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## Perception of School Management Committees on Community Participation in Education among Primary Schools in Tanzania

Eliada Werungu Bina Tieng'o, PhD\*

Associate Registrar, University of Arusha, Tanzania

\*Corresponding author: [williameliada@gmail.com](mailto:williameliada@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** This study focused on the perceptions of school committee members on the importance of community participation in education among public primary schools in Rorya District. The study employed a mixed research methods design which included structured questionnaires and focus group discussions to be able to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The questionnaires were validated by the experts in the field, and the pilot study was conducted in order to establish the acceptable reliability. As a result, a Cronbach's Alpha of above 0.7 was established in each variable. The study revealed that community participation was not making a meaningful impact in education among public primary schools for Rorya District; the role played by the community was ineffective and therefore, inadequate to provide sustainability in public primary. The challenges community participation faced were mainly due to the factors related to the inadequate capacity of the SMCs to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Therefore, the study concluded that the SMCs have limited knowledge: of the importance of engaging community in education; of the role played by community in education; and the challenges community faced in engaging in education for public primary schools in Rorya District; further the study revealed that there was a positive relationship between the perceptions of the SMCs on the role played by the community and their perceptions on the challenges they faced as pertained to participation in education. The study recommends that the local government should raise awareness among the SMCs and the community for effective engagement in education.

**Key words:** School Management Committees, Public Primary Schools, basic education in Tanzania

### Introduction

School Management Committee (SMC) holds central responsibility in the effective teaching and learning of pupils for quality basic education. Parvaiz, et al. (2016) allude to the responsibilities of committees in education as to identify, predict, implement and monitor all learning activities and to raise the community's involvement. Consequently, the perception of the SMCs on their mandate and how they relate to the situations in their particular schools and community is crucial. Tuckman and Monetti (2011) explain the concept of 'perception' simply as a very important aspect in understanding human behavior in attempt to approach life problems. In the light of this explanation, the

perception of SMC members in a particular context would have a bearing on how they handle and carry out their responsibilities. Chua and Mosha (2015) assert that the kind of school management available impacts the performance in a particular school by ensuring workable and agreeable strategies in providing effective teaching and learning.

In order to achieve Sustainable development goals and Education 2030 agenda (UNESCO, 2015a), in Tanzania, the prime focus towards a greater education impact should be directed to the rural public primary schools where more than 80 percent of the population is concentrated (Hakielimu, 2017a). Consequently, the United Republic of Tanzania, has enforced the Fee Free Basic Education (FFBE) policy, whose main objective is to lift the

burden of fees from parents of the poor households to facilitate access of all children to school (Hakielimu, 2017a). Accordingly, UNESCO (2015a) strongly envisaged it necessary to engage resilient local community participation to ensure sustainability in the implementation of FFBE policy.

The Implementation of Fee Free Basic Education (FFBE) thus far has not been without drawbacks. While according to the FFBE policy expectations, the participation of community was to strengthen the delivery of quantity and quality of education to the targeted pupils, Tieng'o (2018) in a study conducted in Rorya District revealed that the School Management Committees lacked initiatives to motivate the community to take up their role in their children's education. Further, the findings of Oyunge (2015) in Moshi, Tanzania, indicated that some constraining factors including hostile school environment, class capacity and lack of inclusiveness were prevalent. These factors commonly glare among primary schools located in the poor communities in the rural areas. Simmons (2012) envisages that poverty has been one of the challenging factors to achieving access to quantity and quality education and expected learning outcomes.

In order to ensure efficiency in the performance of the public primary schools, section 39 of the Education Amendment Act (1995) introduced the School Management Committees (SMCs) which are constitutionally entrusted with the responsibility to supervise and advise the management of primary schools. Consequently, Basic Education scheme for public primary schools in Tanzania is foreseen possible with effective education administration and competent School Management Committee members. This study therefore, investigated on, Perception of School Management Committees on Community Participation in Education for Public Primary Schools in Tanzania in order to share relevant findings and recommendations on the following research questions:

1. What is the importance of community participation in basic education for public primary schools in rural Rorya District, Tanzania as perceived by school management committee members?
2. What role does the local community play in facilitating basic education for public primary schools in rural Rorya District,

Tanzania as perceived by school management committee members?

3. What are the challenges faced in the implementation of Fee-Free Basic education in public primary schools in Rorya District from the perceptions of the school committee members?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the perception of the SMC on the role played and challenges pertaining to community participation and the effective participation of the community?

## Literature Review

This section presents the review of literature on the importance, the role played and the challenges faced in community participation in connection to the school management committees.

From the standpoint of James MacGregor Burns (1978), Transformational Leadership (TL) theory creates a significant change in the life of the people and the organization.

The people and the organization are inseparable; therefore, in the context of the current study, school management committees play a duo role of orchestrating perceptions and activities of both the school management committee and the local community for the interest of the public primary schools. Therefore, Transformation Leadership approach is bound to mutually change the culture and restructure perceptions, values, expectations and aspirations of the people (community) and the organization (head teachers, teachers and pupils) for a suitable teaching and learning environment that will improve the rural the public primary schools in Rorya District where the typical majority of the Tanzanian children attend.

## The importance of community participation

Community participation in education development is crucial for sustaining quality education. Thus, the community members ought to contribute toward quality education. Community development programs have been thought of as an outcome driven approach to shared responsibilities and resources (Pandey 1981). Community participation is more viable and gradual when the strategies for community participations are reciprocated with the needs of the community (Khan, Kurosaki & Miura 2011). In the light of community development theories, where community is involved

meaningfully, they are bound to support the plan which suits their immediate needs. Thus, they are self-motivated to achieve the set objectives of the planned goals (UN General Assembly, 2015; UNESCO, 2014, 2015a, 2015c). That affirms the way forward toward the sustainable facilitation of effective teaching and learning environment in public primary schools.

### **Role played by Community**

The role that community ought to play in Education is for the good of the community at large. Specifically, the results of the roles played provide support to all the marginalized groups to enjoy their human rights to quality education (UNESCO 2000). The rights to education span from basic education to lifelong learning. UNDP (2016) recapitulates that community participation is a dependable strategy that mitigates the inequalities and disparities among the groups of poor people who have not benefitted from development programs. Hence, the local community has a vital role to play to ensure that quality and quantity of education is at the disposal of their people through collaboration and partnership.

A study conducted in Indonesia by Bruns, Filmer and Patrinos (2011) revealed that community's level of awareness of their role in education was capable of warranting that responsible teaching and learning and educational aims and objectives are met. Consequently, the study revealed that School Boards which constituted of parents, students and other stakeholders ensured education performance, enhanced services and that actual learning is seen both at school and away from school.

Moreover, cost-sharing among the stakeholders is one way a number of countries attempt to meet the set objectives for basic education. Myers (2016) alludes to the sustainability of policies and projects of community-based forestry management that fused community-based involvement and decision making which facilitated equitable and sustainable forestry management. This is an example of a vital role that community involvement can play in facilitating the community-based project.

### **Challenges faced by Community**

Education in public primary school of the rural areas tend to face seamless challenges with education delivery and learning. Sifuna and Sawamura (2010) and Yimer (2012) cite an example of low parental/household commitment in which they

concur that in the Sub-Saharan African countries, the poor households' parents withdrew their children and youth from school due to increased inequalities and the compromised quality of education as a result of the escalated shared cost required cost. According to Oakley's work as cited in Fhika (2014), there are three categories of challenges namely structural, administrative and social. The administrative challenges are related to school administration as well as School Management Committees; while the social challenges are associated with community involvement. Chua and Mosha (2015) revealed that provision of effective teaching and learning depends on the kind of school management available in a particular school.

Tieng'o (2018) revealed that factors that proved to magnify the ill environment of teaching and learning included: lack of awareness on the roles and responsibilities of the parents as well as SMC members; poor means of communication and information sharing between school administration and community; lack of management capacity among members of the committees; and lack of financial resources for intended activities in their locality. Statistics show that in the Sub-Saharan Africa, over 60% of the population in the rural areas were poor; therefore they are circumstantially incapacitated (OECD, 2014; UNESCO, 2015a, 2015b; UNICEF, 2012). School Management Committee with members whose awareness on their responsibilities is inadequate could amount to what Bukenya and King (2012) refer to as contextual difficulties and a failure to design strategies and approaches that are suitable for particular contexts which are bound to inflict more challenges for the intended development objectives.

### **Methodology of the Study**

This section highlights on the methodology that guided the study in terms of research design, population and sampling procedures, validity and reliability and statistical treatment of data.

#### **Research Design**

This study employed a Mixed Approach which according to Bryman (2006) and Creswell (2014) is the research design whose strategy is appropriate to explore the most relevant information. Moreover, in order to address well the research problem in this study, the researcher collected quantitative data (through questionnaires) qualitative data (through FGD and face to face interviews) as recommended

by Creswell and Creswell (2018) in order to triangulate the data, increase its dependability and credibility and to enhance the interpretation (Zohrabi, 2013).

### Population and Sampling Procedures

Stratified random sampling as well as simple random sampling methods were employed to obtain 75 out of a population of 104 School Management

Committee members from 8 schools for questionnaire responses. Convenient sampling approach was employed to obtain 16 participants out of 4 schools for FGDs. Each of the 4 schools was obtained through simple random sampling method. Further, consideration was given for interviews on the representation from school locations, villages and wards.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

SN	Category	Frequency	Percent
1	Gender:		
	Male	51	68
	Female	24	32
	<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>
2	Age Group:		
	25 – 35	27	36.0
	36 - 45	22	29.3
	46 – 55	12	16.0
	56 and above	14	18.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>
3	Period Served as member of SMC:		
	Months	19	25.3
	Years	56	74.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>
4	Education Level for SMCs		
	Never attended school	1	1.3
	Primary school	29	38.7
	Secondary school Form 2	2	2.7
	Secondary school Form 4	21	28.0
	1 Year college training	3	4.0
	2 Years college training	13	17.3
	3 Years or more training	6	8.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>
5	Members with children attending		
	Yes	48	64.0
	No	27	36.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

Regarding the gender of the participants, males were the majority 51 (68%) and female 24 (32%). As far as their age is concerned, 25-35 (36%) were the majority, the least 46-55 and above were (16%). The other age groups were 36-45 (29.3%) and 56 and above (18.7%). When it comes to the length of period the members served in the committee, the majority of 56 (74.7%) had served only for months, while the least 19 (25%) served for at least a year or more. Most of the members were relatively new into the SMC. As far as their level of education is concerned, the majority 29(38.7%) attained to primary level, followed by 21 (28%) who completed form 4 secondary school level. Those who completed 2-year college training were 17 (17.3%), followed by 6 (8%) who completed 3-years training;

3 (4%) completed 1 year college training; 2 (2.7%) who completed secondary form 2, and 1 (1.3%) who never attended school. It shows that the profile of the SMC is dominated by members who have less than secondary school education. When it comes to the SMC members whose children, at the moment, enrolled at one of the public primary schools, the majority 48 (64%) of the committee members had a children; while the rest 27 (36%) indicated that they had no children in those schools.

### Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity of the instruments, four experts in the field of education, University of East African Baraton in Kenya reviewed the instruments in order to validate the content. Based on the experts'

comments, the researcher improved the instruments prior to data collection. Further, the researcher employed methodological triangulation process for qualitative data by use of different tools namely questionnaire, interview schedules and focus group discussions guides.

A pilot study was conducted on selected group of typical target group and the reliability was computed. According to Mills and Gay (2016), Cronbach's reliability coefficient is used to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire. Table 2 shows the results of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of which all ranged between .7 and .8 which means the questionnaire was reliable for data collection.

Table 2: Reliability Test of the Questionnaire

SN	Variable	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Participation	9	.741
2	Role played	10	.833
3	Challenges	10	.844

## Findings and Discussion

This part presents analysis of data and results. The analysis of data started with descriptive analysis and then finalized with the testing of hypotheses. The quantitative data was coded and analyzed using the

Table 4: School Management Committee's Perception on the Importance of Community Participation

SN	Items in the Questionnaire	Mean	Std. Dev	Interpretation
1.	Participation will increase ownership and accountability.	1.31	.735	Negative perception
2.	If community members participated actively, it would benefit the school and the community.	1.32	.738	Negative perception
3.	Participating in the programs will ensure equal distribution of resources to improve the community life.	1.52	.921	Tend to be negative
4.	Community participation in programs will increase the sustainability in basic education.	1.15	.456	Negative perception
5.	The programs to support education may empower the poor communities.	1.67	1.057	Tend to be negative
6.	I take responsibility and accountability for my community and school as I participate in programs to support education.	1.37	.712	Negative perception
7.	Programs that are responsive to local community needs while targeting the educational demands can sustain basic education.	1.32	.661	Negative perception
8.	Community participation to support education through cost-sharing will meet the demands of education.	1.60	1.040	Tend to be negative
9.	Participation in project-based programs to support education will increase social capital in solving the community's education demands.	1.53	.949	Tend to be negative
<b>OVERALL SCORE</b>		<b>1.42</b>	<b>.496</b>	<b>Negative perception</b>

The mean scores of the first five items showed "Disagree" which denotes negative perceptions pertaining regarding the community participation. Particularly, the following is how they perceived various aspects regarding community participation

SPSS program. Statistics established means and standard deviations for variability in perceptions of the respondents. Interpretation of mean scores was as in Table 3.

Table 3: Interpretation for Mean Scores

Scale	Interpretation
1.00 – 1.49	disagree (negative perception)
1.50-2.49	Tend to disagree (tend to be negative)
2.50 – 3.49	tend to agree (tend to be positive)
3.50 – 4.00	agree (positive perception)

**RQ 1:** *What is the importance of community participation in basic education among public primary schools in rural Rorya District, Tanzania as perceived by school management committee members?*

From Table 4 we find the overall mean score of 1.42 and the Standard Deviation of .49 revealed that generally, the SMCs respondents disagreed that community participation in education in the public primary schools was important in promoting basic education. The low standard deviation (SD=.496) shows homogeneity of responses. This means the respondents are highly consistent in their perceptions with minimal variations.

*"community participation in programs to support education will increase a sense of ownership and accountability" (M=1.31; SD = .73) "Disagree"; "if community members participated actively, it would benefit the school and the community"(M= 1.32; SD*

= .73) "Disagree"; "Community participation in programs will increase the sustainability in basic education" (M=1.15; SD = .45) "Disagree"; "I take responsibility and accountability for my community and school as I participate in programs to support education" (M=1.37; SD = .71) "Disagree"; "Programs that are responsive to local community needs while targeting the educational demands can sustain basic education"(M= 1.32; SD = .66) "Disagree." Each one of these five items consolidates the negative perspective held by School committee members. These findings are bound to deprive the schools the opportunity to develop. This means that the effort of the community to facilitate the teaching and learning environment is perceived to have no impact. Consequently, the school management committee members generally perceived that community participation adds no value to the betterment of the school development and consequently to the learning effectiveness.

These findings suggest the likelihood that the respondents' level of understanding the role of community engagement was inadequate. This was probably due to the fact that the length of time they had spent as members was only some months, therefore inexperienced. Thus, they were incompetent to handle the responsibility of motivating or mobilizing the community to support the school development.

These findings agree with some of the statements by the participants in relation to if they contributed to the development of the schools. One of the participants commented that, "We do not have anything to do with the school any more. The school belongs to the government. Moreover, we have no good relationship with the school as teachers and parents see each other as enemies." According to Oregon as cited in Turner (2012), participation brings stakeholders together to create and make collective decisions regarding their environment. It promotes ownership and control of their affairs. Moreover, Russell, Reimers, Mapp, Rogotham and Warren (2009) argue that when people are not empowered there is loss of ownership, increased disparity and marginalization. The increased awareness would empower the participants to embrace the idea of community participation.

The researcher observed very dirty and dilapidated school environment and building structures in most schools. This is a sign that the parents are removed

completely from the welfare of the schools contrary to the assertion of UNDP (2016) that community-based initiated programs are fundamental toward effective wellness.

The next mean scores distribution in revealed that the respondents' perspective "Tend to disagree" meaning their perspective tend to be negative in all the four sentences: "The programs to support education may empower the poor communities" (M=1.67; SD = 1.05) "Tend to disagree"; "Community participation to support education through cost-sharing will meet the demands of education" (M=1.60; SD = 1.04) "Tend to disagree"; "Participation in project-based programs to support education will increase social capital in solving the community's education demands" (M=1.53; SD = .94) "Tend to disagree"; "Participating in the programs will ensure equal distribution of resources to improve the community life" (M=1.52; SD = .92) "Tend to disagree."

Mean scores to the rest of items in the table reveal that the School Management Committee tended to be negative with very high standard deviations meaning there is high heterogeneity in the responses of the SMCs, which indicates that the members were not in harmony in their perception toward each of the measured items. These findings suggest that these members were not capable of committing their effort to perform the responsibilities as committee member. According to Nishimura et al., (2009), financial and administrative constraints together are likely to affect the School Management Committee members' perception on provision of primary education. Lack of financial resources, for example, could attribute to a tendency of negative perception on cost sharing and so forth. The study of Tieng'o (2018) further revealed that the parents indicated similarly a negative tendency on the importance of community participation in supporting the public primary schools in Rorya District. Therefore, the negative attitude was prevalent among parents as well.

Due to these findings, it is noteworthy to emphasize the significance of SMCs engagement toward school development. Yamada (2014) consider the role of SMCs as a central tool to improve both access to and quality of education. Therefore, it is important to encourage the local residents and school administration to contribute toward the effectiveness and efficiency of the

schools. . The SMCs members should therefore be enthusiastic about facilitating a meaningful relationship between the community and the school administration. Their low level of education and the fact that some had never gone to school suggest that the members could be ignorant of their responsibilities, and therefore, they may have inadequate foresights to participate. Several members of the Focus Group Discussion expressed that "...We do not have platforms where to report our (parents) concerns about education for our children." It was clear that some parents in various communities were interested to participate in

improvement of the schools, but the effort to achieve that would be thwarted at some point. "... Some members of the SMCs are illiterate. "Meaning such committee members had no capability to follow up, understand, and challenge the proceedings for the interest of the school development. Another established finding was that "...There is no way the concerns of the parent are made known to the school administration." This suggests that the community representatives in the committee were either not aware of their responsibilities or they compromised their responsibility by not conveying properly the parents' concerns to school administration.

Table 5: Committee Members' Perceptions on Role Played by Community for Sustainability in Education

SN	Items in the Questionnaire	Mean	Std. Dev	Interpretation
1.	Community members encourage each other to attend the PTA meetings regularly and actively for education sustainability.	1.21	.664	Disagree
2.	Most community members are concerned about the need of their children's acquisition of the essential materials required to ensure sustainable education process.	1.81	.926	Tend to Disagree
3.	Parents from the community follow on their children's school progress to ensure sustainability the perception of the importance, the role played and the challenges faced in community participation as perceived by the school management committee members in their education.	1.43	.808	Disagree
4.	Parents take initiative in financing education for their children in order to ensure sustainability in education.	1.63	.997	Tend to Disagree
5.	The community works together with the school administration to provide guidance to sure that the children enjoy their basic human right for sustainability in education.	1.40	.805	Disagree
6.	Members of the community encourage each other to meet their required cost-sharing portion to ensure sustainability in education	1.64	.995	Tend to Disagree
7.	Community members jealously safeguard the school premises from vandalism or any destruction.	1.40	.805	Disagree
8.	Parents spend quality time with their children at home to help them with their assignments and getting to know their challenges at school.	1.57	.932	Tend to Disagree
9.	Parents normally follow up on their children's progress at school by consulting with the teachers and the school administration for their education sustainability.	1.63	1.100	Tend to Disagree
10	Community participate in providing voluntary services to improve school facility order to maintain comfortable teaching and learning.	1.75	1.140	Tend to Disagree
<b>OVERALL SCORE</b>		<b>1.54</b>	<b>.626</b>	<b>Tend to Disagree</b>

SMCs being at the governance category, it is a key tool to stimulate action at the school level, to support the deliberations and to advance concerns of the school community for meaningful decisions and implementation initiatives. Carlitz (2016) presented a possibility for the SMCs serving as a rubber stamp for decisions made by the head teachers which does not give room for active, participatory approach which might be the case in schools under investigation?

**RQ 2:** *What role does the local community play in facilitating basic education for public primary schools in rural Rorya District, as perceived by school management committee members?*

Table 5 shows the perceptions of school committee members regarding the role played by the community in public primary schools to guarantee effective teaching and learning environment. The results indicate that the SMCs perception tended to

be negative meaning that the community rarely fulfilled their role for sustainability of education at Rorya District, with the overall mean of 1.54, and the Standard Deviation of .63).

A number of SMC members indicated that there was: "...Lack of awareness on the part of community as marked by low level or no participation at all by some members of community in the matters to do with education." This effect is seen in the way the community tended to be. The findings suggest that the parents in Rorya District do not value education and if they do, it is simply for the sake of their children attending schools, but whether the children learn anything or not, it does not bother them.

The responses of the four out of ten items whose mean scores were within the negative range suggest that they disagreed with the following statements: "Community members encourage each other to attend the PTA meetings regularly and actively for education sustainability." (M=1.21; SD = .66), "Parents from the community follow on their children's school progress to ensure sustainability in their education"(M= 1.43; SD = .80); "The community works together with the school administration to provide guidance to be sure that the children enjoy their basic human right for sustainability in education." (M=1.40; SD = .80) and "Community members jealously safeguard the school premises from vandalism or any destruction to ensure education sustainability" (M=1.40; SD = .80). The respondents' perceptions were therefore negative with high standard deviations indicating heterogeneity of responses.

The heterogeneity findings imply that the School Management Committee members were of divergent opinion but within the same level of disagreement that in Rorya District, the community encourages each other to attend the PTA meetings; they follow up their children's school progress; community works together with the school administration to provide guidance, and that the community safeguards the school premises from vandalism or any destruction. This situation is well verified and supported by the sentiments gathered from the participants to confirm their position. Several School Management Committee Members mostly who are also parents registered that "... Parents are not interested any more in school affairs."

*"... They no longer own the school; it belongs to the government."*

*"... Teachers are seen by the community as enemies."*

In the other five aspects rated by the participants, the perceptions tended to be negative with the mean scores distribution as follows: "Most community members are concerned about the need of their children's acquisition of the essential materials required to ensure sustainable education" (M=1.81; SD = .92), "Parents take initiative in financing education for their children in order to ensure sustainability in education" ( M=1.63; SD = .99), "Members of the community encouraged each other to meet their required cost-sharing portion to ensure sustainability in education"( M=1.64; SD = .99), "Parents spend quality time with their children at home to help them with their assignments and getting to know their challenges at school." (M=1.57; SD = .93) "Parents normally follow up on their children's progress at school by consulting with the teachers and the school administration for their education sustainability" (M=1.63; SD =1.10); and that "Community participates in providing voluntary services to improve school facility in order to maintain comfortable teaching and learning school environment" (M=1.75; SD = 1.14).

The implication here is that while the committee members see a gap in the role played by the community, they lacked initiative to turn around the trend in order for the community to take up their role.

**RQ 3:** *What are the challenges faced in the implementation of Fee-Free Basic education among public primary schools in Rorya District as perceived by the school committee members?*

Over all the nine items in table 6, the results generally show that there are minimum challenges faced in the implementation of fee free basic education in public primary schools in Rorya District at the mean rating of 1.62 and the Standard Deviation of .585). The committee members tended to disagree that the implementation of the fee free basic education faced challenges in terms of the use of unqualified teachers, and lack of teaching and learning materials due to free education which has negatively affected the quality of education; and that some stakeholders have remained indifferent in implementing free education due to perceived

inequalities and compromised disparities from policy expectations to practice.

The respondents in table 6 further tended to disagree that lack of clear communication and dissemination of information on the role of parents in implementing the fee free education policy affected the extent to which they participate that, stakeholders are variedly challenged by disparities of community factors that affect the implementation of free education; and that inadequate participation and resources from the primary beneficiaries affected the stakeholders' implementation of free education.

Moreover, the respondents tended to disagree that some other barriers that are bureaucratic in nature affected the stakeholders' implementation of free education, some unmet needs that are social, economic and environmental in nature discouraged stakeholders' participation in implementing free basic education, that some negative attitudes and beliefs held as cultural norms affected the implementation of the free education due to irregular enrolment and that inadequate inclusion of key stakeholders in planning on education reforms can lead to poor implementation.

Table 6: Challenges Faced in the Implementation of Fee-Free Basic Education in Public Primary School

SN	Item in the Questionnaire	Mean	Std. Dev	Interpretation
1	The use of unqualified teachers and lack of teaching and learning materials due to free education has negatively affected the quality of education received in public primary schools in Tanzania.	1.91	1.199	Tend to be negative
2	Some stakeholders have remained indifferent in implementing free education due to perceived inequalities and compromised disparities from policy expectations to practice.	1.80	1.162	Tend to be negative
3	Lack of clear communication and dissemination of information on the role of parents in implementing the fee-free education policy affect the extent to which they participate.	1.67	1.082	Tend to be negative
4	Stakeholders are variedly challenged by disparities of community factors that affect the implementation of free education.	1.64	1.048	Tend to be negative
5	Inadequate participation and resources from the primary beneficiaries affected the stakeholders' implementation of free education.	1.63	1.037	Tend to be negative
6	Some other barriers that are bureaucratic in nature affected the stakeholders' implementation of free education.	1.60	.986	Tend to be negative
7	Some unmet needs that are social, economic and environmental in nature discourage stakeholders' participation in implementing free basic education.	1.56	.948	Tend to be negative
8	Some negative attitudes and beliefs held as cultural norms have affected the implementation of the free education due to irregular enrolment in public primary schools in Rorya district.	1.56	1.043	Tend to be negative
9	Inadequate inclusion of key stakeholders in planning on education reforms can lead to poor implementation of such initiatives.	1.47	.827	Tend to be negative
<b>OVERALL SCORES</b>		<b>1.62</b>	<b>.585</b>	<b>Tend to be negative</b>

The findings indicate that they tended to disagree that there are challenges, meaning that the challenges are minimal.

The concern for inadequate number of teachers and some not well qualified emerged severally from the qualitative data, particularly from the parents and the Ward Education Coordinators. Such statements include: ". . . *There is a big shortage of teachers.*" ". . . *Pupils do not have text books.*" ". . . *Teacher-students ratio is out of proportion*

The results imply that due to misinformation or inadequate information dissemination, especially at the micro level of implementation, the School Management Committee members (the head teachers, teachers, parents and local government authorities) in Rorya District differed in their understanding of the directives issued by the Tanzania Government as pertains to Fee-Free Basic Education policy. Hence, a need to raise awareness.

The findings on challenges can be well explained by Hakielimu (2017a) that approximately 55% of head teachers misconstrued the implementation directives on the policy of Fee-Free Basic Education with the notion that the government was to take entirely the burden of educating the children.

Consequently, limited knowledge in understanding what the policy entails, particularly the objectives, result into the contradictory findings. Therefore, the committee members seemed to have lacked appropriate information to give appropriate feedback.

Furthermore, some utterances confirmed the challenges in the implementation of the fee free basic education in public primary schools in Rorya District as per the following statements which emerged during interviews and focus group discussions:

“... The idea of free education has come with it enormous challenges such that implementation is seriously hindered.” “... Parents are not interested

to participate on anything that has to do with their children’s education.” “. . . School Committees are not doing much to improve the situation.”

These findings can be interpreted that the SMCs members are not aware of how they are expected to dispense their responsibilities. In reality, the challenges are enormous.

### Hypotheses Testing

Based on the description of the respondents’ perception on the importance community participation and the role played by community participation in public primary schools for basic education, it was necessary to test a null hypothesis which germinated from the fourth research question in order to determine the relationship between the variables under investigation.

RQ 4: *Is there a significant relationship between the role played and the challenges faced in community participation in public primary schools in Rorya District, Tanzania as perceived by the SMCs?*

Table 7: Correlations of SMCs Perceptions on the Role Played and the Challenges Faced

		ROLE	CHALLENGE
ROLE	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.374**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.75	.001
CHALLENGE	Correlation Coefficient	.374**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	75	75

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

The hypothesis which germinated from the fourth research question stated: *There is no significant relationship between the role played and the challenges faced in community participation in public primary schools in Rorya District, Tanzania as perceived by the SMCs.* The correlation coefficient ( $r = .374, p=.001<0.01$ ) shown on Table 7 reveals that there is a significant moderate positive relationship between the SMCs perceptions on the role played in community participation for public primary schools and the perceptions on the challenges faced in community participation for sustainability of public primary school education at .001 which is less than standard significant value of 0.01. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. These findings assume that though the relationship is significantly moderate, as the members of the SMCs in the public primary schools tend to be negative in their perceptions on the role played by the community

for basic education; they also tended to be negative in their perceptions on the challenges faced in community participation for sustainability of fee free basic education and vice versa. Banerji, Berry and Shetland as cited in Tieng’o (2018) reiterates that low education is often considered a result of low quality education system, characterized by poor schools infrastructures, limited teaching and learning materials, inappropriate pedagogy and low quality teachers. These findings confirm the trend traced throughout the perceptions of the SMCs. The lower level of education among the members of the School Management Committee, lack of effective means of communication and the indifferences manifested by the negative perceptions on the importance of community participation in public primary education all seem to be in agreement with each other.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

This part gives the conclusions of the study and corresponding recommendations.

### Conclusions

The School Management Committee members have limited knowledge of the importance of community engagement in education.

1. The School Management Committee members have limited knowledge of the role played by community in education.
2. The School Management Committee members have limited awareness of the challenges facing community engagement in education.

There is a positive relationship in the perceptions of the SMCs on the role played by the community and their perceptions on the challenges faced in community participation for public primary school education in Rorya District.

### Recommendations

The study recommends that local government should create awareness to the School Management Committee members of the importance of community engagement in education.

1. The local government should raise awareness among School Management Committee members on the role played through engaging community in education.
2. The local government should hold seminars at the local level for the school administration, School Management Committee members and the local members so that they can have on challenges

The local government should raise awareness among the SMCs and the community members on how the perceptions of the role played and their perceptions of the challenges and how they influence each other in engaging the community in education.

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