Parabolum Education

Parabolum Publishing

Vol. 1 (1), pp. 116-127, 2026

Doi: 10.58197/x1v13d59

Available online at http://www.parabolumpublishing.org/

Type of article: Research Article

Teacher–Parent Collaboration and Students' Academic Performance in Ordinary-Level Education: A comparative study of Two Secondary Schools in Rwanda

Celine Byukusenge*[1], Yves Urayeneza[1], Jean Pierre Sendegeya[1], Japhet Ndatumuremyi[1], Devotha Nyirabagenzi[1], Henriette Manishimwe[2]

[1]Catholic University of Rwanda

[2]Kibogora Polytechnic

Abstract

Teacher–parent collaboration is widely regarded as an important feature of supportive learning environments because it connects students' educational experiences at school and at home. This study examined the extent and forms of teacher–parent collaboration and their association with students' academic performance in ordinary-level education at School A and School B in Ngororero District, Rwanda. A descriptive design using quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews was employed during the 2023–2024 academic year. The target population comprised 1,002 teachers, parents, students and administrative staff. A sample of 91 respondents was selected through stratified probability sampling. Questionnaires were completed by 43 parents and 41 students, while interviews were conducted with six teachers and one administrative staff member. Quantitative data were summarized using frequencies and percentages, and interview data were analysed thematically. Regular teacher–parent collaboration was reported by 73.8% of respondents at School A compared with 26.19% at School B. Parents at School A also reported greater participation in meetings about student progress, academic events, school decision-making, volunteering and support for learning at home. Reported academic outcomes followed a similar pattern: 40% of students at School A, compared with 12% at School B, were classified as performing excellently in end-unit assessments; 50% and 17%, respectively, reported an A grade in national examinations. Respondents perceived collaboration as beneficial for homework completion, attendance, classroom participation, discipline, motivation and achievement. The findings indicate an association between more extensive teacher–parent collaboration and more favorable reported academic outcomes in the two schools. The study recommends structured, inclusive communication and practical school–home learning partnerships.

Keywords: teacher–parent collaboration; parental involvement; academic performance; ordinary-level education; secondary education; Rwanda

Article information

Received: 06/05/2026;
Reviewed: 02/06/2026;
Revised: 27/10/2026;
Accepted: 31/10/2026

*** Corresponding author:** Celine Byukusenge (celinebyukusenge@gmail.com)

How to cite this article: Byukusenge, C., Urayeneza, Y., Sendegeya, J.P., Ndatumuremye, J., Nyirabagenzi, D., Manishimwe, H. (2026) 'Teacher–Parent Collaboration and Students' Academic Performance in Ordinary-Level Education: A comparative study of Two Secondary Schools in Rwanda', *Parabolum Education*, Vol. 1 (1), pp. 116-127. Available at: https://doi.org/10.58197/x1v13d59

Introduction

Education is a shared responsibility that requires coordinated efforts among teachers, parents, school administrators and the wider community. Students' academic development is influenced not only by classroom instruction but also by the support, expectations and learning conditions they experience at home (Lehrl et al., 2020). Effective teacher–parent collaboration therefore plays an important role in supporting students' academic progress, attendance, behaviour and motivation. Research has demonstrated a positive association between parental involvement and students' academic achievement, although the relationship varies according to the nature and quality of involvement (Castro et al., 2015; Kim, 2022). Epstein (2011) identifies communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and community collaboration as essential dimensions of effective school–family partnerships.

The importance of teacher–parent collaboration is particularly evident in ordinary-level secondary education, where students experience adolescence and increasing responsibility for their learning. At this stage, parental encouragement, academic expectations and communication with teachers can help students develop effective study habits, maintain motivation and improve academic engagement. Hill and Tyson (2009), through a meta-analysis of 50 studies, established that parental involvement, particularly academic socialization, was positively associated with achievement among middle-school students. Similarly, Castro et al. (2015) found a positive relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement across different educational levels. These findings highlight the importance of meaningful partnerships that connect students' learning experiences at school and at home.

In Rwanda, education is considered a shared responsibility involving schools, parents and other stakeholders. Law No. 010/2021 of 16 February 2021 determining the organisation of education in Rwanda recognizes parents' responsibilities in supporting children's education (Republic of Rwanda, 2021). Nevertheless, the extent and effectiveness of teacher–parent collaboration may differ across schools due to variations in communication practices, parental availability, socioeconomic circumstances and institutional leadership. Understanding these differences is important for identifying practical approaches to strengthening school–family partnerships and improving students' learning experiences.

Despite the growing international evidence on the importance of parental involvement, there remains a need for context-specific research examining teacher–parent collaboration and students' academic performance in Rwandan secondary schools. In particular, understanding how parents and teachers communicate, participate in school activities and support learning at home can provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with school–family partnerships. Such evidence is important for informing school-level strategies that promote parental participation and create supportive learning environments.

Against this background, this study examined teacher–parent collaboration and students' academic performance in two selected secondary schools in Ngororero District, Rwanda. Specifically, it sought

to determine the extent of teacher–parent collaboration, identify the activities through which teachers and parents worked together to support students' learning, and examine the reported benefits of collaboration for academic performance. Through a comparative analysis of School, A and School B, the study provides context-specific evidence on the relationship between teacher–parent collaboration and students' academic outcomes in ordinary-level education.

Study purpose and objectives

The purpose of the study was to assess the contribution of teacher–parent collaboration to students' performance in ordinary-level education. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent of teacher–parent collaboration at School A and School B;
2. Identify the activities through which teachers and parents collaborated to support students' learning; and
3. Examine the reported benefits of teacher–parent collaboration for students' academic performance.

Literature Review

Conceptualizing teacher–parent collaboration

Teacher–parent collaboration refers to purposeful and ongoing relationships through which teachers and parents exchange information, share responsibility and coordinate their efforts to support students' educational development (Ashfaq et al., 2024). Meaningful collaboration involves two-way communication, shared understanding of students' learning needs, participation in relevant school activities and the reinforcement of learning and positive behavior at home (Popovska Nalevska et al., 2021).

The distinction between parental involvement and teacher–parent collaboration is important. Parental involvement may refer to activities undertaken by parents independently, such as supervising homework or encouraging study. Teacher–parent collaboration places greater emphasis on the relationship between the home and school, including how teachers and parents communicate, coordinate expectations and respond jointly to students' educational needs. Epstein's (2011) framework provides a useful basis for understanding these relationships because it considers family engagement across several connected dimensions, including communication, learning at home, volunteering and decision-making.

In the present study, teacher–parent collaboration is understood through the frequency of contact and the reported activities undertaken by parents and teachers. These include meetings about students' progress, participation in academic events, involvement in school decisions, volunteering and support for homework or other academic tasks at home.

Forms and dimensions of parental involvement

Epstein's (2011) framework identifies six types of school, family and community involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community. These dimensions provide a comprehensive way of examining how schools can create opportunities for families to contribute to students' learning. Communication involves regular,

accessible and two-way exchanges about academic progress, attendance, behaviour and school activities. Effective communication allows teachers to explain students' strengths and learning needs, while parents can share information about circumstances that may affect learning. Communication should not be limited to informing parents when a student experiences difficulties; it should also recognise progress and encourage constructive cooperation (Popovska Nalevska et al., 2021).

Learning at home involves parents supporting students through appropriate study routines, encouragement, monitoring of homework and discussion of educational goals . Such support does not necessarily require parents to teach curriculum content. Rather, parents can create conditions that enable students to study, complete assignments and develop responsibility for their learning. Volunteering and participation in school activities provide further opportunities for parents to contribute to the school environment. Decision-making, in turn, recognises parents as stakeholders whose views can contribute to school planning and improvement (Epstein, 2011).

These dimensions are relevant to the present study because its questionnaire and interview topics covered communication, meetings, academic events, volunteering, school decision-making and assistance with learning at home. Examining these activities together makes it possible to describe collaboration as a broader partnership rather than as a single form of parental participation.

Teacher–parent collaboration and students' academic performance

A substantial body of research has examined the relationship between parental involvement and students' academic achievement. Hill and Tyson's (2009) meta-analysis of 50 studies found an overall positive association between parental involvement and achievement among middle-school students. Their findings also indicated that the relationship varied according to the form of involvement. Academic socialization such as communicating educational expectations, discussing learning strategies and encouraging future academic planning showed the strongest positive association with achievement. The findings caution against assuming that every form of parental involvement has the same relationship with academic performance.
Similarly, Jeynes (2012), in a meta-analysis of 51 studies, reported a significant positive relationship between parental involvement programmes and academic achievement among school-aged learners, including secondary-school students. Castro et al. (2015) also found a positive, moderate relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement across studies conducted at different school levels. However, the variation between studies indicates that the relationship may depend on the type, quality and context of parental involvement.

These findings suggest that collaboration may support academic performance through several related processes. First, communication can help teachers and parents identify learning difficulties and respond to them earlier. Second, parents' encouragement and monitoring can support homework completion and regular study habits. Third, shared expectations may reinforce students' commitment to attendance, classroom participation and academic effort. Finally, parents' participation in school activities may strengthen their understanding of school expectations and the support students require Castro et al. (2015).

Nevertheless, the relationship should not be interpreted as automatically causal. Students' achievement may also be influenced by prior academic performance, household resources, parental education, school leadership, teacher effectiveness, peer relationships and the availability of learning materials. Consequently, differences in collaboration and academic performance between schools should be interpreted in light of the wider school and family contexts.

Teacher–parent collaboration during adolescence

Ordinary-level secondary education generally involves learners experiencing early or middle adolescence, a period associated with changing social relationships and increasing expectations for independence. During this stage, students may require forms of parental support that differ from those appropriate for younger children. Hill and Tyson (2009) argue that academic socialisation is particularly relevant during early adolescence. This includes parents communicating expectations, discussing educational aspirations, encouraging effective learning strategies and helping students understand the value of education.

For secondary-school students, effective parental involvement should therefore balance guidance with growing learner autonomy. Parents can monitor attendance and academic progress, provide encouragement and establish reasonable expectations without taking over students' learning responsibilities. Teachers can support this process by giving parents clear and practical information about students' progress and by explaining how they can assist at home (Sammons et al., 2015).
This perspective is relevant to the present study because the reported collaboration activities included communication about academic progress, support with homework and examination preparation, and participation in school events. These practices may help connect the increasing independence expected of ordinary-level students with appropriate support from adults at home and school.

School–family partnerships in the Rwandan context

School–family collaboration should be understood within the social, economic and institutional conditions in which schools operate. Parents may differ in their availability, educational backgrounds, literacy, access to communication technologies and confidence in communicating with teachers. Schools may also differ in their communication practices, leadership arrangements and opportunities for parental participation. These differences can influence how families engage with schools and how consistently collaboration is maintained.
In the Rwandan context, examining teacher–parent collaboration at school level is important because the practical experience of partnership may differ between institutions and communities. The present study focuses on two secondary schools in Ngororero District. It compares reported collaboration practices and reported academic outcomes rather than evaluating a national programme or policy. The comparison can therefore provide context-specific evidence about how collaboration is experienced in the two participating schools.

Research gap and contribution of the study

Existing international research generally identifies a positive relationship between parental involvement and students' academic achievement, while also showing that the relationship varies according to the form and quality of involvement (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2012; Castro et al., 2015). Epstein's (2011) framework further demonstrates that family engagement includes several dimensions, rather than being limited to attendance at parent–teacher meetings.

The present study contributes a descriptive comparison of teacher–parent collaboration in two ordinary-level secondary schools in Ngororero District, Rwanda. It examines the frequency of collaboration, the activities through which parents and teachers interact, and the academic outcomes reported by students. By considering questionnaire responses alongside interview accounts, the study provides a local description of how school–family relationships are experienced by different stakeholders.

The study does not establish that collaboration caused differences in academic performance. Rather, it examines whether more extensive reported collaboration coexists with more favourable reported academic outcomes in the two schools. This distinction is important because the descriptive design and the comparison of only two schools do not allow the effects of other school and family factors to be ruled out.

Theoretical framework

Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory emphasizes that learning and behaviour are influenced by observation, interaction and the social environment (Bandura, 1977). Applied to school–family relationships, the theory suggests that students may benefit when significant adults communicate consistent expectations about learning, attendance, discipline and academic effort. Teachers and parents can reinforce constructive learning behaviours by sharing information and coordinating their support.

Epstein's framework of school, family and community partnerships

Epstein's framework identifies six forms of involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community (Epstein, 2011). The present study focused particularly on communication, parent participation in school activities and decisions, volunteering, and support for learning at home. The framework therefore provides a useful structure for interpreting the range of reported collaboration practices.

Taken together, the two perspectives position teacher–parent collaboration as a social and educational process through which home and school can provide more coordinated support. They informed the study's focus on the frequency, forms and perceived educational benefits of collaboration.

Methodology

Research design

The study used a descriptive research design and combined quantitative and qualitative data collection. Questionnaires were administered to parents and students, while semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and an administrative staff member. The design enabled the researcher to describe collaboration practices and compare reported patterns across the two schools. It did not involve an intervention or manipulation of collaboration practices.

Study setting and population

The study was conducted in two selected secondary schools, referred to as School A and School B, in Ngororero District, Rwanda, during the 2023–2024 academic year. The school names are withheld in this manuscript to protect institutional confidentiality. The reported target population was 1,002 individuals, comprising teachers, parents, students and administrative staff. School A's population consisted of 20 teachers, 268 parents, 237 students and three administrative staff members. School B's population consisted of 13 teachers, 246 parents, 211 students and four administrative staff members.

Sample and sampling procedure

The study reported a sample of 91 respondents selected using stratified probability sampling, with the two schools serving as the principal strata. Forty-six respondents were drawn from School A and 45 from School B. The final respondent group comprised 43 parents and 41 students who completed questionnaires, and six teachers and one administrative staff member who participated in interviews.

Data collection instruments and procedures

Questionnaires collected information about the frequency of teacher–parent communication, forms of parental participation, teacher efforts to involve parents, and perceived effects of collaboration on students' learning. Interviews explored collaboration activities, perceived benefits and school initiatives intended to support school–family partnerships. The source document does not provide sufficient detail about the development, piloting, validation or reliability of the questionnaire; these details should be added if available.

Data analysis

Quantitative responses were summarized using frequencies and percentages and presented in tables and figures. Interview information was analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns concerning collaboration practices and perceived effects on students' learning. The source document does not report inferential statistical tests or adjusted analyses; accordingly, the findings are presented descriptively.

Results

Respondent characteristics

Of the 43 parent respondents, 51.16% were mothers, 44.18% were fathers and 4.65% were guardians. Of the 41 student respondents, 60.97% were female and 39.02% were male. Regarding age, 43.90% of student respondents were 13–14 years old, 26.83% were below 13 years and 29.27% were above 16 years.

Frequency of teacher–parent collaboration

Reported collaboration was more frequent at School A than at School B. At School A, 73.8% of respondents reported regular interaction, defined in the source as weekly or bi-weekly. The corresponding proportion at School B was 26.19%. Monthly interaction was reported by 21.42% at School A and 30.9% at School B. Rare interaction was reported by 4.76% and 23.8%, respectively. No respondents at School A reported an absence of collaboration, compared with 19.04% at School B.

Table 1: Frequency of teacher–parent collaboration

Reported frequency	School A	School B
Regular (weekly/bi-weekly)	73.8%	26.19%
Monthly	21.42%	30.9%
Rare	4.76%	23.8%
No collaboration	0%	19.04%

These figures suggest that respondents at School A experienced more frequent teacher–parent contact. The manuscript should verify the denominators used for these percentages against the original questionnaire dataset, because the reported school sample sizes and the apparent denominators in this result are not fully reconciled in the thesis.

Forms of collaboration

Parents at School A reported higher participation across the collaborative activities measured. All participating parents at this school reported involvement in meetings concerning students' progress and school decision-making. At School B, the corresponding proportions were 64.28% and 54.76%. Participation in academic events was reported by 88% of parents at School A and 35.7% at School B. Volunteering in school activities was reported by 76.19% and 19%, respectively. Assistance with homework or academic tasks at home was reported by 95.23% of parents at School A compared with 35.7% at School B.

Table 2: Forms of teachers-parents' collaboration

Collaborative activity	School A	School B
Meetings about student progress	100%	64.28%
Participation in school decision-making	100%	54.76%
Participation in academic events	88%	35.7%
Volunteering in school activities	76.19%	19%
Helping with homework/academic tasks	95.23%	35.7%

Parents also reported that teachers invited them to collaborative meetings (100%), provided regular updates (88.37%) and offered guidance on how to support learning at home (81.39%). Interview accounts described parent–teacher meetings, workshops, telephone communication, progress reports and feedback about students' academic development. School leadership also referred to parent–teacher conferences, academic events and digital communication.

Reported student academic outcomes

Students' reported academic outcomes were more favorable at School A than at School B. At School A, 40% of students were classified as performing excellently in end-unit assessments (above 80%), 50% as good (70–79%) and 10% as average; none were classified as poor. At School B, 12% were classified as excellent, 45% as good, 24% as average and 19% as poor.

Table 3: Reported student academic outcomes

End-unit assessment category	School A	School B
Excellent (>80%)	40%	12%
Good (70–79%)	50%	45%
Average	10%	24%
Poor	0%	19%

For national examinations, 50% of respondents at School A reported an A grade and 48% a B grade. At School B, 17% reported an A, 36% a B, 38% a C and 9% a D or below. Daily classroom participation was reported by 79% of students at School A compared with 38% at School B.

These are reported categories and proportions in the thesis. The manuscript should clarify whether grades and assessment categories were self-reported by students or extracted from official school records, and provide the relevant assessment period and denominators.

Perceived benefits of collaboration

Respondents expressed favorable views about the contribution of collaboration to students' education. Seventy-six percent strongly agreed and 24% agreed that mutual support between teachers and parents positively affected students' education. Eighty-three percent strongly agreed that information sharing between parents and teachers improved students' learning. In relation to examination performance, 98% strongly agreed and 2% agreed that increased collaboration could improve students' performance; 98% also strongly agreed that declining collaboration could negatively affect grades in National examinations

All student respondents reported that parental involvement with teachers encouraged class participation and regular attendance. In addition, 97.56% associated parental involvement with improved grades, 87.80% with homework completion, 95.12% with discipline and 95.56% with a conducive learning environment at home and school. A further 75.60% identified parental time and encouragement during examination preparation as beneficial. Interviewees similarly described perceived improvements in homework completion, classroom participation, test performance, motivation and discipline.

Discussion

The study identified a marked difference in the reported frequency of teacher–parent collaboration between the two schools. Regular interaction was reported by nearly three-quarters of respondents at School A, compared with approximately one-quarter at School B. Conversely, respondents at School B were more likely to report rare or no collaboration. This contrast suggests that the two schools differed in how consistently they connected families with students' learning.

The pattern of activities is consistent with the dimensions emphasized in Epstein's framework, particularly communication, volunteering, decision-making and learning at home (Epstein, 2011). At School A, parents reported greater involvement across these dimensions, rather than participation being limited to occasional meetings. The particularly large difference in reported help with homework points to the potential importance of connecting classroom learning with support in the home environment.

The reported academic outcomes followed a similar pattern. Students at School A were more frequently classified in the excellent category for end-unit assessments and more frequently reported A grades in NESA-prepared examinations. Daily classroom participation was also more commonly reported at this school. These observations are consistent with literature associating academically focused parental involvement with student achievement (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2012).

The findings should not, however, be interpreted as demonstrating that teacher–parent collaboration caused the differences in achievement. The study used a descriptive design, compared only two schools and did not control for possible differences in prior achievement, student socioeconomic circumstances, school leadership, teacher experience, school resources or other contextual factors. In addition, the academic outcomes appear to be reported by students in the source document; verification against school records would strengthen the evidence. The results therefore support an observed association and respondents' perceptions, not a causal conclusion.

The convergence of questionnaire responses and interview accounts provides useful descriptive evidence that stakeholders viewed collaboration as relevant to homework completion, attendance, classroom engagement, discipline and motivation. This convergence does not eliminate the limitations of the small number of schools or the need for more transparent reporting of the qualitative analysis. Future studies could examine the quality and content of communication, not only its frequency, and could include a broader range of schools and independently verified achievement data.

Conclusion

This study compared teacher–parent collaboration and reported academic outcomes at School A and School B in Ngororero District, Rwanda. Respondents at School A reported more frequent collaboration and greater parental participation in progress meetings, academic events, school decision-making, volunteering and support for learning at home. Students at this school also reported more favourable end-unit assessment categories, NESA examination grades and classroom participation. Participants perceived collaboration as beneficial for students' learning, attendance, homework completion, discipline and motivation.

Overall, the findings indicate an association between more extensive teacher–parent collaboration and more favourable reported academic outcomes in the two schools. Given the descriptive design and limited number of schools, the study does not establish a direct causal effect. Its practical contribution is to highlight school–family partnership activities that school leaders and teachers may strengthen and evaluate.

Practical implications and recommendations

- Schools should establish predictable communication arrangements, including scheduled parent–teacher meetings and timely updates about academic progress, attendance and behaviour.
- Teachers should provide parents with practical, realistic guidance on supporting learning at home, including monitoring homework, encouraging study routines and supporting examination preparation.
- School leaders should create opportunities for parents to participate in academic events, school discussions and appropriate decision-making processes.
- Schools should use communication approaches that are accessible to parents with different work schedules, literacy levels and access to digital technologies.
- Future research should include more schools and use longitudinal or quasi-experimental designs to examine whether specific collaboration strategies are followed by measurable changes in References

References

Ashfaq, O., Sami, A., & Yousaf, H. (2024). Parent-teacher collaboration and its effect on student's achievement at pre-school level. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review, 8*(2), 386–399. https://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2024(8-II)32

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Prentice Hall.

Castro, M., Expósito-Casas, E., López-Martín, E., Lizasoain, L., Navarro-Asencio, E., & Gaviria, J. L. (2015). Parental involvement on student academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Educational Research Review, 14*, 33–46. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2015.01.002

Epstein, J. L. (2011). *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools* (2nd ed.). Westview Press.

Hill, N. E., & Tyson, D. F. (2009). Parental involvement in middle school: A meta-analytic assessment of the strategies that promote achievement. *Developmental Psychology, 45*(3), 740–763. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015362

Jeynes, W. H. (2012). A meta-analysis of the efficacy of different types of parental involvement programs for urban students. *Urban Education, 47*(4), 706–742. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085912445643

Kim, S. (2022). Fifty years of parental involvement and achievement research: A second-order meta-analysis. *Educational Research Review, 37*, Article 100463. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2022.100463

Lehrl, S., Evangelou, M., & Sammons, P. (2020). The home learning environment and its role in shaping children's educational development. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 31*(1), 1–6. https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2020.1693487

Ministry of Education. (2022, September 14). *Guidelines on contribution of parents to pre-primary, primary and secondary school education*. Republic of Rwanda.

Popovska, N. G., Popovski, F., & Dimova, P. H. (2021). Communication strategies for strengthening the parent-teacher relationships in the primary schools. *International Journal of Research Studies in Education, 10*(14), 123–134. https://doi.org/10.5861/ijrse.2021.a076

Republic of Rwanda. (2021). *Law No. 010/2021 of 16 February 2021 determining the organisation of education*. Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda.

Sammons, P., Toth, K., Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Siraj, I., & Taggart, B. (2015). The long-term role of the home learning environment in shaping students' academic attainment in secondary school. *Journal of Children's Services, 10*(3), 189–201. https://doi.org/10.1108/JCS-02-2015-0007