

Teachers Involving Parents (TIP): Comparing Tanzanian In-service and Pre-service Teachers' Beliefs on Parental Involvement

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ABSTRACT

In this study, we compared in-service and pre-service teachers' perceptions of parental involvement. The study involved 106 in-service teachers from 55 primary schools and 509 pre-service teachers from five teacher colleges. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model of parental involvement and its questionnaire was used to assess pre-service and in-service teacher's general beliefs about parental involvement, the importance of specific parental involvement activities, teachers' beliefs about parent's efficacy for helping a child succeed in school, and teacher beliefs on the importance of parental involvement in promoting girls education. The parametric test (independent sample t-Test) indicated similarities and differences in pre-service and in-service teacher beliefs on parental involvement. Findings showed more significant means for pre-service teachers on general beliefs about parental involvement and teachers' beliefs on parents' efficacy in helping a child succeed in school. Results showed more significant means for in-service teachers' beliefs on the importance of specific involvement practices and equal means for both pre and in-service teachers on teachers' beliefs on the importance of parent involvement in promoting girls' education. This study recommends including parental involvement in teacher education curriculum and ongoing professional development to in-service teachers to stimulate effective parents' involvement in children's education.

Keywords: *Parental involvement, Teacher beliefs, teacher-parent partnership, parents' efficacy, independent sample t-test*

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental human right and essential for promoting individual's freedom and socio-economic development. In educating children, enormous empirical studies have demonstrated that parents and teachers serve as the main drivers/source (Gulevska, 2018; Liu, Suleimani & Henning, 2020; Ramanlingam & Maniam, 2020). As such, the power of partnership and collaborative engagement between parents and teachers for meaningful learning cannot be overstated. Although the Government of Tanzania and education stakeholders acknowledge the importance of parental involvement, for many years, parental involvement has been mostly confined to the financial aspect of education. However, with the introduction of fee-free education, in 2002, parents are no longer obligated to pay school fees or any contribution related to their children's schooling. The government takes responsibility to finance all the educational costs in public primary schools; this is imperative for a low-to-middle-income country like Tanzania (Kigobe et al., 2021). With a fee-free education policy, teachers think that parents are less inclined to supervise their children's homework or even visit their children's schools to monitor their academic progress (Gregory, 2016; Uvambe & Msoroka, 2021).

Hence; efforts are needed to promote parental involvement in their children's schooling. The thinking and perceptions of teachers on how parents can and should be involved in their children's education are imperative because teachers are the key role players in effective parental involvement in children learning. Therefore, any effort taken to influence parental involvement should not overlook the role of teachers. Despite considerable theoretical and empirical work supporting the critical role of parents in students' school success, generally, pre-service teachers receive little preparation for involving parents and hence raise the need for effective in-service teacher training to enhance parental involvement (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2002). In Tanzania, it is not clear how pre-service teachers are prepared to work with parents as there is no specific course on parental involvement in teacher colleges. With this note, one could ask, if pre-service teachers are not prepared to work with parents, how do they deal with parents when entering the teaching career? Morris and Taylor (1997) stressed that if schools are going to be successful in educating children, teachers entering the profession

must possess relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes, and strategies to enable them to work effectively with students and families from diverse backgrounds. Literature suggests that most educators enter schools without an understanding of the family background, concepts of caring, or the framework of partnerships (Epstein, 2010). Consequently, most teachers are found not prepared to understand, design, implement, and evaluate practices of partnerships with the families of their students. In African countries and Tanzania in particular, there are a handful of studies (Eaford, 2018; Ikechukwu, 2017; Makgopa & Makhele, 2013; Mathekga, 2016; Mathebula, 2017; Nkosi, 2021) on teacher perceptions of parental involvement. However, there is scant information on how pre-service teachers are prepared to work with parents and how in-service teachers are supported to work with parents. Mathekga (2016) investigated teachers' perceptions of parental involvement in children's education in South Africa. The results indicated collective perception among teachers who participated in the survey; parental involvement had positive benefits for both learner performance and social behaviour. Therefore, this study compared the pre-service and in-service teachers' perceptions and beliefs on parental involvement so as to advise how to incorporate parental involvement aspects in teacher education and organize effective in-service teacher training for primary school teachers.

The Importance of Parental Involvement in Education

The concept of parental involvement centres on parents' activities and behaviours that help students learn effectively at school and home (Morera et al., 2015; Epstein, 2010). For example, literature shows that parental involvement is associated with assisting pupils to accomplish homework in the home learning environment; the frequency with which parents are physically present at school; and volunteering at school. Others are parents' communication with children about school; parents' decision-making on education matters; and communication with teachers about their children. These are paramount in children's education (Christenson et al., 1992; Morera et al., 2015). Studies support that engaging families in the education of their children at home and school is instrumental in enhancing learning outcomes for children (Mathekga, 2016; Kigobe, 2019; Kigobe et al., 2021; Gulevska, 2018; Makgopa&Makhele, 2013). For example, Kigobe et al. (2021) assessed the effect of parental involvement intervention on child

literacy development in Tanzania. They found that the intervention had a significant impact on decoding skills, reading fluency and reading comprehension among second-grade children. Kigobe (2019) also revealed parents' willingness to be involved in their children's education. Involvement was related to parents' expectations for children's school success, parents' perceived time and energy, child invitations and parents' self-efficacy. The findings showed associations between parental reading support activities (modelling, reinforcement, encouragement and instruction) with three aspects of children's reading (decoding, fluency, and comprehension). Primary schools reported higher rates of parental involvement than secondary schools. Gulevska (2018) found that attending formal meetings was the leading form of parent participation in the studied schools. Also, primary school teachers reported a positive attitude towards parental involvement. They felt that effective parental involvement in children's education leads to enhanced academic achievement and attendance of students.

In addition, Rivera (2010) found that children from parents who invest time, effort and energy in supporting their children's education were better than those whose parents did not engage in education matters of their children. He argues that the greater the parents' interaction and involvement, the better the child's academic achievement. According to Sapungan and Sapungan (2014), parental involvement serves the following functions to parents: (i) to increase parents' interaction and discussion with their children and enable them to become more responsive and sensitive to their children's social, emotional, and intellectual developmental needs. (ii) To increase confidence in parenting and decision-making skills. (iii) To build positive attitudes towards schools and teachers; hence, stronger ties and commitment to the school policies. Parental involvement also improves communication between parents and teachers and supports each other's efforts. Hence, the administration and teachers become more motivated, more committed, and more active to support the initiatives of the parents (Sapungan & Sapungan, 2014). It is important to note that different aspects of parental involvement have different effects on different elements of student learning. Despite its significance to the education of children, parental involvement is affected by a couple of barriers. These include time limitation, poverty, lack of financial

resources, inflexible work hours, language barriers, lack of awareness, cultural norms; low self-esteem, low motivation, lack of interest, lack of self-efficacy, poor parenting skills, teachers' negative attitudes towards parents as well as the failure of schools to create strong links between homes and schools (Burišić & Bunijevac, 2017; Hornby & Blackwell, 2018; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Williams & Sanchez, 2011). Due to these barriers, not all parents effectively participate in the education of their children; some do not see the worth of their involvement in children's education (Khan, 2003). There is enough evidence from the literature that teachers' perceptions of parental involvement influence success in implementing parental involvement programmes (Mathekg, 2016; Gulevska, 2018; Makgopa&Makhele, 2013). Most of the reviewed studies have focused on in-service teachers in primary schools and secondary schools; none of them compared pre-service and in-service teachers' perceptions of involvement in education. As such, comparing in-service and pre-service teachers' perceptions of parental involvement is worthwhile.

Parental Involvement: Theoretical Framework

In attempting to understand how parents can be involved in children's education, we adopted the model of the parental involvement process by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). The Hoover-Dempsey and Sander framework tries to answer three major questions: (a) why do families get involved in educational activities? (b) What do families do when they are involved in educational activities? Moreover, (c) how does family involvement in children's education positively affect student outcomes? The model focuses on understanding specific elements of the parental involvement process and the relationships among them (Hoover-Dempsey, 2010). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler present a comprehensive model from the parent's perspective on the parent involvement process, grounded in psychological and educational research that researchers have empirically tested (Tekin, 2011). The model is structured in five levels operating between parents' initial choice to become involved (Level 1) to (level 5), which explains the beneficial influence of that involvement on student outcomes (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). According to the model, Level 1 shows the variables related to motivators of the individual parent and parents' decisions about their

involvement. Specifically, three significant constructs fall under this level. They include

1. parental role construction and parental self-efficacy for helping their child succeed in school,
2. parents' perceptions of invitations from others (e.g. being welcomed by the school, teachers or a child), and
3. contextual variables (i.e. parental knowledge, skills, time and energy).

Level 2 includes parental choice of involvement forms. Level 3 shows the involvement mechanisms (i.e., parents' methods to influence a child's schooling). These include modelling, encouragement, reinforcement and instruction. Level 4 indicates significant variables that may enhance or constrain the relationship between the parent's involvement in activities and the child's academic achievement. These factors may include students' perceptions of learning methods used by a parent. Level 5 is about child/student's outcomes (i.e., skills and knowledge) which influence academic achievement. The current study focused on the first level of the model, specifically on the role of teachers in initiating parental involvement through specific invitations to parents and stimulating child invitations to parents by initiating interactive activities, which will lead children to seek help from their parents. The first level of the model provides a clear framework for understanding how teachers, children and schools can motivate parental involvement and promote parents' beliefs on the importance of parental involvement through involvement invitations described in the first level of the model. Kigobe et al. (2018) showed that parents in Tanzania are willing and positively involved in their children's education. However, they need to be invited by teachers and their children. In this regard, it is essential to explore teachers' beliefs on parental involvement to capacitate them to actively engage parents in education activities.

The Present Study

The present study compared in-service and pre-service teachers' beliefs on parental involvement; it assessed their perceptions regarding involving parents in children's education, the importance of parental involvement and their beliefs on parents' efficacy in helping children succeed in school. This

study is part of a larger project which was designed to promote child literacy development through capacity building for pre and in-service teachers to enhance parental involvement in primary education through teacher-parent partnership. The intervention programme was implemented in four regions in northern Tanzania (Shinyanga, Mara, Simiyu and Mwanza). In this study, we aimed at comparing the pre-service and in-service teachers' perceptions regarding parental involvement in children's education, specifically the study assessed i) Pre-service and in-service teachers' beliefs of parents' efficacy in helping children succeed in school ii) pre-service and in-service teachers beliefs of the importance of specific parental involvement practices and iii) pre-service and in-service teachers believe about the importance of parental involvement in girls education? iv) the relationship between pre-service and in-service gender and age on their beliefs on parental involvement

Method

Participants

The participants of this study were 509 pre-service teachers from five teachers college and 169 in-service teachers from 55 schools in the selected four regions of Southern Tanzania. Females consisted of 58.6% of in-service teachers while males consisted of 41.4%. Among the in-service teachers, 16% were aged between 25-29 years; 21.9% were aged between 30-34 years; 30.2% were aged between 35-39 years; 24.9% were aged 40-44 years; and 7.1% were 45 years and more. On educational levels, 43.2% held a certificate in teacher education, 46.7% held a diploma of teacher education, 8.3% were degree holders and 1.8% held higher degrees. For pre-service teachers, females consisted of 63.5%, while 36.5% were males. Among the pre-service teachers, 21.4 % were aged between 18-21 years; 48.9% were aged between 22-25 years; 21.2% were aged between 26-29 years; 6.9% were aged between 30-33 years; 1.4% of students were aged between 34-37; and 0.2% aged between 38-41 years. All pre-service teachers who participated in the study were enrolled in a certificate teacher education program designed to prepare primary school teachers.

Procedures

As stated earlier, this study was part of a larger intervention study designed to enhance parental involvement in primary education as a key factor in child literacy in Northern Tanzania. The intervention focused on empowering pre-service teachers in the teacher education programme and in-service teachers to work with parents to improve literacy in primary schools. The study recruited three in-service teachers from 55 primary schools and 509 student teachers from five teachers' colleges. In this study, 12 trained research assistants who were tutors from the involved teacher's colleges were involved in guiding pre-service and in-service teachers during the training and survey administration. In-service and pre-service teachers were asked to sign a consent form to participate in the study.

Measures

All measures included in the survey were adapted from the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model of parent involvement. The study adopted the tools Walker et al. (2005) developed, which are related to the revised Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model of parental involvement. These scales were previously used and tested for the first time in Tanzania by Kigobe et al. (2018). The scales were back and forth translated to create a Swahili-language survey as Swahili is the national language in Tanzania and showed good internal reliability ranging from .66 to .81 Cronbach's alpha's, indicating moderate to good internal consistency. With the excellent fitness of the tool in the Tanzanian environment, we were convinced to use the same tool in this study. This was also in consideration that the same model guided the current study. For the intervention programme, we added some items to measure teachers' perceptions of the importance of parental involvement in promoting girls' education. The original questionnaire does not contain these items; hence they were added for this study.

Teacher Beliefs about Parental Involvement

The teacher Beliefs about Parental Involvement Scale is an eight-item measure that assesses teachers' general beliefs on parental involvement. Teachers were asked to rate their belief on what is parental involvement at school. Teachers rated their beliefs on a 6-point scale, showing their disagreement on three points of disagreement (disagree very strongly,

disagree, and disagree just a little). They also indicated their acceptance of the statement on three agreement points (agree just a little, agree, and agree very strongly). The scale included items such as "*Parent involvement is important for a good school*" and "*parental involvement can help teachers be more effective with more students*". On the scale, the higher the scores indicated more positive teacher beliefs about parent involvement. In this study, Cronbach's alpha of this scale was .60 for a questionnaire administered for in-service teachers and .56 for a scale administered for pre-service teachers, indicating an excellent internal consistency of a scale.

Teacher Beliefs about the Importance of Specific Involvement Practices

A teacher's belief about the importance of specific involvement practices is the 16-item scale assessing teachers' perceptions on the importance of some specific involvement practices. Teachers were asked to respond to each item on a 6-point scale (1=this is not important to me; 6=this is very important to me). The scale included items like: I believe it is important to "*have a conference with each of my student's parents at least once a year*" and "*Asking my students' parents to help the child with homework*". In the scale, the higher the scores indicated the more strong belief in the importance of the involvement practices. The standardized alpha reliability for the scale administered for pre-service teachers was .81, while .87 was for in-service teachers, indicating an excellent internal consistency of a scale.

Teacher Beliefs about Parent Involvement in Girls' Education

This scale was developed to assess how teachers' beliefs on parental involvement in girls' education. This was a special scale developed in this study to sensitize teachers to work with parents to promote girls' education and retention in primary schools. A scale had three items asking teachers to rate their beliefs on how parents can promote girls' education, the items are "*Parents should encourage girls as much as boys to go to school and to be educated*", "*Girls have the same capacities to learn as boys*" and "*Girls have the same opportunities to learn and go to school as boys*". In the scale, the higher scores indicated teachers' stronger beliefs that parental involvement can promote girls' education. Standardized alpha reliability for the scale administered for pre-services was .66 and .60 for the scale administered to in-service teachers indicating a good internal consistency of a scale.

Teacher beliefs about Parent Efficacy in Helping Children Succeed in School

Teacher beliefs about parent efficacy in helping children succeed in school is seven items scale assessing teachers' beliefs on the ability of parents to help their children succeed in school. The measure incorporates seven items answered on a 6-point scale (1=disagree very strongly to 6=agree very strongly). It includes such items as "*If my students' parents try hard, they can help their children learn even when the children are unmotivated*", and "*my students' parents feel successful about helping their children succeed in school*". On the scale, the higher scores indicated more positive teacher beliefs about parent efficacy. Standardized alpha reliability for the scale administered for pre-services was .54 and .60 for the scale administered to in-service teachers indicating a good internal consistency of a scale.

Results

Statistical Analysis

All the statistical analyses were conducted in SPSS Statistics software 25.0. For this study, we merged two data sets with the same variables. The pre-service data set had 509 cases (respondents) and in-service teachers had 169 cases (respondents). To compare pre-service and in-service teachers' beliefs on parental involvement, we opted for an independent sample t-Test so that we could determine whether there was statistical evidence that the associated population means were significantly different. Our choice was motivated by the fact that our population was not homogeneous because of the different sample sizes of our groups. When the sample sizes for each group differ the p -value is not trustworthy and hence using a normal sample T-test is not advised. The Independent Samples t Test includes an approximate t statistic "Welch t-Test" that is not based on assuming equal population variances. The Welch t-test (Unequal Variance t Test) may be used when equal variances among populations cannot be assumed. It is statistically ethical before performing the independent sample t-test to assess if data meet several requirements such as distribution (normality) of the data and outliers. To assess the data distribution, we checked the skewness and kurtosis of continuous variables for all four scales in the study. Skewness is a measure

of the symmetry, or lack thereof, of a distribution. Kurtosis measures the tail-heaviness of the distribution. Inspection of the continuous variables showed no skewness for the study variables. Values were smaller than +3 and -3; the acceptable values of skewness fall between -3 and +3 (Griffin & Steinbrecher, 2013). All the kurtosis for all four variables were less than -10 to +10 (kurtosis is appropriate from a range of -10 to +10), indicating no variable with a heavy-tailed distribution. 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). In correlation, we first assessed the relationship between individual variables from different data sets to see if the same variables in pre-service and in-service are related.

Then, we conducted another correlation analysis with merged variables from two data sets against the gender and age of the teachers (see table 2). Before running the independent sample t-Test, it is advised to check the descriptive statistics and graphs to get an idea of what to expect. So we started by comparing the two groups by assessing the means and standard deviation (see table 3). After assessing the group means, we then ran an independent sample t-Test to assess whether there was a significant statistical means difference between in-service and pre-service teachers' beliefs on parental involvement. By running an independent sample t-test we are assessing two statistical tests, "Levene's test for equality of variance and test statistics. There are two hypotheses for Levene's test which are either we accept the population of variances of groups one and two are equal, or we reject the hypothesis that the population variances of groups one and two are not equal.

Correlation between Study Variables

The correlation analyses of the individual variables showed relationships for some variables and some unrelated ones. In the first correlation analysis between individual pre-service and in-service variables, results showed a strong positive association between the variables of the same group. Only two variables were correlated across groups, but they did not have a positive relationship. On teacher beliefs about parents' efficacy in helping children succeed in school, findings showed a negative relationship between pre-service and in-service perceptions of parents' efficacy in helping children

succeed. This was the same with teacher belief in the importance of specific involvement practices, which showed a negative correlation between pre-service and in-service teachers on the variable (See table 1). The correlation results for merged variables from two data sets against the gender and age of the teachers showed no correlation between gender and all study variables. Results showed a strong negative correlation between pre and in-service teachers' age with teacher beliefs on parents' efficacy to help the child succeed in school and a positive relationship with teachers' beliefs on the importance of specific involvement practices (See table 1).

Table 1. Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations of all Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. In-service Teacher's Beliefs about Parent Involvement								
2. In-service Teacher Beliefs about Parent Involvement in girls education	.189*							
3. In-service Teacher Beliefs about Parents' Efficacy helping children succeed in school	.369***	.006						
4. In-service Teacher Beliefs about the importance of specific involvement practices	.259***	.453***	.134					
5. Pre-service Teacher Beliefs about Parent Involvement	-.090	-.049	-.100	-.155*				
6. Pre-service Teachers' beliefs about Parental involvement in girls' education	-.138	-.103	-.138	-.059	.398***			
7. Pre-service Teacher Beliefs about Parents' Efficacy in helping children succeed in school	-.067	-.053	-.154*	-.117	.213***	.159***		
8. Pre-service Teacher Beliefs about the importance of specific involvement practices	-.105	-.123	-.130	-.184*	.323***	.247***	.438***	
<i>M</i>	4.99	5.73	4.26	5.35	4.85	5.73	4.67	4.87
<i>SD</i>	0.43	0.49	0.65	0.46	0.60	0.59	0.83	0.66
<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>	.60	.60	.60	.87	.56	.66	.54	.81

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$. Pearson correlations were calculated between all variables.

Table 2. Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations of Gender and Age of Participants with all Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Gender						
2. Age	-.029					
3. Teacher Beliefs about Parental Involvement	.037	.035				
4. Teacher Beliefs about Parents' Efficacy to help the child succeed in school	.052	-.099**	.206**			
5. Teacher beliefs about the importance of specific involvement practices	.058	.117**	.331**	.292**		
6. Teacher Beliefs about Parent Involvement on girls Education	-.070	.003	.361**	.129**	.265**	
<i>M</i>	1.38	2.35	4.89	4.57	4.98	5.73
<i>SD</i>	0.48	1.02	0.06	0.81	0.65	0.56

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$. Spearman non-parametric correlations were calculated between the gender and age of participants and other variables; Pearson correlations were calculated between all other variables.

Group Means for in-service and Pre-service Teachers for all Variables

On the group means, the finding showed that the means for pre-service teachers on the teacher beliefs on parental involvement ($M = 4.85, SD = 0.60$) and teacher beliefs on parents' efficacy in helping children succeed in school ($M = 4.67, SD = 0.83$). Findings show a higher mean for in-service teachers on the importance of some parental involvement practices ($M = 5.35, SD = 0.65$) and an equal mean for both pre-service and in-service teachers on teacher beliefs on parental involvement in promoting girls' education (see table 2). The output of the independent sample t-test of four variables showed that the p-value of Levine's test for three variables was $p < .001$, which is very small. Hence, we rejected the null of Levene's test that the population variances of pre-service and in-service are not equal. Thus, the variance in pre-service teachers is significantly different from that of in-service teachers. This was shown by $F(14.89, 676) = -2.90, p < .001$ for teacher beliefs in parental involvement, $F(11.74, 676) = 5.81, p < .001$ for teacher beliefs in parent efficacy for helping children succeed in school; and $F(23.25, 676) = -8.76, p < .001$ for teacher beliefs on the importance of specific involvement practices.

The output shows that teacher beliefs in parental involvement in girls' education were the only more significant P-value. The larger p-value indicates equal variance between in-service and pre-service teachers over the importance of parental involvement in promoting girls' education. This can also be confirmed by the equal means of the two groups on the beliefs on the importance of parental involvement in promoting girls' education. We then checked the t-test for equality means to assess the actual independent sample t-test by subtracting the second group's mean from the first group's mean. The results showed that there was a significant negative difference in teacher beliefs on parental involvement ($t_{401.66} = -3.41, p < .001$), ($t_{362.50} = 6.54, p < .001$) for teacher beliefs on parent efficacy for helping children succeed in school and ($t_{412.92} = -10.44, p < .001$) for teacher beliefs on the importance of specific involvement practices between pre-service and in-service. This can also be shown by group means (Table 2). The last part of the independent test, which is also essential, is the confidence interval of the difference (CI). Results showed no 0 within the interval, and the CI's lower and upper boundaries contained either negative or positive numbers. This

assured us that our result was significant and agreed with the small p-value of the significance test. If the lower CI contained a negative number and the upper contained a positive number, then our results could be not significant at a chosen significant level $\alpha = 0.05$ (see table 4).

Table 3: Compared Means for in-service and Pre-Service Teachers for all Dependent Variables

Groups		1	2	3	4
1	Mean	4.85	4.67	4.87	5.73
	N	509	509	509	509
	Std. Deviation	0.60	0.83	0.66	0.59
2	Mean	4.50	4.26	5.35	5.73
	N	169	169	169	169
	Std. Deviation	0.43	0.65	0.46	0.49
Total	Mean	4.89	4.57	4.99	5.73
	N	678	678	678	678
	Std. Deviation	0.57	0.81	0.65	0.56

Key. 1: TeacherBeliefsabout Parental Involvement, 2: TeacherBeliefsabout Parents Efficacy 3: TeacherBeliefsabout Importance of some parental involvement practices 4: TeacherBeliefsabout Parental Involvement in girl's education

Table 4: Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	p	t	df	p	M Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Teacher Beliefs about Parental Involvement	Equal variances assumed	14.89	.000	-2.90	676	.004	-0.14	0.05	-0.24	-0.05
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.41	401.66	.001	-0.14	0.042	-0.23	-0.06
Teacher Beliefs about Parents' Efficacy	Equal variances assumed	11.74	.001	5.81	676	.001	0.41	0.07	0.27	0.55
	Equal variances not assumed			6.54	362.50	.001	0.41	0.06	0.28	0.53
teacher beliefs about the importance of specific involvement practices	Equal variances assumed	23.25	.000	-8.76	676	.001	-0.48	0.05	-0.59	-0.37
	Equal variances not assumed			-10.45	412.92	.001	-0.48	0.05	-0.57	-0.39
Teacher beliefs about Parental Involvement in girls education	Equal variances assumed	0.00	.950	0.00	676	.999	0.00	0.05	-0.09	0.10
	Equal variances not assumed			0.00	341.88	.999	0.00	0.04	-0.09	0.09

Note: Chosen significance level $\alpha = 0.05$

Discussion

Teachers' positive attitudes toward parents' educational involvement are highly significant in parents' decisions about involvement in their children's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Although parent-teacher interaction is crucial for children's education, little attention has been paid to this issue in teacher education programmes (Baum & McMurray-Schwarz, 2004; Uludag, 2008). There is limited training available for teachers on how to work with families. Hence, most teachers enter school unprepared to understand, design, implement, and evaluate practices of partnerships with their students' families (Hornby & Witte, 2010). This study assessed pre-service and in-service teacher's beliefs of parental involvement in Tanzania by examining teacher's general beliefs about the importance of parental involvement, teacher beliefs about the importance of specific parental involvement practices, teacher beliefs about parent involvement in girls' education and teacher beliefs about parent efficacy for helping children succeed in school.

Comparing pre and in-service teacher attitudes is essential in developing an intervention to boost teacher-parent partnership through teacher education and ongoing professional development. The study showed similarities and differences in pre-service and in-service teachers' beliefs on parental involvement variables. Results showed the difference between pre-and in-service teachers' beliefs on the parents' efficacy in helping the child succeed in school and the general perceptions of parental involvement. The mean scores of the two variables showed a higher mean to pre-service teachers than in-service teachers. This finding has two explanations: pre-service teachers are more excited and have higher hopes and beliefs about parental involvement. Second, due to several challenges in working with parents that in-service teachers might face daily, they may resent parents and parental involvement. Cheung and Kam (2019) showed that pre-service teachers perceived engaging families in school decisions as the least important and feasible. This differs from our findings; pre-service teachers are optimistic about family-school engagement. These findings are promising to Tanzania and give the impression that teacher education preparatory programmes can efficiently prepare teachers to work with parents. Katz and Bauch (1999)

asserted that pre-service teachers who feel more confident with parents are likelier to involve parents in the future. The findings also highlight the need for ongoing in-service teacher training to support teachers and encourage them through challenges. Teachers need to receive special training on parental involvement in teachers' colleges in Tanzania and hence might find it challenging to work with parents in later years. Many teachers in Tanzania face challenges related to poor teaching and learning environment, oversized classes and lack of explicit policy and guidelines for teacher professional development, which might affect their teaching efficacy and their perception of parental involvement. The findings also revealed that in-service teachers possessed firmer beliefs of the importance of some parental involvement practices. This was expected since in-service teachers have daily experience interacting with parents, while pre-service teachers might have yet to gain experience. It is noted here that parental involvement is not included as a course or aspect in the teacher education programme; therefore, pre-service teachers may need more knowledge of specific parental involvement practices.

The finding aligns with the results of Cheung and Kam (2019), who found that the pre-service teachers felt least confident in implementing parental involvement. These results raise a concern about the need of early preparation for pre-service teachers to help them develop basic knowledge and skill for partnering with families. Hiatt (2001) affirmed that teachers who have received pre-service teacher preparation training have reported feeling well-prepared and able to engage in many parenting practices. Uludag (2008) suggested that teacher education programmes that integrate parental involvement instruction and activities help pre-service teachers become better prepared and carry positive opinions toward parental involvement. On the relationship between age and gender of the pre-service and in-service teachers with the four parental involvement variables, age showed a negative relationship with teachers' beliefs on parents' efficacy to help the child succeed in school. This suggests that the younger teachers believed more in parents' efficacy than more aged teachers. This finding differs from the findings of Abdullah et al. (2011), which showed that the higher the teachers' age, the more they demonstrated positive attitudes toward parental involvement. This is an alarm that teachers in Tanzania face challenges in

their teaching career which may be caused by different challenges that affect their interaction with parents and their perceptions towards parental involvement. This also raises the need for active in-service teacher training to help teachers with ongoing skills and motivations to work with parents. Similarities showed that pre-service and in-service teachers had the same beliefs on the role of parental involvement in promoting girls' education. This is a significant finding given that girls' children in Tanzania still face social-cultural challenges related to gender inequalities, including violence, poverty and a lack of access to age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health education, which accelerate early marriage and school pregnancies. A report from the United Nations Tanzania (2021) in Tanzania shows that 690,001 girls become pregnant every year when they should be in school. To help girls stay and finish school, teachers and parents must work together to create a safe environment for girls at school and home. A similar positive belief of pre-and in-service teachers on parental involvement in promoting girls' education is a good sign that teachers can actively work with parents to support girls' education success. Hence, teacher education programmes must stress parental involvement to prepare teachers to work with parents to help girls stay in school and complete their education. The study of Famade (2015) affirmed that teachers believe that parent involvement is an essential factor in girl child education and that if both parties work together, girl child education will improve significantly. He stressed that though teachers have many roles to play in helping girls' students, the collaborative effort between parents and teachers on girls' education is more to be desired.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study need to be considered in light of the following strengths and limitations. This study is crucial for educators, teachers, policymakers and researchers as it sheds light on the importance of teacher perceptions of active parental involvement. This study gives a vast understanding of the role of positive parental involvement in facilitating active parental involvement and stimulating school-family partnerships. Teachers are fundamental pillars of families' practical involvement in school activities; hence, assessing their beliefs is essential for effective parental involvement. Literature shows that most researchers separately study pre-service and in-service teachers' perceptions of parental involvement.

Comparing pre-service and in-service teachers' perceptions of parental involvement is significant in creating a wholesome mechanism for teacher preparation programmes. This study can help education planners see how in-service teachers perceived parental involvement and evaluate essential aspects to include in pre-service teacher programmes which can be helpful in later years of teachers in schools. Including teacher beliefs on the importance of parental involvement in girls' education variable is the strength of this study. It is essential for all education stakeholders should advocate parental involvement in girls' education. However, teachers need to be more aware and be keener to work with parents as crucial partners with equal responsibility to create a safe environment for girls at school and encourage parents to do the same at home. Including this aspect in pre-service teacher and ongoing in-service professional development programmes is essential. This study reports only cross-sectional data, which limits us from making casual-relationship conclusions. In the future, it might be interesting to do a longitudinal study to assess how pre-service teachers' perception change from teachers' colleges to their earlier years in school.

Implications and Conclusions

Parental involvement in children's education is yet to be widely practised in Tanzania as in the Western world and is not well incorporated in teacher education preparatory programmes. In this light, educators and researchers must continue exploring teachers' perceptions of parental involvement because teachers' attitudes towards parental involvement play an essential role in the ways teachers approach children's families and motivate partnerships with parents. Effective and active parental involvement depends much on positive beliefs and the readiness of teachers to work with parents. Policymakers need to give parental involvement sufficient coverage in teacher education curricula to give teachers foundational skills and knowledge on parental involvement. To strengthen parental involvement in girls' education, teachers need to be aware of their role in motivating parental involvement in girls' education by creating a strong partnership with parents to create a protective environment for girls and motivate girls to realise their educational potential. The assessment of teachers' beliefs on the parents' efficacy in helping children succeed in schools is crucial because if parents

do not believe in their abilities, they cannot appreciate and value their participation in educational activities. It is imperative to encourage parents to believe, trust and help parents to participate in their children's education actively.

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