Extensiveness of Parental Engagement in Academic Progress on Mitigating Students' Dropout among Public Secondary Schools in Kwimba District, Tanzania

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Abstract
This study examined the extensiveness of parental engagement in supporting academic progress to mitigate students dropout in public secondary schools in Kwimba District, Tanzania. Guided by the Ecological System Theory, it adopted a convergent mixed-methods design. The target population comprised 32 schools, heads of schools, teachers, form four students, and parents' representative from school board. Using simple random, total population, stratified random, and snowball sampling, the study involved 9 schools, 78 teachers, 9 heads of schools, 148 students, 18 parents, and 1 DSEO. Data collection employed questionnaires for quantitative data and interview guides for qualitative data. Validity was ensured by expert review, and reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha for quantitative tools and triangulation for qualitative data. Analysis used descriptive statistics (SPSS v27) and thematic analysis. Ethical considerations included permits, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and plagiarism avoidance. Findings revealed that parental support through performance monitoring, teacher engagement, and encouragement significantly reduces dropout rates. The study concluded that consistent home-based support, academic monitoring, and communication with teachers are critical. It recommended establishing affordable, regular communication channels, such as SMS or written notes, to keep parents informed on performance and attendance, enhancing parental involvement in education.

Keywords: Parental Engagement, Academic Progress, Mitigating, Student Dropout, Public Secondary Schools

1. Introduction

Education is universally acknowledged as a cornerstone of individual and societal advancement, equipping learners with the necessary knowledge, skills, and values to improve their lives and contribute meaningfully to their communities. Despite its vital role, student dropout continues to be a pressing global concern affecting both developed and developing countries. Student dropout refers to a situation where learners disengage from the education system before fulfilling the requirements for graduation (Opazo et al., 2021). According to UNESCO (2018), approximately 130 million children in developing countries drop out of school. Dropout not only undermines personal development but also contributes to wider socio-economic challenges such as reduced political participation, increased demand for social services, criminal behavior, and poor health outcomes (Azam, 2018).

In the United States, student dropout is a significant educational concern that adversely affects individuals, families, and the broader society. Reports indicate that the status of dropout rate defined as the percentage of 16–24-year-olds not enrolled in school and lacking a high school diploma rose from 5.2% in 2010 to 8.3% in 2021 (Silva et al., 2023). The consequences include limited career opportunities, lower earning potential, and a higher propensity toward antisocial behavior (Ressa & Andrews, 2022). These trends prompt ongoing questions regarding the role of parental engagement in preventing dropout.

In African countries, secondary school dropout rates remain a pressing concern, particularly among students from low-income and rural backgrounds. In Egypt, the dropout rate is estimated at 23%, with the figure rising to 30% in rural areas (Miconi et al., 2023). The issue is especially severe among children from the poorest households, where 35% discontinue their education, often due to academic underperformance and lack of motivation (Poul et al., 2023). The factors raise critical concerns about the level of parental involvement in supporting children's education and its potential role in preventing dropout.

Similarly, in Nigeria, 23% of students dropout before completing secondary schools, with boys more likely to leave than girls, highlighting a gender disparity that further emphasizes the need to examine the effectiveness of parental engagement in addressing school retention (Khan & Samad, 2022). In Kenya, students from low-income families face challenges such as school fees, transportation costs, and the need to purchase uniforms and supplies, all of which hinder sustained education (Muthami et al., 2023). Moreover, long distances to school contribute to irregular attendance and eventual dropout (Saro, 2023). Collectively, the statistics from illustrate the widespread nature of school dropout in Africa and reinforce the

importance of understanding how parental responsiveness and support play a pivotal role in keeping children in school.

In Tanzania, the government launched the 2014 Education and Training Policy (ETP), operationalized through the 2016 Circular No. 3, which established the "Fee-Free Basic Policy" program. This policy aimed to improve access to education and reduce dropout rates by eliminating tuition fees and related contributions (URT, 2016). However, parents were still responsible for providing basic learning materials, monitoring school attendance, arranging transportation, supporting school activities, and ensuring student discipline. In addition, initiatives such as the National Guidelines for the Provision of Food and Nutrition Services (URT, 2023) aimed to enhance school attendance and retention. Despite these initiatives, dropout rates in Tanzania remain troubling, particularly in certain regions such as Mwanza.

Parental engagement is a key determinant of academic success and a powerful tool in curbing dropout (Rahmawati, 2022). Involved parents help foster positive learning environments, maintain communication with educators, monitor academic progress, and provide emotional and material support (Saputri&Fauziddin, 2022). Such engagement enhances student motivation, academic performance, and overall school experience (Barnett et al., 2020). Nevertheless, various barriers, including negative parental attitudes, financial constraints, poor infrastructure, and weak home-school collaboration continue to undermine effective parental participation (Mkama&Storbeck, 2023). Providing adequate learning resources, maintaining parent-child academic communication, and offering emotional support are essential in reducing dropout risks (Yang et al., 2023; Stratton et al., 2022). However,parents lack the time or resources to fulfill these responsibilities (Zhang, 2020).

In Mwanza region, the dropout trend is especially alarming, with Kwimba District recording the highest number of dropouts between 2019 and 2023. As shown in Table 1.1, a total of 9,122 students dropped out from secondary schools in Kwimba over five years period, surpassing other districts in the region see Table 1.

Table 1.1

Number of Students Dropout in Secondary Schools in Mwanza Region, Tanzania (2019–2024)

	MWANZA REGION										
YEAR	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	BUCHOSA	ILEMELA MC	KWIMBA	MAGU	MISUNGWI	MWANZA CC	SENGEREMA	UKEREWE	TOTAL DROPOUT	%
2019	168524	1208	384	**1202**	633	1283	449	1148	869	7176	4.3
2020	180780	992	427	**1525**	1005	1124	627	1400	1052	8082	4.5
2021	186,267	1255	339	**1928**	1024	1134	558	1225	1041	8504	4.6
2022	192290	1297	521	**2056**	1091	1259	584	1324	1112	9244	4.8
2023	211744	1386	667	**2411**	672	1512	526	1121	802	9097	4.3
2024	373,022	3702	152	**5427**	395	1526	241	1541	896	13880	4.7
TOTAL	1312627	9840	2490	14549	4820	7838	2985	7759	5772	55983	4.2

Source: Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania (BEST), 2019–2024

Data in Table 1 illustrates a concerning trend of increasing student dropout rates in secondary schools within Mwanza region over the period from 2019 to 2024. Data shows fluctuation in the number of students leaving school prematurely, whereby Kwimba is the leading district with the highest number of14549students compared to another district in the region from 2019-2024. The established trends of student's dropout in secondary schools specifically in Kwimba district summarized in Table 2

Table 2

Number of Students Dropout in Secondary Schools in Kwimba District, Tanzania (2019–2024)

YEAR	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	DEATH	INDISCIPLINE	PREGNANCY	DROPOUT	TOTAL	%
2019	17618	7	3	92	1100	1202	6.8
2020	18997	2	7	48	1468	1525	8.0
2021	19830	3	0	37	1888	1928	9.7
2022	20187	2	6	42	2081	2131	10.5
2023	20858	3	5	14	2389	2411	11.6
2024	30185	12	6	2	3413	3433	11.3
TOTAL	127,675	29	27	235	12339	12,630	57.9

Source: Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania (BEST), 2019–2024

The data reveal a steady rise in dropout rates, from 6.8% in 2019 to 11.3% in 2024, with truancy identified as the major contributor. This sharp increase underscores a critical need to examine interventions that could reverse the trend. Given the central role parents play in students' academic lives, the current study investigated the extensiveness of parental engagement in academic progress on mitigating students' dropout among public secondary schools in Kwimba district, Tanzania**.**

2. Statement of the Problem

Persistent of dropouts among students in secondary school in Tanzania remains a pressing problem that requires immediate attention. Parents, teachers, and education administrators complain that dropping out of school severely limits students' chances of economic and social well-being in the future (Kamissa, 2020). Despite government's efforts to reduce student dropout in secondary schools through fee-free education and the school feeding program, Kwimba is the district with the highest number of student dropouts in Mwanza Region and countrywide, which requires urgent attention. The truancy rate in public secondary schools is approximately 13%, influenced by various complex factors (Lyanga, 2023).

Numerous studies, including those by Kinyangu (2020) and Rugimbana and Mwila (2023), have explored the problem of student dropout, focusing largely on economic, social, and institutional factors. However, studies have not comprehensively addressed the role of parental engagement as a key strategy for mitigating dropout. Specifically, they paid limited attention to how parents support learning at home, monitor academic progress, participate in school activities, and maintain consistent communication with their children about school-related matters.Therefore, the current study seek to investigate the extensiveness of parental engagement in academic progress in mitigating students' dropout in public secondary schools in Kwimba District, Tanzania.

3. Research Question

This study was guided by the following research question:

To what extent does parental engagement in students' academic progress mitigating Students' dropout in public secondary schools in Kwimba District, Tanzania?

4. Significance of the Study

The relevance of this study lies in its potential to inform practice, shape policy, and enhance understanding of how parental academic engagement can effectively address student dropout in the Tanzanian education context. For teachers, it provides insights into how parental academic involvement can support at-risk students and reduce dropout rates through

improved home-school collaboration. Parents gain awareness of the value of engaging in their children's academic progress and are equipped with practical strategies to support learning and school retention. Students benefit from enhanced academic guidance, motivation, and emotional support, which contribute to improved performance and reduced likelihood of dropping out. For policymakers, the study offers evidence to guide the development of educational policies that strengthen parental involvement in schools. Academically, it contributes empirical data to the limited literature on parental engagement and dropout in Tanzania, and it supports the Social Capital Theory by illustrating how parental academic engagement functions as a resource to retain students in school.

5. Theoretical Framework

Social Capital Theory, developed by Pierre Bourdieu in the early 1980s, explains how social relationships, networks, and shared norms serve as valuable resources that can influence individual and community outcomes. These resources are embedded in the trust, cooperation, and mutual obligations within a social network. The theory asserts that such assets can enhance educational success, improve community well-being, and strengthen resilience (Mishi et al., 2023). In the context of parental engagement in academic progress, Social Capital Theory suggests that when parents are actively involved in their children's learning, they create productive connections with teachers, administrators, and fellow parents. These networks foster trust, communication, and a shared sense of responsibility, which collectively help in addressing challenges that contribute to student dropout in public secondary schools.

Social Capital Theory is well-suited for examining parental engagement in Kwimba District, as it accommodates the social, cultural, and economic diversity within the community. It stresses the pivotal role of relationships and networks in generating opportunities and resources for student retention. By focusing on parents' active participation in their children's academic journey, the theory provides a clear lens for understanding how strong partnerships between parents, students, and schools can foster a supportive educational climate that reduces dropout rates (Mishra, 2020).

One limitation of Social Capital Theory lies in its multi-dimensional nature, making it challenging to operationalise and measure consistently. In the case of parental engagement and student dropout in Kwimba District, quantifying intangible elements such as trust, reciprocity, and cooperative norms can be difficult. Reliance on traditional research instruments may fail to fully capture the depth of social relationships, potentially affecting

measurement accuracy and, consequently, the reliability of the study findings (Gamoran et al., 2021).

This theory offers a strong foundation for designing strategies to mitigate student dropout by reinforcing social networks among parents, teachers, and school communities. Interventions guided by the theory may include structured parent–teacher engagement programmes, community learning forums, and mentorship initiatives aimed at improving parental advocacy and academic monitoring. Additionally, capacity-building workshops could equip parents with communication and educational support skills, thereby fostering the social capital necessary for maintaining student attendance and academic commitment (Masserini&Bini, 2020).

6. Empirical Review

The review of empirical studies covers different studies done globally, in Africa, East Africa, Tanzania and the local context. These research studies helped to understand the problem, research approaches, and instruments for data collection, analysis and interpretation. Also, reviewed studies helped the researcher to establish the knowledge gap which is filled by the current study.

6.1 Extent to which Parental engagement in Students' Academic Progress Mitigates Students' Dropout in Secondary Schools

The extent of parental engagement in students' academic progress plays a crucial role in mitigating students' dropout rates in public secondary schools. Research has shown that when parents are actively engaged in their children's education, students are more likely to stay in school and achieve academic success. This involvement can take various forms, including monitoring homework, attending parent-teacher meetings, and providing a supportive home environment for learning. By being actively involved, parents can help create a positive and conducive atmosphere for their children's education, which in turn reduces the likelihood of dropout.

Mohlouoa and Tlale (2020) conducted a study on the Role of Parental Engagement in Students' Academic Success and its Impact on Reducing Dropout Rates in Secondary Schools," focusing on how parental involvement affects dropout rates in secondary schools in Malaysia. Using a qualitative design, the study employed focus group interviews and field notes to identify the causes of learner dropouts, with purposive sampling chosen for convenience. The study revealed that a lack of parental engagement in students' academic progress, along with financial difficulties, were significant contributors to high dropout rates.

Many students left school to work and support their families. The study highlighted the importance of enhancing parental involvement to improve academic performance and reduce dropout rates. The study provides a great guide to the current study however the finding cannot be generalized in the context of Tanzania due to the use of qualitative research design and differences in the cultural and education system. Therefore, there is need to conduct a study in Tanzania context. Therefore, the current study investigated the extent parental engagement in students' academic progress mitigate students' dropout in public secondary schools in Kwimba District, Tanzania.

Paul et al. (2021) conducted a study examining the impact of parental engagement on school dropout rates among Indian adolescents in secondary schools. Using an ex-post-facto research design and a quantitative approach, the study analyzed IHDS panel data of children aged 8-11 years in round-I and 15-18 years in round-II. Logistic regression models were used for bivariate, multivariable, and stratified analyses. The findings revealed that children whose parents did not participate in PTA meetings, discuss academic progress, or supervise homework had a significantly higher risk of dropping out. Specifically, the odds of dropout were higher for children with less parental engagement in these areas. The study also highlighted gender, school type, and community factors, with certain subgroups at even higher risk. The study by Paul et al. (2021) provides valuable insights into the relationship between parental engagement and school dropout, particularly during the transition from primary to secondary school. Therefore, the current study investigated the extent parental engagement in students' academic progress mitigate students' dropout in public secondary schools in Kwimba District, Tanzania.

Ssenkasi and Hassan (2021) conducted a study about Parents' Attendance of School Meetings and Pupils' Academic Performance in Selected Secondary Schools in Kyotera Town Council, Uganda. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design where both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used. The study employed Census and purposive sampling technique were used to select a sample of 71 teachers, 8 Members of the PTA, and 8 SMC members of the selected schools. The major instruments used in the study were a Likert scale type questionnaire which was filled by teachers as well as an interview guide for head teachers, PTA executives and SMC members. The study revealed that parents were not serious with attending school meetings. Based on records of meetings in schools visited, some of the parents do not attend school meetings. The study highlighted the connection

between parental involvement and students' academic performance, offering valuable insights into the role of parental engagement in education. However, while this study focused on academic performance, the current study expands on this by addressing the issue of student dropout. Moreover, the study was done in the context of Uganda which has slightly different educational policy and approach from that of Tanzania. Therefore, the current study investigated the extent parental engagement in students' academic progress mitigate students' dropout in public secondary schools in Kwimba District, Tanzania.

Seni and Onyango (2021) conducted a study about The Roles of Parents in Enhancing Students attendance among Public Secondary Schools at Nyamagana District, Tanzania. The study employed mixed research approach to organize the qualitative and quantitative data so as to deal with the research problem. The study sample size of 88 students and the use of convenient sampling. The sample for this study included 88 students whereby simple random sampling was used to select the where purposive sampling was used to select the DEO, WEO and some teachers while parents were selected through convenient sampling. The study revealed that parents are somehow not doing very well on the issue of parenting as a good number of them did not play their role effectively hence do not influence student attendance. The study by Seni and Onyango (2021) focus on students' attendance that provide insights into potential factors affecting dropout rates, but the study does not explicitly examine dropout ai its primary focus and as the outcome variable. Therefore, the current study investigated the extent parental engagement in students' academic progress mitigate students' dropout in public secondary schools in Kwimba District, Tanzania.

Kataga and Mwila (2024) conducted a study about Strategies for Managing Truancy and Dropout Rates in Secondary Schools: A Study in Temeke Municipality, Tanzania. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from 336 respondents, including students, teachers, parents, school heads, and local government officials. Findings reveal socioeconomic hardships, poor school environments, and inadequate parental involvement as primary contributors to truancy. The study findingsbroadly focus on multiple factors such as socioeconomic hardships, poor school environments, and inadequate parental involvement with a little depth of understanding regarding the specific role of parental engagement in academic progress. Although parental involvement was identified as a contributing factor, it was not the central focus of the investigation. Therefore, the current study in Kwimba District lied in its targeted approach to critically examine the extent to which parental engagement in students' academic progress mitigates student dropout.

7. Summary of Literature Review and Research Gaps

The reviewed empirical studies on student dropout and parental engagement arise from several factors identified in research conducted globally, across Africa, and within Tanzania. Studies from Malaysia (Mohlouoa&Tlale, 2020), India (Paul et al., 2021), Uganda (Ssenkasi&Hassan, 2021), Tanzania (Seni & Onyango, 2021) and Tanzania(Kataga & Mwila 2024) offer important insights into how parental engagement supports students' academic performance and school attendance. However, their findings are often contextually specific, with limited applicability to Tanzania's educational landscape, particularly concerning dropout mitigation. Many of these studies focused on isolated outcomes such as academic achievement or attendance, rather than directly addressing the extent to which parental engagement in academic progress influences student dropout, thus revealing a conceptual gap. Contextually, the studies conducted outside Tanzania, especially those by Mohlouoa and Tlale (2020) and Paul et al. (2021), were situated in different cultural and socio-economic environments, which limits their generalizability to the Tanzanian context. Methodologically, most of the reviewed studies relied on either qualitative or quantitative methods alone, without employing a mixed-methods approach that could offer a more comprehensive understanding of how various dimensions of parental engagement affect dropout rates. The current study aims to bridge these conceptual, contextual, and methodological gaps by using a mixed-methods approach to explore the extent to which parental engagement in academic progress mitigates student dropout in public secondary schools in Kwimba District, Tanzania.

8. Design and Methodology

The study employed a convergent research design under a mixed methods approach. The convergent design involved the simultaneous collection of data and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data separately, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study targeted 32 public secondary schools, 32 heads of schools, 782 teachers, 1,476 form four students, and 175 parents in Kwimba District, Tanzania (URT, 2023). The sample size of this study comprised of 9 public secondary schools, 78 teachers, 9 heads of schools, 148 form four students, 18 parents who are the members of the school board and one (1) District Secondary Education Officer (DSEO) making a total of 254 respondents. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires, while qualitative data were collected through interview guides. MWECAU research experts in the field of education Planning and administration validated data collection instruments. A pilot study was conducted in 2 public secondary schools. The

reliability of questionnaires for Likert-type items was estimated using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient where 0.835 for teachers and 0.856 for students were obtained while reliability for qualitative data was established through triangulation. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics through SPSS software version 27. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically using NVivothrough familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and write-ups.

9.1 The Extent to which Parental engagement in Students' Academic Progress Mitigates Students' Dropout in Public Secondary Schools in Kwimba District, Tanzania

This study aimed to investigate theextent to which parental engagement in students' academic progress mitigates students' dropout in Public Secondary Schools in Kwimba District, Tanzania. To understand the concern, the required information was obtained by the researcher through questionnaires provided items to teachers and students to indicate the level of agreement with the given statement while the head of schools, parents and DSEO were interviewed. The five-level Likert scale was employed to guide the unit of analysis in this study, with the primary unit of analysis being the individual responses of students, parents, teachers, and school administrators within public secondary schools in Kwimba District. The Likert scale used includes: 1 = Very Low Extent (VLE), 2 = Low Extent (LE), 3 = Moderate (M), 4 = High Extent (HE), and 5 = Very High Extent (VHE). This scale enables the researcher to quantify the extent of parental engagement in students' academic progress in relation to its influence on mitigating student dropout. Additionally, descriptive statistics were used, including frequencies (F) and percentages (P), with the following interpretation scale for percentage ratings: ≤20% = extremely minority, 21–49% = minority, 50–59% = moderate, 60–69% = majority, 70–89% = very high majority, 90–99% = extremely majority, and 100% = overwhelming majority (Taherdoost, 2019). To measure this extensiveness, the results were analyzed using the mean score criteria developed by Chyung and Hutchinson (2023), where mean values from 1.00–1.99 denote Very Low Extent (VLE), 2.00–2.99 Low Extent (LE), 3.00–3.99 Moderate Extent (ME), 4.00–4.49 High Extent (HE), and 4.50–5.00 Very High Extent (VHE).Response for teachers and students are summarized in Table 1

Table 1

Teachers (TRs) and Students (STs) responses on The Extent to which Parental engagement in Students' Academic Progress Mitigates Students' Dropout in Public Secondary Schools in Kwimba District, Tanzania(n=78 and 146)

S/N	Statement	Resp	VLE		LE		ME		HE		VHE		Mean
			f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
1	Parents who show interest in their children's academic progress contribute to students staying in school and completing their education.	TRs	4	5.1	6	7.7	6	7.7	29	37.2	33	42.3	4.04
		STs	9	6.2	7	4.8	13	8.9	52	35.6	65	44.5	4.08
2	When parents communicate regularly with teachers about academic struggles, and early identification of issues helps reduce the likelihood of students dropping out.	TRs	4	5.1	1	1.3	7	9.0	22	28.2	44	56.4	4.29
		STs	13	8.9	6	4.1	15	10.3	58	39.7	54	37.0	3.92
3	Parents' participation in school events and volunteer work helps students feel more connected to school and reduces dropout rates.	TRs	5	6.4	6	7.7	9	11.5	36	46.2	22	28.2	3.82
		STs	7	4.8	9	6.2	11	7.5	56	38.4	63	43.2	4.09
4	Parents who regularly monitor their children's school attendance help ensure consistent attendance, reducing the risk of dropout.	TRs	7	9.0	2	2.6	6	7.7	24	30.8	39	50.0	4.10
		STs	12	8.2	12	8.2	19	13.0	53	36.3	50	34.2	3.80
5	Parents who help students set academic goals and provide guidance contribute to students staying in school.	TRs	11	14.1	1	1.3	7	9.0	25	32.1	34	43.6	3.90
		STs	12	8.2	11	7.5	8	5.5	47	32.2	68	46.6	4.01
6	Parental encouragement of academic success and involvement in school activities motivates students to remain engaged and reduces dropout rates.	TRs	3	3.8	4	5.1	10	12.8	22	28.2	39	50.0	4.15
		STs	12	8.2	10	6.8	15	10.3	46	31.5	63	43.2	3.95
7	Parents who collaborate with teachers to address academic challenges play a key role in reducing dropout rates.	TRs	1	1.3	1	1.3	6	7.7	27	34.6	43	55.1	4.41
		STs	16	11.0	18	12.3	10	6.8	45	30.8	57	39.0	3.75
8	Parental involvement in addressing school-related challenges, such as bullying or peer pressure, helps students stay in school and reduces dropout rates.	TRs	3	3.8	3	3.8	5	6.4	28	35.9	39	50.0	4.24
		STs	18	12.3	8	5.5	10	6.8	59	40.4	51	34.9	3.80
9	Parents who offer emotional support during stressful academic periods help students overcome challenges and reduce the likelihood of dropping out.	TRs	3	3.8	6	7.7	9	11.5	23	29.5	37	47.4	4.09
		STs	7	4.8	13	8.9	13	8.9	53	36.3	60	41.1	4.00
10	Parental involvement in resolving conflicts or difficulties students face at school helps improve retention and reduces the chances of dropout.	TRs	7	9.0	5	6.4	8	10.3	19	24.4	39	50.0	4.00
		STs	10	6.8	7	4.8	12	8.2	43	29.5	74	50.7	4.12
	Grand Mean for TRs												**4.104**
	Grand Mean for STs												**3.952**

Source: Field Data (2025) 1=Very Low Extent (VLE), 2= Low Extent (LE), 3=Moderate (M), 4=High Extent (HE), 5=Very High Extent (VHE), F=frequencies, P=Percentages

Data presented in Table 1show that a very high majority of teachers (79.5%) and students (80.1%) rated to a high extent that parents who show interest in their children's academic progress contribute to students staying in school and completing their education. In contrast, an extremely minority of teachers (12.8%) and students (11.0%) rated this to a very low and low extent. Additionally, an extremely minority of teachers (7.7%) and students (8.9%) indicated a moderate extent. The mean score was 4.04 for teachers and 4.08 for students. This implies that most teachers and students recognised the importance of parental interest in academic matters as a critical factor in promoting school completion. The very high majority rating suggests that both groups believed that parental engagement fostered a supportive learning environment that helped prevent dropout. Conversely, the extremely minority who rated this to a low, very low, or moderate extent, represent individuals who have limited experiences on active parental involvement as they prioritised other factors they thought were contributing to student retention. The consistently high mean scores further reinforce the general consensus that parental interest positively influences students' educational continuity. In connection with this, during a face-to-face interview with the researcher, Parent four had these to say:

> Yes, it very important. A parent who shows interest in the child's education helps the child stay focused. In my case, I always ask my son what topics they covered and whether there is any homework. Even though I may not understand everything, I make sure he knows I am paying attention. I also attend school meetings and speak to his teachers to hear how he is doing. That has helped him become more serious. I have seen other children lose direction because no one at home checks on them. Some even stop attending school completely. A child who feels supported at home will try harder and is more likely to continue with school until completion (Parent four: Personal communication, on the 13th of March, 2025).

In relation to the ongoing discussion, the Head of School B had these to say:

> A big difference exists between students whose parents are involved in their education and those whose parents are not. In Kwimba district, many parents are occupied with farming and other responsibilities, but those who take time to follow up on school matters like attending meetings, asking about performance, or checking exercise

> books.make a real impact. Learners whose parents are actively involved tend to behave better, attend classes regularly, and take their studies seriously. Lack of parental support at home often leads to poor performance and eventually dropping out. Encouraging parents to stay engaged in their children's academic journey has proven effective in keeping students in school (HoS B: Personal communication, on the 18th of March, 2025).

Information in the interview indicates that both Parent four and the Head of School B affirm the importance of parental involvement in students' academic progress. Parent four stressed the value of showing care through communication and follow-up, which helped maintain the child's focus. Similarly, Head of School B observed that students with supportive parents demonstrated more discipline and commitment to their education. These perspectives suggest that in the Kwimba context, consistent parental engagement was found to play a vital role in promoting school attendance and reducing the risk of dropout. These findings are in line with those by Tan et al., (2020) who affirmed that, parental involvement positively affects student achievement, but its benefits are stronger for students whose parents are more educated. These findings also align with Pierre Bourdieu's Social Capital Theory, developed in the early 1980s, which emphasizes the importance of social networks, relationships, and the resources embedded within them in shaping individual behavior and success.

In the context of public secondary schools in Kwimba District, Tanzania, it was found that when parents show interest in their children's academic progress, it reinforces strong social bonds between families and schools. This involvement creates a network of support, accountability, and encouragement, which Bourdieu identifies as a form of social capital that students can draw upon to navigate challenges and remain committed to their education. According to the theory, such social connections enhance students' motivation and sense of responsibility, as they recognize the value their families place on education. As a result, students are more likely to stay in school and complete their education, as the parental interest signals consistent support and expectations, thereby reducing the risk of disengagement or dropout.

Data presented in Table 1 show that a very high majority of teachers (84.6%) and very high majority of students (76.7%) rated to a high extent that when parents communicate regularly with teachers about academic struggles of students, early identification of issues helps reduce the likelihood of students dropping out. In contrast, an extremely minority of

teachers (6.4%) and students (13.0%) rated this to a very low and low extent. Additionally, an extremely minority of teachers (9.0%) and students (10.3%) indicated a moderate extent. The mean score was 4.29 for teachers and 3.92 for students. This implies that most teachers and students recognised the importance of regular parent-teacher communication in addressing academic difficulties early and preventing school dropout. The majority rating suggests that both groups believed that such collaboration was playinga crucial role in keeping students engaged in education. On the other hand, the extremely minority who rated this to a very low, low, or moderate extent, reflect a small group that perceived other factors as more pressing or may not fully recognise the benefit of timely communication. The mean scores further indicate general approval and support for regular parental engagement with teachers. Connected to this ongoing discussion, during a face-to-face interview with the researcher, Parent two had these to say:

> Talking to teachers helps a lot. Last term, I learned from my son's teacher that he was struggling in class. I had no idea. After we talked, I reduced his chores at home and gave him more study time. His performance improved. Without that conversation, I might have lost him to poor performance. Parents should not wait; early follow-up helps children stay in school (Parent two Personal communication, on the 11th of March, 2025).

In relation to the ongoing discussion, the Head of School E had these to say:

> Parents who communicate with us help prevent bigger problems. We can notice a student falling behind, but if we don't talk to the parent, nothing changes. But when parents follow up, we work together, sometimes arranging for extra help. That early support makes students feel guided and reduces dropout (HoS E: Personal communication, on the 24th of March, 2025).

Information in the interview indicates that both Parent two and Head of School E recognize the value of early communication about academic struggles. Parent two highlights how quick action after a teacher's feedback improved her child's performance, while the Head of School E stressed the importance of cooperation in providing timely support. Both accounts suggest that consistent parent–teacher communication helps keep students in school. These findings are in line with those by Permatasari and Artha, (2023) who affirmed that, improving teacher qualifications, reducing class sizes, and increasing parental engagement and communication can help reduce high school dropout.

Data presented in Table 1 show that very high majority of teachers (74.4%) and a very high majority of students (81.6%) rated to a high extent that parents' participation in school events and volunteer work was making students feel more connected to school and reduced dropout rates. In contrast, an extreme minority of teachers (14.1%) and students (11.0%) rated this to a very low and low extent respectively. Additionally, extreme minority of teachers (11.5%) and students (7.5%) indicated a moderate extent. The mean score was 3.82 for teachers and 4.09 for students. This implies that most teachers and students recognised the importance of parental participation in school-related events as a factor fostering students' attachment to school and promoting continued attendance. The majority rating suggests that both groups believed that such involvement was contributing positively to student retention. On the other hand, the extreme minority who rated this to a very low, low, or moderate extent, reflects a small group that might prioritise academic support over school participation or not fully value the indirect effects of parental presence. The mean scores further indicate general support for encouraging parental involvement in school activities. With a connection to the ongoing discussion, during a face-to-face interview with the researcher, the HoS I had these to say:

> When parents come for meetings, school events, or even help during school cleanliness days, their children feel proud. They see that their family values education. We have noticed that students whose parents are involved behave better and are less likely to skip classes. It creates a strong link between home and school, and that helps prevent dropouts (HoS I Personal: communication, on the 11th of April, 2025).

Pertaining to this sub-theme,the District Secondary Education Officer had these to say:

> Parental involvement beyond just paying fees makes a real difference. When students see their parents attending debates, sports events, or helping during school functions, it boosts their morale. They feel supported and important. On the other hand, children whose parents never show up,they often make them feel neglected. Participation sends a message that school matters, and so does their future. It plays a part in keeping them in school (DSEO Personal communication: on the 4th of April, 2025).

Information in the interview indicates that both the HoS I and the District Secondary Education Officer believed that parental participation in school activities was contributing significantly to students' emotional connection to school. HoS I highlighted how student behavior and attendance improved when their parents were seen taking part in school affairs.

Similarly, the DSEO emphasized that such involvement affirmed to students that their education was valued, thus enhancing their sense of belonging and reducing the risk of dropping out. The findings of this study, are in line with those by Paul et al., (2021) who affirmed that, parents' participation in school events and volunteer work are associated with students' feeling more connected to school, higher academic achievement, and lower dropout rates.

Data presented in Table 1 show that very high majority of teachers (80.8%) and students (70.5%) rated to a high extent that parents who regularly monitor their children's school attendance help ensure consistent attendance, thus reducing the risk of dropout. In contrast, an extremely minority of teachers (11.6%) and students (16.4%) rated this to a very low and low extent. Additionally, an extremely minority of teachers (7.7%) and students (13.0%) indicated a moderate extent. The mean score was 4.10 for teachers and 3.80 for students. This implies that most teachers and students noted the importance of parental monitoring in promoting consistent school attendance and discouraging absenteeism. The majority rating suggests that both groups believed this form of parental oversight was playinga crucial role in reducing dropout. On the other hand, the extremely minority who rated this to a very low, low, or moderate extent, reflect a small group that might view other dropout factors as more influential or may lack experience with engaged parenting. The mean scores further indicate general approval and support for regular parental attendance checks. Reacting on this during a face-to-face interview with the researcher, Parent nine had these to share:

> I always ask my daughter how the school learning was each day and check her exercise books. If she delays or skips school without reason, I follow up immediately. There was a time she started pretending to go but didn't reach school. After I found out, I spoke to her and the class teacher. Since then, she has been consistent. Parents need to be alert. If you don't check, children can easily lose direction and start missing classes. Monitoring them helps a lot (Parent nine: Personal communication, on the 26th of March, 2025).

In line with the foregoing, Parent eleven had these to say:

> In this village, some children go to the farm instead of school when parents are not keen. I make sure my son leaves home in uniform and I check his attendance report. I even ask other students if he was present. Once children know their parents are checking, they take school seriously. That pressure helps them stay in school and

avoid bad groups. Itis the parents' responsibility (Parent eleven: Personal communication, on the 3rd of April, 2025).

Information in the interview indicates that both Parent nine and Parent eleven understand the critical role of parental monitoring in maintaining regular school attendance. Parent nine shares a personal example of how proactive checking and teacher communication corrected her daughter's attendance issues, thus emphasising the need for parents to stay vigilant. Parent eleven echoes this sentiment, therefore highlighting how in rural areas like Kwimba, students may be tempted to skip school for non-academic activities if left unsupervised. His routine of verifying attendance through direct checks and peer inquiries shows a practical strategy for ensuring accountability. Both accounts suggest that parental oversight instils discipline and reinforces the importance of education, thereby reducing the chances of students dropping out. These findings are in line with those by Munyaneza et al., (2023) who affirmed that, regular parental monitoring and involvement in children's school attendance and academic activities reduces the risk of school dropout.

Data presented in Table 1 show that very high majority of teachers (75.7%) and a very high majority of students (78.8%) rated to a high extent that parents who were helping students set academic goals and providing them with guidance, were contributing to students staying in school. In contrast, an extremely minority of teachers (15.4%) and students (15.7%) rated this to a very low and low extent. Additionally, an extremely minority of teachers (9.0%) and students (5.5%) indicated a moderate extent. The mean score was3.90 for teachers and 4.01 for students. This suggests that most teachers and students knew the importance of goal setting and parental guidance in encouraging students to remain in school. The majority rating suggests that both groups believed that such support fostered commitment to education. On the other hand, the extremely minority who rated this to low, or moderate extent, reflect a small group that may prioritise other factors or may not fully recognise the role of parental direction in academic success. The mean scores further indicate general approval and support for encouraging parental academic guidance. Making connection to the ongoing discussion, during a face-to-face interview with the researcher Parent seven, said the following:

At home, I always tell my son to aim higher. I remind him that education is the only way he can get a better life. We sit down and talk about his dreams.He wants to be a teacher. I encourage him to study hard and avoid bad company. Even if we don't have much, I make sure he knows that his future depends on staying in school. Children

> need to hear these things from their parents (Parent seven: Personal communication, on the 20th of March, 2025).

Arguing in line with the ongoing discussion, parent twelve had these to say:

> I told my daughter from Form One that I wanted her to finish Form Four and go beyond. Every term, I ask her what marks she got and where she wanted to improve. I also help her plan study time at home, especially during weekends. If parents leave everything to teachers, children may lose focus. But if they know someone at home is guiding them, they stay serious with school (Parent twelve: Personal communication, on the 4th of April, 2025).

Information in the interview indicates that both Parent seven and Parent twelve recognise the importance of helping children set clear academic goals and giving consistent guidance as a strategy to keep them engaged in school. Parent seven emphasised verbal motivation and nurturing long-term aspirations as a way to inspire commitment to education. This emotional support plays a key role, especially in rural areas including Kwimba, where external distractions are common. Parent twelve provided a more structured example, where regular monitoring of performance and setting study plans at home would make the child remain focused. Both accounts suggest that students are more likely to remain enrolled and motivated when parents take an active role in their academic planning. These findings are in line with those by Yang et al., (2023) who affirmed that, parental involvement including setting academic goals, providing guidance, offering support, maintaining communication, and expressing high expectations, positively contributes to students' academic achievement, motivation, engagement, and likelihood of staying in school.

Data presented in Table 1 show that a very high majority of teachers (78.2%) and students (74.7%) rated to a high extent that parental encouragement of academic success and involvement in school activities were motivating students to remain engaged and reduced dropout rates. In contrast, an extremely minority of teachers (8.9%) and students (15.0%) rated this to a very low and low extent. Additionally, extremely minority of teachers (12.8%) and students (10.3%) indicated a moderate extent. The mean score was 4.15 for teachers and 3.95 for students. This implies that most teachers and students recognised the role of parental encouragement in sustaining student engagement and preventing dropout. The majority rating suggests that both groups believed that such encouragement was a vital element of student motivation. On the other hand, the extremely minority who rated this to low, or moderate extent, reflect a small group that tended to focus more on academic resources or teacher

support as key motivators. The mean scores further indicate general approval and support for continued parental involvement in motivating students. Making connection to this, during a face-to-face interview with the researcher, Parent ten had these to say:

> I always tell my children that education is their weapon. I attend school meetings and follow up on their progress. Even if I can't read well, I go to the school and ask the teachers how they are doing. My son once told me he felt proud when he saw me at school during the academic day. He said, 'Mama, I'll work harder so you won't be ashamed.' That kind of encouragement pushes them to stay focused (Parent ten: Personal communication, on the 9th of April, 2025).

With connection to the same matter, the Head of School seven had these to say:

> Students whose parents are active in school matters are different. They ask questions, they behave well, and you see they are trying. Sometimes we have school events or parent-teacher sessions, and those children whose parents attend are more motivated. One student told me, 'Sir, my mother came today, I must do well.' Parental support gives students a reason to care. It makes them feel noticed and important. That reduces dropout in many cases (HoS G: Personal communication, on the 25th of March, 2025).

Information in the interview indicates that both Parent ten and Head of School G emphasise the strong influence of parental encouragement and school involvement in motivating students to stay engaged and remain in school. Parent ten highlighted how even basic participation such as attending meetings or asking about school work can uplift a child's morale, especially in contexts like Kwimba where resources may be limited but where emotional support carries great weight. Her account illustrates how a parent's visible presence in the academic space builds pride and accountability in students. Similarly, the Head of School G observed that students with active parents show noticeable positive behaviour, greater classroom engagement, and increased commitment to learning. Both responses reflect how students feel recognised and valued when parents show interest in their school life. This sense of connection to school and motivation from home support reduces dropout rates among secondary school students by fostering a sense of purpose, accountability, and encouragement. These findings are in line with those by Szabó et al., (2024) who affirmed that, parental encouragement and involvement in school activities increase student engagement, improve academic motivation and achievement, and reduce dropout rates.

These findings also align with Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed in the mid-1980s, which emphasises the importance of fulfilling three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness, to foster motivation and well-being. When parents encourage academic success and actively participate in school activities, they help meet these needs in their children. Parental encouragement enhances students' sense of competence by affirming their academic abilities, while involvement in school activities fosters relatedness by strengthening the emotional connection between the student, family, and school community. According to SDT, when students feel supported and connected in this way, they are more likely to develop intrinsic motivation and stay engaged in their education. This internal drive to succeed contributes to reduced dropout rates, as students are motivated not just by external expectations but by a genuine desire to achieve and remain in school.

Data presented in Table 1 show that an extremely majority of teachers (89.7%) and a majority of students (69.8%) rated to a high extent that parents who collaborate with teachers to address academic challenges play a key role in reducing dropout rates. In contrast, an extremely minority of teachers (2.6%) and students (23.3%) rated this to a very low and low extent. Additionally, an extremely minority of teachers (7.7%) and students (6.8%) indicated a moderate extent. The mean score was 4.41 for teachers and 3.75 for students. This implies that most teachers and students recognised the importance of parental collaboration with teachers in solving academic problems and supporting students' persistence. The majority rating suggests that both groups believed that such cooperation was essential in identifying and resolving learning difficulties. On the other hand, the extreme minority who rated this to a very low, low, or moderate extent, reflect a small group that may have limited exposure to effective collaboration or may rely more on internal school mechanisms. The mean scores further indicate general approval and support for parent-teacher cooperation. In line with the ongoing discussion, during a face-to-face interview with the researcher, Parent 6 had these to say:

> Sometimes children act like they are going to school, but they have other plans. I have told my son that I will not tolerate laziness. When he comes back, I ask him what he learnt. I also speak to his teachers when I get the chance. One time he started failing maths badly. I met with the teacher and we agreed to give him extra work and make follow up. He improved after that. If we just leave our children to go their own way,

they get lost. Parents must talk to teachers and help where possible (Parent six: Personal communication, on the 18th of March, 2025).

Regarding the issue at hand, Parent ten had these to say:

Here in our village, there are many distractions. Boys run to the lake for fishing, and girls are sent to sell groundnuts. But I don't allow that during school time. I talk to my daughter's class teacher every month. If she misses homework, I want to know why. That communication helps me understand her progress. When she sees that I care, she also puts effort. Many parents wait until things are too bad. But if we walk together with the teachers, our children stay focused and they don't drop out easily (Parent ten: Personal communication, on the 28th of March, 2025).

Information in the interview indicates that both Parent six and Parent ten recognise the importance of parent–teacher collaboration in addressing academic challenges that may lead to dropout. Parent six shared how direct engagement with teachers and timely intervention helped his son recover from academic decline, demonstrating that active parental involvement contributes to a student's retention. Similarly, Parent ten emphasised how rural life presents various distractions for students, and that regular communication with teachers helps reinforce accountability and motivation. Both respondents highlight that when parents show interest in their children's education and maintain contact with the school, students are more likely to remain disciplined and less likely to drop out. These findings are in line with those by Rachman et al., (2024) who affirmed that, parent-teacher collaboration and parental involvement in students' academic lives are associated with reduced dropout rates and improved academic outcomes.

Data presented in Table 1 show that a very high majority of teachers (85.9%) and of students (75.3%) rated to a high extent that parental involvement in addressing school-related challenges, such as bullying or peer pressure, was helpingstudents stay in school and reduce dropout rates. In contrast, an extremely minority of teachers (7.6%) and students (17.8%) rated this to a very low and low extent. Additionally, an extremely minority of teachers (6.4%) and students (6.8%) indicated a moderate extent. The mean score was 4.24 for teachers and 3.80 for students. This implies that most teachers and students recognised the importance of parental intervention in resolving school-related issues as a way to support student retention. The majority rating suggests that both groups believed that addressing social or behavioural challenges with parental support strengthened students' commitment to schooling. On the other hand, the extremely minority who rated this to low, or moderate

extent reflect a small group that might rely more on institutional responses or may not fully understand the impact of parental presence in such matters. The mean scores further indicate general approval and support for addressing school challenges through parental involvement. Reflecting the ongoing discussion, during a face-to-face interview with the researcher Parent four, had these to say:

> I noticed my son had changed he became quiet and didn't want to go to school. After talking to him several times, he told me some boys were laughing at him and threatening him at school. I didn't wait. I went straight to the school and spoke to the discipline teacher. They called the boys and warned them. Since then, my son is back to his normal self and attends school regularly. If we don't act fast, our children will keep silent and slowly lose interest in school. Parents must speak up when they see something is wrong (Parent four: Personal communication, on the 13th of March, 2025).

In relation to the foregoing, the Head of School I had these to say:

> Sometimes students suffer in silence because of peer pressure or bullying. Wehave seen some withdraw, others even stop coming completely. But when parents are involved, it makes a big difference. I remember one case where a girl was being mocked because of her appearance. The mother came to school, and we held a meeting with the students involved and their parents. The matter was resolved. Since then, that student's performance has improved. When parents cooperate with the school to solve such issues, it encourages students to stay and feel safe. It builds trust and reduces dropout cases (Head of School nine: Personal communication, on the 4th of April, 2025).

Information in the interview indicates that both Parent four and Head of School I understand the vital role of parental involvement in addressing social challenges students face in school, such as bullying and peer pressure. Parent four shared how early signs of her son's emotional withdrawal were traced to bullying, and how her quick action and school engagement helped restore his attendance and confidence. Similarly, the Head of School I emphasized that students facing peer-related problems often struggle silently unless parents and school staff work together. He gave an example where parental collaboration successfully resolved a bullying case, helping the affected student re-engage with school. These accounts suggest that timely parental intervention in school-related social issues creates a supportive environment, thereby contributing to the retention of students in school. These findings are in

line with those by Stephen, (2024) who affirmed that, parental involvement in addressing school-related challenges, including academic support and engagement with teachers, helps students stay in school and reduces dropout rates.

Data presented in Table 1 show that very high majority of teachers (76.9%) and students (77.4%) rated to a high extent that parents who offer emotional support during stressful academic periods help students overcome challenges and reduce the likelihood of dropping out. In contrast, an extremely minority of teachers (11.5%) and students (13.7%) rated this to a very low and low extent. Additionally, an extremely minority of teachers (11.5%) and students (8.9%) indicated a moderate extent. The mean score was 4.09 for teachers and 4.00 for students. This implies that most teachers and students recognised emotional support from parents as a crucial buffer against stress-related dropout. The majority rating suggests that both groups believed that such support enabled students to cope with academic pressures more effectively. On the other hand, the extremely minority who rated this to a very low, low, or moderate extent reflect a small group that may undervalue emotional factors in academic success or prioritise institutional support mechanisms. The mean scores further indicate general approval and support for nurturing student resilience through parental encouragement. In relation to the ongoing discussion, during a face-to-face interview with the researcher, Parent one had these to say:

> These days, schooling is not easy for children. There are too many subjects, and sometimes my daughter gets stressed during exam periods. When I see her worried or silent, I don't shout. I sit with her and ask what is going on. I tell her to do her best and not be afraid. Even if she fails, I tell her she can still try again. One time she cried because she thought she would be punished for failing maths. I encouraged her and talked to the teacher. She later passed well. Children need to know we are with them, not against them (Parent one: Personal communication, on the 10th of March, 2025).

Making connection with the ongoing discussion, the Head of School A had these to say:

> In secondary school, we see students under pressure, especially during exams or national assessments. Some even fall sick due to exam fear. But those with supportive parents tend to cope better. One boy almost dropped out because he failed Form Two exams. His parents came to school, talked to the teachers, and encouraged him not to give up. He stayed, worked hard, and passed the following year. When parents show love and understanding instead of anger, it helps the student regain confidence. That kind of support reduces dropout, especially here in Kwimba where many children

already face hard conditions (Head of School A: Personal communication, on the 17th of March, 2025).

Information in the interview indicates that both Parent one and Head of School A acknowledge the importance of emotional support from parents during stressful academic periods. Parent one shares how her daughter's stress during exams was managed through calm conversations and encouragement rather than punishment, which helped the child regain confidence and improve academically. Likewise, the Head of School 1 describes a case where parental reassurance and involvement prevented a student from dropping out after a major failure. Both accounts highlight that when parents respond to academic stress with understanding and motivation, students are more likely to persevere and stay in school. This supportive approach is especially crucial in rural settings like Kwimba, where external challenges already place pressure on learners. These findings are in line with those by Kamila and Ramadhani, (2024) who affirmed that, parental emotional support helps students cope with academic stress, improves engagement, and reduces dropout rates, especially when students live close to family or have high-quality parent relationships, although its direct effect on academic stress and dropout may vary depending on the context and other support systems.

Data presented in Table 1 show that very high majority of teachers (74.4%) and very high majority of students (80.2%) rated to a high extent that parental involvement in resolving conflicts or difficulties students face at school was helping improve retention and reduce the chances of dropout. In contrast, an extremely minority of teachers (15.4%) and students (11.6%) rated this to a very low and low extent. Additionally, an extremely minority of teachers (10.3%) and students (8.2%) indicated a moderate extent. The mean score was 4.00 for teachers and 4.12 for students. This implies that most teachers and students recognised the role of parental involvement in resolving conflicts as vital for students' retention. The majority rating suggests that both groups believed that addressing such difficulties with the help of parents helped students feel safer and more supported. On the other hand, the extremely minority who rated this to a very low, low, or moderate extent, reflect a small group that might see these as matters for school administration or peer intervention. The mean scores further indicate general approval and support for conflict resolution through parental engagement. In line with this argument, during a face-to-face interview with the researcher, Parent twelve had these to say:

> My son once had a misunderstanding with one of his teachers. After that, he didn't want to go to school. I noticed he was avoiding the topic, so I insisted until he opened up. I went to the school and requested a meeting with the teacher. We all sat together and discussed the issue. The teacher also explained his side, and we agreed on how to move forward. Since then, my son has been attending well and is more settled. As parents, we cannot ignore when our children face problems at school. If we leave them alone, some just stop going completely (Parent twelve: Personal communication, on the 4th of April, 2025).

Based on the ongoing discussion, the Head of School I had these to say:

> Wehave had students who stopped attending just because of small issues that were never resolved like being scolded in front of others or having a fight with classmates. But when parents come and engage with the school, things improve. I remember a case where a girl was being isolated by her peers. The parent came, and we involved the guidance teacher. It helped the child feel supported and she continued with school. In Kwimba, where some families already struggle, we really need parents to help us address such issues early before they push students out (Head of School I: Personal communication, on the 4th of April, 2025).

Information in the interview indicates that both Parent twelve and Head of School I understand the importance of parental involvement in resolving school-based conflicts and difficulties. Parent twelve narrated how a timely intervention in a teacher-student misunderstanding restored her son's confidence and school attendance. Similarly, the Head of School I emphasized that unresolved issues, even if minor, can escalate into dropout if not addressed in collaboration with parents. His example of addressing social exclusion through joint efforts with a student's family shows how school-home cooperation supports student retention. Together, the accounts highlight that when parents take an active role in conflict resolution, it builds a strong support system that encourages students to remain in school despite the challenges. These findings are in line with those by Vijayakumaran et al., (2023) who affirmed that, parental involvement in students' education such as supervising homework, communicating with teachers, and supporting academic motivation, helps improve student retention and reduce dropout rates.

These findings also align with Pierre Bourdieu's Social Capital Theory, developed in the early 1980s, which emphasises the importance of social networks and relationships in providing individuals with access to resources and support. When parents are actively

involved in resolving conflicts or difficulties their children face at school, they strengthen the social ties between the family and the school community. This involvement fosters a supportive environment where students feel valued and understood, thus reducing feelings of isolation or helplessness. According to Bourdieu's theory, these strong relational networks built on trust, shared values, and mutual support constitute social capital that students can rely on in times of need. As a result, students are more likely to remain engaged in school and less likely to drop out, as they benefit from the collaborative efforts of their parents and school personnel in overcoming challenges.

Generally, the grand mean score for teachers was 4.104 and grand mean score for students was 3.952, indicating a very high extent rating provided by teachers that parental engagement in students' academic progress mitigates student dropout in public secondary schools in Kwimba District, Tanzania. This very high rating underscores the significance of active parental involvement in enhancing students' commitment to education and reducing dropout rates. These findings are in line with those by Musili and Wambua (2023), who affirmed that continuous parental support in students' academic activities boosts learners' morale and encourages school persistence. Moreover, these findings align with Pierre Bourdieu's Social Capital Theory (early 1980s), which emphasises that individuals gain access to valuable resources and support through their social relationships and networks. According to this theory, when parents actively engage in their children's academic progress through regular communication with teachers, help with assignments, or follow up on academic performance, they create a form of social capital that enhances students' educational experience. This supportive network fosters accountability, motivation, and a sense of belonging, all of which contribute to reducing dropout rates by ensuring that students feel guided, valued, and empowered to remain in school.

10. Conclusion of the Study

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusion was drawn:

The engagement of parents in their children's academic progress contributes to mitigating students' dropout in public secondary schools in Kwimba District to a very high extent. The study revealed that regular parental involvement through activities such as reviewing academic performance, attending school meetings, and setting educational goals strengthens the communication between home and school, thus enabling timely interventions. Schools with active parental engagement reported improved student attendance, academic focus, and a stronger sense of responsibility, as parents reinforced the value of education and supported

learning efforts at home. This collaborative effort between parents and teachers helps address academic challenges early, thus reducing the risk of disengagement and dropout.

11. Recommendations for Action

To reduce dropout rates, parents should promote greater parental involvement in their children's academic progress by making regular attendance at parent-teacher meetings, sharing progress reports, and involving in the academic goal-setting with their children. Teachers should create platforms for routine communication with parents about student performance. They should be trained on how to support academic development at home through follow-ups on assignments and exam preparations. Education officers should support capacity-building programmes and integrate parent engagement indicators into school performance evaluation tools.

12. Recommendations for Further Studies

Future research should explore the influence of other dimensions of parental involvement, such as parent-child communication, parental attitudes toward education, and socio-economic factors on student dropout.

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