



Perceived Parental Engagement in Improving Students' Academic Achievement in Sululta Sub-city Secondary Schools of Shaggar City Administration, Oromia Regional State

Feye Dechasa Feyisa¹ & Melkamu Afeta Gonfa^{*2}

¹Education and Behavioral Studies Unit, College of Social Sciences and Humanities,
Salale University, Ethiopia

²Department of Psychology, College of Educational Sciences, Kotebe University of Education
Ethiopia

Abstract

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the level of perceived parental engagement in improving students' academic achievement in secondary schools in Sululta Sub-City, Shaggar City administration. In the study, a mixed research approach and descriptive research design were used. Questionnaire, key informant interview, and document review were used as data gathering tools. A stratified simple random sampling technique was employed to select 65 teachers and 307 students. In addition, 4 principals and 28 PTA members were taken purposively. Quantitative data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The findings of the study revealed that the overall parental engagement was at a low level in school activities and decision-making. However, parents moderately encouraged their children to achieve satisfactory results, stay focused, and develop positive attitudes toward education. Teachers reported low levels of principal involvement in engaging parents in education and school development initiatives. Finally, it was suggested that the provision of consecutive training programs for parents by schools and education bureaus mainly focus on supporting parents in their children's education, making continuous follow-ups, involving parents in school decision-making, strengthening the student council, and creating a strong relationship between the school and the community.

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*Corresponding
Author:

Melkamu Afeta Gonfa

E-mail:

melkamu.afeta@kue.edu.et

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INTRODUCTION

The role of parents in enhancing students' learning and academic performance is very crucial. Parental engagement can be measured in multiple ways, including activities that parents engage in at home and school and having positive attitudes towards their children's education, school, and teachers (Kohl et al., 2000). The perception of parents in students' academic achievement refers to how students perceive their parents' role, attitudes, and involvement in their academic pursuits, and how they believe it impacts their academic performance.

Students' perception of their parents' influence can have a significant impact on their motivation, self-beliefs, and academic outcomes. The role of parents as an educational stakeholder is immense in improving learners' academic success and learning outcomes. The primary purpose of parents is to have assurance and trust that their children receive a quality education, which will prepare them for a successful and productive adult life in a global society (Cotton & Wikelund, 2001; USAID/EQUIP2, 2006). Meaningful involvement

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of parents and other caregivers in their children's education can have a significant positive impact on academic performance. Research findings indicate that students whose families are actively engaged in their education achieve higher test scores, attend school more regularly, complete their homework consistently, demonstrate greater motivation, and exhibit better discipline and ethical behavior (Cotton, 2000).

Tirusew (2001) stated that it is crucial that all schools set a goal in their improvement plan for increasing partnerships with parents. Gannon (2012) noted that while good schools make a difference, parental involvement is a stronger predictor of a child's academic performance than the school's qualities.

Therefore, this study implicates that parents' engagement in their children education means that they are responsible for all home-based activities of their children's education, such as supporting them with homework, encouraging school attendance, teaching ethics, and initiating children to read, which is highly needed in improving their academic performance, and engaging in school-based activities such as raising funds to build classrooms, fulfilling laboratory needs, involving themselves in school decision-making such as resource mobilization and utilization, and participating in planning for the better academic achievement of their children, instead of putting all loads about their children on the schools.

School committees are Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) members. The parent-teacher associations are a voluntary group of dedicated and enthusiastic parents, caregivers, and staff representatives who are involved in a range of activities that support the school, including raising additional funds, coordinating various school services, and planning social activities.

Regarding this, MoE (2002) stated that the school committees have the following roles: planning different school activities and projects, generating income from various sites, hiring and firing teachers, taking a role in keeping the students' discipline, and improving school administration are the major ones. In addition, they make the students

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disciplined, follow teachers in the learning process, and give advice to teachers and principals who do not play their roles appropriately. The committees investigate whether teachers actively maintain students' interest in learning by encouraging them to ask questions, participate in discussions, and engage in classroom activities. They also have the role to facilitate teachers' collaboration with parents to strengthen school-home relationships and work together to reduce students' dropout rates and absenteeism.

The parent-teacher association (PTA) committees are a formal organ in any school composed of parents and teachers' members and have a responsibility to play their roles. Their primary function is connecting schools and society, and in turn, parents have the chance to speak with teachers about their children. It has been established to support schools through involving parents, providing resources, and filling the entire gap that the government is unable to fill on its own.

In the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP IV) of Ethiopia, which covered the implementation period of 5 years (2010/11-2014/15), among the core priorities, one is quality education and internal efficiency, which is ensuring student completion and achievement. In the structure of action programs under ESDP IV, the first priority is also given to primary and secondary education quality and community participation (MoE, 2010). According to the document (ESDP IV), student achievement has not sufficiently improved, and it needs the special attention that should be given to the involvement of different participants, mainly at the school level. In real practice, however, there is a gap and low participation of PTAs in school activities to improve the problem of student academic achievement.

In Ethiopia, the participation of parents in enhancing students' academic achievement at all educational levels has been a problem, and it characterizes all educational institutions. The school principals, teachers, and other employees should be in a position to mobilize students, parents, and non-parent community members to

work together for the betterment of the school (Tadele, 1995). Most of the studies overlooked the parental involvement in their children's education, which makes it difficult to achieve the intended goal without their close support and supervision.

The existing gaps and the practical personal experience prompt the researchers to investigate the status of parental engagement in improving students' academic achievement in Sululta Sub-city secondary schools of the Shaggar City administration, Oromia Regional State.

Statement of the Problem

In Ethiopia, the low participation of parents in their children's education has become a significant challenge at all levels of schooling. Many schools struggle because parents are not actively involved in supporting their children's learning. As Tadele (1995) explained, school leaders, teachers, and staff must work together to engage parents and the broader community for better educational outcomes. Research findings show that when families take part in their children's education, students perform better academically, attend school more regularly, and show improved behavior and confidence. Active family involvement also strengthens school-community relationships, builds trust, and helps parents develop leadership and teamwork skills. Moreover, teachers who maintain strong, positive relationships with families are more likely to stay motivated and committed to their schools. Therefore, promoting parent participation is vital for raising students' academic achievement and creating a more caring and effective school environment.

In the Ethiopian context, the problem of low parental participation is clearly seen across many educational institutions. The Ministry of Education (2010) identified that in Oromia, one of the significant challenges is the limited involvement of parents and other community members in education, along with poor efficiency and low quality of learning. Since education serves as the foundation for the development of all other sectors, it requires the active cooperation and support of different stakeholders. Therefore, schools must take

the lead in mobilizing teachers, students, parents, and the wider community to work together for improvement. As Tadele (1995) emphasized, school principals, teachers, and other staff should actively encourage collaboration among all members of the school community to create better educational outcomes.

Most of the research conducted in Ethiopia was primarily focused on assessing whether a significant relationship exists between students' academic achievement and gender (Amogne, 2015), school resources and facilities (Tadesse & Maeregu, 2014), the family background of the students (Aemero & Lakshmi, 2013), and the teaching methods, teacher quality, and leadership styles.

However, the studies had mainly overlooked the role of parental engagement in children's education, though it is challenging to achieve educational goals without active parental involvement. Less attention has been given to the participation of parents and the wider community to enhance learning outcomes.

In the Shaggar City administration, specifically among Sululta Sub-city secondary schools, as far as the researchers' knowledge goes, there are no previous studies conducted on parental engagement in improving students' academic achievement. In addition, based on the researchers' personal observation, among Sululta secondary schools, parents' and PTAs' engagement in supporting their children's education and school development activities is at a minimal level and remains weak. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate students' perceived parental engagement in improving their academic achievement in Sululta Sub-city secondary schools of Shaggar City Administration of Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of students' perception of their parental engagement in improving their academic achievement in Sululta Sub-city Secondary Schools of Shaggar City Administration, Oromia?

2. What is the status of teachers' perception of parental engagement in their children's education and school activities in Sululta Sub-city Secondary Schools?

3. To what extent are school principals involving parents in their children's education and school development initiatives in Sululta Sub-city secondary schools?

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Description of Study Area

The study was carried out in Sululta Sub-city, which is part of the Shaggar City Administration in the Oromia Regional State of Ethiopia. Sululta is located just north of Addis Ababa, bordered by the Mulo District and West Shawa Zone to the west, North Shawa Zone to the north, and Barrak District to the east. The name "Sululta" is derived from the Afan Oromo word "*Suluula*," meaning valley or lowland (Socio-Economic Profile of Sululta Sub-city, 2013). Geographically, the sub-city lies between 9.1853°N and 38.7604°E, at an altitude ranging from 2,500 to 3,230 meters above sea level. It has a cool highland climate, with annual rainfall between 800 and 1,200 millimeters and an average temperature of 18°C to 22°C. According to a 2006 E.C. survey conducted by the Sululta sub-city council, the sub-city has a total population of 37,988, of which 18,394 (48.4%) are male, and 19,594 (51.6%) are female. This sub-city, with its growing population and close proximity to the capital, provides an important context for studying parental engagement in education, as community participation plays a vital role in improving students' academic achievement and the overall quality of schooling.

The schools' data reveals that most of the students attending their education in Sululta town secondary schools are coming from the surrounding districts' elementary schools, like Sululta elementary and Laga Dima elementary, and from private elementary schools' students after completing the grade eight National Ministry Exam.

Research Approach and Design

The study used a mixed research approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative approach was the main focus, while qualitative data was used to support and strengthen the findings of the quantitative data. A descriptive research design was chosen because it helps to collect and analyze detailed information about the existing situation.

Data Sources

This study used both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data, which are more accurate and detailed, were collected from students, teachers, school principals, and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members. To support and strengthen the findings, secondary data were also used, including students' mark sheets, school meeting minutes, letters, and reports.

Sampling Procedures

The study used a stratified simple random sampling technique to select student and teacher participants. From a total of 2,039 students, 334 were chosen, and from 90 teachers, 73 were selected. The strata for sampling were based on sex to ensure balanced representation. To determine the sample size of the study participants (students and teachers), Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination was used, calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where: n = number of samples, N = total population, and e = error tolerance (0.05), which is the level of precision with a 95% confidence interval. Consequently, using this formula with a significance level of $e = 0.05$ and a population size of $N = 2039$ for students and 90 for teachers.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} ; n = \frac{2039}{1+2039(0.05)^2} = 334.$$

Therefore, the sample size n for this research was 334 student respondents.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} ; n = \frac{90}{1+90(0.05)^2} = 73.$$

Therefore, the sample size n for this research was 73 teachers. However, data analysis was finally conducted on 307 students and 65 teachers, as some responses were incomplete or missing. For qualitative data, principals and PTA members were

selected using purposive sampling, resulting in 28 PTA members and 4 school principals from the sampled schools.

Tools for Data Collection

In the study, a questionnaire was used to obtain quantitative data, and key informant interviews and document review were used to gain qualitative insights, both conducted at the same time. This approach allowed the researchers to gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the issue under study.

All instruments were carefully checked and improved to ensure their quality before administration. In addition to feedback from the research supervisor, two subject-matter experts holding PhDs in Educational Psychology and Developmental Psychology reviewed the instruments based on their knowledge and experience. Their comments and suggestions were used to modify and improve the tools, ensuring that complex or unclear questions were removed, wording was made clear and simple, and concise instructions were provided for completing the questionnaires.

The finalized questionnaire was distributed to 334 students and 73 teachers. The response rate was 307 students (92%) and 65 teachers (89%), and the analysis was conducted based on these completed responses. The internal consistency reliability for both student and teacher responses was very high, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.97. For analysis and interpretation, Bluma's (2012) interval scale was used to classify respondents' positions as follows: mean ≤ 1.49 = very low, 1.5–2.49 = low, 2.5–3.49 = moderate, 3.5–4.49 = high, and ≥ 4.5 = very high.

Semi-structured key informant interviews were used to collect data from principals and PTA members. During the interviews, the researchers

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actively probed to gather more detailed information from the participants. In addition, documents such as student result records (mark lists), meeting minutes, and both published and unpublished materials related to the study topic were reviewed and used as supplementary data sources.

Data Analysis

In this study, the collected data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed with descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, using SPSS software version 23. The results were presented in tables and graphs. Qualitative data from the key informant interviews were coded, categorized, and analyzed thematically to provide deeper insights into the study findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

As shown in Table 1, 175 (57.0%) of the respondents were female, and 132 (43.0%) were male, indicating that the majority of the students in the study were female. Regarding age, 272 (88.6%) were between 15 and 20 years old, while 28 (9.1%) were 20 years or older, showing that most respondents fell within the 15–20 age range. In terms of grade level, 92 (30.0%) were in grade 12, 78 (25.4%) in grade 11, 70 (22.8%) in grade 9, and 67 (21.8%) in grade 10, suggesting that a larger proportion of students were from grade 9, reflecting proportional sampling from each grade level. Concerning the school distribution, 134 (43.6%) of respondents were from Sululta Secondary School, 75 (24.4%) from Ifa Boru Wale Lube Secondary School, 51 (16.6%) from Ifa Boru Laga Dabo Secondary School, and 47 (15.3%) from Ifa Boru Malka Hayu Secondary School.

Table 1

Socio-demographic characteristics of student respondents

No.Variables	Category	N	Percentage
1 Age	Below 15 years	7	2.3%
	15-20	272	88.6%
	20 and above	28	9.1%

Table 1 continues.

2	Sex	Male	13	24.30%
		Female	17	57.0%
3	Grade level	9th	78	25.4%
		10th	67	21.8%
		11th	70	22.8%
		12th	92	30.0%
4	School Name	Ifa Boru Laga Dabo Secondary School	51	16.6%
		Ifa Boru Malka Hayu Secondary School	47	15.3%
		Ifa Boru Wale Lube Secondary School	75	24.4%
		Sululta Secondary School	134	43.6%

Table 2 shows that 56 (86.2%) of the teacher respondents were male and 9 (13.8%) were female, indicating a significant gender disparity among teachers in the secondary schools of the study area. Regarding age, most teachers fell within the 30–40 years range, with 22 (33.8%) aged 30–34 years, 14 (21.5%) aged 35–39 years, 11 (16.9%) aged 25–29 years, 12 (18.5%) aged 40 and above, and 4 (6.2%) aged 20–24 years. This shows that the majority of teachers are in their productive career age.

In terms of educational qualifications, 46 (70.8%) of the teachers held a first degree, while 19 (29.2%) had a second degree, indicating that most teachers are well-qualified for their teaching assignments. Regarding teaching experience, 16 (24.6%) had 11–15 years, 15 (23.1%) had 6–10 years, 12 (18.5%) had over 20 years, 11 (16.9%) had 6–10 years, and 11 (16.9%) had 1–5 years of experience. This suggests that many teachers have substantial teaching experience, which can positively impact student learning.

Concerning school distribution, 32 (49.2%) of the teachers were from Sululta Secondary School.

while the remaining participants were from the three Ifa Boru Secondary Schools, reflecting proportional sampling from each school.

For qualitative data collection, four principals were selected as key informants, one from each selected school. All principals were male, aged 30 years and above, and held first- or second-degree qualifications, with teaching experience ranging from 1 to 15 years. Similarly, 28 PTA representatives were selected from the sampled schools, with 1 to 12 years of experience as committee members.

These findings indicate that most respondents were male, and female representation among school principals and PTA members was almost nonexistent. Additionally, most teachers and principals were aged 30 and above, held first-degree qualifications, and had substantial work experience. This suggests that the participants have the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to contribute effectively to improving students' learning and academic achievement in the schools.

Table 2

Socio-demographic characteristics of teachers' respondents

No.	Variables	Category	N	Percentage
1	Age	20-24	4	6.2%
		25-29	11	16.9%
		30-34	22	33.8%
		35-39	14	21.5%
		40 and Above	14	21.5%

Table 2 continues.

2	Sex	Male	56	86.2%
		Female	9	13.8%
3	Educational level	Certificate	0	0.0%
		Diploma	0	0.0%
		First Degree	46	70.8%
		Second Degree	19	29.2%
		Others	0	0.0%
4	School Name	Ifa Boru Laga Dabo Secondary School	11	16.9%
		Ifa Boru Malka Hayu Secondary School	11	16.9%
		Ifa Boru Wale Lube Secondary School	11	16.9%
		Sululta Secondary School	32	49.2%
5	Teaching experience	1-5	11	16.9%
		6-10	15	23.1%
		11-15	16	24.6%
		16-20	11	16.9%
		Over 20 Years	12	18.5%
6	Field of study	Physics	6	9.2%
		Geography	6	9.2%
		History	7	10.8%
		Afan Oromo	4	6.2%
		Civics and Ethical Studies	5	7.7%
		Mathematics	9	13.8%
		IT	3	4.6%
		English	8	12.3%
		HPE	3	4.6%
		Amharic	1	1.5%
		Biology	4	6.2%
		Chemistry	5	7.7%
		Economics	1	1.5%
		EdPM	3	4.6%

Student Respondents' Response to Parental Engagement

As shown in Table 3, for item 1, students were asked whether their parents support their children's extracurricular activities. The responses indicated that 83 (27.0%) disagreed, 67 (21.8%) agreed, 65 (21.2%) were undecided, 54 (17.6%) strongly disagreed, and 38 (12.4%) strongly agreed. This shows that most students perceive parental support for extracurricular activities as low, with a mean value of $\bar{X} = 2.84$, indicating relatively low involvement.

For item 2, the student's mean value was $\bar{X} = 2.19$, and for item 3, $\bar{X} = 2.07$. These results suggest that parents rarely attend parent-teacher conferences and do not consistently follow up on their children's school performance. Overall, the findings indicate limited parental engagement in key areas of students' academic and extracurricular lives. The finding of one participant from the open-ended question reveals that:

From the family side, as usual, the parents ask what my child is doing at school, and I believe that no more than five percent of the family monitors whether their child is doing homework,

assignments, and studying when he/she gets home. Therefore, I think it is important for families to control where their students or children spend time, what they do, and whom they spend time with... From the findings, it can be deduced that a lack of

support at home can affect students' learning, behavior, and overall development, and it also shows the need for stronger family involvement in children's education.

Table 3*Response of students on parental engagement in their education*

No.	Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	My parents demonstrate support for my extracurricular activities.	54	17.6%	83	27.0%	65	21.2%	67	21.8%	38	12.4%	2.84
2	My parents attend parent-teacher conferences.	110	35.8%	109	35.5%	30	9.8%	37	12.1%	21	6.8%	2.19
3	My parents are strict when I come to school.	111	36.2%	119	38.8%	37	12.1%	25	8.1%	15	4.9%	2.07
4	My parents encourage me to get a favorable score.	67	21.8%	90	29.3%	41	13.4%	58	18.9%	51	16.6%	2.79
5	Parent engagement in my education is helpful to the teacher.	49	16.0%	96	31.3%	63	20.5%	58	18.9%	41	13.4%	2.82
6	Parents are welcomed and motivated by schools to be involved in students' learning.	67	21.8%	113	36.8%	59	19.2%	48	15.6%	20	6.5%	2.48
7	My parents think education is the only way to get ahead.	69	22.5%	113	36.8%	43	14.0%	52	16.9%	30	9.8%	2.55
8	My parents give me enough time to study, do homework, and complete assignments.	65	21.2%	101	32.9%	50	16.3%	51	16.6%	40	13.0%	2.67
9	Parents participate in the school-related activities decision-making process.	83	27.0%	139	45.3%	33	10.7%	27	8.8%	25	8.1%	2.26
10	My parents provide educational materials for me to achieve better results.	60	19.5%	116	37.8%	40	13.0%	58	18.9%	33	10.7%	2.64
11	My parents provide adequate resources for the school.	106	34.5%	119	38.8%	27	8.8%	34	11.1%	21	6.8%	2.17
12	My parents' encouragement helps me to stay focused on my education.	28	9.1%	59	19.2%	45	14.7%	95	30.9%	80	26.1%	3.46
13	My parents' positive attitude toward education produced a positive attitude in me toward education.	6	2.0%	17	5.5%	20	6.5%	146	47.6%	118	38.4%	4.15

As shown in Table 3, students reported that parental encouragement to achieve good grades and participate in school activities is at a moderate level, with mean values of $\bar{X} = 2.79$ and $\bar{X} = 2.82$. Based on this, it can be concluded that parents' encouragement of their students to score well and

engagement in the school or in the classroom is relatively at a medium level. Interviewees' responses also emphasized that families play a key role in supporting their children's learning by providing necessary materials, a quiet study space, and regular follow-up. This aligns with the World

Bank finding that successful students come from homes where parents offer guidance, support, and a positive environment for learning and personal growth.

Regarding whether parents are welcomed and motivated by schools to participate in students' learning, 113 (36.8%) students disagreed, 67 (21.8%) strongly disagreed, 59 (19.2%) were undecided, 48 (15.6%) agreed, and 20 (6.5%) strongly agreed. The mean response was $\bar{X} = 2.48$, indicating that school leaders are generally not welcoming or motivating parents to engage in their children's learning.

Student respondents were also asked whether their parents think education is the only way to get ahead, and the result reveals that the mean value of the students' response is ($\bar{X} = 2.67$). Hence, the finding implies that the value of education is not as good for students' parents in the study schools. Regarding this, Aristotle once noted that the efforts of educating children can be difficult and challenging, but the results are rewarding. We may face many hardships while trying to educate our students at home, yet in the end, the effort proves worthwhile. Nonetheless, the findings indicated that parents still didn't understand the value of education for their children. Pertaining to this, some respondents suggested that;

...there is a need to engage families to bring positive changes for future generations. Significant effort is required from school leaders and education professionals to achieve these changes. Providing professional guidance and advice to parents is especially important to improve their attitudes toward education and support their children's learning.

Concerning whether parents give their children enough time to study, do homework and assignment, 101(32.9%) of student participants responded disagree, 65 (21.2%) of them responded strongly disagree, 51(16.6%) rated it as agree, 50 (16.3%) responded as undecided and 40 (13.0%) responded it as very strongly agree. The computed students' mean value is ($\bar{X} = 2.67$). Based on the observed result, it can be concluded that parents do

not give much time for their children to study, do homework, and complete assignments. Results from the interview part also reveal that families want their children to be well educated and reach great heights. However, there is a problem with how to encourage and give time to their children. Interviewees also suggested that families should listen to their children properly, meet their needs, give advice, and not overburden them with work at home.

The question does parents participate in decision making and other school related activities was poised to student respondents, and 139 (45.3%) of the students responded disagree and 83 (27.0%) responded strongly disagree, 33 (10.7%) of them rated it as undecided, 27 (8.8%) of students rated it as agree, and 25 (8.1%) of them rated it as strongly agree. The students' mean response value is ($\bar{X} = 2.26$). From the result, it can be concluded that the parents do not participate in decision-making and other school-related activities.

As to parents' fulfillment of educational materials to bring better results in their children, 116 (37.8%) of the students responded disagree and 60 (19.5%) of them rated it as strongly disagree, 58 (18.9%) of the students rated it as agree, 40 (13.0%) of the respondents rated it as undecided and 33 (10.7%) of the students rated it as strongly agree. The computed average mean of students' responses was ($\bar{X} = 2.64$). Student participants were also asked whether parents provide more resources for the school, and 29 (44.6%) of students responded undecided, 16 (24.6%) responded strongly disagree, 11 (16.9%) of them rated it as disagree, 8 (12.3%) teachers rated it as agree and 1 (1.5%) of them rated it as strongly agree. The response of students based on the mean value is ($\bar{X} = 2.49$). From the result, it can be said that parents do not provide educational materials for students to achieve better results. The results from the key informant interviews also expressed their opinion by saying there is a lack of books, enough computers, and enough laboratory facilities, and a need for students' material to improve learners' results and skills. Learners don't have enough books

to take notes and do homework or classwork from the book. There are a few books available in the schools for all grade levels. A book-to-student ratio of five in each grade level, which results in a loss of students' interest in education. It seems like sending a child to shop to buy something from the shopkeeper, but in education, it should not be like that; rather, it requires paying attention to children and playing a great role to make them responsible citizens.

A query was presented to student respondents that do they believe their parents' encouragement helps them to stay focus on their education, most students 119(38.8%) rated their idea as disagree, 106(34.5%) of them rated it as strongly disagree, 34(11.1%) rated it as agree, 27(8.8%) of them rated it as undecided; and 21 (6.8%) of them were rated it as strongly agree. The mean average value of students is (\bar{X} =2.17).

Finally, student respondents were presented with a question that asked if positive attitudes in the parents toward education would produce a positive attitude toward their education. Regarding this, 32 (49.2%) of teachers responded strongly disagree, 18 (27.7%) responded disagree, 9 (13.8%) of them rated it as agree, 5 (7.7%) of the teachers rated it as undecided, and 1 (1.5%) of them rated it as strongly agree. The calculated mean value of students' responses is (\bar{X} =1.91). Based on the students' responses, it can be concluded that parents' provision of resources for the Sululta Sub-city schools is at a low level.

In [Table 3](#) for items 12 and 13, most student respondents, 95 (30.9%) and 146 (47.6%), reported as agree. The mean value of the students' response is (\bar{X} =3.46) and (\bar{X} =4.15) respectively. In the interview part, principals expressed that the participation of some parents is limited to giving some money to the schools. Some interviewees stated that most of the students were from rural areas; their parents also living in rural areas, which are far from the school. This makes their parents not available for the meetings; it reduces the chance of controlling their children as they are living alone.

With regard to parents' inculcation of positive attitude in their children toward education, 146(47.6%), 118(38.4%), 20(6.5%), 17(5.5%), and 6(2.0%) reported as agree, strongly agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree, respectively. The computed mean average result was (\bar{X} =4.15). The result reveals that a large majority of the student participants responded positively as their parents were inculcating a positive attitude in their children.

Teachers' Perception of Parental Engagement in Their Children's Education

As shown in [Table 4](#), teachers were asked whether Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members perform their roles as expected. The results indicated that 26 (40.0%) strongly disagreed and 18 (27.7%) disagreed regarding PTA engagement in students' learning, with a mean value of \bar{X} =2.15. This shows that PTA members' performance in school activities is generally low. Regarding efforts to generate revenue and increase school income, 29 (44.6%) teachers strongly disagreed, and 17 (26.2%) disagreed, with a mean value of \bar{X} =2.08, \bar{X} = 2.08, \bar{X} =2.08. This suggests that PTA members' capacity to contribute to school revenue is low, which negatively affects the schools' internal income.

Teacher respondents were asked whether Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members are involved in school administrative issues. The responses showed that 20 (30.8%) were undecided and 17 (26.2%) strongly disagreed, with an average mean of \bar{X} =2.49. This indicates that PTA members are generally not participating in administrative matters. Regarding whether PTA members create a conducive environment for communication between the school, parents, and the community, 41 (63.1%) of teachers strongly disagreed, with a mean of \bar{X} =1.66. This suggests that PTA members are weak in fostering effective communication and collaboration for better student outcomes.

Regarding the engagement of PTA members, some of the interviewed PTA representatives put their idea as follows:

Our primary focus is generating income to provide educational materials for the library, ICT room, and laboratory; improve school buildings, and hire additional staff, especially support personnel, when there is a shortage of human resources.

From this, it can be concluded that PTA members are performing relatively well in administrative or non-academic matters at school. However, greater involvement is needed in academic areas, such as evaluating student results, promoting student and teacher discipline, and continuously monitoring the teaching and learning process.

Table 4

Response of teachers' perception of parental engagement in students' education

No.	Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	Parents are welcomed by the school and motivated by teachers to get involved in their children's learning.	25	38.5%	31	47.7%	4	6.2%	4	6.2%	1	1.5%	1.85
2	Parents give their children time to study, do homework, and do assignments.	28	43.1%	19	29.2%	11	16.9%	6	9.2%	1	1.5%	1.97
3	Parents participate in decision-making and other school-related developments.	11	16.9%	24	36.9%	21	32.3%	7	10.8%	2	3.1%	2.46
4	Parents provide educational materials for students to achieve better results.	16	24.6%	11	16.9%	29	44.6%	8	12.3%	1	1.5%	2.49
5	Parents provide more resources for the school.	32	49.2%	18	27.7%	5	7.7%	9	13.8%	1	1.5%	1.91
6	Parent Teacher Association's members plan different school activities and projects.	14	21.5%	24	36.9%	12	18.5%	12	18.5%	3	4.6%	2.48
7	The Parent Teacher Association's members are playing their roles to the expected level.	26	40.0%	18	27.7%	7	10.8%	13	20.0%	1	1.5%	2.15
8	Parent Teacher Association's members attempt to generate revenues, which increase the school income, making the school conducive and, in turn, improving students' academic achievement.	29	44.6%	17	26.2%	6	9.2%	11	16.9%	2	3.1%	2.08
9	The Parent Teacher Association's members are involved in school administrative issues.	17	26.2%	16	24.6%	20	30.8%	7	10.8%	5	7.7%	2.49
10	Parent Teacher Association members create an atmosphere where school and society, parents and teachers, communicate with each other for better results for students.	41	63.1%	11	16.9%	8	12.3%	4	6.2%	1	1.5%	1.66

Teachers' Responses to Principals' Support of Parental Engagement in School

As shown in Table 5, item 1, teachers were asked whether principals establish a supportive culture of participatory decision-making for PTA members. The responses indicated that 26 (40.0%) disagreed, 19 (29.2%) strongly disagreed, 13 (20.0%) agreed, 6 (9.2%) were undecided, and 1 (1.5%) strongly

agreed. The average mean value was $\bar{X} = 2.25$, which falls within the low range. This indicates that most teachers perceive principals as not fostering a supportive culture of participatory decision-making for PTA members in matters related to student education and school development. As shown in Table 5, item 2, teachers were asked whether principals set a clear vision and mission for the

school and communicated it to parents. The responses indicated that 23 (35.4%) disagreed, 17 (26.2%) strongly disagreed, 12 (18.5%) agreed, 10 (15.4%) were undecided, and 3 (4.6%) strongly

agreed. This suggests that principals are not effectively communicating their vision and mission to parents, which negatively affects the role parents play in supporting their children's education.

Table 5

Teachers' Responses to Principals' Support of Parental Engagement in School Activities

No.	Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	Principals establish a supportive culture of participatory decision-making for Parent Teacher Association members.	19	29.2%	26	40.0%	6	9.2%	13	20.0%	1	1.5%	2.25
2	Principals set a clear vision and mission for the schools and communicate it to parents.	17	26.2%	23	35.4%	10	15.4%	12	18.5%	3	4.6%	2.40
3	Principals create a conducive environment that helps parents to participate in enhancing students' academic achievement.	19	29.2%	24	36.9%	8	12.3%	7	10.8%	7	10.8%	2.37
4	Principals encourage parents in different ways to enhance their children's academic achievement.	23	35.4%	22	33.8%	9	13.8%	9	13.8%	2	3.1%	2.15
5	The student council is actively working with parents to improve students' learning.	16	24.6%	32	49.2%	4	6.2%	9	13.8%	4	6.2%	2.28

As shown in Table 5, teachers were asked three questions: whether there is a conducive environment for parents to participate in school affairs, whether sufficient materials are available to support parental involvement, and whether the student council actively works with parents to improve learning. The majority of teachers disagreed, with 19 (29.2%), 23 (35.4%), and 16 (24.6%), respectively. The mean values were \bar{X} =2.37, \bar{X} =2.15, and \bar{X} =2.28, indicating weak parental engagement. This suggests that the schools lack a supportive environment, adequate materials, and active student council involvement to foster parental participation in the teaching and learning process.

Discussion

Socio-demographic characteristics of student respondents were analyzed, and the results indicate that the majority of the student respondents in the study were females. Regarding the age category of respondents, a larger proportion of them were from grade 9, showing that a large number of students were proportionally selected from each grade level.

With regard to the demographic profile of teachers, the majority of them were male, indicating a large proportion of teachers in secondary schools were males, denoting gender disparity among teachers in the secondary schools of the study area. In terms of age, the majority of teachers belong to the 30-40 years of age category, which implies that they were in their productive career age. In terms of

educational qualifications, a large majority of teachers hold a first degree, followed by second degree holders, indicating that most teachers are well-qualified for their teaching assignments. As to teachers' experience, many teachers had substantial teaching experience (6-15 years), which can positively impact student learning.

Regarding interview participants, all key informant interviewees (school principals and PTA members) were male, which indicates that female representation was almost non-existent. Additionally, most principals are 30 years old or above, hold first-degree qualifications, and have substantial work experience. This implies that the participants have the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience to contribute effectively to improving students' learning and academic achievement in the schools.

The main study variables' data were analyzed mainly on the response of the students and teachers' perception of parental engagement to enhance their children's academic achievement and contribution to school development initiatives. The findings of the study indicated that most of the students reported that their parents were not providing the required support for their children to engage in extracurricular activities. Parents were rarely attending parent-teacher conferences and did not consistently follow up on their school performances. However, students reported somewhat positively on their parents' encouragement of their children to score good results and engagement in their education.

Pertaining to this, recent studies validate this finding that many parents do not actively support extracurricular participation or consistently follow up on school performance (Levental, 2024). However, the result is inconsistent with the study conducted by Beyene and Asgedom (2025), which reported that parental engagement in homework and participation in school activities is positively associated with students' academic achievement.

The present study's findings revealed that a large majority of students reported that school leaders were not as welcoming or motivating to

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parents at schools and engaged in their children's learning. Parents were also not giving due attention to the value of education. Student respondents also reported that the majority of parents did not give much time for their children to study, overburdened them with work at home, did not give time to do their homework and assignments, did not listen to their children properly, and did not adequately meet their needs to focus on their education. The findings of the study also indicated that parents were not participating in school decision-making processes and other school-related activities.

Mocho et al. (2024) stated that low parental engagement in their children's education leads to poor emotional support, lack of communication, and reduced academic monitoring. Abraha (2025) also found that parents provide limited homework support and insufficient study time due to competing responsibilities, which aligns with the present finding that students are overburdened with household tasks.

As to parents' fulfillment of educational materials to bring better results in their children, the results indicated that most parents do not fulfill educational materials for their children. The results from the key informant interviews also show that there is a lack of books, adequate computers, and enough laboratory facilities, and a need for students' materials to improve learners' performances and skills. Learners don't have enough books to take notes, though they are expected to do homework or classwork from the books. There are a few books available in the schools for all grade levels. There is a book-to-student ratio of five in each grade level, which results in a loss of students' interest in education. Most of the student respondents also reported that a large number of parents were not encouraging them to stay focused on their education and did not show positive attitudes toward education.

The result of the study goes against studies conducted in Kenya and Nigeria, which found that parents who actively provide teaching and learning resources significantly improve pupils' achievement and motivation in school (Choge & Edabu, 2023). It also refutes the findings of Awash

(2001), which highlights that parents as educational participants should provide additional resources for the school to assist with student achievement and to enhance a sense of community pride and commitment, which may be influential in the overall success of the school. For instance, parent involvement with their children's educational process through attending school functions, participating in the decision-making process, encouraging students to manage their social and academic time wisely, and modeling desirable behavior for their children represents a valuable resource for schools across this nation. They have the right and the responsibility to be involved in their children's educational process. The most immediate and practical advantage of community engagement in education is that it is likely to improve the school's success. In addition, other practical advantages include: more resources for the school; greater relevance of the school in terms of culture, curriculum, and schedules for the child and for the community; reduction of the work burden of teachers and principals; and, perhaps most importantly, the addition of another, often very well-informed voice.

An interview result conducted with school principals showed that the participation of parents in school meetings and conferences is limited, as most of the students were from rural areas; their parents are also living in rural areas, which are far from the school. It makes student parents not available for the meetings; it also reduces the chance to control their children as they are living in distant settings. Contrary to the above findings, a large majority of the student participants responded positively, as their parents were indicating a positive attitude toward their children's education. The response of teachers' perception of parental engagement in their children's education was analyzed. Accordingly, teachers reported that parents were not welcomed and motivated by the schools so that parents would be involved in their children's learning. The PTA members were also not actively involved in school planning and development activities.

The findings of the study also entail that Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members were not performing their roles as expected. The PTA members were relatively involved in school administrative affairs but are weak in fostering effective communication and collaboration for better student outcomes. PTAs also lack the capacity to contribute to generating diversified school revenues, which in turn negatively affects the schools' internal income. Thus, it can be inferred that PTA members were performing relatively well in administrative and non-academic matters at the school. However, their involvement in academic areas, such as evaluating student results, promoting students and teacher disciplinary issues, and continuously monitoring the teaching and learning process, is almost non-existent.

According to the [Ministry of Education \(2002\)](#), school guidelines, school committees have key roles including planning school activities and projects, generating income from various sources, hiring and dismissing teachers, maintaining student discipline, and improving school administration. PTAs are established to support schools by involving parents, providing resources, and addressing gaps that cannot be filled by the government.

Regarding the roles of PTA members in students' academic achievement, [Tirusew \(2001\)](#) also indicated that PTA members can serve to bridge the gap between families and schools. Recognizing the mutuality of families and schools, and the need to open a dialogue between families and schools, can contribute to children's growth and development. According to Tirusew, PTA involvement may include a number of elements such as providing parents with facts about their child's development, empowering parents to become effective change agents for their children, exchanging information about a child between parents and teachers, hosting joint parent/teacher activities like childhood assessment or program planning, and helping parents get access to community services.

Teachers' perception of principals' encouragement of parents to be involved in their children's education and school initiatives was analyzed. The result indicates that most teachers perceive principals as not fostering a supportive culture of participatory decision-making, even for student parents' representatives (PTA members), in matters related to student learning and school development initiatives.

In relation to this, research conducted by [Smith \(2002\)](#) pointed out that the quality of interpersonal relationships determines how effectively a leader can motivate followers. Leaders who recognize their accountability for students' academic achievement are more likely to establish a supportive culture of participatory decision-making that encourages intellectual stimulation and sets high performance expectations ([Sillins, 2002](#); [Sushila, 2004](#)). Teachers play a central role in education, helping students grow and achieve their potential. To enhance teacher involvement, school leaders must provide guidance and support. Committed, accountable, and responsible leaders are essential to inspire teachers and improve students' learning outcomes.

The present study findings also indicated that most teachers reported that principals were not effectively communicating their vision and mission to parents, which negatively affects the role parents play in supporting their children's education.

Pertaining to this, [Olagboye \(2004\)](#) reported that improving student performance begins with the establishment of strong school management. Principals can achieve this by setting a clear vision, demonstrating instructional leadership, fostering team spirit, providing direction, monitoring and evaluating progress, and collaborating with staff to determine the school's goals ([Leithwood, 2000](#)). On the other hand, according to [Blackaby and Blackaby \(2001\)](#), the success of a school and the achievement of its goals depend largely on the principal's effectiveness in vision, including both foresight and hindsight. Principals should not only know the direction but also involve others in formulating and sharing the vision to mobilize the

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school community, including teachers, students, parents, and committees. Effective principals inspire teachers and students by presenting a realistic vision, planning for the future growth of the school, and communicating their vision clearly from top to bottom. However, the findings indicate that principals in the study schools are not performing in this manner.

Teachers also reported that school principals were not fostering parental participation in the teaching and learning process by providing them supportive environment, supplying adequate materials, and encouraging active student council involvement.

Contrary to this, [Hensley \(2013\)](#) emphasized that effective leaders create an atmosphere where followers feel safe, supported, recognized, involved, and valued, giving staff a reason to embrace the leader's vision. When teachers and students feel unrecognized, uninvolved, or unwelcome, the outcomes are negatively affected. Similarly, [Stronge et al. \(2008\)](#) noted that effective principals foster a safe and secure learning environment, consistently welcoming students, teachers, and parents, and involving the entire school community to promote meaningful teaching and learning. However, the findings above indicate that principals in the study schools do not create such a conducive atmosphere.

CONCLUSIONS

From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that students perceive their parents' engagement in education and school-related activities as generally low. Parental involvement in extracurricular activities, attending meetings and parent-teacher conferences, monitoring children's progress, supporting teachers, welcoming and motivating students, valuing education, providing study time, supervising homework and assignments, participating in school decision-making, and providing educational materials and resources were all reported at low levels. However, parents showed a moderate level of engagement in encouraging children to achieve good grades, helping them stay

focused on their education, and fostering a positive attitude toward learning.

On the other hand, the study also examined teachers' perceptions of parental engagement in their children's education. The findings revealed that parents' involvement in areas such as being welcomed and motivated by the school, providing study time, supervising homework and assignments, participating in decision-making, supplying educational materials and resources, and PTA members' engagement in school planning, project execution, revenue generation, creating a conducive environment, involvement in administration, and fostering communication between the school, parents, and community were all perceived as low. This indicates that teachers view parental engagement as weak, highlighting the need for schools to develop strategies to enhance parents' active involvement in their children's education.

The study also analyzed teachers' perceptions of school principals' engagement of parents in their children's education and found it to be low across all variables. Principals were reported not to establish a supportive culture of participatory decision-making for PTA members regarding students' education and school development. They were also not effectively communicating their vision and mission to parents, which negatively affects parents' role in supporting their children's learning. Additionally, the findings indicate a lack of a favorable environment, insufficient school materials, and minimal involvement of the student council in engaging parents in the teaching and learning process.

Key informant interviews suggested that the Sululta Sub-city Education Office, together with school principals and PTA members, should provide continuous, relevant, and timely training and workshops to raise awareness and commitment among parents and the community. School principals need to create an environment where parents, teachers, and leaders are fully dedicated to improving students' academic achievement. Schools should prioritize parental engagement and strengthen PTA participation to enhance student

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outcomes. Parents and PTAs should actively involve themselves in school activities, including supporting learning, participating in decision-making, generating income, maintaining a conducive environment, and engaging in administrative matters. Collaborative efforts, targeted training for parents, provision of educational materials, and good governance are essential factors to increase students' academic achievement.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn, the researchers suggested the following recommendations for all concerned bodies.

School leaders need to arrange training programs periodically that increase student parents' awareness and work to change their attitude, as they have a big contribution in improving their children's education and school development initiatives.

The schools need to prioritize attention to parents' engagement and strengthen the PTA committee of the school in an attempt to increase student academic achievement. Parents and PTAs should actively involve themselves with willingness in school-related development activities, such as maximizing students' learning, in-school decision-making, generating income, and maintaining a good school climate.

As the main goal of any school organization is to improve students' learning outcomes, Sululta sub-city secondary schools should engage all stakeholders in academic issues such as planning to improve students' results, following up on its implementation, and evaluating the outcome.

The school leaders should establish and strengthen student council and provide defined roles and responsibilities on how to enhance the quality of education delivery in schools and increase parent participation in their children's education.

The school leaders and education office of the sub-city should identify external and internal factors that affect student parents' engagement and take the necessary measures to address those

problems and increase parents' participation in their children's education.

Finally, further research is suggested to be conducted on the factors that limit parental engagement and on related topics by other scholars.

CRediT Authorship Contribution Statement

Feye Dechasa Feyisa: Conceptualization, Data Collection, Data Analysis, Model Development and Analysis, and Writing an Original Draft.

Melkamu Afeta Gonfa: Model Validation, Supervision, Review, and Editing.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval

This study was approved by the Kotebe University of Education Research and Ethics Review Committee.

Data Availability

The data generated and interpreted during this research are accessible from the authors upon request.

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