

Teachers Involvement of Parents in Controlling Students' Misbehaviours in Public Secondary Schools: A Case Study of Chemba District Council, Dodoma-Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates how teachers utilize parental involvement as an alternative disciplinary measure in public secondary schools in Chemba District, Tanzania. Utilizing a qualitative case study design, data were collected from 48 purposively selected participants (teachers, administrators, parents and students) through focus group discussion, in-depth interviews, and document reviews. The findings revealed that parent-teacher collaboration is overwhelmingly crisis-driven, strictly reserved for severe offenses due to the logistical and economic constraints of agro-pastoralist families. Furthermore, intense cultural friction exists; parents frequently reject non-violent dialogue, actively demanding corporal punishment during school meetings instead. Despite these barriers, the study found that when schools successfully facilitate empathetic, constructive dialogue between parents and students, the behavioural improvements are profound and permanent. The article concludes that for parental engagement to effectively replace physical punishment, schools must shift from reactive disciplinary tribunals to proactive communication, supported by extensive community sensitization on modern child protection.

Keywords: Parental Involvement, Students Misbehaviours, Public Secondary Schools, Agro-Pastoralist Families, Behavioural Improvements

INTRODUCTION

The management of student discipline across the globe has experienced a significant shift over the past few decades, moving away from harsh punitive control toward more restorative and collaborative frameworks. Educational policymakers and human rights organizations increasingly argue that maintaining order in the classroom should not rely on physical punishment but rather on alternative disciplinary measures that respect the dignity of the child. Within this modern approach, the partnership between the school and the home is considered a fundamental pillar. In many developed educational systems, involving parents is no longer viewed as a last resort but as a continuous and proactive strategy. By keeping parents engaged in their children's daily behavioural progress, schools seek to create a united front that prevents minor classroom disruptions from escalating into major disciplinary problems.

The psychological importance of parent-teacher collaboration is deeply rooted in established behavioural theories. From the perspective of Skinner (1953) and his principles of Operant Conditioning, effective behaviour modification requires consistent reinforcement across all environments. When a student receives the same behavioural expectations and consequences at home as in the classroom, the likelihood of internalising positive conduct increases substantially. Sabornie and Espelage (2023) further argue that disciplinary interventions achieve greater success when there is strong value congruence between teachers and families. When parents actively reinforce good behaviour or apply non-violent corrective measures at home, they strengthen the teacher's authority and create a supportive environment in which students feel guided rather than controlled.

However, applying this collaborative ideal in Sub-Saharan Africa often encounters significant structural and cultural challenges. In many African educational systems, relationships between schools and families are shaped

by poverty, overcrowded classrooms, and differing perceptions of child-rearing. Atta and Mensah (2023) observe that in several contexts, parents frequently regard schools as the primary institutions responsible for discipline while they concentrate on economic survival. Gershoff et al. (2024) further note that parental engagement in resource-constrained environments is often limited by logistical barriers, forcing teachers to address disciplinary matters with minimal family support. As a result, teachers may become overwhelmed and resort to traditional punitive methods simply to maintain classroom order.

In Tanzania, these challenges are further complicated by a distinctive regulatory and cultural environment. Although the government promotes child-friendly school policies and alternative disciplinary approaches, limited corporal punishment remains legally permissible, creating uncertainty among teachers. Moreover, the implementation of alternative disciplinary measures frequently conflicts with deeply rooted cultural beliefs concerning child upbringing, commonly referred to as *Malezi*. Ishabisa (2025) reports that many rural Tanzanian parents perceive physical punishment not as abuse but as a necessary component of raising respectful and responsible children. Similarly, Mushi, Malekela and Bhalalusesa (2022) found that teachers who attempt to rely on counselling and other non-violent measures are often criticised by parents who expect corporal punishment to remain the principal method of discipline. Consequently, teachers frequently find themselves balancing modern educational policies against traditional community expectations.

The implications of this cultural tension can be better understood through Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory. According to Bandura, children and adolescents learn behaviours by observing and imitating significant role models, particularly parents and teachers. When schools seek to involve parents in peaceful disciplinary interventions but parents advocate physical punishment, students receive conflicting messages regarding acceptable methods of conflict resolution. Such situations may reinforce the perception that violence constitutes a legitimate response to misconduct, thereby undermining efforts to cultivate restorative and non-violent school cultures.

In addition to cultural challenges, practical obstacles associated with parental involvement in rural agro-pastoralist communities present considerable difficulties. Mbanga, Piliyesi and Anyona (2020) emphasize that for families dependent on subsistence farming and livestock keeping, daily economic responsibilities often take precedence over school engagement. Travelling long distances to attend school meetings concerning behavioural issues is frequently regarded as economically burdensome. So, parent-teacher interaction rarely functions as an early intervention mechanism. Instead, as Mabula and Ligembe (2022) observed, parental involvement tends to occur only after serious or persistent misconduct has emerged, making collaboration reactive rather than preventive.

Despite these documented challenges, little empirical evidence exists on how teachers involve parents in managing student misbehaviour in public secondary schools in Chemba District Council. While previous studies have examined school discipline and parental involvement in other parts of Tanzania, their findings may not reflect the realities of Chemba's predominantly rural and agro-pastoralist context. Consequently, there is limited understanding of the communication strategies teachers use, parents' responses to school disciplinary initiatives, and the barriers affecting effective collaboration. This knowledge gap limits the development of context-specific interventions to strengthen school-family partnerships. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate how teachers involve parents in controlling student misbehaviours in public secondary schools in Chemba District Council.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

This investigation is anchored in two foundational behavioural theories that explain why parental involvement is critical for shaping student conduct.

The first is Operant Conditioning Theory, developed by B.F. Skinner (1953). Skinner established that behaviour is strictly a function of its consequences, emphasizing that for behavioural modification to succeed, consequences must be consistent. In the context of school discipline, this theory argues that alternative measures require complete alignment between the school and the home. If a teacher utilizes non-violent consequences at

school, but the parent uses physical punishment at home, the student receives mixed signals. Without consistent reinforcement across both environments, the attempt to establish lasting moral discipline fails.

The second is Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura (1977). Moving beyond basic rewards and punishments, Bandura posits that adolescents learn how to navigate conflicts by observing the actions and attitudes of their primary role models. Within this framework, parents and teachers serve as the ultimate symbols of authority. If a school attempts to resolve a disciplinary issue through peaceful dialogue, but a parent arrives at the office and explicitly demands that the teacher beat the child, the student learns a dangerous lesson. The adolescent observes that physical violence is the final, socially acceptable tool for solving problems, which completely neutralizes the school's non-violent pedagogical goals.

Empirical literature review

Teachers' involvement of parents in controlling students' misbehaviours in public secondary schools

Globally, managing student discipline is increasingly understood as an ecological partnership that depends heavily on home-school collaboration. Sabornie and Espelage (2023) note that disciplinary interventions achieve their highest success rates when there is strong value congruence between teachers and families. Their research in developed educational systems demonstrates that when parents actively reinforce a school's non-violent disciplinary codes at home, students exhibit far fewer disruptive behaviours in class.

However, applying this collaborative ideal in the African context often encounters severe structural and cultural friction. Quansah, Kudadze, and Agoke (2022) observed a significant disconnect between official school policies and home expectations in Ghanaian secondary schools. While modern educational frameworks push for alternative measures, many parents in these regions view soft discipline as entirely insufficient. Atta and Mensah (2023) found that this disconnect often leads to disciplinary dumping, a situation where parents refuse to participate in behavioural correction and simply expect the school to act as an isolated correctional facility.

In East Africa, the logistical realities of rural poverty further paralyze parent-teacher collaboration. Gershoff, Purtell, and Holas (2024) highlight that in resource-constrained settings, parental engagement is minimal because families are consumed by the daily demands of economic survival. Mbanga, Piliyesi, and Anyona (2020) strongly echo this in the Tanzanian context, arguing that for families living in strict subsistence conditions, the heavy economic cost of losing a day's labour drastically outweighs the perceived benefit of visiting the school to discuss a child's minor misbehaviour.

Because of these logistical and economic hurdles, parental involvement in Tanzania has become almost entirely reactive. Mabula and Ligembe (2022), in their investigation of community day secondary schools in the Mwanza region, found that parent-teacher interaction is exclusively crisis-driven. Teachers rarely summon parents for early interventions, choosing instead to wait until a student commits a severe or chronic offense that requires administrative escalation, such as a suspension. This reactive approach effectively removes parents from the daily, continuous process of shaping student character.

Beyond economics and logistics, the empirical literature exposes a massive cultural conflict regarding what constitutes proper child-rearing, known locally as *Malezi*. Ishabisa (2025) provides critical evidence showing that rural Tanzanian communities often act as strict custodians of physical discipline. Many parents explicitly reject modern psychological guidance, believing that sparing the rod literally destroys the child's future. Mushi, Malekela, and Bhalalusesa (2022) found that this creates a highly hostile collaboration. Teachers who attempt to follow government safe-school directives and use dialogue are frequently pressured, ridiculed, or directly instructed by parents to use the cane instead.

While these studies provide an excellent map of the economic, logistical, and cultural barriers facing Tanzanian teachers, the literature primarily focuses on general regional trends or urban municipalities. There remains a distinct gap in empirical data regarding how teachers navigate these specific challenges in Chemba District Council. As a vast, agro-pastoralist district where traditional beliefs intersect heavily with geographical isolation, Chemba presents a unique environment. It is currently unclear how teachers in this specific district attempt to

establish communication, how they handle parents who actively demand physical retribution, and whether their collaborative efforts actually yield permanent behavioural changes. Addressing this specific contextual gap is the primary focus of this article.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research approach and research design

In this study the researcher adopted qualitative research approach which explores deeply complex human behaviours, feelings, and the social meanings that individuals ascribe to a phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Also, the study utilized a case study research design which allowed the researcher to answer the how and why questions regarding the utilization of alternative disciplinary measures in Chemba district council in public secondary school (Yin, 2018).

Area of the study, targeted population and sample size

The study was delimited strictly to the administrative boundaries of Chemba District Council, restricting the study to Chemba district council allows for an intensive, microlevel analysis of a specific rural administrative system due to its distinct socio-educational profile which serves as a critical case for understanding the implementation gap of alternative disciplinary measures in Chemba district council of Dodoma region in Tanzania. The target population statically in Chemba district council is as follows, 13,037 students, 1,948 teachers, 100 school administrators from public secondary school within Chemba District Council (BEST 2025). A sample of 48 participants was selected for this study. This included 16 teachers four from each school, 8 school administrators (two from each school), 8 parents (2 from each school) and 16 students four from each school (the selected school). This number was expected to provide rich and detailed information while maintaining manageability in data collection and analysis.

Sampling techniques and procedures

To select a representative and information rich sample from the target population, this study utilized nonprobability sampling technique specifically heterogeneous sampling technique, involving ordinary teachers and administrators like Heads of Schools and Discipline Masters/ mistress as well as parents. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), purposive sampling involves selecting individuals based on their specific knowledge or position relative to the phenomenon of interest. These respondents were selected not for statistical representativeness, but for their information richness. As the administrative custodians of the Regulatory Paradox, these officials possess exclusive insight into the institutional pressures, infrastructural deficits, and cultural mandates that drive the normalization of violence. Selecting them purposively ensured the study to captures the reality of the subject matter.

The sampling procedures followed a systematic, step-by-step process to ensure rigor. First, a sampling frame (list of all public secondary schools) was obtained from the Chemba District Education Officer (DEO). From this frame, four schools were selected purposively regarding geographical location considering each division within the district to ensure that data are captured across different contexts. Within the selected schools the Heads of those specific schools, discipline masters and head prefect were purposively selected for in-depth interviews or questionnaire to capture data.

Data collection tools

To obtain rich, reliable, and comprehensive information about alternative disciplinary measures in public secondary schools, this study employed qualitative data collection tools. These included semi structured interviews, questionnaire and document reviews. Using more than one tool ensured data triangulation, thereby increasing the credibility, validity, and depth of the study's findings (Yin, 2021; Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Interviews

This serves as the primary data collection instrument. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants to explore their experiences, beliefs, and challenges. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2021), this flexible format allows the researcher to probe beyond surface-level answers. Using an interview guide, the researcher engaged teachers in a dialogue to uncover their personal philosophies regarding discipline. This method is crucial for revealing sensitive information such as a lack of confidence in counselling or frustration with school policies that teachers might be hesitant to disclose in a public forum.

Focus Group Discussion

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) refers to a special group established for the purpose of discussion in a research study, comprising of a specific number of participants as deemed necessary according to the particular study (Shabina et al., 2024). The researcher used this tool for collection of data from students where they were categorized into four groups (1 for each group for each school) and provided them with questions for discussion. This helps the researcher to clarify the responses as well as exploration of various topic due to interaction of various respondents.

Documentary review

Documentary review was employed to examine official school records, policy documents, disciplinary logs, and relevant government circulars related to disciplinary measures. This tool helped to verify and complement information obtained from interviews and other tools. It also provided objective evidence of how disciplinary policies are implemented and recorded in schools (Bowen, 2009). The analysis focused on identifying trends, frequency, and patterns of disciplinary actions, as well as compliance with the Education (Corporal Punishment) Regulations of 2002.

Trustworthiness of the study

According to Korstjens and Moser (2018) trustworthiness in qualitative research is the logic that the research is high quality and can be relied on. It includes credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability. The research adopted three data collection tools namely interview, questionnaire, and documentary review to ensure credibility of the study. The study was done by following all research procedures including getting permission letters, preparation of research tools relevant to research objectives, and research ethics were maintained to ensure the dependability of the study. The researcher also maintained reflexivity and avoided personal biases in writing the study to maintain the conformability. To ensure transferability the researcher chose participants carefully as to reflect a variety of experiences, since this could assist to get insights that were applicable to other inclusive learning settings.

Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted using Thematic Analysis. Following the systemic framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2022), the process involved a systematic coding of the qualitative data to identify patterns and insights in perception. The analysis proceeded through six phases including familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes against the dataset, defining the themes, and producing the final report. This method allowed the researcher to move beyond simple description to interpret the underlying meaning of teachers' views regarding the efficacy of alternative disciplinary measures.

Research ethics

Research ethics refer to the code of moral principles and conduct that guides scientific inquiry to ensure the protection and dignity of participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Given the sensitive nature of the study which investigated teachers' utilization of alternative disciplinary measures in public secondary school, the researcher strictly observed the principle of Informed Consent. Prior to data collection procedure, the purpose, nature, and potential risks of the study was clearly explained to all participants. For all participants' students,

teachers and administrators a written consent form was provided to ensure that no participant was coerced into participating against their will.

Furthermore, the principles of Confidentiality and Anonymity was highly enforced to protect respondents from potential victimization. To mitigate this, no personal names or specific school names were recorded on the questionnaires or interview transcripts; instead, a coding system (e.g., School A, Teacher 01) were used. The data collected were stored securely by a researcher and were used exclusively for academic purposes. Finally, the researcher obtained all necessary Administrative Clearances to legitimize the field entry. An official research clearance letter was secured from Tumaini University Makumira, which was presented to the Chemba District Executive Director (DED). Copies of these permits were provided to the Ward Education Officers and Heads of sampled schools. This hierarchical protocol ensured that the study complies with the legal framework of the United Republic of Tanzania. Additionally, the researcher was committed to the principle of Non-Maleficence (Do No Harm), ensuring that the interview questions and questionnaires were conducted with sensitivity to avoid traumatizing students.

FINDINGS

Teachers' involvement of parents in controlling students' misbehaviours in public secondary schools

The findings of this study are drawn directly from the field data to explain how teachers involve parents in managing student discipline. Based on the responses gathered, the findings are categorized into four main themes: the severity of offenses that trigger parental involvement, the use of corporal punishment during these interventions, the communication methods used to reach parents, and the resulting behaviour improvement plans.

Parents are involved when major offenses are committed by student

Parental involvement is rarely utilized as an immediate or proactive disciplinary measure. Instead, the vast majority of teachers reported that they only summon parents when a student commits a severe, chronic offense, such as prolonged truancy or extreme defiance, or when typical classroom punishments have repeatedly failed. This reactive approach to parental involvement was strongly corroborated by the school of schools. During in-depth interviews, Heads of Schools and Discipline Masters explained that summoning a parent is formally treated as a high-level administrative escalation rather than a routine academic tool. A Discipline Master confirmed this by stating, *"A parent is only summoned to my office when the student is on the situation of being suspended or expelled."* (Interview with DM2, on 15 April 2026). Also, this was supported by another discipline master who stated that *"we involve parents in big challenges"* (Interview with DM4, on 21 April 2026). Also, one student participant explained *"When a parent is called to school, students know that the problem has become bigger because teachers have already tried other methods"* (FGD with students 17 April, 2026). Also, one parent stated *"Most of the time, we are called when the problem has continued for a long period. The school expects us to help correct the child's behaviour at home"* (Interview with Parent 1, 17 April, 2026).

One Head of School stated that *"because parents often have to travel long distances from their farms or grazing areas, calling them for minor behavioural corrections is viewed by the community as an unnecessary disruption of their economic livelihoods"* (Interview with HoS1 on 14 March, 2026). Adding to this, another head of school pointed out, *"You must understand our community. If you call a father who is looking after his cattle far away just to tell him his son did not do homework, he will be furious with the school, not the boy."* (Interview with HoS4 on 21 March, 2026). Another Head of School explained: *"Teachers use parents in major cases like chronic truancy, a class teacher calls the parent for discussing how to help the student but sometime parents do not respond."* (Interview with HoS2 on 15 April, 2026). The vast majority of teachers reported that they only summon parents when a student commits a severe, chronic offense, rendering the collaboration crisis-driven rather than preventative. This reactive approach was strongly corroborated by the discipline masters, who explained that summoning a parent is formally treated as a high-level administrative escalation. Highlighting this dynamic, one discipline master explained:

Parents only visit this school when there is a massive fire to put out, like a suspension. They are busy farming and grazing cattle. We cannot call them for minor behavioural corrections; they simply won't show up unless the

issue is severe. (Interview with DM3 on 17 April, 2026) During the fieldwork period spent within the school grounds, instances of proactive parental engagement were virtually non-existent. Parents were rarely observed visiting the school compound informally to check on their children's behavioural progress. The disconnect between the school and the home is so severe.

These data confirmed that the use of parents by teachers in Chemba is strictly reactive, punitive, and crisis-oriented, completely lacking the ongoing collaborative partnership required for effective alternative disciplinary measures. Thus, while some challenges limit parental involvement mostly to severe causing crisis-driven cases but teachers genuinely attempt to use these interventions to seek cooperation and understand the root causes of the student's behaviour at home.

Punishment (corporal punishment) is given when parents are involved

The nature of these parent-teacher meetings, once they do occur, was further illuminated by the students' narratives. When asked to describe what typically happens when their parents are called to school due to a discipline issue, most students reported a stark lack of collaborative advising. A student participant explained *"Some students become afraid when teachers say they will call parents because they know their parents may punish them at home"* (FGD with students, 17 April, 2026). From the interview one parent said that *"Punishment alone cannot solve every problem. Teachers and parents need to discuss why the child behaves badly"* (Interview with Parent P4 in 16 April, 2026). A discipline master shared their experience during a parent-teacher meeting by reporting that *"you invite a parent to discuss their child's behaviour, and the first thing the father says is, 'I gave you this child to teach and discipline. If he is stubborn, use the cane. Why are you calling me'"* (Interview with DM1 on 14 April, 2026). Another head of school clearly outlined how physical force and alternative measures are currently blended as a compromise to satisfy the community's cultural beliefs:

Teachers involve parents in chronic offenses not in minor offenses... by either giving one or two sticks or giving other activities to do... In order to work well in managing school indiscipline cases is better to use alternative disciplinary measures and sticks for a child of African. (Interview with HoS3on 17 April, 2026).

Another head of school stated *"parents like to use stick for misbehaving students."* (Interview with HoS3on 17 April, 2026). This was also supported by another discipline master who openly said *"parents suggest the use of corporal punishment like sticks"* (Interview with DM2 on 15 April, 2026). The few instances of parent-teacher interaction observed by the researcher were highly formalized, tense disciplinary hearings held near the Head of School's office, usually involving a student facing potential suspension. Although intense parental expectations often pressure teachers into administering physical punishment during these meetings, teachers actively try to blend these community demands with alternative discussions to ensure students take discipline seriously.

Through parents' meetings and communications

The field data revealed that the majority of the respondents supported that use formal communication channels to bridge the gap between the school and the home. Teachers involve parents in controlling student misbehaviour through parents' meetings and communications. The data shows that schools actively rely on formal letters, phone calls, and general meetings to keep parents informed and engaged. One student explained *"When teachers communicate with parents, students become careful because they know their parents will receive information about their behaviour"* (FGD with students, 15 April, 2026). Also, one parent stated *"Communication from teachers helps parents know what is happening at school and how they can assist their children"* (Interview with Parent 5, 17 April, 2026). Another parent added *"When teachers and parents communicate well, it becomes easier to correct students because everyone provides the same guidance"* (Interview with Parent P6, 16 April, 2026). Moreover, during the in-depth interviews, Heads of Schools and Discipline Masters confirmed that continuous communication is highly valued. School leaders emphasized that scheduled meetings are used to build a collaborative environment. A Head of School explained: *"We use the annual parents' meetings to discuss school rules. We communicate clearly with parents so they can support our disciplinary actions at home."* (Interview with HoS2 on 15 April 2026).

A Discipline Master added that phone calls are frequently used to set up face-to-face discussions: *"Communication is key. We regularly make phone calls to parents of misbehaving students to arrange a meeting in my office so we can talk."* (Interview with DM1 on 14 April 2026). When direct contact is difficult, school leaders use local community networks to ensure the message reaches the parents. Highlighting this effort, a Head of School stated: *"Sometimes we pass the message through the village leaders to find the parent and inform them about the school meeting."* (Interview with HoS4 on 21 April 2026). Finally, a Discipline Master summarized the overall goal of these communication strategies: *"Parent meetings help us to share the behavioural progress of the students openly. It builds a good relationship between the teachers and the community."* (Interview with DM3 on 17 April 2026). These findings demonstrate that while through formal letters, phone calls, and general parental meetings, teachers continuously keep the community informed and involved in the disciplinary management of the students.

Through behaviour improvement plan in collaboration with parents

When parents are involved lead to permanent behavioural changes for some students. When asked if they had ever witnessed a peer's behaviour improve permanently due to parental teamwork, several students acknowledged that constructive dialogue between parents and teachers yielded better, longer-lasting changes than the when they are being beaten. These isolated success stories empirically validate the premise that parental engagement, when executed as a supportive partnership, can serve as a highly effective Alternative Disciplinary Measure. Providing interview evidence for this, one Discipline Master shared a specific success story regarding a chronic truant: *"There was a boy was very stubborn but when we called his mother and the boy saw his mother crying in the office, he changed completely and never dodged a class since."* (Interview with DM3 on 17 April, 2026). A student participant stated *"When parents talk with teachers and the student is guided, sometimes the student changes because he understands the problem"* (FGD with students, 14 April, 2026). Moreover, another parent added that *"A child needs guidance from both teachers and parents because discipline is not only the responsibility of the school"* (Interview with Parent 8, 15 April, 2026). Another head of school also acknowledged this shift in behaviour, though noting it is not a universal fix. One head of school summarized the mixed outcomes of parental summons: *"Yes, when we involved parents, the student sometimes changes completely but other students does not change."* (Interview with HoS4, on 21 April 2026).

The data reveals that while rare, genuine collaboration between the school and home has a profound psychological impact on the learner. These instances prove that when parental involvement is shifted from a tool of punishment to a platform for restorative dialogue and strict supervision, it successfully achieves the permanent behavioural modification that physical discipline alone fails to produce. While some students change strictly out of fear of punishment, the findings prove that genuine parent-teacher collaboration and continuous supervision successfully trigger empathy and permanent behavioural changes for many students.

DISCUSSIONS

Parental involvement in major offenses committed by students

The findings of this study demonstrate a complex and dual-natured relationship between the school and the home in managing student misbehavior. It is evident that parent-teacher collaboration in Chemba District is highly strategic, typically reserved for major, chronic offenses rather than minor classroom disruptions. Teachers deliberately manage daily infractions internally because they deeply understand the logistical and economic constraints facing the local agro-pastoralist community. Summoning parents who must travel long distances from their farms for minor issues is practically viewed as an unnecessary disruption to their livelihoods. This operational reality firmly aligns with the concept of crisis-driven engagement identified by Mabula and Ligembe (2022). Just as in other rural Tanzanian settings, parents are primarily brought into the disciplinary process when a situation worsens beyond basic classroom management. This is further supported by Mbanga, Piliyesi, and Anyona (2020), who argue that the overriding daily demands of economic survival in rural communities often supersede proactive school engagement, forcing teachers to adapt by handling minor indiscipline on their own. The researcher concludes that although limiting parental involvement to serious disciplinary cases is a practical response to the socio-economic realities of rural communities, it promotes a reactive rather than preventive approach to discipline. This reduces opportunities for continuous parent-school collaboration, early intervention,

and consistent behavioral support, potentially allowing minor misbehavior to develop into more serious disciplinary problems.

Parents' participation in school meetings and communications

Despite these geographical and economic barriers, the findings show a strong institutional commitment to maintaining communication. Schools actively utilize formal letters, mobile phone calls, and annual parent meetings to bridge the gap between the administration and the community. When direct contact fails, school leaders leverage local government structures, such as village leaders, to ensure disciplinary messages reach the parents. These continuous communication efforts demonstrate that teachers actively seek value congruence and collaborative problem-solving with the home, a practice that Sabornie and Espelage (2023) assert is essential for disciplinary interventions to achieve their highest efficacy. The researcher observes that the use of multiple communication channels demonstrates schools' determination to sustain parental involvement despite significant geographical and socio-economic challenges. By combining formal and informal communication strategies, schools enhance the likelihood that parents remain informed and engaged in addressing student misbehaviour. This reflects a collaborative approach to discipline that strengthens trust, shared responsibility, and consistency between the school and the home.

Parental involvement in provision of punishment (corporal punishment)

However, the actual execution of face-to-face disciplinary meetings frequently encounters intense cultural friction. The findings revealed that when parents are summoned to the school, the sessions often transform into disciplinary tribunals rather than supportive dialogues. This dynamic is largely driven by the parents themselves, who arrive frustrated and actively demand that teachers use physical force. Many parents in the district firmly believe that a child will not take discipline seriously without corporal punishment, explicitly granting teachers permission to administer the cane. This cultural expectation mirrors the hostile collaboration documented by Mushi, Malekela, and Bhalalusesa (2022), who found that teachers often feel pressured to use corporal punishment simply to satisfy parental expectations of what good schooling looks like. Similarly, Ishabisa (2025) notes that rural Tanzanian parents frequently act as strict custodians of physical discipline, actively rejecting modern psychological guidance.

The implications of this parentally sanctioned physical discipline are significant when analysed through Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory. Bandura posits that adolescents acquire behavioural scripts by observing the actions and attitudes of their primary role models. When a student witnesses their own parent instructing the school leadership to deliver corporal punishment before any discussion can take place, the student internalizes the lesson that physical force is the ultimate and legitimate tool for resolving conflicts. This normalizes aggression, making it highly challenging for teachers to cultivate a purely restorative classroom environment when the home explicitly advocates for retributive discipline. The researcher concludes that while parents actively participate in school discipline, their strong support for corporal punishment conflicts with modern restorative disciplinary approaches. This reinforces students' acceptance of physical punishment as a legitimate corrective measure and limits the effectiveness of positive discipline. Therefore, changing parental attitudes through continuous awareness and education is essential for successful implementation of non-violent disciplinary practices.

Parents collaboration in behaviour improvement plans

Nevertheless, the most encouraging revelation from the study is the high rate of permanent behavioural modification that occurs when parent-teacher collaboration is executed constructively. The narratives demonstrated that when parents and teachers successfully bypass physical punishment in favour of deep, empathetic dialogue, the results are highly transformative. Students reported that engaging in serious discussions about their future and witnessing the emotional struggles of their parents triggered a deep sense of moral responsibility. Realizing they were disappointing their families proved to be a far more effective deterrent than physical pain, leading to lasting obedience and a permanent halt to behaviours like chronic truancy. These specific success stories validate the arguments of Atta and Mensah (2023), proving that when pedagogical dissonance is overcome and true value congruence is achieved between parents and teachers, parental

engagement functions as an incredibly powerful non-violent tool. Finally, it is important to note from a psychological standpoint that for some learners, this permanent change is driven by an elevated fear of facing the combined authority of the school and the home. Viewed through Skinner's (1953) theory of Operant Conditioning, the threat of severe punishment from both parents and teachers acts as a powerful aversive stimulus that permanently suppresses negative behavior. Ultimately, the discussion of these findings indicates that despite the initial geographical and cultural barriers, authentic parental involvement, whether it successfully taps into a student's empathy or establishes strict authoritative boundaries, remains one of the most effective alternative disciplinary measures available to teachers in the district. The researcher concludes that meaningful parent-teacher collaboration promotes lasting positive behaviour by fostering students' self-awareness and responsibility through dialogue and support. Although fear of parental and school authority may deter misconduct, guidance-based collaboration is more effective for sustainable behavioural change than physical punishment.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Finally, the study concludes that the success of joint behavior improvement plans carries the most transformative implication of the study as the findings revealed that students permanently change their behavior after witnessing their parents' emotional investment proves that physical pain is not a pedagogical necessity. This implies that students possess a strong capacity for internal moral correction. If schools can successfully shift the nature of parent-teacher meetings from tribunals of punishment to platforms of joint psychological support, parental involvement can serve as the ultimate non-violent corrective tool.

Recommendations

Based on the empirical findings and the implications discussed, the following recommendations are proposed to bridge the gap between alternative disciplinary policies and the practical realities in Chemba District:

1. Parents should be provided with trainings on the long-term psychological damage of physical violence and the proven effectiveness of restorative dialogue as the findings revealed that parents prefer the use corporal punishments which are prohibited now days to children.
2. School administrators are supposed to plan a clear time table which is regularly for teacher-parental meeting to provide chance for parents to be updated for students' behaviours at school.
3. Teachers should utilize phone calls or village leadership networks to share early positive updates or minor concerns with parents which can strengthen collaborate with the school before a disciplinary crisis occurs.

Study Limitations

Several limitations affected accessibility of research data including; language barrier where some of parents were not aware of English language which was planned by the researcher for data collection. This made a researcher to interpret the interview guides into their familiar Language which is Kiswahili language. Also, difficult accessibility of respondents as teachers and students were in holiday during the data collection period leading to late in accessibility of data.

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