

Community Engagement as an Engine for School Performance: The Case of Secondary Schools of Kamonyi District, Rwanda

Mashyaka Thacien¹
Irénée Ndayambaje²

¹mashyakathacien@gmail.com

²ndbje@yahoo.fr

^{1,2}University of Rwanda

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effects of community engagement on school performance in secondary schools in Kamonyi District, Rwanda. The study specifically focused on evaluating the extent of parental involvement in secondary schools in Kamonyi District and its influence on academic achievement, student attendance, and teacher performance, examining the effectiveness of community communication channels in promoting school performance in secondary schools in Kamonyi District and investigating the role of local community support in enhancing school performance in secondary schools in Kamonyi District. Guided by Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence, the research explores the roles of parental involvement, community communication channels, and local community support in enhancing academic achievement, student attendance, and teacher performance. Using a correlational research design, quantitative data were collected from a sample of 530 respondents. The study utilized a total sample size of 530 respondents drawn from a target population of 2,014 individuals. A census approach was applied to head teachers and members of the school parents' committee, each consisting of 101 individuals, ensuring full inclusion of these groups. For secondary school teachers, stratified random sampling was used to select 328 participants from a total population of 1,812. Secondary data were gathered from reports, policy documents, and other relevant records from the Ministry of Education and Kamonyi District's Education Office and primary data were collected through structured questionnaires. After data collection, the responses from the questionnaires were coded and entered into SPSS, for analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, including means, frequencies, and percentages. Correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationship between community engagement and school performance. The study found a strong and statistically significant relationship between community engagement and school performance in Kamonyi District ($r = 0.874$, $p < 0.01$). Parental involvement positively correlates with teacher performance ($r = 0.803$, $p < 0.01$) and student attendance ($r = 0.735$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting its role in enhancing teaching effectiveness and student presence. Effective community communication also improves student attendance ($r = 0.757$, $p < 0.01$) and teacher performance ($r = 0.816$, $p < 0.01$). Additionally, local community support shows the strongest correlation with academic achievement ($r = 0.969$, $p < 0.01$) and student attendance ($r = 0.818$, $p < 0.01$), emphasizing the importance of community contributions to school success. In conclusion, the study emphasizes that strong community engagement—through active parental involvement, effective communication, and local community support—significantly enhances school performance in Kamonyi District. To address the gaps identified, the study recommends that the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) develop and implement guidelines encouraging parental involvement in school governance, decision-making, and educational activities. Strengthened policies on community engagement and investments in digital and traditional communication platforms are also essential to foster effective communication between schools and stakeholders.

Keys words: Community Engagement, School Performance, School Performance of Secondary Schools, Secondary Schools

I. INTRODUCTION

Active community involvement has consistently been shown to improve student outcomes, enhance school environments, and increase accountability within educational institutions (Epstein and Sheldon, 2016)). As schools continue to adapt to evolving societal needs, community engagement serves as a powerful engine that drives school success, particularly in secondary schools where academic demands and societal expectations are high. This study is rooted in the conviction that active collaboration between communities and schools is essential for promoting quality education and improving school performance, particularly in Kamonyi District, Rwanda.

Internationally, community engagement has long been recognized as a key factor in enhancing educational outcomes. For instance, Epstein (2011) underscores the importance of school-community partnerships, asserting that schools with active parental and community involvement often experience higher student achievement, improved attendance, and better school climates. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),

2017) emphasizes the importance of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. This goal highlights the need for active community involvement as a critical factor in achieving quality education and improving learning outcomes. This notion aligns with UNESCO's (2017) focus on SDG 4, which promotes inclusive and equitable quality education, emphasizing the need for community involvement to achieve these objectives. In more developed contexts, such as the United States, policies like Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) highlight the importance of parental involvement and community partnerships in enhancing student learning and well-being (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Similarly, in the United Kingdom, educational frameworks encourage community and parental participation to improve school environments and student success.

In Africa, community engagement has also played a critical role in improving school performance. The Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP) emphasized the importance of community support in maintaining and improving educational infrastructure (Republic of Kenya, 2005). In addition, policies like the Cost Sharing Policy in Kenya, established after the Kamunge Report in 1988, required communities to share the financial responsibility for education, fostering a collaborative effort between schools and communities (Republic of Kenya, 1988).

Locally, in Rwanda, the government has recognized the potential of community engagement in improving education. The Ministry of Education's Strategic Plan (MINEDUC, 2018) highlights the importance of community participation in supporting schools, particularly in terms of accountability and resource mobilization. Studies conducted by the Rwanda Education Board (REB, 2020) show that schools with strong community ties often perform better in national examinations and have lower dropout rates. However, despite these successes, the mechanisms through which community engagement influences school performance in Rwanda remain under-researched, particularly in rural districts like Kamonyi.

Community engagement, in this context, refers to the active involvement of parents, local organizations, businesses, and other community stakeholders in the educational processes of secondary schools. This engagement may involve activities such as volunteering in schools, participating in parent-teacher associations (PTAs), contributing to school governance, supporting infrastructure development, and fostering partnerships with local businesses and community organizations (Epstein, 2011). Community engagement also involves decision-making, supporting student learning outside of school, and creating an enabling environment for improved educational outcomes (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014).

School performance, in this study, refers to measurable outcomes related to student and institutional success like academic achievement, attendance rates, dropout rates, and the overall school climate (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2013). Effective school performance is indicated by high levels of student achievement, low dropout rates, and a positive and supportive environment conducive to learning and personal development. Indicators such as test scores, behavioral conduct, and engagement in extracurricular activities are critical to evaluating school performance (Bush & Glover, 2014).

Research has shown that community engagement can significantly impact school performance. Studies such as Epstein (2011) have demonstrated the positive effects of community involvement on student outcomes, attendance, and school climates. In Rwanda, the MINEDUC Strategic Plan (2018) and studies by the REB (2020) indicate that schools with strong community engagement often perform better in national examinations and experience lower dropout rates. Additionally, Nkurunziza (2021) found that schools with robust community involvement reported higher levels of student achievement and improved student behavior.

However, several gaps remain in the existing literature. First, there is limited research on the specific types of community engagement activities that are most effective in improving school performance in rural areas like Kamonyi District (Epstein, 2011; Goodall & Montgomery, 2014). While there is evidence supporting the general benefits of community involvement, it is unclear which forms of engagement yield the most significant impact. Second, the barriers to effective community participation in education have not been fully explored in this context. Understanding the challenges communities face in engaging with schools is essential for developing targeted interventions (Nyamusore et al., 2020). Lastly, there is limited data on the long-term effects of community engagement on educational outcomes in secondary schools in Kamonyi District (OECD, 2013). This study sought to fill these gaps by exploring the specific mechanisms through which community engagement influences school performance in the secondary schools of Kamonyi District. By investigating these issues, this research provided actionable insights for educators, policymakers, and community members, offering strategies to strengthen community-school partnerships and enhance educational outcomes in rural Rwanda.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Community engagement is widely recognized as a key driver of educational success globally, yet its specific impacts on secondary school performance in Kamonyi District remain underexplored. While Rwanda's education policies emphasize parental and community involvement—linked to a 15% reduction in absenteeism and a 10%

decrease in dropout rates (REB, 2020) - detailed local studies are lacking. The Kamonyi District Education Office (2022) indicates that schools with strong community ties achieve a 12% higher success rate. However, Kamonyi's secondary school performance continues to lag behind districts like Gasabo and Nyarugenge, where active community engagement has driven improvements of 25% and 22%, respectively (MINEDUC, 2022).

This disparity can be attributed to socioeconomic and cultural challenges, as well as institutional and infrastructural barriers. Kamonyi's high poverty rate (53.5%) significantly limits parental contributions and participation compared to urban districts like Gasabo (27.6%) and Nyarugenge (29.2%) (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda [NISR], 2018). Additionally, cultural perceptions in rural areas often place the responsibility for education solely on teachers, reducing parental involvement (MINEDUC, 2022). Institutional support disparities further compound the issue, with Kamonyi receiving 40% less funding for community engagement initiatives than urban districts (MINEDUC, 2018). Poor infrastructure also restricts parent participation, as 70% of Kamonyi schools are in remote areas (REB, 2020).

If unaddressed, these challenges could exacerbate absenteeism, dropout rates, and declining performance. This study aims to bridge the knowledge gap by investigating how community engagement influences secondary school performance in Kamonyi District, Rwanda, and by identifying strategies to enhance its impact.

1.2 Research Objectives

- (i) To evaluate the extent of parental involvement in secondary schools of Kamonyi District and its influence on academic achievement, student attendance, and teacher performance.
- (ii) To examine the effectiveness of community communication channels in promoting school performance in secondary schools of Kamonyi District.
- (iii) To investigate the role of local community support in enhancing school performance in secondary schools of Kamonyi District.

1.3 Research questions

- (i) How does the extent of parental involvement in secondary schools of Kamonyi District influence academic achievement, student attendance, and teacher performance?
- (ii) In what ways do community communication channels, such as social media interactions and community meetings, promote school performance in secondary schools of Kamonyi District?
- (iii) What role does local community support, including donations and community representation in school advisory boards, play in enhancing school performance in secondary schools of Kamonyi District?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

The concept of community engagement in education plays a significant role in shaping educational outcomes. Epstein's (2011) framework of school, family, and community partnerships provides a foundational theory for understanding the impact of collaboration between schools, families, and communities on student success. Epstein's model posits that when schools engage parents and community members in the educational process, students are more likely to experience improved academic achievement and better behavior. This collaborative partnership fosters an environment of support that can positively affect the overall learning experience, highlighting the potential for schools to leverage external resources and networks to enhance the educational setting. Social capital theory, as proposed by Putnam (2000), further supports the idea that community engagement fosters the development of social networks that benefit both individuals and the broader community. When communities are involved in the educational process, they create an environment of trust and collaboration that can have lasting positive effects on educational outcomes. This theory underscores the significance of community support in promoting student success by providing access to resources, networks, and shared goals that strengthen the educational framework.

School-community engagement plays a pivotal role in enhancing academic achievement, student attendance, and teacher performance. Epstein's (2011) partnership model demonstrates that active family and community involvement in decision-making processes and educational activities leads to significant improvements in student outcomes. These improvements include higher test scores, better student behavior, and increased student engagement, all of which contribute to an enhanced learning environment. The active participation of parents and the community creates a support system that motivates students to perform at their best, as the collective effort fosters a sense of responsibility and investment in their success. Sanders (2013) emphasizes the importance of school leadership in facilitating community partnerships. Effective school leaders must create opportunities for parents and community members to engage in meaningful collaboration, ensuring that their perspectives and input are valued. Research

suggests that when parents are actively involved in school governance and their children's education, students are more likely to attend school regularly, demonstrating a commitment to learning.

However, challenges persist in implementing effective community engagement. Bryk and Schneider (2002) identify common obstacles such as limited resources, time constraints, and a lack of expertise that can impede efforts to foster meaningful involvement. These barriers are particularly prominent in schools that face high levels of socio-economic stress or limited funding. Nevertheless, research shows that even in resource-constrained environments, sustained efforts to build and maintain community partnerships can lead to positive educational outcomes. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) argue that when communities are engaged in the educational process, schools experience increased accountability and improved teacher performance, as teachers feel supported and motivated by the broader community.

School performance is influenced by a variety of factors, including community engagement. Bryk and Schneider (2002) highlight the importance of trust and collaboration among teachers, administrators, students, and parents in creating a positive school climate that fosters student learning. In schools where these relationships are strong, academic achievement tends to be higher, reflecting the benefits of a cohesive and supportive educational environment. This collaborative dynamic helps ensure that all stakeholders are invested in both teaching and learning processes, leading to improved student outcomes.

2.1.1 Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence

Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence posits that the three major contexts in which children grow and learn—the family, the school, and the community—are interconnected. This theory suggests that the overlapping of these spheres, where the efforts of schools, families, and communities intersect, is critical to improving student outcomes. Epstein (1995) identifies six types of involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community.

This theory directly informs the current research as it emphasizes the importance of comprehensive community engagement, involving various stakeholders in supporting students' education. This theory underpins the current research, which investigates the effects of community engagement on school performance in secondary schools within Kamonyi District, Rwanda. By examining how community involvement intersects with school and family efforts, the study aligns with Epstein's theory, aiming to understand and quantify how enhanced collaboration among these spheres can improve academic achievement, student attendance, and teacher performance in the district.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Parental Involvement and Its Influence on Academic Achievement, Student Attendance, and Teacher Performance

A meta-analysis by Castro et al. (2015) reveals that parental involvement is strongly associated with academic success, accounting for approximately 20% of the variance in student achievement. Students with involved parents consistently achieve better grades and standardized test scores. Additionally, Epstein and Sheldon (2016) demonstrate that comprehensive parental involvement programs can reduce absenteeism by 10-15%, with active parent participation being a key factor in improving attendance. Parental involvement also influences teacher performance. Robinson and Harris (2018) report that 85% of teachers feel more motivated and effective when parents engage actively in their children's education, leading to higher job satisfaction and improved teaching performance.

2.2.2 Effectiveness of Community Communication Channels in Promoting School Performance

The effectiveness of community communication channels in promoting school performance is well-documented. Kraft and Rogers (2015) find that personalized communication, such as emails and text messages, can lead to an average improvement of 0.3 standard deviations in student test scores. Schools utilizing these tools report higher parental engagement, which directly enhances student performance.

Goodall (2016) highlights that effective communication strategies improve student attendance by 7-12%, while Thompson and Mazer (2019) show that schools using digital communication tools experience a 15-20% increase in overall school performance metrics, including academic achievement and teacher effectiveness.

2.2.3 Role of Local Community Support in Enhancing School Performance

Local community support plays a critical role in enhancing school performance. Sanders (2013) finds that schools with strong community partnerships see a 10-15% improvement in academic performance due to resources such as tutoring and extracurricular activities provided by the community. Warren (2005) reports a 20% decrease in behavioral issues and a 12% increase in student attendance in schools with active community involvement. Howley and Howley (2006) note that rural schools with strong community support experience a 15% improvement in teacher retention and performance, attributed to the supportive environment created by the community.

The impact of community engagement on school performance is significant. Henderson and Mapp (2002) observe a 25-30% increase in student achievement in schools with high levels of community involvement. Bryk and Schneider (2002) find that strong trust and collaboration among teachers, parents, and the community reduce absenteeism by 15-20%. Furthermore, Jeynes (2011) reports that community involvement enhances teacher effectiveness by 20%, highlighting the crucial role of community support in fostering a positive educational environment.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study used a correlational research design to explore the relationship between community engagement and school performance in Kamonyi District, Rwanda. A quantitative approach was employed, with data collected using structured questionnaires containing closed-ended and Likert scale questions. The research aimed to fill gaps in the literature regarding the impact of community engagement on educational outcomes, particularly in rural Rwanda.

3.2 Study Location

The study was conducted in Kamonyi District due to its diverse population and the presence of a well-established network of public secondary schools, making it an ideal setting for comparative analysis.

3.3 Target Population

The study's target population included District Education Officers, head teachers, and secondary school teachers from Kamonyi District, totaling 2,014 individuals.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study utilized a total sample size of 530 respondents drawn from a target population of 2,014 individuals. A census approach was applied to head teachers and members of the school parents' committee, each consisting of 101 individuals, ensuring full inclusion of these groups. For secondary school teachers, stratified random sampling was used to select 328 participants from a total population of 1,812.

3.5 Data Collection Instrument

Data collection involved both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was gathered through structured questionnaires designed to capture quantitative data on community engagement and school performance. To ensure validity and reliability, a pilot study was conducted, and Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the reliability of the research instruments.

3.6 Data Analysis

After data collection, responses from the questionnaires were coded and entered into SPSS for analysis. Descriptive statistics (means, frequencies, and percentages) were used to summarize the data. Additionally, correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between community engagement and school performance.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical standards; including obtaining informed consent from participants and ensuring confidentiality. These measures enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Response Rate

Table 1

Response Rate

Sampled	Responded	Response Rate (%)
530	530	$530/530 \times 100 = 100$

The response rate of 100% in this study indicates a high level of participation, with 530 out of the 530 sampled individuals responding to the survey. A response rate of this magnitude suggests that the data collected is representative and reliable, minimizing non-response bias.

4.2 The extent of Community Involvement in Secondary Schools of Kamonyi District and its Influence on Academic Achievement, Student Attendance, and Teacher Performance

Community engagement, as examined in this study, is a crucial aspect of school development and student success. It was explored through three key indicators: Parental Involvement, Community Communication Channels, and Local Community Support. These indicators reflect the extent to which schools foster active participation and collaboration with both parents and the broader community to enhance the educational experience for students. By engaging stakeholders such as parents, local organizations, and businesses, schools can create a supportive environment that contributes to academic achievement and overall school development.

4.2.1 Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is the first analyzed indicator of community engagement, reflecting its pivotal role in influencing school performance. Table 2 summarizes the perceptions of respondents on various aspects of parental participation in secondary schools in Kamonyi District.

Table 2

Parental Involvement

Statements	N	Min	Max	\bar{X}	Std. D
Parents attend parent-teacher meetings at the school.	530	1	5	4.13	0.90
Parents actively participate in school-organized events (e.g., sports days, cultural events).	530	1	5	4.11	0.89
Parents engage in discussions about their children's academic progress with teachers.	530	1	5	4.06	0.95
Parents volunteer to support school activities (e.g., field trips, school cleanups).	530	1	5	4.15	0.90
The school organizes workshops for parents on educational support strategies at home.	530	2	5	4.13	0.90
Parents contribute to decision-making processes at the school.	530	2	5	4.10	0.90

The data in Table 2 highlights robust parental involvement in secondary schools of Kamonyi District. Parents attending parent-teacher meetings scored a high mean of 4.13 (Std. D = 0.90), reflecting consistent attendance at these critical forums. Active participation in school-organized events, such as sports and cultural activities, also received strong support, with a mean of 4.11 (Std. D = 0.89). Parents' engagement in discussions about their children's academic progress with teachers was similarly positive, with a mean score of 4.06 (Std. D = 0.95). Additionally, volunteering for school activities, such as field trips and cleanups, had the highest mean score of 4.15 (Std. D = 0.90), indicating strong support for extracurricular efforts. Workshops for parents on educational support strategies scored a mean of 4.13 (Std. D = 0.90), suggesting that schools actively promote parental involvement in home-based learning. Contributions to decision-making processes also scored well, with a mean of 4.10 (Std. D = 0.90), showcasing inclusive practices in school governance.

These findings are consistent with studies emphasizing the critical role of parental involvement in educational outcomes. For instance, Kimu and Ngugi (2021) found that 78% of parents who regularly attended parent-teacher meetings reported improved student grades in their Kenyan study. Similarly, Nzabonimpa et al. (2020), in their Rwandan study, reported that 84% of schools with high parental participation in activities like sports days experienced increased student attendance and discipline, leading to a 15% improvement in national exam performance.

Mwangi et al. (2023) in Kenya found that parental engagement in workshops and decision-making processes was positively correlated with better student academic performance, with 67% of students in such schools scoring above-average grades. In contrast, research by Bakunzi and Habimana (2019) in Burundi revealed that only 42% of parents attended school meetings, and less than 30% participated in decision-making processes due to socio-economic constraints. These figures underscore the challenges faced in less-engaged communities.

The findings from Kamonyi District reflect a higher level of parental involvement compared to some regional counterparts, underscoring the success of community engagement initiatives in this area. These results reaffirm the importance of structured parental involvement in improving school performance, while also highlighting the need for strategies to address barriers in less-engaged contexts.

The findings concurred with that from the open questions whereby the respondents said that Parents' participation in school events and meetings is influenced by various encouraging and discouraging factors. Encouraging factors include effective communication, where timely and clear information through accessible channels such as social media, text messages, or community announcements motivates parents to engage. A supportive school environment that fosters a welcoming atmosphere and values parental input also encourages active involvement. Additionally, parents are more likely to participate when they perceive that school events and meetings have a direct positive impact on their children's education. Flexible scheduling of events to accommodate working parents and recognition of their contributions further promotes participation.

On the other hand, discouraging factors such as time constraints due to demanding work or household responsibilities can hinder parental involvement. Ineffective communication, such as last-minute or unclear announcements, reduces awareness and attendance. Some parents may feel that their participation is undervalued or believe that school events do not address their concerns, leading to disengagement. Economic challenges, such as transportation costs, and cultural or social barriers, including lack of confidence in engaging with school authorities, also discourage participation. The findings from Kamonyi District align with Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Parental Involvement, particularly in the areas of Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, and Decision-making. The high levels of parental participation in meetings, school events, and academic discussions reflect strong Communication and Volunteering practices, where schools actively engage parents through clear communication and provide opportunities for involvement in extracurricular activities and decision-making processes. The strong support for workshops on educational strategies demonstrates a focus on Parenting by equipping parents with skills to support their children's education at home.

4.3 The Effectiveness of Community Communication Channels in Promoting School Performance in Secondary Schools of Kamonyi District

This section examines the effectiveness of communication channels between the school and the community, an essential indicator of community engagement. The analysis focuses on the use of social media, local radio, community meetings, and parent-teacher interactions to share updates and address issues. The findings highlight the strengths and areas for improvement in fostering collaboration through timely and inclusive communication.

Table 3

Community Communication Channels

Statement	N	Min	Max	\bar{X}	Std. D
The school shares important updates with the community through social media platforms.	530	2	5	4.09	0.93
Local radio or community newsletters frequently feature school-related activities.	530	2	5	4.12	0.88
Community meetings that discuss educational matters are regularly held.	530	1	5	4.11	0.92
The school sends out frequent communications (letters, messages) about school programs to the community.	530	1	5	4.10	0.94
The community receives timely feedback from the school on issues raised.	530	1	5	4.14	0.91
Parents attend parent-teacher meetings at the school.	530	1	5	4.09	0.97

The data in Table 3 indicates that the school employs effective community communication channels, as evidenced by the high mean scores across all statements. For example, the use of social media platforms for sharing important updates scored a mean of 4.09 (Std. D = 0.93), indicating strong agreement among respondents, though there is some variability. Similarly, local radio or community newsletters frequently featuring school-related activities scored a mean of 4.12 (Std. D = 0.88), reflecting consistent utilization of traditional media for engagement. Regular community meetings discussing educational matters had a mean of 4.11 (Std. D = 0.92), underscoring their importance in maintaining open dialogue between the school and the community. Frequent communications, such as letters or messages, scored a mean of 4.10 (Std. D = 0.94), suggesting they are a well-established practice, though the variability highlights areas for improvement in ensuring all community members receive these updates. The highest mean score of 4.14 (Std. D = 0.91) was for timely feedback from the school on issues raised by the community, reflecting the responsiveness of the school to community concerns. Lastly, parent-teacher meetings scored a mean of 4.09 (Std. D = 0.97), although the higher standard deviation indicates some parents may face challenges in attending these meetings.

These findings align with other studies in the field. A study by Karimi et al. (2020) conducted in Kenya found that schools leveraging both digital and traditional communication channels, such as social media, newsletters, and local radio, experienced increased levels of community engagement and trust. This is consistent with the high mean scores in the present study, particularly for statements related to social media use and local radio features. Additionally, Murekatete (2022) in Rwanda reported that regular community meetings and parent-teacher interactions significantly improved collaboration between schools and communities. This finding resonates with the high mean scores for statements on community meetings and parent-teacher meetings in the current study, underscoring their role in fostering effective communication and mutual understanding.

The respondents confirmed that the current communication methods between the school and the community are generally effective, as they incorporate diverse channels such as social media, local radio, and community meetings; ensuring information reaches a wide audience. These methods foster timely updates, transparency, and collaboration, strengthening the relationship between the school and the community. Social media provides quick and

accessible communication, while traditional channels like local radio and community meetings cater to individuals who may lack access to digital platforms.

However, improvements could enhance their effectiveness further. For instance, increasing the frequency of updates and ensuring consistency across all channels would help maintain community engagement. Introducing a dedicated communication platform or app specifically for school-related updates could streamline interactions and reduce information gaps. Additionally, creating multilingual communication materials to accommodate diverse linguistic needs within the community and incorporating feedback mechanisms, such as suggestion boxes or online surveys, would ensure two-way communication and encourage greater participation.

4.4 The Role of Local Community Support in Enhancing School Performance in Secondary Schools of Kamonyi District

This indicator explores the extent to which local communities provide support to schools through various means, such as resource mobilization, volunteer activities, and active participation in school initiatives. It highlights the collaborative role of the community in enhancing the quality of education.

Table 4

Local Community Support

Statement	N	Min	Max	\bar{X}	Std. D
Local community organizations provide donations or resources to the school (e.g., books, equipment).	530	1	5	4.15	0.86
Community members participate in the school advisory board or council.	530	1	5	4.15	0.81
The community assists with the maintenance and improvement of school facilities.	530	1	5	4.12	0.87
Local businesses offer internships or work experience opportunities for students.	530	1	5	4.17	0.83
Community leaders advocate for the school's development and needs at local forums.	530	1	5	4.12	0.81
The community collaborates with the school in organizing educational initiatives (e.g., literacy programs, health campaigns).	530	1	5	4.17	0.82

The findings in Table 4.4 indicate a strong level of local community support for schools, as reflected in high mean scores across all statements. The statement "Local businesses offer internships or work experience opportunities for students" and "The community collaborates with the school in organizing educational initiatives (e.g., literacy programs, health campaigns)" both reported the highest mean score of 4.17 (SD = 0.83 and 0.82, respectively). These results suggest that local businesses and collaborative efforts significantly contribute to school activities. Similarly, the statements "Local community organizations provide donations or resources to the school (e.g., books, equipment)" and "Community members participate in the school advisory board or council" each recorded a mean score of 4.15 (SD = 0.86 and 0.81, respectively), underscoring the material and decision-making support communities provide to schools.

The participation of community leaders and members in advocacy and maintenance efforts also demonstrated considerable support, with mean scores of 4.12 (SD = 0.81) and 4.12 (SD = 0.87), respectively. These findings highlight the vital role of community engagement in fostering a supportive educational environment.

These results align with findings from similar studies conducted between 2019 and 2024. For instance, Bello and Johnson (2021) investigated community support in Nigerian schools and found that 78% of respondents acknowledged receiving material and financial contributions from local community organizations, emphasizing their pivotal role in resource provision. Similarly, Ndung'u et al. (2022) reported in a study in Kenya that over 85% of surveyed schools experienced active participation from community leaders in advocacy and resource mobilization, significantly enhancing educational outcomes.

Both studies highlight the critical importance of community support mechanisms, corroborating the findings of this research, where high mean scores demonstrate the tangible and intangible contributions of local communities to schools' success. These results underscore the value of partnerships between schools and their communities in achieving sustainable educational development.

The respondents stated that the local community has significantly contributed to supporting the school's activities through financial assistance, provision of resources, and active participation in school programs. Contributions from local businesses and community organizations, such as donations of learning materials, funding for infrastructure projects, and support for extracurricular activities, have bolstered the school's capacity to provide quality education. Community members often volunteer their time and expertise, participate in decision-making processes, and advocate for educational initiatives, which further strengthens the school's operational framework.

To enhance community support, schools could establish formal partnerships with local businesses and organizations to secure sustainable resources and expertise. Encouraging greater parental involvement through targeted workshops and awareness campaigns could increase community participation. Additionally, creating

platforms for regular dialogue between the school and the community, such as town hall meetings or advisory committees, would ensure that community members feel valued and informed about the school's needs and achievements. Recognizing and celebrating community contributions through public acknowledgments or award ceremonies could also motivate more individuals to engage in supporting the school's activities.

4.5 Relationship between Community Engagement and School Performance in Public Secondary Schools of Kamonyi District, Rwanda

The study examined the relationship between community engagement and school performance in secondary schools in Kamonyi District, Rwanda. The indicators of community engagement included parental involvement, community communication channels, and local community support. School performance was assessed based on academic achievement, students' attendance, and teacher performance. To analyze the relationship between community engagement and school performance, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used. A positive correlation indicates that as community engagement increases, school performance improves, while a negative correlation suggests the opposite. The relationship's significance was tested at a p-value of 0.01, where a p-value less than or equal to 0.01 indicates a statistically significant relationship, and a p-value greater than 0.01 suggests the relationship is not statistically significant. This approach allowed for a detailed examination of how community engagement influences various aspects of school performance in the context of secondary schools in Kamonyi District.

Table 5
Correlations Analysis

		Academic Achievement	Students' Attendance	Teacher Performance
Parental involvement	Pearson Correlation	.374**	.735**	.803**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	530	530	530
Community communication Channels	Pearson Correlation	.392**	.757**	.816**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	530	530	530
Local community support	Pearson Correlation	.969**	.818**	.661**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	530	530	530

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis reveals significant relationships between community engagement and school performance indicators, namely academic achievement, students' attendance, and teacher performance in secondary schools of Kamonyi District, Rwanda.

First, parental involvement shows moderate to strong positive correlations with all three indicators of school performance. Specifically, it correlates with academic achievement ($r = 0.374$, $p < 0.01$), student attendance ($r = 0.735$, $p < 0.01$), and teacher performance ($r = 0.803$, $p < 0.01$). These findings suggest that as parental involvement increases, school performance improves. This is consistent with the study by Mugisha et al. (2021), who found a significant positive relationship between parental involvement and improved academic outcomes and attendance in secondary schools in Rwanda. The authors emphasized the crucial role of parents in fostering a supportive environment that enhances student learning.

Second, community communication channels exhibit strong positive correlations with academic achievement ($r = 0.392$, $p < 0.01$), student attendance ($r = 0.757$, $p < 0.01$), and teacher performance ($r = 0.816$, $p < 0.01$). These results suggest that effective communication between schools and their communities contributes significantly to better school performance. This is supported by Karangwa and Nshimiyimana (2022), who found that schools with robust communication networks between parents, teachers, and community members experienced higher student performance and more engaged teachers.

Finally, local community support has the strongest positive correlations with the school performance indicators. Specifically, it correlates with academic achievement ($r = 0.969$, $p < 0.01$), student attendance ($r = 0.818$, $p < 0.01$), and teacher performance ($r = 0.661$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that community support plays a pivotal role in improving various facets of school performance. Similar findings were reported by Nguyen and Bizoza (2021), who noted that local community support—through donations, mentorship, and advocacy—greatly contributed to better academic results, improved attendance, and more effective teaching in rural secondary schools across Rwanda.

In conclusion, the correlation analysis confirms that community engagement, as measured by parental involvement, communication channels, and local community support, has a significant positive impact on school

performance indicators. These findings align with the existing literature, emphasizing the critical role of the community in supporting school success, enhancing student outcomes, and improving teacher performance.

Table 6

Overall Correlation Analysis

		School Performance
Community Engagement	Pearson Correlation	.874**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	530

The overall correlation analysis in Table 4.9 demonstrates a significant positive relationship between community engagement and school performance, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.874** (p-value = 0.000). This indicates a strong and statistically significant relationship, meaning that as community engagement increases, school performance also tends to improve. The significance level of 0.01 further supports the validity of this correlation. These findings are consistent with previous studies, such as those by Muriithi (2022) and Njeri (2023), who reported that increased community involvement positively influences school performance by enhancing resources, teacher motivation, and student outcomes. The results emphasize the importance of fostering community engagement as a strategy for improving educational quality in secondary schools.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The findings of this study underscore the crucial role of community engagement in enhancing school performance in Kamonyi District. Active parental involvement, encompassing participation in school meetings, events, academic discussions, and decision-making, was shown to have a positive influence on academic achievement, student attendance, and teacher performance. Additionally, the study highlights how effective communication—through both digital platforms like social media and traditional methods such as local radio and community meetings—strengthens the collaboration between schools and the broader community, further contributing to improved school outcomes. Local community support, including the contributions of businesses and organizations, emerged as a key driver in enhancing academic performance, student attendance, and teacher effectiveness. Statistically significant correlations between community engagement and school performance reaffirm the importance of these relationships in driving educational success. These findings stress the need for schools and communities to maintain and deepen their partnerships to ensure continued academic improvements and better educational outcomes for students.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations are proposed for different stakeholders to enhance community engagement and improve school performance as follows: The Ministry of Education should focus on developing and implementing national guidelines that promote parental involvement in school activities and decision-making processes. Strengthening existing policies to actively engage local communities in supporting education is essential. Additionally, the Ministry should invest in both digital and traditional communication platforms to ensure effective communication between schools and communities. This will help disseminate important information to all stakeholders and foster greater community participation in educational initiatives.

The Kamonyi District authorities should mobilize resources from local businesses and organizations to support schools in areas such as infrastructure development, provision of learning materials, and student mentorship programs. Utilizing local communication channels, such as radio broadcasts and community meetings, can significantly enhance community participation in school activities. Moreover, the district should conduct regular monitoring and evaluation to identify gaps in parental and community involvement and implement targeted interventions to address these challenges effectively.

Secondary schools should strengthen collaboration between parents and teachers by organizing regular meetings and workshops to encourage active participation in students' educational progress. Schools should also leverage various communication platforms, such as social media and newsletters, to keep parents informed about school activities and student performance. Investing in teacher professional development is crucial to improving teaching quality and fostering a collaborative learning environment. To enhance student attendance, schools could implement reward systems and maintain consistent communication with parents. Additionally, engaging local businesses and community organizations in advocacy efforts and resource mobilization can provide further support for school programs and initiatives.

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