

## **Does Parents' Valence toward School Relate to their Perceptions of Invitation to School Involvement?**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Parents' involvement in children's schooling is usually affected by their prior personal experience with schooling. Thus, if we want to assess parents' involvement in school activities and their children's learning it is crucial to assess their prior personal experience with schooling. This study, therefore, examined the relationship between parents' self-reported valence toward school and their perceptions of invitations to the involvement of the school, teachers, and their child. The study involved 1176 low-income parents of children from 55 primary schools in four regions in Northern Tanzania. A multivariate linear regression model showed that parents' prior schooling experience (school valence) has a statistically significant effect on parents' perceptions of general invitations from school, teachers, and specific invitations from the child. Results showed that the school attributes could affect the relationship between parents' valence and their perceptions of involvement invitations. Possible interventions to promote inclusive parental involvement through supportive schools will be discussed.*

**Keywords:** *Valence, parental involvement, involvement invitation, school-family partnership, primary school, inclusive parental involvement, supportive schools*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Although parent involvement is crucial for children to learn the importance of education and develop reading skills, not all low-income parents are involved in their children's education (Gay et al., 2020). This can negatively affect children's educational progress. It is proven that when a child starts school, the parents' school memories are likely to become activated and function as a basis for their evaluation of the child's schooling; hence studying the effect of parents' schooling is crucial (Räty, 2010). Parents with low socioeconomic status often need more knowledge on how to be involved in their child's education and school activities. Socioeconomic background, especially schooling experiences, can accelerate or minimize their desire for involvement. By 2020, Tanzania had a 97% enrolment rate in primary education, whereby both boys and girls have the same access to primary schools (UNESCO, 2022). Despite the successful universal primary education, parents' and families' role in strengthening children's learning in primary education, girls' retention in schools and transition to secondary education is minimal in Tanzania. Introducing fee-free education brought many concerns about parents' position in educating a child; teachers worry that a fee-free education policy might have an undesirable effect on parents (Gregory, 2016). With most poor parents in public schools, it is questionable if parents are engaging in children's education and

how social-economic backgrounds affect their involvement. Understanding how parents' schooling experiences affect their perceptions of education involvement is vital in achieving effective inclusive parental involvement, especially in a country like Tanzania, where there are economic disparities between parents in public and private schools. This study, therefore, explored the relationship between parents' school experience (school valence) and their perceptions of involvement invitations from schools, teachers and their children in Tanzania to understand how parents' prior School experience relates to their recent decisions on school involvement.

### **Parents' Valence toward School and Invitation to Involvement**

Valence is the emotional positivity and negativity of an experience (Taylor & Rowley, 2004). parents' valence toward school can be defined as the extent to which a parent, based on prior personal experience with schooling, is generally attracted to or repelled from school engagements (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2004). Generally, parental valence toward schools is referred to how attracted a parent is to school, given past experiences. Parental involvement in children's learning takes different forms and can be motivated by various factors related to parents' personal life experiences and other general contextual factors. Understanding the relationship between parents' beliefs and relevant social-contextual variables governing beliefs about their roles in children's learning requires exploration of the link between parents' understanding of their role in children's learning and their prior experiences with schools (Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). Parents' own past school experiences might not only influence how they construct their roles in children's education but also might affect their response to the involvement invitations and

their beliefs on the effect of their involvement. Researchers explained that parents might use their personal schooling experience to develop expectations for their roles, as well as their ideas about the roles of others in various social systems, especially schools and teachers (Gay et al., 2020; Manz et al., 2004; Raty, 2002; Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). Whitaker and Hoover-Dempsey (2013) stressed that parents' construction of their role regarding involvement in their children's schooling might be influenced by experiences and memories of their own school experiences and past teachers' behaviours. These experiences may include memories and evaluations of childhood interactions with parents and teachers, which contribute to an individual's schema for anticipated and expected interactions between parents, teachers, school and students (Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). Such experiences indicate what teachers and families should do for students learning.

It is argued here that parents' experiences related to engagement with schools engender an overall attitude about or valence towards schooling and their roles in the educational process as related to their children. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) suggested that parents' childhood experiences with schools are likely joined with present experiences with schools to influence the development of role construction and beliefs on the impact they can make for involvement in their children's schooling. Parents' assessment of their school experiences may make them feel competent or incompetent when interacting with teachers. This might influence their decisions when they are invited to schools or in any form of involvement from teachers and their children (Manz et al., 2004; Raty, 2002). The assessment of parents' past schooling experiences does not only help in understanding parents' involvement decisions but also might help in designing proper interventions to

empower and boost parents' confidence in dealing with their children's teachers and school personnel.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study employed the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model of parental involvement, which suggests that family engagement is a process that begins with families' decision-making about being involved and culminates with student outcomes (Whitaker et al., 2018). Although several models have tried to analyse the parental involvement process, the Hoover-Dempsey model is perhaps the most informative because it describes the personal, contextual and life context motivators for involvement. The model views human behaviour as part of a reciprocal system that also includes personal factors (e.g., beliefs) and environmental factors (e.g., social interactions and physical surroundings) (Walker et al., 2010). This study focused on the first level of the model.

At this level, it is assumed that parents' motivation to be involved is influenced by motivational beliefs (parents' role construction and sense of self-efficacy), perceptions of invitations to involvement (from school, teacher, and child), and perceived life context (time and energy, skills and knowledge). This study focuses on how parents' personal school experience can affect how parents perceive the invitations to involvement from school, teachers and their children. Past research findings suggested that among these four categories, parents' perceptions of invitations from school, teachers and children are the strongest predictors for both parents' home-based and school-based involvement behaviours across grade levels (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Green et al., 2007; Kigobe et al., 2018; Kigobe, 2019; Kohl et al., 2002; Simon, 2004 Walker et al., 2006). Literature has shown that parents' motivational beliefs and perceived life context play a secondary

role in shaping parents' involvement; this is the same with family socio-economic background (Walker et al., 2010; Green et al., 2007; Walker et al., 2006). This study was motivated by the assumption that assessing how parents' personal school experiences (parents' valance towards school) relate to how parents perceive invitations to involvement might help motivate inclusive involvement activities in low-income families. Taylor et al. (2004) proposed that a parent's perception of their own school experiences influences their thinking towards their child's schooling, which consequently may affect academic socialization practices and, in turn, may impact their children's academic success.

### **The Current Study**

The present study identified the relationships between parents' valence towards school with their perceptions of the invitations to involvement from schools, teachers and their children. This study is part of a large project designed to promote child literacy development through an intervention focusing on capacity-building teacher training to help teachers work with parents in primary schools. The intervention programme was implemented in four regions in Northern Tanzania (Shinyanga, Mara, Simiyu and Mwanza), including 55 schools within ten administrative districts. This study presents the findings of the baseline data of the intervention. The present study explored two research questions: 1.) Does Parents' valence toward school relate to their perceptions of the invitation to school involvement from schools, teachers and their children? 2.) How is the relationship between parents' prior school experiences (school valance) and their perceptions of invitations to involvement affected by school conditions?

## **Methods**

### **Participants**

A total of 1187 parents (a maximum of 15 to 20 parents from each school and one parent from each family) participated in the study. Of 1187 parents, 52% were mothers, and 48% were fathers. Regarding relationship status, 67.7% were married, 6.5% were single parents, 7.2% were widows, 1.4% were divorced, 11.9% were separated, and 5.3% did not disclose their status. Of all these parents, 7.3% were illiterates, 70.4% had primary school education, 13.9% had secondary school education, 3.2% had a college education, 1.4% had undergraduate degrees, and 0.2% had postgraduate degrees. In this study, 22% of the families had only one child, 20.8% had two children, 19.6% had three children, 18% had four children, and 14.1% of the families had five or more children. Regarding income status, 83.2% had a low income, with a budget under 5000 Tshs (2 USD) per day, 11.9% were parents with middle income, having between 10000-15000 Tshs (4-6 USD) per day, and 4.9% were considered parents with high income having 20000 Tshs or more (9 USD or more) per day.

### **Procedures**

This study was part of an intervention study designed to enhance parental involvement in primary education as a key factor in child literacy in the Northern part of Tanzania. Participants were drawn from 55 public primary schools from 10 administrative districts in four regions of Northern Tanzania. These regions are Mara, Shinyanga, Mwanza and Simiyu. These regions were selected because they are among the regions in Tanzania with vast enrolment but simultaneously experiencing many social and economic problems. Such problems include school dropout and early marriage, which endanger the quality of education (BEST,

2020). All four regions have 2766 public primary schools, with approximately 2,300,000 enrolled students from grades one to seven. Through simple random sampling, 55 public primary schools were selected from lower and higher-performing schools in ten districts. All 55 invited schools agreed to be registered in the intervention programme and invited parents at school to fill out the survey and participate in teacher-involving parent training sessions. In the first meeting, district and ward educational officers were invited to officiate the meetings. Parents were asked to sign a consent form to participate in the study and allow their children to participate in the intervention study. To coordinate the exercise and minimize social desirability bias, 12 trained research assistants who were tutors from nearby teacher colleges guided parents and teachers in each school during training and survey administration.

### **Measures**

All measures included in the survey were the revised Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model of parental involvement from Walker et al. (2005). These scales were used and tested for the first time in Tanzania by Kigobe et al. (2018). The scales showed good internal reliability ranging from .67 to .89 Cronbach's alpha's, indicating moderate to good internal consistency. With the excellent fitness of the tool in the Tanzanian environment, I decided to use the same tool in this study.

### **Parent self-reported Valance towards School**

Parent valence was measured by six items which assessed parents' attraction to or general disposition toward schools based on prior experiences with schools. Parents were asked to rate their own experiences when they were in school, and they were asked to rate their personal experiences with their teachers and school personnel



and rate their general school experience. The response for each item was anchored by negative experiences and positive experiences (e.g., My school: 1 = disliked, 6 = liked; My teachers: 1 = ignored me, 6 = cared about me). Higher scores indicated a strong attraction or good experience towards school; lower scores indicated a lower attraction toward school. The Cronbach's alpha of this scale was .76, indicating a good internal consistency.

### *Parents' perceptions of invitation to be involved*

#### **Parents' Perceptions of General School Invitations to Involvement**

Parents' perceptions of school invitation to involvement were assessed using a six items measure. Parents were asked to rate their experiences concerning their involvement in school activities organised by schools. Responses for this measure ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The six items included items such as "This school lets me know about meetings and special school events", "Parent activities are scheduled at this school so that I can attend," and "This school's staff contacts me promptly about any problems involving my child." The Cronbach's alpha of this scale was .66, indicating a moderate internal consistency.

#### **Parents' Perceptions of Specific Teacher Invitations to Involvement**

Researchers explained that parents might use their personal schooling experience to develop expectations for their roles, as well as their ideas about the roles of others in their various social systems, especially schools and teachers. Parents' perceptions of teachers' invitations to involvement were assessed with the five-item scale developed by Walker et al. (2005). Parents rated their

perceptions of teacher invitation to involvement through six common involvement behaviours that represent home-based activities (e.g., communicating with the child about the school day, helping the child with homework, supervising the child's homework) and school-based activities (e.g., helping out at the school, communicating with the teacher, attending special events at the school). Response options for this measure were 1 (never), 2 (one or two times), 3 (four or five times), 4 (once a week), 5 (a few times a week), or 6 (daily). Cronbach's alpha of this scale was .86, indicating a strong internal consistency.

### **Parents' Perceptions of Specific Child Invitations to Involvement**

With five items, parents rated their children's requests for parental involvement in common home-based and school-based involvement activities (e.g., "My child asked me to help explain something about his or her homework;" "My child asked me to help out at school"). Responses for this measure ranged from 1 (never) to 6 (daily). Cronbach's alpha of this scale was .82, indicating a strong internal consistency.

### ***Parents' Personal Motivators to the Involvement***

#### **Parents' Role Construction**

Role construction was assessed by nine items describing parents' beliefs about what they should do concerning their children's schooling (Walker et al., 2005). Parents rated their role beliefs on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (disagree very strongly) to 6 (agree very strongly). Item examples are: "I believe it is my responsibility to (a) volunteer at the school and (b) communicate with my child's teacher regularly". Higher scores indicated that parents strongly believed that it was their responsibility to be

involved in their children's schooling. The internal consistency of this scale was good, with a Cronbach's alpha value of .80.

### **Parental Efficacy for helping Children Succeeds in school**

At school, it was assessed by four items referring to parental beliefs on whether or not their involvement is likely to have a positive influence on their children's learning (Walker et al., 2005). Parents rated their self-efficacy beliefs on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (disagree very strongly) to 6 (agree very strongly). Item examples are: (a) "I make a significant difference in my child's school performance", and (b) "I feel successful about my efforts to help my child to learn". Higher scores indicated that parents have a higher sense of efficacy. The Cronbach's alpha of the two items in the scale was .63 after the deletion of two negative worded items.

### ***Parents' Perceived Life Context***

#### **Parents' Perceptions of the Time and Energy**

It was measured by six items referring to how parents perceived time and energy in their decision about involvement (Walker et al., 2005). Parents rated their perceptions on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (disagree very strongly) to 6 (agree very strongly). Item examples are: "I have enough time and energy to (a) communicate with my child about the school day and (b) attend special events at school." The Cronbach's alpha of this scale was .68, indicating a moderate internal consistency.

#### **Parents' Skills and Knowledge**

This aspect measured six items examining parents' understanding of their skills and knowledge (Walker et al., 2005). Parents rated

their perceptions on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (disagree very strongly) to 6 (agree very strongly). Item examples are: “(a) I know effective ways to contact my child’s teacher; (b) I know how to supervise my child’s homework.” The Cronbach’s alpha of this scale was .70, indicating a good internal consistency.

## **Results**

### **Statistical Analysis**

All the statistical analyses were conducted in SPSS Statistics software 25.0. For all samples, Pearson and Spearman correlations, means and standard deviations of the variables were calculated to examine the relationships between variables (see table 1 below). The results showed that parents' level of education, employment condition, parent income and the number of children were not correlated with the outcome variable. Therefore, I did not include them in further analyses. Since I had more than one dependent variable, a multiple linear regression was inappropriate because an ordinary linear regression cannot accommodate more than one dependent variable; hence, I opted for multivariate linear regression.

The multivariate linear regression model extends the standard multiple linear regression models. While OLS regression seeks to find the line that best predicts one DV from one or more IVs, multivariate multiple linear regressions are used when there is a problem consisting of two or more predictor variables and two or more response variables (Quick, 2013). I ran two models in the general linear model for multivariate analysis; in the first model, I had seven dependent variables; I added three invitation variables (the general school invitations, specific invitations from teachers and specific invitations from students). Then two parents'

motivators (role construction and parent's sense of efficacy) and two contextual life variables (parents' knowledge and skills and parents' resources and energy) were added to the model. I added these variables because, in several studies, they have been related to other hypothesized motivators of parents' engagement in their student's learning, including student, teacher, and school invitations to involvement and parent's valence towards school (e.g., Anderson & Minke, 2007; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Drummond & Stipek, 2004; Green et al., 2007; Kigobe et al., 2018). In the second similar model, I wanted to control the effect on specific school attributes by adding school as a fixed factor to assess its effect on the relationship between parents' valence with their perception of involvement invitation. Literature suggests that a specific school climate uniquely shapes how each school supports and influences parental involvement practices. Whitaker and Hoover-Dempsey (2013) acknowledge the specific influence each school might (school climate) have by examining how schools' different administrative approaches to parent involvement appeared to function differently in supporting parents' role beliefs. Lastly, I added parent school valence as a covariate (main predictor) to assess the multivariate significance tests and significance tests of between-subjects effects (F tests)

**Table 1. Correlation between all study variables**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1 Gender												
2 Education	-.037											
3 children	-.001	-.034										
4 Income	-.011	.244***	.043									
5 Parent valence	.006	-.023	.034	-.051								
6 School invitation	.001	-.051	-.056	.042	.303***							
7 Teachers invitation	-.010	-.014	-.056	-.031	.085***	.323***						
8 Child Invitation	-.030	-.025	-.019	.025	.094***	.405***	.385***					
9 Parents efficacy	.008	.033	-.059	.087***	.233***	.303**	.124***	.180***				
10 Parents' Role construction	-.014	.058*	-.067*	.143***	.163***	.235***	.109***	.290***	.208***			
11 Parents Knowledge and skills	-.030	-.021	.017	.155***	.229***	.344***	.166***	.336***	.335***	.487***		
12 Parents Energy and Resources	.019	.061*	-.012	.155***	.255***	.374***	.147***	.313***	.321***	.476***	.697***	
<i>M</i>	1.48	1.53	2.80	1.69	5.80	5.13	3.26	4.29	5.04	5.33	5.24	5.36
<i>SD</i>	0.50	0.97	1.38	1.16	0.48	0.76	1.55	1.38	1.18	0.62	0.78	0.73
<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>					.750	.66	.86	.82	.63	.80	.70	.68

Note. \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . Spearman non-parametric correlations were calculated between parent's characteristics and other variables; Pearson correlations were calculated between all other variable

### **Multivariate Significance Tests**

In multivariate tests, the main covariate, *parent school valance*, was significantly better than the .05 mile by any of the four leading multivariate tests of group differences (Hotelling's T-Square, Wilks' lambda, Pillai's trace and Roy's most significant root). This means that each effect is significantly related to all outcome variables. I checked Wilks' lambda, a standard measure of the difference between groups of means on the independent variables. I used it to test whether there are differences between the means of identified groups of subjects on a combination of dependent variables. The findings showed a statistically significant difference in parents' perceptions of the invitations to the involvement from school, teachers and the child, based on parents' prior school experiences (school valance) in both models.  $F(7, 1168) = 26.05, p < .001$ ; Wilk's  $\Lambda = 0.86$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .13$  and  $F(7, 1162) = 9.14, p < .001$ ; Wilk's  $\Lambda = 0.94$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .06$  respectively. Having achieved a statistically significant result in multivariate significance tests (see table 2), I then continued with further tests to assess the significance tests of the between-subjects effects of the F tests.

**Table 2. Multivariate Tests**

Effect		Value	F	df	P	Partial Eta Square
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	0.25	56.11	7	.001	0.25
	Wilks'	0.75	56.11	7	.001	0.25
	Lambda					
	Hotelling's Trace	0.34	56.11	7	.001	0.25
	Roy's Largest Root	0.34	56.11	7	.000	0.25
Parent valence	Pillai's Trace	0.13	26.05	7	.001	0.13
	Wilks'	0.86	26.05	7	.001	0.13
	Lambda					
	Hotelling's Trace	0.16	26.05	7	.001	0.13
	Roy's Largest Root	0.16	26.05	7	.001	0.13

Statistically significant difference:  $p < .001$



### **Significance Tests of between-subjects Effects (F tests)**

To understand how parents' school valance affects parents' current perceptions of the invitations to the involvement; I checked the tests of between-subjects products to see how parents' school valance affects parents' perceptions of the invitations to the involvement from school, teachers and child. I also assessed whether parents' school valance affected parents' motivators (role construction and sense of efficacy) and perceived life context variables (knowledge and skills, energy and resources). Findings showed that parents' school valance experience had a statistically significant effect on parents' perceptions of general school invitations ( $F(1, 1174) = 119.05; p < .001; \text{partial } \eta^2 = .06$ ), specific teacher invitation ( $F(1, 1174) = 8.59; p < .003; \text{partial } \eta^2 = .001$ ) and for specific child invitation ( $F(1, 1174) = 10.57; p > .001; \text{partial } \eta^2 = .01$ ). On personal motivators, parents' school valance had a statistically significant effect on both role construction ( $F(1, 1174) = 32.14; p < .001; \text{partial } \eta^2 = .03$ ) and parent sense of efficacy ( $F(1, 1174) = 67.59; p < .001; \text{partial } \eta^2 = .05$ ).

In the parent's life contextual variables, parents' prior school experience (school valance) had a statistically significant on both parents' perceived knowledge and skills ( $F(1, 1174) = 65.09; p < .001; \text{partial } \eta^2 = .05$ ) and ( $F(1, 1174) = 81.61; p < .001; \text{partial } \eta^2 = .06$ ) for parents perceived energy and skills. Adding a school as an intervening variable made some changes in the model. The model showed that school statistically affected the relationship between teacher invitation and specific child invitation on parents' school valance (see table 3). After adding school, parents' prior school experience (school valance) was no longer a significant predictor of specific child invitations and ( $F(1, 1068) = 0.09; p = .76; \text{partial } \eta^2 = .00$ ) for specific teacher invitations. However, the interaction of

parents' school (valance) and school predicted all three  
involvement invitations (See table 3).

Table 3. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects with School effect

Source	Dependent Variables	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	School Invitation	252.81	107	2.36	5.90	.001	.37
	Teachers Invitation	1152.96	107	10.77	6.86	.001	.41
	Child Invitation	657.81	107	6.14	4.12	.001	.29
	Parents efficacy	673.00	107	6.29	7.01	.001	.41
	Role construction	150.52	107	1.40	4.92	.001	.33
	Knowledge and skills	241.46	107	2.25	4.99	.001	.33
	Parents Energy and Resources	188.14	107	1.75	4.22	.001	.30
Intercept	School Invitation	12.95	1	12.94	32.32	.001	.03
	Teachers Invitation	18.10	1	18.10	11.52	.001	.01
	Child Invitation	23.99	1	23.98	16.09	.001	.01
	Parents efficacy	1.16	1	1.16	1.29	.256	.00
	Role construction	26.35	1	26.34	92.16	.001	.08
	Knowledge and skills	5.18	1	5.17	11.44	.001	.01
	Parents Energy and Resources	9.71	1	9.70	23.28	.001	.02
School	School Invitation	82.91	52	1.59	3.91	.001	.16
	Teachers Invitation	130.79	52	2.51	1.60	.005	.07
	Child Invitation	185.45	52	3.56	2.32	.001	.10

	Parents efficacy	156.78	52	3.01	3.31	.001	.14
	Role construction	37.42	52	0.72	2.52	.001	.11
	Knowledge and skills	89.40	52	1.71	3.80	.001	.16
	Parents Energy and Resources	77.73	52	1.49	3.58	.001	.15
Parent valence	School Invitation	6.10	1	6.10	15.24	.001	.01
	Teachers Invitation	0.14	1	0.15	0.09	.759	.00
	Child Invitation	0.04	1	0.05	0.03	.860	.00
	Parents efficacy	23.96	1	23.96	26.70	.001	.02
	Role construction	1.25	1	1.25	4.39	.036	.00
	Knowledge and skills	15.21	1	15.21	33.61	.001	.03
	Parents Energy and Resources	10.27	1	10.27	24.62	.001	.02
School * Parent valence	School Invitation	83.97	52	1.61	4.03	.001	.16
	Teachers Invitation	137.32	52	2.64	1.68	.002	.08
	Child Invitation	194.17	52	3.73	2.50	.001	.11
	Parents efficacy	149.90	52	2.88	3.21	.001	.13
	Role construction	37.30	52	0.72	2.51	.001	.11
	Knowledge and skills	86.10	52	1.66	3.66	.001	.11
	Parents Energy and Resources	76.39	52	1.47	3.52	.001	.15
Error	School Invitation	427.78	1068	0.40			

Teachers Invitation	1677.69	1068	1.57
Child Invitation	1592.12	1068	1.49
Parents efficacy	958.06	1068	0.90
Role construction	305.31	1068	0.29
Knowledge and skills	483.32	1068	0.45
Parents Energy and Resources	445.36	1068	0.42

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Statistically significant difference:  $p < .001$

## **Discussion**

This study explored the impact of parents' self-reported valence towards the school on how parents perceive invitations for involvement from school, teachers and children. The study was conducted in public schools, where many families possess low socio-economic conditions. The majority of parents, 77.7%, in the study went to school up to grade seven; others never went to school or did not finish primary education; 83% of parents lived under two dollars. The bivariate correlation showed no significant relationship between parents' socio-economic conditions (level of education, income, employment conditions and the number of children) with parents' valence towards school. The lack of correlation between parents' school valence and parents' socio-economic variables indicates no link between socio-economic conditions and parents' attitudes towards schooling.

This finding contrasts with Brown (2013) who found a significant bivariate correlation between education level and valence toward school. Although he found a correlation between parents' education level and school valence, he acknowledged that parents' school valence is only sometimes high when parents are educated. Brown explained that sometimes parents, who answered more positively about their school experiences pressed through difficult situations and developed resilience as a child, perhaps motivated their desire to continue pursuing educational goals. The lack of bivariate relationship between parents' level of education and parents' school valence might indicate that education can have some contributions but is only one of the factors for positive valence in parents. Other social contextual factors influence positive school valence in parents, such as a supportive school

environment. This is true for the population of this study. Although they come from a low socio-economic background, they possess higher expectations for their children education success, which motivate them to have positive attitude when invited for school involvement. The results showed that parents' school valence had a significant effect on parents' perception to involvement invitations. The findings showed that the stronger valence a parent possesses the more positive they are with the involvement invitations from schools, teachers and their children, which in turn motivates active involvement of parents in children's schooling and affects their learning success. This is in line with the findings of Barnett and Taylor (2009). They found that valence, positive or negative recollections of a mother's school experiences, were associated with parent reports of higher engagement in their children's academics. Thus, it is argued here that parent's perception of their own school experiences influences their thought process towards their child's schooling.

Consequently, this may affect academic socialization practices and, in turn, may impact their child's academic success. Adding a variable school in the model changed the effect of parents' valence towards involvement invitations from teachers' invitations and specific child invitations. This finding suggests that specific school climate impacts the association between parents' valence and present views of their children's schooling. This shows that school is a vital aspect of parental involvement, which might hinder or promote active parents' engagement in their child's schooling regardless of their schooling background. Having the majority of participants from low-income families, it is promising that the school can provide social support that will motivate parents and boost their confidence in their children's schooling. This is in

connection with Brown (2013), who noticed that some parents who reported positive valence came from low socio-economic status but possessed higher educational goals for their children because of the solid social support they received. The absence of a link between parents' school valence with teacher and child invitations might also imply that parents hold negative memories of their relationship with their teachers and parents while at school. Another explanation might be the lack of interaction between teachers and parents. Teachers might perceive schools doing enough to involve parents in school activities or need more skills to motivate parental involvement. However, the interaction of school and parents' valence was significant and positively related to all invitation variables, which might indicate that the relationship between school valence and the involvement invitation is motivated by supportive school environment.

Furthermore, the findings showed a significant solid effect of parents' valence towards school, with two parents' variables (self-efficacy and role construction). These are significant variables explaining parents' decisions to be involved in their children's schooling. The results indicated that the higher the parent's valence towards school, the higher parent's sense of efficacy and role construction. This was also proven by Whitaker and Hoover-Dempsey (2013). They found that parents construct an overall perception of or valence toward education and their roles in their children's educational experience based on past experiences relating to their involvement with schools. In both models, the relationship between parents' valence with life contextual variables (parents' knowledge and skill and parents' energy and resources) was strong. This finding indicates that the more knowledgeable and resourceful parents are, the more positive valence they



possesses. It is explicit that knowledge and resources are crucial in motivating parental involvement regardless of their schooling history. Hence, schools and teachers need to consider these factors by designing an inclusive parental involvement system that empowers parents with essential skills and knowledge to engage in their student's learning actively. In a low-income population like in this study, the desire and willingness of parents to be involved in children's education are pre-determined by the number of resources, skills and knowledge that parents possess. Schools and teachers must create an excellent supporting system to enable parents to participate in children schooling actively. Gay et al. (2020) stressed that parents with insufficient resources are often less involved than parents from higher-income backgrounds. In this regard, schools need to create inclusive involvement system to support parental involvement to all parents regardless their income and resources.

### **Implications for Research**

Parents' valence towards school can be seen as one potential social-psychological link in the chain through which the meanings of education are transmitted from one generation to the next (Räty, 2010). Research that seeks to explain parents' involvement in decisions needs to understand the effect of parents' schooling on their children's learning, despite the evidence that meanings assigned to education contribute to educational life histories and educational generations (Barnett & Taylor, 2009; Brown, 2013; Räty, 2007, 2010), there are minimal studies on parent's valence towards school in children's schooling. Thus, this study contributes to the same. Researchers should continue exploring multidimensional factors that can explain parents' involvement in decisions and the processes involved. To effectively encourage

parental involvement activities, it requires a good understanding of parental personal motivators and the role of life contextual variables to support inclusivity in parental involvement in schools. Researchers need to continue researching the role of schools in creating an excellent supporting system for parents, particularly those from low social and economic backgrounds. It is already proven that parents with higher levels of education process higher valence (Brown, 2013; Rätty, 2010). Thus, researchers should focus on how schools can stimulate inclusive parental involvement by creating a welcoming climate that accommodates all parents regardless of social and economic standards. The emergence of specific invitations from teachers and children as the most influential variables on parents' involvement choices is significant because schools can influence teacher practices more than any other variables (Anderson & Minke, 2007). The same teachers can stimulate parental involvement at home by providing parent-child learning opportunities through interactive homework to enable parents' engagement in their children's learning at home.

### **Strengths and Limitations of the Study**

Parent valence is an essential aspect that few studies in this research area have considered necessary to focus on compared to other factors. Especially parent valence towards school and parental involvement in school has been relatively unexplored (Barnett & Taylor, 2009). Thus, the current study contributes considerably to understanding parental participation by studying the overlooked element in the processes. In many studies using the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model, parent valence was used as a supporting variable to explain parents' role construction. However, none of the studies investigated it as a leading factor variable (Brown, 2013; Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013;

Whitaker, 2011), even though Walker et al. (2005) tested and suggested that the two scales were uncorrelated and should be separate components. In this study, parents' valence towards school was an independent variable employed to explain the link between parents' past school experience and their perceptions towards involvement invitations from schools, teachers and the child. However, the findings of this study need to be considered in light of the following limitations. First, this study reports parents' self-reported valence only, which might be influenced by social desirability. In the future, it is essential to include teacher and student reports to assess their perceptions on how they view the effect of parents' valence towards their schooling interactions and practices. Second, the study involved parents from public schools only; in the future, researchers should include private schools for comparison purposes. In Tanzania, the conditions of public and private schools are pretty different; it is essential to involve both schools to get more factual findings.

### **Conclusions**

Although parents' valence towards school is essential in supporting the active involvement of parents in children's schooling, schools have an indispensable role in helping parents regardless of their schooling background. Parental involvement is complex because parents differ and come from different social and economic backgrounds. However, schools should embrace parent disparities because all parents deserve equal treatment in the involvement process through an inclusive school environment. Therefore, understanding parents' schooling background is essential in enabling every parent to be equally involved in their child's schooling.

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