Original Article

Parent's Perspectives on Boarding Schools in Primary Education Settings: The Case of Std Vi and Vii in Magharibi B District Unguja

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ABSTRACT

This paper is set to determine the Parents' perspectives on boarding schools in Zanzibar. The study is expected to provide insights into the Parents' perspectives and experiences regarding boarding schools in primary school settings, especially for STD VI and VII. The study will shed light on the benefits, challenges, and potential outcomes associated with boarding in primary school settings from different parents. The study utilized the Social Learning Theory developed by Albert Bandura, which is a psychological framework that emphasizes the role of observation, imitation, and modeling in the learning process. This theory highlighted the impact of models in shaping behavior, both positive and negative, and demonstrated how children could imitate aggressive behavior they witnessed in adults. In this study, data was gathered directly from primary sources through various methods such as interviews, Questionnaires, and group discussions in order to give chances for any respondent to give out his or her view about boarding schools in primary education settings in confidence and freeway. The findings indicate that parents prefer boarding schools as they provide a conducive learning environment, help in students' social development, and safety in boarding schools is well-managed. Also, boarding schools have adequate resources and facilities and communication between parents and boarding schools is effective. The study concludes that parents hold varied perspectives on boarding schools, emphasizing their perceived benefits such as conducive learning environments, social development opportunities, and well-managed safety protocols. These positive views are complemented by concerns about resource adequacy, communication effectiveness, and the rigidity of the boarding school environment.

INTRODUCTION

In Zanzibar, like any other parts of Tanzania, parents send their children to boarding and day schools, but most of the parents send their children to boarding schools just because boarding schools offer an opportunity for students from different backgrounds, to get education in affordable learning environment regardless of different challenges. Different researchers suggest that boarding schools provide a unique educational environment for students, particularly those of early age. According to Brophy and Good (1974), parents consider boarding schools as an option for their young children for various reasons, such as the desire for a focused and disciplined learning environment, exposure to a diverse community, and opportunities for personal growth and independence.

In a study conducted by Creswell (2014), it was found that parents have specific expectations when considering boarding school education for their young children. These expectations include academic hardship for their children, character development, social skills enhancement, and preparation for future educational and social opportunities. However, the decision to send their children to boarding schools at an early age has faced a lot of challenges that destroy the child more than build him or her. Research by Collins and Gan (2013) suggests that parents may have concerns about the emotional well-being and adjustment of their children in a boarding school setting. They may also worry about the potential impact on family dynamics and the distance between them and their children.

By exploring parents' perspectives on boarding school education in Primary settings, this study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the factors influencing their decision-making process. The findings will inform educational institutions and policymakers about the needs and expectations of parents, ultimately improving the educational experience and outcomes for students in boarding schools. This study will investigate how parent's perspectives about this may either be effective or not effective for the development of our future generations. The study concentrated on what parents would say about boarding schools for children of the lower age in the Mafia.

Statement of the Problem

Different views have shown that parents have different perspectives about keeping their children at boarding schools, others support while others do not support keeping their children at boarding schools. The decision to send a child on to boarding school is a complex one that involves various factors. Understanding parents' perspectives on boarding school in Primary education settings is essential to address their needs, concerns, and expectations. However, there is a lack of comprehensive research on this topic, particularly considering the specific inferences and implications for parents.

By exploring this problem, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the reasons behind parents' choices regarding the boarding school education for their young children. It also seeks to identify the potential benefits and challenges associated with this educational option, as perceived by parents. The findings can contribute to the development of effective strategies and support systems for parents, educational institutions, and policymakers, ultimately enhancing the quality of boarding school experiences for students in primary education.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study was to investigate parents' perspectives on boarding schools in primary education settings in Tanzania, the case of Magharibi B District Unguja. Specifically, to assess the perspectives of parents regarding boarding schools in primary education settings and to check if

boarding supervisors (matron and patron) face challenges concerning boarding schools.

Research Questions

What are the parents' perspectives on boarding school in primary education settings? This question is very crucial for this study.

Significance of the study

A study of this nature is very significant as it will explore the parent's perspectives, both students in boarding and those who do not have students in boarding about boarding programs in primary education settings, and give out suggestions according to the views given out.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Before we make our review, we think it is important to clarify two concepts that are crucial to the understanding of our paper. Those terms are perception and parents. Perception is the process by which people translate sensory impressions into a coherent and unified view of the world around them, Gamoran and Berends (1987). Though necessarily based on incomplete and unverified information, perception is equated with reality for most practical purposes and guides human behavior in general. In this study, perception means the positive or negative attitude of parents on boarding schools in primary education settings. Another term to be defined is "parents" which refers to the individuals who bring a child into the world and are responsible for the upbringing, care, and nurturing of that child. The concept of parenthood is deeply rooted in various cultural, social, and psychological perspectives, and its meaning can be interpreted in different ways based on factors such as historical context, legal definitions, and personal beliefs.

In many cultures, parents are regarded as the primary caregivers and moral guardians of their children, responsible for their physical, emotional, and psychological well-being, (Brown and David, 2018). From a legal standpoint, parents are often recognized as having legal and moral obligations to provide for their children's needs and welfare, including shelter, food, education, and health care, (Brown and David, 2018). Parents' perspectives towards boarding schools in primary education settings

The study revealed that parents' perspectives towards boarding schools for students of early age change through the decades with legal and social changes from different countries, governments, and of course families (Flores, 2021). This reveals that boarding schools for young children developed in individual countries and keep on changing accordingly. It is from this point of view, that younger borders as a system in almost all parts of the world are geared to serve some purposes which cannot be concerned.

The new emphasis on boarding schools for younger children is a result of working mothers. However, the care and love of the mothers for younger children influenced even boarding schools for young children to employ more teacher mothers to take care of the young boarders (Flores, 2021). This is because women were seen as being suited for this role of the teacher in caring the younger children from three (3) years of age as compared to men.

In Kenya, parliament insisted that the proper age for boarding school should be twelve years of age when children are old enough to be in a boarding school (Ayalon, 2019). These boarding schools have both advantages and disadvantages for the young children.

In a study conducted by Hargreaves, (2021) at Salafiyah III Islamic boarding schools in Pekalongan with research subjects ranging in age from 4-5 years old, it was stated that the life of the first 5 years of children will have a tremendous impact on their social-emotional development. This is inseparable from parents who pray for early childhood and provide more motivation to make it grow and develop optimally, such as children being able to memorize al-quran mastering general science, and cognitive and psychosocial development.

The review on reasons for Boarding Schools

Death of the parents and prolonged illness, this is amongst the reasons for boarding to young learners. During the First World War, there were increased in orphans due to the death of the parents and prolonged illness (Hattie, 2012).

Having no primary school nearby is another reason for having boarding at the early age where children were sent away to boarding school from as early as

age 5 (Mickelson, 2015). Additionally, the Wrangell Institute enrolled children roughly from ages 5 to 15. While Wrangell served children who were orphans or who had been removed from families due to problems, it also served many children who were taken away from healthy families living in communities that did not have primary schools (Johnston, &Wildy, 2016). With few exceptions, students were forced to go away to school to have space and enjoy themselves; this would encourage developing traumatic situations in the child to feel neglected by the parents where Oedipus developed (Hattie, J. 2012). In this view, Michael insisted that the parents should understand their roles which cannot be replaced by boarding schools.

Kikaho, (2020) argues that as much as what boarding schools might provide as solutions to unsettled families, as stated by Hornby, & Witte, C. (2014) Child abuse in the home and change in behavior when they are left with relatives; they may not completely replace the role of parents, especially at this tender age. Sometimes, the child's family may be dealing with complex situations such as severe mental illness, physical disability, illness, drug or alcohol problems, domestic violence, homelessness, acute financial hardship, instability, and may be on the verge of breakdown (Gentry, M. 2016).

Death of their parents, on the other hand, the child may be cared for by siblings, grandparents, aunties or uncles, or other extended family members because of their parents' deaths, or the inability of the parents to care well and safely for them.

Divorce, single parents, mistreatment of babysitters, and lack of people in the home is a significant in the boarding schools for younger children (Mickelson, R. A. 2015). Further, Loveless, T. (2013) argued that the negative effects of moving for children may be due to the loss of social capital in the short term after moving. Children develop their social skills from a very young age, as they interact with parents, relatives, teachers, and other fellows. This interaction plays a major role in the personality development of the child. As in traditional Chinese culture, many grandparents live with the family, and because of China's one-child policy, sometimes there are four grandparents, two parents, and just one child in a home. Some parents worry that the

grandparents will spoil the child, so they send them to boarding schools (Ladson-Billings, G. 2020). On the contrary, Creswell, (2014) observes that children who board are forced to survive psychologically to a great cost. Duffell insists that "in order to cope with their loss of family and to adapt to their school environment, children unconsciously construct a strategic survival personality and that such personality structure invariably becomes counter-productive in adult life" (p. 51). Also, these younger children experience bullying and sexual abuse from the grown-up children. This shows the bad experience that boarding schools bring to the life of these younger children. However, the boarding school experience is not uniform; it is multidimensional and students who live in boarding schools tell astonishing stories of courage, resistance, and adaptation (Mkandawire, T. 2005). Furthermore, boarding offers opportunities to form, and explore in depth, a wide variety of social networks and relationships. These sentiments suggest that although the food, environment, peer interaction, and freedom help the child to stay in the boarding school, it will never replace the parental love and relationship with the child. The academic performance of young boarders and the experiences of boarding scholars and day scholars differ depending on each individual and the school attached to it. Where by the influence of the school for young learners is a vehicle for reflecting the future personality of an individual which includes mental, physical, social, and emotional (Boler, J. 2008).

Boarding schools seem to have varied benefits for the learners' future lives. The benefits include improving academically as they have all the time available to immerse in an education environment, and extracurricular opportunities to get involved in new hobbies as they interact with others in the evening and on weekends. Other benefits are built in social life, where children will be living with friends for fun, fostering independence for self-reliance, and also an appropriate place for busy parents against hostile life at home.

Boarding schools still influence various traumatic experiences that affect learners' personalities (Collins, C. A., and Gan, L. 2013). They also found out that the environment affects personality

development as a result of a lack of emotional expression. However, the respondents were of the view that sending children to boarding schools can help ease the psychological and educational challenges of absent parenting (Loveless, T. 2013).

Mkandawire, T. (2005) emphasized that boarding schools offer many opportunities for all children, including an extended range of education, supervised homework time ("prep"), before and after school activities, and high-quality pastoral care. This is particularly important for vulnerable children coming from chaotic homes or homes where they are not supported to make the most of their educational opportunities. Further, boarding schools can bring stability to children's lives, they can also reduce education barriers and improve educational outcomes. Mickelson, R. A. (2015) states that boarding can be one way of meeting the needs of young people in difficult situations to prevent family breakdown or a formal move into the care system. It can also help to raise the aspirations of the child and everyone around.

Theoretical Framework

This study has used Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Kikaho, T. (2020) The theory emphasizes the role of observation, imitation, and modeling in the learning process. This theory highlighted the impact of models in shaping behavior, both positive and negative, and demonstrated how children could imitate aggressive behavior they witnessed in adults. This theory suggests that children learn through observation and modeling of others. Boarding schools may not provide adequate socialization opportunities for children to learn from peers and interact with adults in meaningful ways (Bandura, 1977).

In the context of the study, Bandura's theory will highlight understanding about impacts of boarding schools on students in primary education settings. According to Bandura's theory, keeping the lower aged students at boarding school has an impact on the behavior of the children, both positive and negative.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study Area

This study was conducted among the public primary and private schools in Magharibi B District. The reason for selecting this district is the availability of many boarding schools that can help much with the access for data collection.

Research Design

The current study employed a case study research design. The importance of choosing this design is to provide detailed information on the real situations concerning to a particular situation. This study used a mixed research approach. It involves collecting both types of data, conducting separate analyses, and then merging the results in some meaningful way. The mixed research approach was preferred since it enables the researcher to capture the feelings, attitudes, and expectations of the participants as well as collect objective and generalized data, respectively. This approach also facilitates the collection of different kinds of information and triangulations to generate great confidence in arriving at a conclusion.

Targeted Population,

The targeted population of this study comprised parents with children at boarding schools and those who do not have children at boarding schools, head teachers of the schools with boarding schools, and matrons/patrons in schools with boarding in Zanzibar town. The sample size will be 60 participants as distributed hereunder.

Table 1: Distribution of Sample Size

S/No	Respondent	Ratio
1.	Parents with students in boarding	30
2.	Parents with no students in boarding	30
3	Headteachers	5
4	Matrons	5

Source: Field Data (2024)

This study used purposive sampling techniques and random sampling to get respondents for the study. A purposive sampling technique was used in sampling the parents of the students at boarding schools and those with no students at boarding, Parents were to give out their views about the benefits and impacts of boarding schools in primary education settings. Five head teachers were used for this study. The selection was based on the head teachers with more than five years of leadership experience. teachers were to contribute about the benefits and the impacts of boarding schools and the performance of students' progress, and the Matron/Patron gave out their views about what they know about the daily life situations of the students because they are familiar with them.

A random sampling technique was also used to select parents from different villages who have children in boarding schools who then provided their perspectives concerning boarding schools. Parents from different villages were selected in different ways to make sure that, there was no kind of bias, for example researcher wished to get five parents from five different villages by selecting from the box that he could prepare.

Data Collection Methods

In this study, data was gathered directly from primary sources through various methods such as Interviews, Questionnaires, and group discussions in order to give a chance for any respondent to give out his or her view about boarding schools in primary education settings in confidence and freeway.

Questionnaires; in this study, questionnaires were set out to gather parents' views. The researcher used Standardized Swahili to set questionnaires, just because most of the respondents use Swahili language as their means of communication. Thereafter that was translated to English language.

Interview; an interview is a method of data collection in qualitative research where a researcher interacts directly with participants to gather information, insights, and perspectives on a particular topic of interest Kikaho, T. (2020). The researcher asked questions and engaged in conversation with the participants, aiming to elicit detailed responses that provided valuable qualitative data. In this study, the researcher also used interviews as a tool for gathering and collecting data from the respondents to know about the parents' views of boarding schools in primary education settings. Because of time, the researcher used structured interviews, whereby pre-determined set of questions in a specific order were asked. The questions were standardized and did not deviate from the established script.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The general over view of the Perspectives of Parents Regarding Boarding Schools in Primary Education Settings is as indicated in table 2 below.

Table 2: Parent Responses on Boarding Schools

Statement	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
Boarding schools provide a conducive learning environment.	75%	25%
Boarding schools help in students' social development.	80%	20%
Safety in boarding schools is well-managed.	70%	30%
Boarding schools have adequate resources and facilities.	65%	35%
Communication between parents and boarding schools is effective.	60%	40%

Boarding schools provide a conducive learning environment

75% of respondents agreed that boarding schools provide a conducive learning environment, suggesting that these schools have efficient organization and retrieval systems for learning materials. Meanwhile, 25% of respondents disagreed, indicating that there are still areas where improvements should be made in the learning environment of boarding schools. From the field area, one of the head teachers responded:

> *"The structured environment in boarding schools helps children to focus more on their studies without the distractions they might face at home."*

A study by Hornby, G., & Witte, C. (2014) highlighted that boarding schools with well-structured learning environments contribute

significantly to academic success. The findings also align with the findings of Gamoran, A., &Berends, M. (1987), who noted that students in boarding schools often perform better academically due to fewer distractions and more focused study time.

Despite the positive feedback, the 25% who disagreed may have concerns about the rigidity of the boarding school environment, which might not suit all children. Understanding individual learning needs and providing a flexible learning environment could address these concerns. Additionally, a study by Gentry, M. (2016) emphasized the importance of personalized learning plans in boarding schools to cater to diverse learning styles.

Boarding Schools Help in Students' Social Development

80% of respondents agreed that boarding schools help in students' social development, reflecting the positive impact of living and interacting closely with peers. However, 20% of respondents disagreed, suggesting that some parents might be concerned about their child's social skills in such settings. From the field area, Matron from one of the schools had this to say:

> "Boarding schools offer various extracurricular activities that promote teamwork and social skills among students."

Kim et al. (2022) reported that the structured social environment in boarding schools helps students develop essential life skills such as empathy and leadership. The 20% disagreement could stem from concerns about bullying or the lack of individualized attention. According to a study by Hargreaves, A. (2021), schools need to implement robust anti-bullying policies and provide counseling services to address these concerns. Ensuring a safe and supportive environment is crucial for social development in boarding schools.

Safety in Boarding Schools is Well-Managed

70% of respondents agreed that safety in boarding schools is well-managed, indicating general satisfaction with the security measures in place. Meanwhile, 30% of respondents disagreed, highlighting areas for potential improvement in

safety protocols. From the field area, respondents commented:

> "The presence of dedicated staff and strict security measures ensures that children are safe at all times."

According to Magoka, S. M., Wawire, C., & Mugambi, D. (2021), effective safety measures in boarding schools include 24/7 supervision, secure campus facilities, and well-trained staff. A study by Hattie, J. (2012) emphasized that regular safety drills and clear communication channels significantly enhance the sense of security among students and parents. The 30% disagreement might reflect concerns about specific incidents or perceived lapses in security. As noted by Gentry, M. (2016) continuous assessment and upgrading of safety protocols are essential. Engaging parents in safety discussions and providing transparent updates can also help alleviate concerns.

Boarding Schools Have Adequate Resources and Facilities

65% of respondents agreed that boarding schools have adequate resources and facilities, suggesting general satisfaction with the infrastructure. However, 35% of respondents disagreed, indicating a need for improvements in resources and facilities. From the field area, respondents mentioned:

> "Well-equipped classrooms and access to various learning resources enhance the educational experience in boarding schools."

A study by Johnston, O., &Wildy, H. (2016) highlighted the importance of modern facilities and resources in enhancing the learning experience. Similarly, a report by UNICEF (2020) emphasized that access to adequate resources, such as libraries and sports facilities, contributes to overall student well-being and academic performance.

The 35% disagreement may point to disparities in resource allocation or outdated facilities. As suggested by Barbirye, A., (2019) regular investment in infrastructure and technology is crucial. Ensuring equitable distribution of resources can also address these concerns and improve the overall educational experience.

Communication Between Parents and Boarding Schools is Effective

60% of respondents agreed that communication between parents and boarding schools is effective, showing general satisfaction with the information flow. However, 40% of respondents disagreed, indicating significant room for improvement. From the field area, respondents said, *"Regular updates and parent-teacher meetings help us stay informed about our child's progress and well-being."*

A study by Gentry, M. (2016) found that schools that provide regular updates and have clear communication channels experience higher levels of parental satisfaction. The 40% disagreement suggests that some parents feel out of the loop regarding their child's progress. Implementing multiple communication channels, such as emails, newsletters, and regular meetings, can address these concerns. According to Barbirye, A., (2019), personalized communication and feedback systems can significantly enhance parent-school relationships.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings underscore the nuanced perspectives surrounding boarding schools in primary education settings. While many stakeholders appreciate the structured learning environments and developmental opportunities offered by boarding schools, significant challenges exist. These include addressing student emotional needs, improving communication between schools and parents, ensuring adequate resources and safety measures. Despite these challenges, boarding schools play a crucial role in fostering academic discipline, social skills, and holistic development among students.

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