

**A Study of Home-School Communication and Mutual Trust in Tanzanian
Secondary Schools from the Perspective of Social Capital Theories**

By

Happy Shayo Joseph

Northeast Normal University

Phd - Educational Economics and Management (2023)

ABSTRACT

Communication serves as a vital component of home-school partnership. It is embedded in the home-school engagement rather than a standalone construct. Communication does not only promote positive home-school relationships but also stimulates and strengthens other partnership components such as trust. Nonetheless, studies have overlooked this variable for years. As compared to trust that has received prominent attention in the body of knowledge, the majority of the studies found that improving communication is the major way of fostering trust. Surprisingly, it is not clear how and what components of communication promote trust. This thesis extends the literature by examining communication aspects that affect home-school trust.

Adopting the pragmatic paradigm, this work employed a concurrent mixed-methods design, involving qualitative and quantitative techniques tools to gather data from 340 parents and 145 teachers from 10 schools selected via a stratified random sampling technique. While the quantitative survey was distributed to all participants, the in-depth interviews were conducted to seven school administrators. Moreover, there were four and five focus groups for teachers and parents respectively. The analytical framework considered the components of the social capital theory that integrated different scholarly ideas. Using the three major dimensions of the integrated framework, bonding, bridging, and linking social capital served as the lenses toward the interpretation and discussion of the findings.

The study found that the home-school communication process involves two major aspects; motive and connectivity networks. Notwithstanding that the communication ii

process is propelled by feedback, support, and mentorship; networking is established by the paths, systems, and applications. In addition, through the communication process, trust was observed via accommodative networks, supportive interactions, mentorship, social values, and identity. It was also revealed that communication is a two-sided sword due to its double-sided powers on affecting trust in the home-school context involving reciprocity, negligence, and anxiety.

Observing the findings from the integrated social capital basis, power struggle, structure holes, and weak ties emerged to explain the communication process and trust-building in a home-school context. With parents-teacher trust higher than teacher-parent trust, and implicit information from both home and schools, it was evident that the nature of trust between these two institutions is authority-based.

The study concluded that the selection of the appropriate networking tool, clear motives, and acknowledgment of each party's expectations enhance the commencement and sustainability of communication hence the flourishing of trust. The study serves as a potential door key to both schools and families towards the structuring of communication per the desired motives and expectations. Furthermore, the study could persuade policymakers on establishing training programs for in-service teachers and embed partnerships and parent-teacher relations contents in pre-service teachers' programs.

KEYWORDS: *Home-school Communication, Mutual Trust, social capital, partnership, collaboration*