Details	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Males	35	58.3%
	Females	25	41.7%
Age	13-23 years	17	28.3%
	24-33 years	23	38.3%
	34-43 years	8	13.3%
	44-53 years	7	11.7%
	54 years and above	5	8.3%
Category	Students	10	16.7%
	Parents	20	33.3%
	Teachers	20	

Source: *Author's Compilation in 2024*

Levels of Community Involvement in School Governance and Support Initiatives in the Yendi Municipality

Inactive School Management Committee (SMC)

In Ghana, the SMC is a management committee that comprises largely the community members who oversee the activities of the school. Thirty-five (35) participants reported that the SMC, which is a key unit that comprises both teachers and community members that exercise oversight over school management, never held meetings regularly as expected,



indicating a lack of consistent governance and oversight. One of the participants who was a member of the SMC explained to us that:

“You see the SMC is a unit that you can use to measure community engagement. It comprises of key community members who should oversee the affairs of the school. Our SMC is inactive. I cannot remember the last time we met” (Interview with a 66-year-old community member).

Another participant who was a head teacher explained that:

“The community does not show much interest in the affairs of the school. We have an SMC which does not function. They simply do not care” (Interview with a 44-year-old head teacher).

These statements indicate that the SMC in the school is very inactive, demonstrating the level of community engagement in school management in JHS in Yendi Municipality.

Poor Attendance at Parents and Teachers’ Association (PTA)

The PTA is one of the umbrella units that bring community members to take initiative that will support the management of a school. Participants reported that parents were not attending PTA meetings. One of them stated that:

“We have a lot of things to do. The teachers take salaries; we hustle to survive, so why should we be so obsessed with school management? What is the job of the teachers?” (FGD with a 36-year-old man).

Another participant also explained to us that:

“Parents don’t turn up for meetings. This is an avenue for them to take part in school management decisions but they don’t turn up” (Interview with a 43-year-old head teacher).

Another also noted:

"The turnout at PTA meetings is disheartening. Parents are not showing up, and it's affecting how we can collectively support the students' education" (Interview with a 49-year-old school head).

These statements imply that community members display less enthusiasm in school activities, demonstrating low levels of community involvement in decision making.

Lack of Interest in Students Absenteeism

JHSs in Ghana are largely run only during the day, meaning that students report to school every day from home. A community which is involved in the affairs of the school will chase students to school if they are seen at home during school hours. Thirty-nine (39) participants reported poor student school attendance, reflecting broader community disengagement with educational priorities. One of the participants who was a teacher stated:



“In most of the communities I have worked in before coming here, community members would chase any student they see outside the school during school hours back to school indicating engagement. Here they don’t care. They sit with some of the students under the tree during school hours” (Statement by a 39-year-old teacher during FGD).

This indicates a lack of community interest in the academic affairs of JHS in Yendi Municipality. Another participant also indicated that:

“Sometimes you could be teaching and a relative or parent will come and call a student out for discussion or send him or her elsewhere. This is not done anywhere” (Interview with a 37-year-old female teacher).

All these indicate a lack of community involvement in the management of JHS in the Yendi Municipality.

Influence of Levels of Community Involvement on Teaching and Learning Activities

Participants reported low levels of community interest in the teaching and learning activities of JHS in the Yendi Municipality. Forty-nine (49) participants mentioned that many Junior High School (JHS) students exhibited poor attendance, frequently missing classes without valid reasons and the school management committee appears less worried about it. Thirty-five (35) of them reported a noticeable lack of participation in classroom activities, with students showing minimal interest in lessons and rarely engaging in discussions or group work and when scolded by teachers, their parents or other members of the community threaten such teachers. Twenty-three (23) participants also noted that homework completion rates were low, with many assignments either submitted late or not at all, showing low levels of parental involvement in the academic activities of their wards. Thirty-seven (37) participants reported that students demonstrated poor performance in examinations, with declining test scores and a high failure rate. The overall lack of motivation and enthusiasm for learning was evident in their disengaged behaviour and absenteeism which received no condemnation from the community members. Many participants attributed such instances to poor school-community involvement, where inadequate parental support, minimal community interest in educational activities, and irregular SMC meetings contributed to a weak educational environment, thereby impacting students' academic performance negatively. One of the participants stated:

"Many students are not attending classes regularly, and when they do, they seem uninterested and disengaged. It's challenging to keep them motivated without support from their families and the community" - Teacher.

Another participant also noted:

"Homework completion is a serious issue. Most students either don't turn in their assignments or submit them late, which affects their overall performance and understanding of the subjects" - School Head.



Another further explained:

"The lack of community involvement is evident in the students' attitudes. They don't see the importance of education because they don't have strong role models or encouragement from their families and the community" - Parent.

These quotes imply a significant correlation between low levels of community involvement and poor academic performance among students in the Yendi Municipality. The teachers and school head highlighted issues such as irregular attendance, lack of interest in classroom activities, and poor homework completion, indicating a disengaged student body. The parents highlight the broader impact of insufficient community and family support, suggesting that students lack motivation and role models to value education. This collective disengagement from the educational process is detrimental to students' academic performance and overall learning experience, emphasizing the need for stronger school-community partnerships to foster a supportive and motivating educational environment.

DISCUSSION

The study revealed a significant lack of community involvement in Junior High School (JHS) management within Yendi Municipality. This was evidenced by irregular School Management Committee (SMC) meetings, poorly attended Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and lack of interest in students' school attendance. The Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) highlights the importance of strong interactions within a microsystem, such as the home-school connection, for student development. Weak connections between home and school, or the mesosystem, diminish community impact, emphasizing the need for consistent participation to foster a conducive school climate.

The low levels of community involvement were found to negatively affect student academic performance, with 49 participants reporting frequent absences, 35 noting minimal participation in classroom activities, and 23 observing late or unsubmitted homework. Additionally, 37 participants highlighted declining test scores and high failure rates. This disengagement suggests that the lack of community involvement reduces student motivation, as parental support and school-community relationships are crucial for fostering academic interest and success. Supporting these findings, Adam (2005) emphasized the importance of community participation on student performance, while Ampiah and Adu-Yeboah (2009) highlighted its role in reducing dropout rates. The study affirms that stronger school-community partnerships, aligned with the Ecological Systems Theory, can improve academic outcomes by enhancing the quality of environmental connections that influence students' learning experiences.



IMPLICATION FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

This study contributes to literature by emphasizing the significant role of community involvement in school management and its direct influence on students' performance, particularly in rural areas like Yendi Municipality. It highlights the relevance of the Ecological Systems Theory in understanding the dynamics between home, school, and community.

In the field of practice, the study highlights the importance of developing policies that promote stronger school-community partnerships. It calls for targeted interventions, such as training for SMCs and PTA engagement, to enhance community participation in school governance and improve educational outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal significant gaps in community involvement in the management of Junior High Schools (JHS) in the Yendi Municipality. The inactive School Management Committee (SMC), low attendance at Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, and lack of community interest in student absenteeism point to a disengaged community that does not prioritize education. This disengagement is further reflected in the low levels of participation in teaching and learning activities, with students frequently missing classes, showing minimal interest in lessons, and failing to complete assignments on time. These factors contribute to declining academic performance and high failure rates, suggesting that a lack of community support plays a critical role in student disengagement and poor educational outcomes. The study emphasizes the need for a stronger connection between schools and their surrounding communities to improve student motivation and academic performance. Teachers, school heads, and parents all highlighted the detrimental effects of community disengagement, which weakens the educational environment. To address these challenges, it is crucial to foster consistent community participation through regular SMC meetings, increased PTA involvement, and a collective commitment to supporting students' academic journeys. Strengthening school-community partnerships and encouraging parental involvement are key strategies to creating a more supportive and motivating atmosphere for students, ultimately improving their engagement and educational outcomes.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings highlight the critical need for more research on effective strategies to strengthen community involvement in school management, particularly in underrepresented areas like Yendi Municipality. Future studies should explore the impact of targeted community engagement programs on improving student attendance and academic performance.



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