

# Implications of School Governance on Parental Participation in School Activities in Selected Secondary Schools in Bugesera District, Rwanda

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## ABSTRACT

School governance is the engine for all the activities in the school. The school governance plays a significant role for parents to feel welcomed or neglected. Participation of parents in school activities has raised concerns for the government of Rwanda from long ago and MINEDUC has put in place a law to create a room whereby parents' role in the school development will be observed clearly. Bugesera District has been reported to experience absence of parental involvement in schools' events which interested the researcher to carry out this investigation. The main objective of this study was to explore the implications of school governance on parental participation in school activities whereas the specific objectives were (i) to examine the effects of school decision making process on parental participation in selected secondary schools of Bugesera District. (ii) to assess the functioning of the school governing bodies on parental participation in selected secondary schools of Bugesera District, (iii) to evaluate the contribution of quality assurance on parental participation in selected secondary schools of Bugesera District, (iv) to find out the reasons why the parents do not actively participate in school activities in selected secondary schools of Bugesera District. This research utilized concurrent mixed method research design. The target population consisted of 5675 individuals, including members of the school executive council, school leaders, teachers, and students. A sample of 52 respondents, consisting of 4 head teachers, 10 teachers, 18 parents, and 20 students, were chosen from the selected secondary schools of Bugesera District. Both simple random sampling and purposive sampling methods were used to sample them. Data were gathered using focus groups, questionnaires, document reviews, and guided interviews. Head teachers and teachers completed questionnaires, which were utilized in this study as quantitative data gathering instruments. Head teachers also received interviews in addition to questionnaires. In addition, focus groups were employed to get qualitative information from parents and students. Tables and graphs were used to display the data after they had been examined using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages). The findings to this study (90%) have shown that decision processes are made through in person meetings that gather them at school and parents are encouraged to participate in decision making through school committees and school general assemblies. The findings (85%) again indicated that generally the governing bodies exist in almost all the schools, functional and all the lawful members are included. Parents testified that they are involved in quality assurance through students' homework, provision of school materials, monitoring the movements of their children from home to school and back home. Parents highlighted that when they do follow up on quality assurance, this boosts the children's confidence and increase their efforts in learning. However, the findings indicated that the level of welcoming parents in school activities is still low and proposed reinforcement in school governance attitudes towards the participation of parents in school activities. Therefore, the study recommended thorough follow up and attention on the implementation of the established policies that regulates the school governance in order to fully integrate the parents.

**Key words:** School Governance, Parental participation, School activities, Decision-making, Quality assurance, School governing bodies.

## INTRODUCTION

The school governance plays a big role in the academic achievement and behaviors of the students. Involving parents and community in school governance helps a school achieve its goals effectively. It is on this note that UNICEF (2021) affirms that the positive cooperation and good communication between the school and the community through school governance improves the parental participation in school activities and thus improves students' learning outcomes.

In the same vein, World Bank (2020) argues that parental participation in school activities builds trust and improve the learning achievement of the students and the school as a whole. Taking the example of Turkey, it was found out that the cooperation between Parents, Teachers and School (PTS) contributed to the establishment of the school aims and boosted school activities including planning, budgeting (Bilgen & Yusuf, 2019). A similar impetus on school governance has been documented in the United States of America (USA) whereby families and community's engagement through general school or parent-teacher organization or association meeting are becoming an integral part of education reform efforts (Hanson, 2019).

In Ireland, the school governance known as "Whole School Approach" is emphasized to ensuring that the school and parents share common values and vision to positively respond to the learner needs (European Commission, 2015).

In Canada, school governance is emphasized to allow parental involvement initiatives that addresses local barrier to parent participation and behavioral problems' (Hamlin, 2018 & Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016).

In South Africa, school governance has also gained consideration as it helps to addressing inequality among parents and deliver a broad suite of skills and competencies for their children (Winthrop, 2021).

In Rwanda, parental participation is the primary concern for supporting and monitoring the advancement in education (NCDC, 2008). At national level, the Ministry of Education and Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) have been acting to strengthen the school governance with the aim of improving parental participation in school activities. According to the REB (2020) education guide about professional standards for effective leadership; working with parents and wider community has been stressed as key among the five-school leadership professional standards; and the guide shows how the participation of parents and community is of very paramount importance. It is therefore expected that parents and wider community actively be engaged in the school activities to support learning as the core business of the school. (REB, 2020).

The emphasis on school governance, as a trigger, is also connected to the fact that low parental participation in school activities has been remaining an issue hindering a number of school achievement (The Wellspring Foundation for Education, 2019)

### Objective of the Paper

The general objective is to investigate the implications of school governance on parental participation in school activities in selected secondary schools in Bugesera District, Rwanda and suggest the possible solutions to the problem.

#### 1.1.1. Specific Objectives of the study

- i. To examine the effects of school decision making process on parental participation in selected

- secondary schools in Bugesera District.
- ii. To assess the functioning of the school governing bodies on parental participation in selected secondary schools in Bugesera District.
  - iii. To evaluate the contribution of quality assurance on parental participation in selected secondary schools in Bugesera District.
  - iv. To find out the reasons why the parents do not actively participate in school activities in selected secondary schools in Bugesera District.

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### Theoretical framework of the study

Joyce Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence served as the foundation for this investigation (Epstein, 2001). By combining psychological, pedagogical, and sociological perspectives on social institutions, this theory provides an integrated explanation and description of the relationships among parents, schools, and local environments. During the procedure, three key social contexts or establishments that may have an impact on children's education and socialization are recognized: family, school and community. Epstein (2001) proposed the types of parent involvement: (1) parenting, (2) communicating, (3) volunteering, (4) learning at home, (5) decision making, and (6) collaborating with the community (Epstein, 2001). It has been suggested that these six types of involvement be used in an all-encompassing program of family, community, and school collaborations. (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). In Epstein's perspective, parental participation in school activities is of paramount importance as it also supports the learning of the children

### Decision making process and parental participation

Engaging parents in decision-making process helps to effectively mitigate the issue of low parental participation in school activities. Decision making is referred to as a process of formulating a decision, gathering information, and weighing possible possibilities. According to Russo (2017), decision-making is the process by which an individual, group, or organization chooses how to proceed in the future to achieve a particular set of objectives while keeping in mind available resources. In the process of making a certain decision, different stakeholders share their views and opinions so that the conclusion will be made after the agreement of each person.

In education, decision making has been decentralized from the government to the local schools in order to welcome different opinions and increase the development of schools. One of the well-known type of decision making is called Site-based decision making (SBDM). Everett (1998) described this type of decision making as a decentralization process whereby the school takes on the role of the main administrative body for educational improvement and opens up channels of communication for teachers, support staff, parents, and community members—people with direct experience of pertinent issues pertaining to schools and education—to provide their input. (Everett, 1998)

Epstein (2001) argued that decision making process is one of the pillars of involving parents in school activities. He stated that including parents in decision-making processes at school fosters the growth of parents as leaders and advocates who will benefit the school's goals achievement. Furthermore, she continued arguing that the results of parental involvement are positive. Parents have a say in school choices, feel a sense of ownership over the school, and contribute to policies that impact their children's education. (Epstein, 2001)

Engaging parents and community in planning and developing school mission, visions and policies, boosts their participation and partnership with the school.

The study carried out by Nancy (1996) concentrated on a number of areas where partnerships might be developed between parents and schools. The study provides the survey data on the range of parent engagement activities sponsored by public elementary schools, the number of parents who participate in those activities, and the degree to which parents' opinions are taken into account when making decisions on school-related matters. According to the report, 74 percent of all schools indicated that parents have no influence at all in the process of monitoring and evaluating instructors, indicating that at the extreme, parents have limited say in decisions surrounding this procedure. Additionally, about 20% of all schools reported that parents have no influence over choices about the distribution of funding or goods for the library. (Nancy, 1996)

Based on the data above, this parental participation has not currently improved to a high extent especially in the schools, which this study is based on. There are still low percentages of parents being involved in decision-making process.

In addition to the research mentioned above, White (2022) carried out a study and reported in her findings that parents have the required attributes to be involved in selecting curricula, overseeing the financial plan, and selecting personnel, instructors, and administrators who complement the school environment. Even if they are trained educators, they still play a huge role the good decisions, which can positively affect the school. She persisted in her argument that parents ought to have an equal voice at the table when it comes to decisions made about everything from academics to after-school programs to extracurricular activities like community events.

The role of parents as decision-makers extends beyond simple engagement to include complete involvement in all facets of the operation of the school. Furthermore, Murat Gürkan Gülcan and Ali Duran conducted a cross-national analysis of parent involvement in decision-making: Germany, France, and Turkey. During the interviews, principals from the three nations stated that parents positively influence education (18/21), that parent involvement is essential (25/26) and that parent involvement strengthens education (13/37). Additionally, it was noted that parents actively participate in meetings held in classes and at the school, have a voice in budget decisions, and are heavily involved in decisions pertaining to school growth procedures. Furthermore, research showed that teachers have a significant role in forming parent participation in the decision-making processes. However, this research again revealed a gap in the clarity of the parents' roles on decision but highlighted the importance of paring attention on the parents' educational experiences which play a big role in the way they participate in making decisions for the schools' development. (Murat Gürkan & Ali Duran, 2018)

### **School Governing Bodies and parental participation**

The school cannot only be run by the head-teacher without the help of others. That is why every school must have governing bodies composed of the head-teacher, teachers, parents, students, and other staff members. The governing bodies have had different names such as School Executive Committee (SEC) or School General Assembly Committee (SGAC), School Executive Council (SEC), School Development Committee (SDC), and school administrative staffs. The functions and elections of these committees influence the parental participation in school activities. For example, the School General Assembly Committee is a volunteer group that brings together parents and educators of students in a certain school, usually for fund-raising and other endeavors pertaining to the overall well-being of the school. Their aim is to link a school and homes; parents and community (Gudlaug, 2010). In order to build solid working relationships between parents and the school and to create a basis for a team that will strategically plan how to achieve certain school objectives, the head teacher, teachers, and other staff members should collaborate with parents.. (Meghal, 2014) At this point parental participation is very crucial, which is why parents should be actively involved in school activities and the SGAC is responsible for that.

According to Andre (2012), there are four members of the School General Assembly Committee: The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the School General Assembly; the School Owner or his/her Representative; the Head Teacher of the School, who serves as an ex officio non-voting rapporteur; two teachers who represent their peers; and two students who are members of the School General Assembly. (Andre, 2012) The school executive committee needs members that are elected in order for it to function. In her study "Parent-Teacher Association of Baggao East District and Its Contribution to School Development," Gazmen (2016) discovered that the main objective of implementing projects and programs is to establish a positive and harmonious interaction between the home and the school. (Gazmen(2016). According to Balaba and Dela's (2015) study, the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in the Division of Misamis Oriental was operational. The study focused on teachers' and parents' perceptions and involvement in PTAs for the academic and social development of students. Balaba (2015)

According to Francess's (2021) study, the School Executive Council (SEC) plays a significant role in promoting parental participation and school development. The PTA has an impact on parents' involvement in physical facilities and school-community relations. (Francess 2021) The results of a study by Balaba & Dela (2015), discovered that students with involved parents do better academically.

In their research on the School General Assembly Committee (SGAC), Rulinda (2013) and Andre (2012) noted that the committee's responsibilities included calling meetings and serving as the assembly's head; keeping an eye on how decisions are being carried out; monitoring adherence to rules, regulations, and directives governing the school; managing school property; and analyzing the action plan. Furthermore, Meghal (2019) contended that SGACs are also well-known for planning fundraising activities to support schools that run on a limited budget and require extra materials to improve the quality of instruction; in this regard, they are crucial in planning fundraisers to meet the needs of the schools.

The active involvement of School General Assembly Committee is measured by the level of parental participation. Therefore, parents contribute to the educational development of their children by assisting them while doing homework, participating in school activities, assessing and try to solve the challenges, which their children face at home. (Agustinho, 2012)

As the findings of the studies mentioned earlier, the school governing bodies can engage parents and support them to actively participate in school activities. It is obvious that those school bodies can influence the parental participation positively when they are empowered and the parents are part of them.

### **Quality assurance and parental participation**

Quality of the education provided by a school plays a big role in the participation of parents in school activities. The school, which provides low quality of education, struggles with engaging parents. Ensuring the quality, equity, and efficiency of educational provision requires a methodical assessment process known as quality assurance. It includes assessments of students, teachers, and school administrators, as well as external evaluations (such as inspections). This can be understood in terms of the input, procedure, result, and sustainability of the teaching methods that a school provides. According to Peter (2020), internal quality assurance systems are policies and processes implemented in educational establishments to encourage involvement from all parties involved in quality-related endeavors in order to optimize their output. He added that the stakeholders become more interested in participating in the school activities, when the school offers quality education. (Peter , 2020)

In the field of education, quality assurance refers to the effective administration, oversight, monitoring, evaluation, and reviews of the curriculum implementation process and resource inputs in order to generate high-quality learning outcomes that satisfy societal expectations and standards.

Fasasi (2014) carried out research on the quality assurance tactics used by secondary school administrators in Osun State, Nigeria. The results of this study regarding the influence of a high-quality education on parental involvement were encouraging. The results' implications show that a key element in evaluating a school's efficacy is its principals' capacity to implement policies that would guarantee high standards in the work that the institution produces. This essay asserts that everyone involved in the education system has a role to play in quality assurance. To ensure that staff members' efforts are focused on maintaining school quality, the principle should supervise teachers and other staff members. This depicts that parents are one of the stakeholders of a schools. Therefore, it is very crucial to create a quality assurance system, which reflects on the quality of education provided by a school so that the stakeholders will actively participate in school activities.

In addition to that, when a school hires qualified teachers, adapt good and enough teaching and learning materials, it is likely to improve the quality of education when there is also regular supervision and reflections on the education offered. This affects the students' academic performance especially in national examination. For the parents to realize how the school provide quality of education, they tend more likely to participate because they know that their children will benefit from it.

According to Karsidi's (2013) research, the presence of parent associations in schools indicates the need to create and maintain social networks inside them, particularly those that connect parents and educators. Furthermore, there is a significant association between parental guidance and children's accomplishment, indicating that the quality of education should be good. These findings serve as a warning about the significance of parental assistance in raising the standard of education in schools. (Karsidi, 2013)

Joshua (2014) found that effective application of the quality assurance model, strong political will on the part of the government, and enabling policies by the Ministry of Education are necessary for sustainable quality assurance in secondary education. These factors will also guarantee that parents participate adequately in the quality assurance system. In addition, sustaining quality assurance influence the parents and community to participate actively in school activities.

On the contrary, this study showed also that there was systematic model of quality assurance, which should link the parents and school activities. Additionally, the study suggested that in order to ensure the quality of learning, inclusive management is required to support the roles that parents and principals play in bolstering institutional management and providing resource inputs to support effective teaching and learning outcomes in secondary schools. (Joshua, 2014)

In a similar vein, Undiyaundeye's (2020) study discovered that the Parents Teachers Association (PTA)'s involvement improves quality assurance in the following areas: the supply of educational resources, the provision of physical facilities, the relationship between the school and the community, and student discipline. The study suggests that in order for parents to actively participate in their children's education, there should be frequent meetings between the school and the parents. (Undiyaundeye, 2020)

One of the most important components of ensuring the quality of learning is monitoring and evaluation, also known as the continuous management function. Its purposes include determining whether expected results are being achieved, identifying implementation bottlenecks, and highlighting any unintended consequences (positive or negative) from an investment plan, program, or project (hereinafter referred to as the "project/plan") and its activities. On a school basis, embedding parents in monitoring and evaluation improves their participation in child's learning and helps the school to know the areas of improvement. M&E helps also to ensure that each individual understands its value and how it fits into their daily responsibilities. The head-teacher and other staff might base on the feedback given to improve and assure the quality of learning.

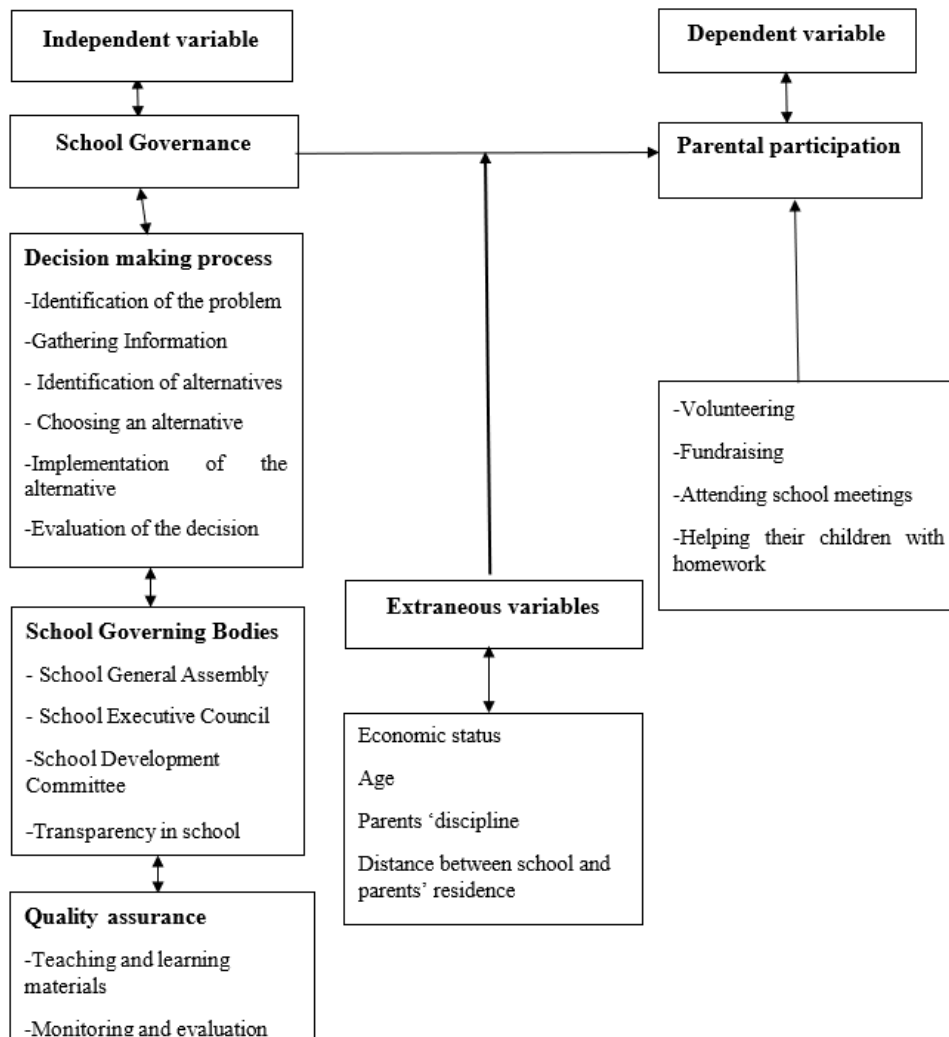
Anders (2016) argued that M&E can be used to improve the quality assurance in a school and influence the school climate. (Anders, 2016)

From the literature on quality assurance, the schools, which support and thrive for the quality of teaching and learning, the parents get urged to know the learning process of their children and can participate in any activity prepared by the school. This results to the better quality of the teaching and learning, which might encourage the parents to actively participate in school activities.

### Summary and Gaps identification

This chapter reviews the literature that is relevant to the study's variables. Diverse academic perspectives and study results demonstrated the advantages of parental involvement. From the literature, there are very few studies, which tackled the issue of parental participation using the school governance as the independent variable. For instance, involving parents in decision making, school governing bodies, and quality assurance are part of school governance. Unfortunately, studies, which focused on those areas are not enough and the ones which are available seem to be outdated. For this reason, this study is unique and expected to contribute to the existing literature in order to help other researchers, who will try to tackle the same issues.

### Conceptual framework of the study



Source: Researcher, 2023

The conceptual framework demonstrates how the independent and dependent variables are related. Parental participation is the dependent variable that is influenced by school governance, which is the independent variable.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design for this study used a concurrent mixed method approach (2007). Three different sorts of designs are included in the concurrent mixed technique, according to Creswell (2013): concurrent transformative design, concurrent embedded design, and concurrent triangulation design. The primary methodology utilized in this study was concurrent triangulation, in which the researcher simultaneously gathered quantitative and qualitative data, comparing the two databases to see whether there were any differences, convergence, or a combination of the two. Typically, it employs distinct quantitative and qualitative methodologies to counterbalance the limitations of one approach with the advantages of the other, or in other words, the potency of one enhances the potency of the other. (Creswell (2013) With this strategy, the relationships between the study's variables are defined more precisely. In this design, the researcher simultaneously gathers both types of data and incorporates the information to evaluate the findings as a whole(Creswell , 2007). A combination of qualitative and quantitative data was gathered for this study in order to investigate the implications of school governance on parental participation in school activities.

### Data collection instruments

In order to obtain richer data and make more thorough findings than could be obtained with other research methodologies, this study employed focus groups, interviews, and questionnaires with both closed- and open-ended questions.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), researchers should justify the different data gathering approaches they use by demonstrating how relevant and appropriate they are for the type of research they are doing. (Denzin, 2011)In regard to this study, the data related to variables, which reflect on the implication of school governance on parental participation, were collected. Expert opinion and a reliability test were used to determine the validity and reliability of the instrument.

### Sample size

Using the Yamen formula (1970) of sample size determination, including head-teachers, teachers, parents, and high school students selected as sample size of the study. (Yamane, 1967) The sample size of the study was using this formula of Yamane (1967).

$$\text{Sample size, } n = N * \frac{\frac{Z^2 * p * (1 - p)}{e^2}}{[N - 1 + \frac{Z^2 * p * (1 - p)}{e^2}]}$$

Source: Yamen (1967)

**N:** population size of the study

**e:** marginal error selected at 5%.

**p:** Critical value (confidence level 95%)

**p:** a. sample proportion (uncertain)



p: b. sample proportion

Sample size is **n**:  $(5675 * (1.96^2) * 0.05 * (1-0.05) / (0.05^2) / (5675 - 1 + ((1.96^2) * 0.05 * (1-0.05) / (0.05^2))))$   
 =52

**n=52**

The results above depict that the sample size of this study is 52 from the total population of 5675, which is the lower number of the responses from the respondent to maintain a 95% confidence interval.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Decision making process

Item	Questions	Responses	Freq	%
1	How do you identify problems that hinder parents to participate in school activities?	Through regular staff meetings and discussions	2	50%
		Through parent-teacher conferences or other meetings with parents	4	100%
		Through surveys or feedback forms sent to parents	0	0%
		Through community outreach programs	1	25%
		By analyzing academic and behavioral data of students	1	25%
2	How do you involve parents in the decision-making process when identifying problems or issues?	Through school meetings or focus groups	1	25%
		Through surveys or feedback forms sent to parents	0	0%
		Through regular updates in newsletters or on social media	1	25%
		By inviting parents to join school committees	4	100%
		By providing workshops or training sessions for parents	1	25%
3	How do you gather information from parents to inform decision-making?	Through surveys or feedback forms sent to parents	0	0%
		Through school meetings with them or focus groups	3	75%
		Through one-on-one meetings with parents	1	25%
		By analyzing parent communication through emails, calls or messages	1	25%
		Through teacher-parents conferences	2	50%
4	How do you ensure that the information gathered from parents is relevant and useful to the decision-making	By providing clear guidelines or prompts for feedback	1	25%
		By using open-ended questions that encourage detailed responses	1	25%
		By providing training or support to parents on how to give constructive feedback	1	25%
		By cross-referencing the information with other data sources	1	25%
		By conducting follow-up meetings with parents to clarify feedback	4	100%

	process?			
5	<i>How do you involve parents in identifying alternative solutions to problems?</i>	Through town hall meetings or focus groups		100%
		By soliciting feedback through surveys or feedback forms		
		By inviting parents to join working groups or committees	2	50%
		By hosting brainstorming sessions with parents	1	25%
		By collaborating with parent associations or councils	4	100%
6	How do you ensure that parents have a say in choosing the alternative solution that is ultimately implemented?	By holding a vote or survey to determine the preferred solution	1	25%
		By using a consensus-building process to reach a decision	1	25%
		By inviting parents to join a decision-making committee or working group	2	50%
		By holding parent-teacher conferences to discuss potential solutions	3	75%

Table 4.3 presented the information collected from the respondents about the involvement of parents in decision-making processes for the school development. For example, head teachers were asked about the mechanisms they use to identify problems that hinder parents to participate in school activities and all of them (100%) revealed in common that they get information through parent-teacher conferences or other meetings with parent. According to the information presented in Table 4.3, 50% of the respondents mentioned regular staff meetings and discussions as another way of finding out problems that hinder parents to parents to participate in school activities. The head teachers were also asked about how they involve parents in the decision-making process when identifying problems or issues, and all of them (100%) indicated that inviting parents to join school committees is the most used channel to involve them in decision making process. The findings collected through interviews, indicated that the head teachers testified the successful examples of how they involved parents in the decision-making process whereby every term the school committees approve different activities to be done and clarify the road map for each of the activities. One of the respondents said: *“During the parents’ meetings, the parents themselves decided to support the construction of the girls’ room and to support the teachers of nursery who were not paid on the government payroll”*.

Seventy-five percent of the head teachers also mentioned that in the process of gathering information from parents to inform decision-making, school meetings with parents or focus groups are useful to collect adequate information. 50% included the use of teacher-parents’ conferences, 25% topped up with one-on-one meetings with parents and analyzing parent communication through emails, calls or messages. While asked on how they ensure that the information gathered from parents is relevant and useful to the decision-making process, all the respondents (100%) revealed that they conduct follow-up meetings with parents to clarify feedback on the information previously gathered. Meantime 25% of the respondents additionally mentioned that they either use surveys whereby open-ended questions that encourage detailed responses are employed, or provide clear guidelines or prompts for feedback, or provide training or support to parents on how to give constructive feedback or cross-reference the information with other data sources. The findings also revealed that 100% of the head teachers involve parents in identifying alternative solutions to problems through town hall meetings or focus groups and by collaborating with parent associations or councils, 50% of them involve parents in identifying alternative solutions to problems by inviting them to join working groups or committees and 25% involve parents in identifying alternative solutions to problems by hosting brainstorming sessions with parents. In an interview with Head Teacher A, the side of the respondents said: *“We use social media and platforms such as email, academic bridge and WhatsApp to exchange*

*information*". Again, findings indicated that respondents 75% ensure that parents have a say in choosing the alternative solution that is ultimately implemented by holding parent-teacher conferences to discuss potential solutions, 50% invite parents to join a decision-making committee or working group and provide a suggestion box or feedback mechanism for parents to share their ideas and opinions, 25% opt to holding a vote or survey to determine the preferred solution and using a consensus-building process to reach a decision. The head teacher C, from the respondents, said: *"We made a triangle tree to locate each of the school stakeholders whereby parents are placed on one side of the triangle and their ideas are recorded without losing any of them. And when there is a problem, we sit together for discussions and handle it as a team"*.

It was likely that 100% of the respondents evaluate and communicate the results of the decision-making process to parents and the wider school community by inviting parents and other stakeholders to a meeting to discuss the results and implications of the decision-making process. 50% topped up with the point that they distribute a summary report of the decision-making process and outcomes to all parents via email, WhatsApp group, and Phone calls.

On the other hand, parents have provided their views on their participation in school activities and decision making. Parents provided in ideas through focus groups whereby the targeted parents gathered at school. Parents provided their perceptions on the challenges that prevent them from participating in the school activities and decision making and the majority of the parents pointed out the low level of mindset and illiteracy are observed as the first challenge faced by parents which prevent them from participating in school activities thus lack of their role in decision making. Among other challenges include those linked to children misbehavior which creates parent fear to show up in front of the school leadership as they suspect that they would be questioned and have no clear explanations about that. There is also long distance from home to school and sometimes, lack of transport means. In addition, lack of clear communication between the school and parents through students. Meanwhile parents stressed that it is of a paramount for every parent to be part of the school activities and collaborate with the school leadership to follow up all the school activities for the benefit of their children. Moreover, parents have given feedback on the ways that the schools use to involve parents in decision making. Respondent A, from the parents of GS Kagasa, urged: *"For us parents, communication becomes a challenge and it is important that there is clear communication between parents and school whereby the school projects are communicated to parents through phone calls, students' communication books, and other ways that the school might establish but which are regularly functional"*. One the other hand she cautioned parents *"Parents should avail themselves and pass by the school for some time to check on the schools and be informed on the activities that require their interventions"* She added. The respondents mentioned that parents should attend the school meetings to be aware of the school plans and activities and provide their ideas. This would also allow the parents to make decisions on their children learning, suggest changes and make effective decisions on the school life. Parents provided their ideas on the functioning of the school bodies that they were supposed to inform parents and that they should work closely with parents in the community and link them to the school leadership.

Parents also provided their suggestions that the school governing bodies could use to increase their participation in school activities. They suggested that mobilization and encouragement could be used in order to change parents mind and turn them into school partners rather than consumers. School meetings should also be increased in order to collaborate with parents with the agenda to sensitize the importance of their children's education and that this education has a great impact on the family. The school also should work on the teachers' activities and the teaching processes because sometimes when a parent has initiative to follow up on the child's performance and realize that the child has not well progressed, they get discouraged and remain cursing the school instead supporting their initiatives. Respondent D, from the parents of GS Nyabagendwa, declared this *"I recently posed the question during the school general assembly as I was feeling the burden as a parent about the way teachers are taking care of the children behavior for example*

*children who are usually erring outside the school during studying hours and engaged into fights with the street children but my question was not well received by the school head teacher and the feedback was too harsh.”*

Parents realized that the schools are different in leadership and both administration and the committees establish their own way of governance. It is observed that parents in the same area could attend the school activities at one school and do not attend them at the neighboring school. The role of the governing committees is very crucial to motivate this parent active participation in school activities. When their governing style is welcoming, parents are participating massively but when the committees and the school leadership are not welcoming, the parents abstain themselves to attend the school activities.

### Respondents perceptions on the implication of the governing bodies

Nr	Statement	Responses	Frequency	%
1	<b>Which one of the following are found in your school?</b>	School General Assembly	4	100%
		School Executive council	1	25%
		School Development committee	1	25%
		Student Association	0	0%
2	<b>Are parents given chance to be part of the school committees?</b>	Yes	4	100%
		No	0	0%
3	<b>How does your school hold School General Assembly meetings with parents?</b>	In person, at the school premises	3	75%
		Combination of in-person and virtual meetings	1	25%
		Virtual meetings through video conferencing platforms	0	0%
		No School General Assembly meetings are held with parents	0	0%
4	<b>How does School General Assembly support the parents to participate in school activities?</b>	By organizing regular meetings to provide parents with updates on school activities and progress.	4	100%
		By creating a different school governing bodies to facilitate communication and involvement between parents and school.	1	25%
		By inviting parents to participate in school committees	2	50%
		By offering opportunities for parents to volunteer in school events and activities	1	25%
		By providing resources and training for parents on how to become more involved in school activities.	1	25%
5	<b>How often does the School Executive Council meet with parents during a school term?</b>	Monthly	1	25%
		2 Monthly		0%
		3 Monthly	2	50%
		Yearly		0%
		Never	1	25%

6	<b>What types of activities or events has the School Executive Council organized with parents in the past year?</b>	Fundraising events	0	<b>0%</b>
		Community work (Umuganda)	1	<b>25%</b>
		Parent-teacher conferences	1	<b>25%</b>
		Community service events	1	<b>25%</b>
		None	1	<b>25%</b>
7	<b>Does the School Development Committee have a specific mandate or plan for engaging parents in school development activities</b>	Yes	3	<b>75%</b>
		No	1	<b>25%</b>
8	<b>How does your school involve parents in the School Development Committee?</b>	Parents are invited to attend committee meetings in person	0	<b>0%</b>
		Parents participate in committee meetings through virtual platforms.	0	<b>0%</b>
		They are invited to participate in annual reviews of the school's development plans and goals	1	<b>25%</b>
		Parents are invited to submit written proposals or feedback to the committee	0	<b>0%</b>
		They are represented by elected parent representatives who attend committee meetings	2	<b>50%</b>
		Other (please specify: no school development committee)	1	<b>25%</b>
9	<b>How do you ensure that the election process of school committee members is transparent?</b>	By establishing clear guidelines and procedures for the election process, and communicating them to all potential candidates and voters.	3	<b>75%</b>
		By ensuring that the election is held at a time and place that is convenient and accessible to all members of the school community	2	<b>50%</b>
		By providing a fair and equal opportunity for all eligible candidates to participate in the election	3	<b>75%</b>
		By allowing all eligible voters to cast their votes anonymously, and ensuring that the vote-counting process is conducted openly and transparently	2	<b>50%</b>
		By providing an opportunity for candidates to challenge the election results and evaluate the election process for fairness and transparency	2	<b>50%</b>
10	<b>How do you involve parents in the school committee election process?</b>	Encouraging parents to nominate themselves or other parents for the election		<b>0%</b>
		Allowing parents to vote for the school committee members	2	<b>50%</b>
		Both a and b	2	<b>50%</b>
11	<b>How transparent is the school committee election process?</b>	Not transparent at all	0	<b>0%</b>
		Somewhat not transparent	0	<b>0%</b>
		Moderately transparent	0	<b>0%</b>
		Very transparent	1	<b>25%</b>
		Completely transparent	3	<b>75%</b>

Source: Data collection from field, 2023

Table 4.5 summarized the responses of the respondents of the questions that were seeking to find out the existence of the governing bodies and their functions and roles in increasing the parent participation in school activities. Head teachers (100%) responded that the main ruling body which is school general assembly exists in the schools they lead. However, only 25% of them confirmed that on top of the general assembly there are school executive council (SEC) and School Development committee (SDC). None of them uttered the existence of the students' association as another governing organ which to some extent would encourage the participation of their parents in school activities. The researcher asked again if the parents are given opportunity to be part of the school committees and 100% of the Head teachers responded "yes". In addition, the respondents supported this by affirming that they ensure that the election process of the committee members is transparent through establishing clear guidelines and procedures for the election process, and communicating them to all potential candidates and voters (75%), by providing a fair and equal opportunity for all eligible candidates to participate in the election (75%), by ensuring that the election is held at a time and place that is convenient and accessible to all members of the school community (50%), by allowing all eligible voters to cast their votes anonymously, and ensuring that the vote-counting process is conducted openly and transparently (50%), by providing an opportunity for candidates to challenge the election results and evaluate the election process for fairness and transparency. The respondents also revealed at 50% that they involve parents in the school committee election process by both encouraging parents to nominate themselves and other parents for the election and allowing them to vote for the school committee members. Moreover, 75% of the respondents affirmed that the school committee election process is very transparent

The research sake to find out how the school general assembly gathers and the respondents responded that it takes place in person and the school premises (75%) or takes place through the combination of in-person and virtual channels (25%). In addition, the respondents stipulated that the School General Assembly supports the parents to participate in school activities by organizing regular meetings to provide parents with updates on school activities and progress (100%), by inviting parents to participate in school committees (50%), by creating a different school governing bodies to facilitate communication and involvement between parents and school (25%), by offering opportunities for parents to volunteer in school events and activities (25%) and by providing resources and training for parents on how to become more involved in school activities (25%). The research sake to know how often the School Executive Council meet with parent during a school term and 50% of the respondents revealed that it convenes 3 times monthly and 25% responded that it convenes once per month. In the meantime, 25% of the respondents revealed that the School Executive Council never convenes. There is a strong relationship between the statements about the existence of the School Executive Council and the how often they convene as only 25% of the respondents confirm the existence of these committees in the schools they lead and the fact that 25% of the respondents reveal that these committees never meet which may be a confirmation that they never exist in some schools. These findings also indicate that there is lack of awareness and implementation of the ministerial law establishing the structure of the school governance (MINEDUC, 2021) especially in the establishment of school organs. It is clear that the absence of some school organs within the school bodies and the lack of meetings of some organs diminish the participation of parents in school activities. These findings again contradicted the researches on the School Governance on Parental Participation in school activities in selected secondary schools exemplified in the literature review such as the study of Francess (2011) which certainly found out that the School Executive Council (SEC)'s contribute to the parental participation and school development and influences the parental involvement in physical facilities and the school-community relations. In the current research, it is evident that the executive council cannot play this role while they are not in place. These findings also show that the School General Assembly Committees which is mainly formed for a basic reason of taking into account the welfare and education of the learners as revealed by Rulinda (2013) do not this key role in schools of Bugesera as they are not in place and consequently the parents' role in the follow

up of the school and learners wellbeing through the school governing bodies is not observed as stipulated in the school governance law (MINEDUC, 2021).

The respondents also revealed types of activities or events that the School Executive Council organized with parents in the past year including fundraising (25%), umuganda (25%), Parent-teacher conferences (25%), and Community service events (25%). Moreover, 25% of the respondents demonstrated that none of the School Executive Council members has been part of the articulated activities during the past academic year. Together with the other frequencies, it is observed that the executive council are not active enough in organizing activities and events for the development of the schools in Bugesera Districts which also discourages parents in general to mind about the school activities and development. This further validates Meghal's (2019) perspective. He stated that while SGACs are important in helping schools that are operating on a limited budget and require extra resources to improve the quality of education, they are also important in conducting fundraisers for the needs of the school. This proves the fact that the schools of Bugesera are not benefiting much of the parents' support in the increase of the school budgets and rely on the governments supplies to implement all the school activities.

Although 75% of respondents confirmed that the School Development Committees have a specific mandate or plan for engaging parents in school development activities, they oppositely affirm that the schools involve parents in the School Development Committee through representation of elected parent representatives who attend committee meetings (50%), invitation to participate in annual reviews of the school's development plans and goals (25%). These controversial versions make confusion on the research about the significance of the roles and impact of the school governance in boosting parents' participation in school activities.

#### 4.4.2. Respondents' views on governing bodies

Table 4. 6. Respondents' views on the school governing bodies

Nr	Statement	Response	Frequenc y	%
1	Are you part of any school governing body?	Yes	7	70%
		No	3	30%
2	Does sector executive council work closely with parents?	Yes	10	100%
		No	0	0%
3	How often do sector executive council's meetings take place?	Never	0	0%
		Rarely	0	0%
		Sometimes	7	70%
		Often	2	20%
		Always	1	10%
4	How does Sector	Regular meetings and consultations	6	60%

	Executive Council work together with parents	Involving parents in decision-making processes and seeking their input and feedback	2	20%
		Communicating with parents through newsletter, emails, and other forms of correspondence	2	20%
		Organizing parent workshops and training sessions	0	0%
		Encouraging parents to join committees	0	0%
5	How transparent is committee selection in this school	Not transparent at all	1	10%
		Somewhat not transparent	0	0%
		Moderately transparent	3	30%
		Very transparent	4	40%
		Completely transparent	2	20%
6	How does the lack of transparency in committee selection influence the parental participation?	Discourages parental participation	7	70%
		Creates skepticism and distrust	0	0%
		Diminishes sense of ownership and investment	1	10%
		Reduces motivation to engage	1	10%
		Leads to disconnection and disengagement	1	10%

Source: Data collection from field, 2023

Table 4.6. indicates the responses provided by the participants on the way they perceive the governing bodies in their schools. Various questions were asked seeking to know the relevance of the existing governing bodies to the implementation of parent participation in school activities in the secondary schools of Bugesera District. The majority of the respondents (70%) responded that they are part of the school governing bodies in their schools, which concurs with Rwandan law establishing the school governance which stipulates that there must be respondent representatives among the school governing bodies. (MINEDUC, 2021) All the respondents (100%) who participated in research affirm that the sector executive council works closely with parents which sometimes takes place (70%). Through regular meetings and consultations (60%), involving parents in decision-making processes and seeking their input and feedback (20% and communicating with parents through newsletter, emails, and other forms of correspondence (20%). On the side of respondents, it found that only 20% percent affirm that the selection of the members of the school committees is completely transparent while 40% mentioned that the selection is very transparent. However, 30% of the respondents added that the selection is moderately transparent and 10% have openly



said that the selection is not transparent at all. Moreover, the respondents mentioned that the lack of transparency in committee selection discourages parental participation (70%), diminishes sense of ownership and investment (10%), reduces motivation to engage (10%) and Leads to disconnection and disengagement (10%)

#### 4.4.3. Parents on the school governing bodies

The committees are set in place at school and parents play a significant role in their establishment during the general assemblies. Parents revealed that they play a key role in the establishment of the governing bodies by giving their votes. They are also encouraged to willingly participate in these bodies by giving their candidacy and proposing the candidates but some of them mentioned that the elections are tricked ahead of time by the school leaders and the elected members are those who would not challenge the school leaders in any ways! Parents revealed that once the committees are in place, most of the ideas are implemented together with the school administration though sometimes they act reluctant and do not pay much attention on the parents' ideas and suggestions which they fail to implement. For example, one parent suggested respondents should always be available to watch on the students' movements from school to outside during the time of school because it was not secure for the children to going round the outside the school while others are in the classroom and their safety outside the school was not assured. It was observed that there was no feedback given to this parent and no action was taken to solve the issue and she was saddened by the incident that took place in the aftermath whereby a child was beaten by the street children.

#### How does the school encourage parents to participate in school activities?

Parents who participated in the focus group commented on the ways used by the school and governing bodies to encourage them to participate in the school activities that the school sometimes send invitations through the students' communications books or sheet of papers, sometimes through local informants popularly known as messengers who verbally utter the announcements in the villages and through local churches. They mentioned that they are invited to attend main activities such as meetings and community work known as "umuganda". Respondent C, one parent from GS Mwendu, said: *"The school mainly invite us for agricultural activities such as planting vegetables in the school garden for the welfare of our children. So, as a parent, I often attend and bring the fertilizers because the wellbeing of our children is my main concern."* Parents also revealed that they participate in the school rehabilitation by transporting sand and stones but also providing manpower to facilitate the school in the expenses on various activities.

#### 4.5. Respondents perceptions on quality assurance

##### 4.5.1. Respondents' perceptions on quality assurance

Table below presents the findings on the way the respondents' views on the quality assurance and the way it is being implemented in their schools in connection with parent participation in school activities. Four respondents were targeted, participated and responded 100% to questionnaires

Table 4. 7. Respondents' views on the quality assurance

Nr	Statement	Response	Freq	%
1	How important is parental participation in ensuring quality assurance in teaching	Not important	0	0%
		Somewhat important	0	0%
		Moderately important	2	50%

	and learning?	Very important	2	50%
		Extremely important		0%
2	How often do you evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning materials?	Daily	2	50%
		Weekly	2	50%
		Monthly	0	0%
		Termly	0	0%
		Never	0	0%
3	How effective are the teaching and learning materials in enhancing student learning in your school?	Not effective at all	0	0%
		Slightly effective	0	0%
		Moderately effective	3	75%
		Very effective	0	0%
		Extremely effective	1	25%
4	How often do you conduct monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in your school?	Never	0	0%
		Rarely	0	0%
		Sometimes	0	0%
		Often	1	25%
		Always	3	75%
5	How do you conduct it?	By setting clear learning objectives and performance standards, and regularly assessing their progress using a variety of methods such as tests, assignments, and projects	3	75%
		By regularly observing and evaluating teachers' classroom instruction and providing feedback and support to help them improve their teaching practice.	3	75%
		By regularly collecting and analyzing data on student performance and teacher effectiveness, and using it to identify areas for improvement and inform decision-making	2	50%
		By regularly reviewing and updating the school's curriculum and instructional materials to ensure they align with current best practices and meet the needs of all students	2	50%
		By involving parents and other stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation process through regular communication and feedback mechanisms	4	100%
6	How often do you organize parent-teacher meetings to	Never	0	0%
		Rarely	0	0%

discuss quality teaching and learning?	Sometimes	2	50%
	Often	1	25%
	Always	1	25%

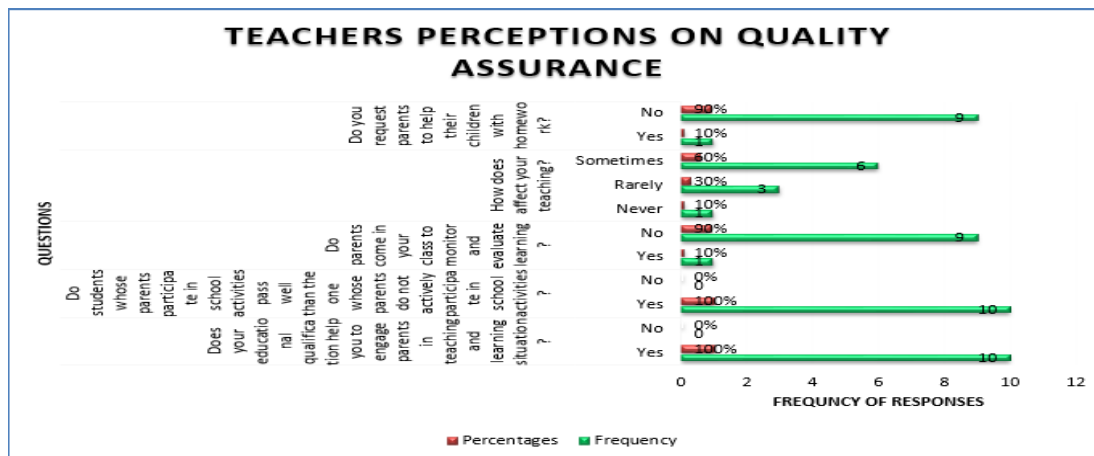
Source: Data collection, 2023

Table 4.7 presents the summary of the findings gathered on the side of the respondents about the quality assurance in their schools. Different questions were asked to check whether the quality assurance is connected to the parental participation in the development of secondary schools of Bugesera district.

The findings show the respondents agreement that parental participation is very important (50% and moderately important (50%) in ensuring quality assurance in teaching and learning. The findings rated how often the respondents evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning materials and show that 50% of them do this activity daily and 50% weekly. The findings indicate that 75% of the respondents are on the stand that teaching and learning materials are moderately effective in enhancing student learning in your school. Which means that the teaching and learning materials are not yet on the level of helping the schools to develop the maximum of the students' potentials because of the quality, quantity, specific and up to date materials. The gathered findings also affirm that 75% of the respondents always conduct monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in their schools while 25% do it often by involving parents and other stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation process through regular communication and feedback mechanisms (100%), by setting clear learning objectives and performance standards, and regularly assessing their progress using a variety of methods such as tests, assignments, and projects (75%), by regularly observing and evaluating teachers' classroom instruction and providing feedback and support to help them improve their teaching practice (75%), by regularly collecting and analyzing data on student performance and teacher effectiveness, and using it to identify areas for improvement and inform decision-making (50%) and by regularly reviewing and updating the school's curriculum and instructional materials to ensure they align with current best practices and meet the needs of all students (50%). The findings indicate that 50% of the respondents sometimes organize parent-teacher meetings to discuss quality teaching and learning while 25% do it often and 25% always organize parent-teacher meetings to discuss quality teaching and learning.

#### 4.5.2. Teachers views on quality assurance

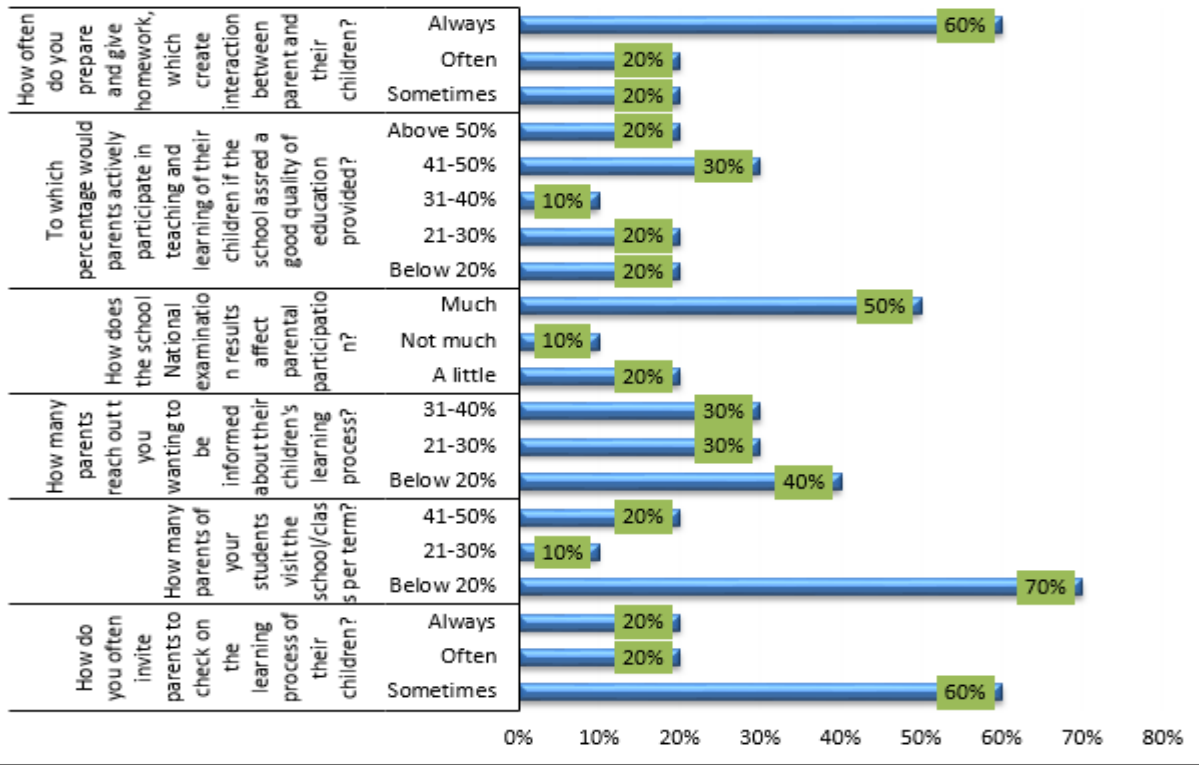
Table: 4.8. Teachers views on quality assurance



Source: Data collection from field, 2023

Table 4.8 presents the responses of the teachers on the quality assurance. The findings indicated that 100% of the teachers affirmed that their educational qualifications help them to engage parents in teaching and learning situations. One of the respondents in his own words articulated the following: “During my studies at University, I learnt the roles and responsibilities of the parents on their children’s education and the impact the lack of parent participation causes on the child’s performance” Anonymous. The findings again indicated the affirmation of 100% teacher-respondents that students whose parents participate in school activities pass well than those whose parents do not attend the school activities. Contrary to the respondents’ perspectives, 90% of the teachers denied that parents come to their class to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning and 60% of them declared that it sometimes affects their teaching due to the fact that they are not sure of the parents thinking about the quality of teaching. In the meantime, 90% of the teacher-respondents revealed that they request parents to help their children with homework activities.

### TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS ON QUALITY ASSURANCE (2)



Source: Data collection from field, 2023

The findings show that 60% of the teachers sometimes invite parents to check on the learning process of their children but below 20% of parents do visit the school/class as affirmed by 70% of teacher-respondents. Only 30% of the teachers affirm that between 31-40% of the parents reach out to them wanting to be informed about their children’s learning process. Fifty percent of teachers have observed that the national examination results affect much the parental participation and 30% of them wish that at least between 41-50% of the parents should actively participate in teaching and learning of their children. The findings indicated that 60% of the teachers always provide homework for their students.

The findings on quality assurance proved to the researcher, as Peter (2020) said, that it is from within the school internal quality assurance systems (practices and procedures) that all the stakeholders will get

interested in participating in school activities (Peter , 2020). It was observed that the schools have not done much in ensuring that quality education is assured based on the results of the findings, thus the reductions of parent participation in school activities. The respondents show double standards as they witness to daily (50%) and weekly (50%) implement their major duties of evaluating and ensuring that the teaching and learning materials are of high quality and themselves (75%) testify that these materials are moderately effective to boost learning. This made the researcher thinking that the respondents do not really focus on teaching and learning which affect the parent participation in school activities.

On the side of parents who participated in this research, they commented on their role in quality assurance as they were gathered in the focus groups at schools. They said that parents should work closely with teachers to monitor the smooth learning of the children by maintaining communication with teachers. They added that parents should not stop by only providing school materials such as school uniform, notebooks and school feeding fees but increase their role in supporting their children to do their homework, ask what they have learnt during the day and help them revise their lessons by allowing them to have free time for revision. Respondent B among the parents from GS Mwendu gave her point of in this way: *“When my children reach home from school, I ask them if they have brought homework, after receiving the answer, I ask them to do some activities and later urge them to do their homework or revise their lessons. I do supervise them if they are doing so, though I am not able to directly support them on their lessons but I encourage them to consult their peer neighbors so that they return to school in the following morning with everything clearer.”*

The respondents mentioned that parents should spare some time to visit the school and learn more about what’s going on at school and be informed on how their children are performing. Respondent A among the parents from GS Kagasa stated this: *“In order to play my role in the follow up of my children learning, I make sure I know that my children have reached at school and they have attended the class, I also enquire if they have won the uniforms that I bought for them. I make sure I know the time they have left class; calculate the exact time they spend on the way coming home to ensure they don’t go astray and pull some misbehavior or do wrong to others. I often talk to the teacher to get to know how my children behave and perform in their lessons. That is how I do follow up of my children’s learning journey.”* Parents highlighted that when they do follow up on quality assurance, this boosts the children’s confidence and increase their efforts in learning, consequently in the end, a difference is observed in the students’ performance of the children whose parents reach out to school and those whose parents do not visit the school. It also creates the teachers’ attention to children because they make much efforts in teaching since they realize the strong partnership with parents in the follow up of learning processes.

However, on the side of parents, some are not much involved in monitoring their children’ education both at school and home, consequently, the children are not much interested in strengthening their learning because they realize that their parents are not much concerned. On the side of the school, sometimes parents are not well received at school and they discouraged to go back and to continue facing the school leaders and teachers who do not pay attention to them. This carelessness also affects the learners because at teacher who does take care of a parent as adult, would pay lesser attention to children. Respondent E, a parent from GS Gashora shared her experience in these words. *“I noticed changes in my child’s performance in P2 compared to his previous performance in nursery level and P1 where he was perfectly performing well. I went to school to check with the teacher what was wrong. When I reached the school, it was around 3pm, I looked for the teacher of my child but did not find him and went back home. After one week I returned to school to see the teacher, again I did not find him, he was not at school. I asked another teacher whom I promptly met but he didn’t want to listen to me. In few words, when a parent faces such kind of reception, it is very hard to continue the courage to visit the school, so the school leaders should encourage teachers to welcome parents and organize meetings between teachers and parents and most particularly between a teacher, a parent and a child. The parent continued “Teachers continue to blame parents that they do not visit their children at school but in fact, they don’t care about welcoming them. On top of that, teachers do*

*not pay effective attention to our children. For example, I recently went to school to see how my child is doing. When I reached the school, I found out that my child was not at school. I asked where to find him and only his peers could locate him that he went down to the lake. None of the teachers knew it.”*

The findings on the quality assurance have shown double faces on the side of the participants in the research. On one hand, the school leaders, as the professional in charge supervisors of the quality assurance have demonstrated that it well followed up and this confirms the theory that quality assurance is mainly in the hands of the internal school administration prior to the external inspection. (Peter , 2020)

On the other hand, there has been a gap in the coordination of parent participation in the process of quality assurance in schools of Bugesera District as some of the parents claim to not have been given space to ensure that their children are learning properly due to teachers’ negligence and lack of school leaders’ attention to parents’ attempts to quality assurance. This supports the literature that Fasasi (2014) mentioned in the research conducted in Nigeria, that the principal should coordinate teachers and other staff members to see that their activities are geared towards ensuring quality in the schools and that parents are one of the stakeholders of schools and that it is very crucial to create a quality assurance system, which reflects on the quality of education provided by a school so that the stakeholders will actively participate in school activities.

## **SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

### **School decision making and parental involvement**

The findings indicated that both respondents and teachers and parents and students support the way decisions are made through in person meetings that gather them at school. They are on the same view that parents are encouraged to participate in decision making when identifying problems and finding solutions through school committees and school general assemblies. Parents also are informed the outcomes of the decision they made during school meetings of either committees or general assemblies. It was also found that parents are likely involved in different activities including general assemblies, community work (umuganda). However, in some cases parents indicated that the members of the committees make decisions with the school leaders without the consent of the general assemblies and this reduce their participation in decision making thus reduces their role in the development of the schools. Parents also revealed that they are often discouraged to participate in school activities by the way they are welcomed both in the meetings and at school especially when there is no attention paid to their ideas or when they visit the school. Some other factors that prevent them from participating in school activities include illiteracy, parent’s reluctance to welcome the school requirements and the low communication relationship between the school and parents in general.

### **School governing bodies and parental involvement**

The participants in this research have indicated that generally the governing bodies: school general assembly, school executive committees and school development committees exist in almost all the schools. The participants indicated that school governing bodies are functional and all the lawful members are included. Parents revealed that they are encouraged to participate in the school governing bodies through elections, giving their candidacy, proposing candidates and voting for the members of each of the governing bodies. They also revealed that once the governing bodies are set up, the school activities are implemented well. The respondents indicated that the established organs, once they are well organized, they play a big role in mobilizing parents to play their role in the development of the school thus impact the achievements of the school targets. However, the findings show that some of the schools have not yet put in place all the governing bodies as regulated by the Rwandan law of 2021 establishing the governance of education in

Rwanda. It was also found that some governing bodies do not function properly depending on the way they have been established either by the corruption of the school leaders or by the tricks from other sources as indicated by parents in the focus groups.

### **School Quality assurance and parental involvement**

The research findings showed that the participants in this research play a key role in quality assurance. Respondents mostly monitor the quality and the use of teaching materials, monitor the teaching and learning process, evaluate students' performance using statistics and other means of measurement and ensure that parents are involved through school visit, parent-teacher meetings, and classroom meetings with the teachers and students. Parents testified that they are involved in quality assurance through students' homework, provision of school materials, monitoring the movements of their children from home to school and back home. Parents highlighted that when they do follow up on quality assurance, this boosts the children's confidence and increase their efforts in learning, consequently in the end, a difference is observed in the students' performance of the children whose parents reach out to school and those whose parents do not visit the school. It also creates the teachers' attention to children because they make much efforts in teaching since they realize the strong partnership with parents in the follow up of learning processes.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

The study's conclusions led to the creation of the following suggestions for a number of organizations, including stakeholders (local government, communities, and parents), practitioners (Head teachers and teachers), and policy makers (MINEDUC and its agencies).

### **Education policy makers**

Recommendations go to MINEDUC and education agencies as the policy makers to make further steps in ensuring that the policies established reached the implementers i.e school leaders, teachers, parents and students, and that they are effectively placed at the implementation level.

MINEDUC and education agencies should also hold accountable via monitoring the engagement of the districts and sector officials in charge of education and school leaders who, on the expenses of the local and school community, limit the school governing policies to cover their malfunctioning. There should be a regular monitoring and evaluation in schools to check whether the parents are being involved in school activities. The latter should be held responsible for making the school governing bodies (SEC and SAC) functional and encourage their members to be active through the mobilization of each member's (Parents, teachers, students and school leaders) roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, MINEDUC and education agencies should commit to regularly visit the schools to monitor the implementation of the school governing laws and policies on the benefit of the general school operations.

### **Implementers of the school governance policies**

The head teachers and teachers should ensure that the establishment of formal governing bodies of transparent and coherent with the law governing education in Rwanda by making the elections of the governing bodies become transparent to the extent that each rightful person might play their significant role in the development of the parental participation in school activities and that of the school in general.

The governing bodies should align with the established responsibilities of leading the school with full involvement of the parents in decision making and quality assurance by sensitizing the parents' roles and responsibilities towards the school as outlined in the documents, allowing each member space to express

their thoughts through different platforms and take into account the expressed ideas and enquiries. Avoid enthroning the members who cannot stand for the school accountability to fully practice the low governing the schools in Rwanda Parents should participate in school activities at the best level they can to make the schools shine and developed.

The executive council members have to understand and put into action their role and responsibilities in order to be the role models of the rest of the parents to take part of the schools' development by pioneering and participating in the school initiatives. Creating activities, which engage parents and motivating them by explaining to them the importance of their participation, will surely boost their participation in school activities.

### **Stakeholders of schools in education**

The school stakeholders in education include the local leadership, development partners and the community as a whole. Each of these partners has a key role to play to make the school governing bodies function effectively to lift up the parent participation. For example, the local leaders hold a key responsibility to follow up the school daily activities and participate in the community engagement for the school development. As they take part in such activities, they would not miss the opportunity to seek information on the function of the school governance, the participation of parents in school activities in the aim of extending their support as the school makes an important community asset. The same for the development partners, they should strengthen their efforts in making the school governing bodies function in a way that enables the school become a welcoming environment to both parents and students. For example, this might be through their different projects implemented across the school as they partners' with the school leadership, they would seek information and support the school to establish functioning bodies, encourage parents and key partners to actively engage in school activities and take part of the school governing bodies. Their support might also extend to physically participate in school activities such as school meetings, community work, fundraising events, voluntary activities in the aim of seeking where might be gaps and work towards strengthening the collaborations with both parents and school executive leadership in order to build a strong working cohesion that enables all school governing bodies to accomplish their duties.

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