

Original Paper

Assessing School Community Involvement in Implementing School Summary Report Cards A Case study of Mpanda District in Katavi Region, Tanzania

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Abstract

We describe here a study that assessed school community involvement in implementing a School Summary Report Card (SSRC) in public secondary schools: in Mpanda District in Katavi Region, Tanzania. The study had three specific objectives, which were to evaluate the awareness of the school community in the implementation of SSRC in school progress, examine the level of community participation in the implementation of SSRC, and explore the challenges of implementing SSRC. The study was guided by an open systems theory which originated from the General System Theory and approach by Ludwing Von Bertalanffy, in 1950s after World War II (Scott & Davis, 2016). Data were collected through questionnaires to 45 teachers; interviews with 5 heads of schools, 3 Ward Educational Officers, and 1 District School Quality Assurance Officer. Focused Group Discussions were conducted with 50 students and 35 community members. We also performed school observation and documents review. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were used to analyze the data. The findings indicate that the majority of the teachers and community members were not made aware of the use of SSRC. Low involvement of the school community members in the implementation of SSRC and also there varying interpretations of common symbols in the SSRC and mismatch between ratings of the SSRC indicators and the final valuation of the SSRC. The study recommends the conduction of a broader sensitization of the school community on what constitutes SSRC, and how to implement it to bring about an impact on the school and community

Keywords

Involvement, School community, School summary report cards

1. Introduction

The Summary School Report Card (SSRC) is an approach in delivering information to key school stakeholders [school management, teachers, parents, pupils/students, and communities] about schools' status in Tanzania to enhance school quality improvement (URT, 2017). The SSRC displays a number of school performance indicators, which include, the number of qualified teachers, students' enrolment and dropout, teacher-student ratio, infrastructure, student engagement, and school quality grades in both quantitative and qualitative forms (URT, 2017). The information provided by the SSRC is valuable for education stakeholders to comprehend the status quo of the schools for the improvement of education quality.

In essence, the SSRC aims at increasing the involvement of the school community in the administration of school activities to improve the quality of education provided to students (Florez, 2012; UNESCO, 2019; Oregon Department of Education, 2021). By involving students, parents, and communities ability to better understand and use the information on how their schools are being managed and performing, their voices can be strengthened to demand better quality of education for all children (Florez, 2012; Aryeh-Adjei, 2021). However, Nnunduma and Kopoka (2022) posit that in many countries, parents and the community at large are typically unaware of how well schools are doing and have little or no role in actively contributing to the dialogue on how to improve education since they are normally uninformed of how well or bad schools are performing. Jacobsen, Saultz and Snyder (2013) reported that school report cards improved the involvement of the community by providing an excellent opportunity for school leaders to communicate with parents, community members, and the public upon release of such reports.

In Pakistan, Andrabi, Das, and Khwaja (2017) revealed that school report cards informed the school community of the situation prevailing at school, and stirred the discussion of improving the delivery of quality education. It was reported that the school report card influenced large improvements in student enrolment and learning outcomes such as improvement in student test scores. For further improvement, this report was shared by the whole community at the end of the academic year. In Latin America, experience shows that the school report card was lauded and much publicized for improving involvement and school performance (Cameron, Moses, & Gillies, 2006).

In African countries, school report cards were found to enhance school-community collaboration in solving school problems (Aheto-Tsegah, 2011). However, it is reported that the awareness of the community regarding school report cards was low (UNESCO, 2019). The Gambia is one of the countries that have implemented a school report card system in Africa and the 'education research shows that the more the community is involved in the life of a school, the more likely the school will be successful' (MoBSE, 2011).

Knudsen (2021) found that, in Gambia, the school report card served as a tool for informing the school community about school performance, increased their involvement, and helped in the planning and implementation of school improvement programmes. In Uganda and Namibia, school report card

appears to have succeeded in mobilizing parents, communities, students, and schools to participate in the work and management of their schools (Cameron, Moses, & Gillies, 2006). School Report cards can serve a variety of purposes including increasing accountability in the education system, assisting in school planning and budgeting processes, providing feedback to administrators and teachers, and increasing social participation which can improve civil society (Cheng & Moses 2016).

In Tanzania, there is a long-time debate on the quality of education in the country, and the question of quality education and its indicators is still a matter of contention in Tanzania. The Education and Training Policy (ETP) clearly states that the vision is to develop a Tanzanian who is well-educated and competent and that the policy is guided by the philosophy of Education for Self-Reliance (URT, 2014). Section 5.2 of ETP states that the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) will arrange for opportunities for various stakeholders to contribute to the development of education. Moreover, to improve the quality of education, the government of the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) has implemented different initiatives to ensure that the community participates or is involved in education improvement. The Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) of 2017-2021 strategy number 2 and 5 specifies that all education stakeholders should be aware of national quality standards and quality assurance processes and should be regularly informed of the results of whole school evaluation and learning assessments at different levels, including local communities through online and paper-based digitized reports as well as through a simplified report card, posted publicly at the school (MoEST, 2017)

Therefore, in 2018 the new school quality assurance system introduced the SSRC to ensure that communities can identify how schools are performing against a small set of quality indicators (URT, 2017). The quality indicators included the number of qualified teachers, teacher absenteeism, learners' enrolment, dropout, capitation, teacher-pupil ratio, pupil-to-book ratio, facilities, and services (water, electricity, toilets, desks), teacher teaching, students' engagement, Ward Educational Officer visit, and whole school development plan. The SSRC is produced once every four years by the school quality assurance officers, using information collected during the school self-evaluation, the annual school census, and the Whole School Visit. It mainly focuses on the state of school resources, pedagogical and management practices, and school outcomes to show the school, parents, and the public how the school is performing (URT, 2017). In addition, schools will receive the SSRC not more than 2 months after the date of the Whole School Visit.

The School Quality Assurance Officers/District Education Officers/Ward Education Officers are responsible for ensuring that the SSRC is sent to schools and that schools are displaying the SSRC in a public space for other school community members such as students and parents as well as community members to see (URT, 2017). Though a report by URT says SSRC has been successful by 38% in improving school community involvement and accountability (URT, 2019) the reality of community involvement paints a different picture (Nnunduma & Kopoka, 2022). Katavi region was one of the regions which were reported to have experienced positive impacts of SSRC in Tanzania. The report

revealed that SSRC has improved the community accountability of all school community members in improving school and students' performance through increased community involvement in the implementation of SSRC issues. However, there are no empirical studies to substantiate that claim. This calls for a study to assess the school community's involvement in implementing SSRC. Therefore, this study assesses the school community involvement in implementing SSRC in Mpanda District, Katavi region, Tanzania. For that matter, it assesses the awareness and participation of the school community regarding the implementation of SSRC, and the impact of SSRC on the teaching and learning process, participation or involvement, and dropout rate in Mpanda District, Katavi region, in Tanzania. We chose Katavi region because it is located in the periphery, on the border with Congo, and Zambia and we wondered whether and how the policy implementation had this part of the country.

This study was guided by three specific objectives

- i. To evaluate the awareness of the school community in the implementation of SSRC in school progress in public secondary schools in Mpanda District.
- ii. To examine the level of community participation in the implementation of SSRC in school progress in public secondary schools in Mpanda District.
- iii. To explore the challenges of implementing SSRC in public secondary schools in Mpanda District.

2. Method

2.1 Research Approach

The study employed a concurrent mixed research approach and a cross-sectional descriptive research design to collect data from five public secondary schools.

2.2 Sample size and Sampling Procedures

Kerlinger's formula was used to select the sample size of five secondary schools equivalent to 20% of all public secondary schools in Mpanda district. Also, the formula was used to select a sample of 45 teachers from a total number of 441 teachers in Katavi District. Kerlinger's formula states that for maximum sample size, 10% of the population if it is larger and 30% if the population is small, be used. This study used 10% of the population since the target population was larger, consisting of 441 secondary school teachers in Mpanda district, which is approximately 45 secondary school teachers.

2.2.1 Sampling Procedures

Stratified random sampling was used to select nine teachers in every school based on whether they were in the academic department, heads of departments, school internal quality assurance supervisor, and normal teachers. Moreover, a purposive sampling technique was used to select five school heads, three ward education officers, and one district school quality assurance officer based on their position in the education system. 50 form four students were also purposively selected on the basis that they had been in the secondary education system for four years which provided them with sufficient experience and understanding regarding school management and supervision. Then, stratified random sampling

was used to select 10 form four students in every school based on their position in the education system, based on their sex. In addition, 35 community members were also selected using purposive sampling based on their convenience of participating in the study.

2.4 Methods of Data Collection

Data were collected through questionnaires from 45 teachers, and in-depth interviews with 5 heads of schools, 3 Ward Education Officers (WEOs), and 1 District Quality Assurance Officer (DQAO). Also, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with 50 students and 35 community members/parents to collect data. In addition, documentary review and observation of school documents were done to validate collected data and information collected through questionnaires and interviews. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data collected using a questionnaire and information gathered through interviews and FGDs were analysed using the thematic analysis method.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Awareness of the School Community in the Implementation of SSRC

The first specific objective evaluated the awareness of the school community in the implementation of SSRC in school progress in public secondary schools in Mpanda District, This study mainly evaluated the knowledge of the various school communities regarding the existence of SSRC and its contents and the time taken to receive SSRC since the last whole school visit. In addressing this objective, the study posed one fundamental question, which was intended to determine if the communities were aware of SSRC implementation.

3.1.1 Whole School Visit

Regarding the whole school visit, when respondents were asked if their schools had received a whole school visit all of the surveyed teachers (100%, n=45) in secondary schools agreed that each of their schools had received a whole school visit. When asked to provide a specific time they received a whole school visit most of them said that the last visit took place in 2021 which is almost five years since 2016.

Table 1. School which Received Whole School Visit (n=45)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Yes	45	100.0
No	0	0.0
Total	45	100.0

Source: Field Data (2022).

However, the in-depth interview with DQAO, heads of schools, and WEOs (all administrators) revealed that all schools were visited by quality assurance officers in 2021 and SSRCs had been received. The

researcher physically saw the cards. Moreover, during the FGD with students, it was revealed that the schools were visited by school quality assurance officers. However, the FGD by community members/parents informed this study that they were not aware if their schools had been visited by school quality assurance officers.

In documentary review and observation showed that all 5 sampled secondary schools received whole school visits in 2021 since 2016. This contradicts the policy which stipulates that a whole school visit to secondary schools should be done every four years. But due to the shortage of financial and human resources at the national level, whole school visits are not conducted every four years (see Table 1) The whole school visit aims to appraise schools in the state of school resources, pedagogical and management practices, and school outcomes to show parents and the public how the school is doing (URT, 2017).

3.1.2 Knowledge of SSRC and Its Contents

This study evaluated the school community's knowledge regarding the SSRC as a means of providing feedback on the whole school visit to the school community concerning school progress after the whole school visit. Table 2 shows that of 45 surveyed teachers only 31% (n=14) agreed to be aware of the existence of SSRC, while the majority of them 69% (n=31) said that they did not know anything about SSRC. In this study, the researchers discovered that the majority of the teachers in Mpanda district have little or no knowledge of the SSRC. Moreover, in a follow-up question that asked about the content of SSRC, 21% (n=3) only said that the content of SSRC includes school progress and curriculum implementation, and 14% (n=2) said that SSRC is about displaying the status of school infrastructure, number of students, number of teachers, amount of capitation fund received by a school and truancy of students. On the other hand, the findings indicate that 64% (n=9) of teachers knew nothing and thus had nothing to say. Table 2 shows teacher awareness of the SSRC.

Table 2. Number of Teachers Who Are Aware of SSRC (n=45)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Yes	14	31.0
No	31	69.0
Total	45	100.0

Source: Field Data (2022).

During FGDs with students, the findings indicate that 100% (n=50) of students in sampled secondary schools are unaware of the SSRC despite the researcher showing them how it is supposed to look like. Students said that they have never seen the SSRC let alone being told about it. They complained that the school management team had concealed the card. During this discussion session, students showed their dissatisfaction with the habit of being ignored in the process of planning and decision-making as

well as the implementation of different strategies which aim at improving schools. They said that it is an indicator that school management is against the guideline by choice as they do not want to implement the requirement of the national system as required. In essence, students are the most important stakeholders in the teaching and learning process and the education sector in general. As such, ignoring them will not improve the provision of quality education. Students must be carefully and fully integrated into the education business. Their participation in the implementation of SSRC is crucial for the betterment of the school environment. The findings are within the theoretical foundation of open system theory.

During FGDs with community members/parents in one of the schools, said that they do know it, and one member reported having seen it in the office of the head of school. However, he admitted to just having a glimpse of it, and when asked to explain what SSRC contains, he said he didn't know what was written because he never read it. Also, from observation, the researcher found that in all 5 (100%) sampled secondary schools, only 2 (40%) secondary schools posted SSRC on the board in the office of the head of school, and 3 (60%) secondary schools' SSRC are kept in the cupboard. This is contrary to the directives issued by the MoEST which require the heads of schools to post SSRC on the notice boards so that the school community can access it and get feedback on the whole school visit (URT, 2017).

On top of that, this study found that the visited secondary schools had no notice boards which could be used to post the SSRC for school community members to read and provide their opinions on how to tackle the identified problems. The essence of positing the SSRC on the notice board for the public to view is to inform them about the school's progress and thus motivate the community to take steps in rectifying the situation or encouraging the school management to maintain good performance. Concealing the SSRC from the community deprives the community of information regarding the progress of the school, and hence reduces the chance of the school getting support from the community as supported by (Olumade & Olatoun, 2015). In other words, the community will not be able to act upon the challenges observed by school quality assurance after the whole school visit. This finding is contrary to the open system theory, which emphasizes that the performance of the school and students can be enhanced when the school is open to allow the involvement of external parts such as parents and the local community in school administration. This brings about high performance and quality education.

3.1.3 Time of Receiving the SSRC

The researchers were interested to know how long it took the school to receive SSRC after the whole school visit. The responses from teachers in Table 3 indicates that most of them 67% (n=30) did not know when the SSRC was received since the last whole school visit. Also, the results in Table 3 show that 20% (n=9) of teachers said that they received SSRC after two months, and 13% (n=6) after three months. Therefore, it can be concluded that teachers do not know when SSRCs were received after the whole school visit was conducted by school quality assurance officers from the district quality

assurance office. According to the new school quality assurance framework (2017), the school quality assurance officer is required to submit the SSRC report to the school not later than two months after the whole school visit.

Table 3. Time of Receiving SSRC

Variable	Frequency	Percent
After 2 months	9	20.0
After 3 months	6	13.0
Don't know	30	67.0
Total	45	100.0

Source: Field Data (2022).

During the in-depth interview, this study was informed by heads of secondary schools that they received SSRC after two months of the whole school visit. This indicates that quality assurance officers perform their duties according to the quality assurance framework. Moreover, this signifies that the heads of schools do not provide feedback to teachers regarding the whole visit evaluation report since most of the teachers did not know what SSRC is or even when it is supposed to be submitted to the school after the whole school visit. According to Goodlad's model of evaluation, school management/supervisors are required to initiate communication both internally and externally to stir dialogue on how well the SSRC issues can be addressed. Short of that, what is happening in Mpanda district will result in poor implementation of SSRC, and hence deprived school performance and delivery of quality education are jeopardized. This also does not agree with the open system theory, which is built under the collaborative partnerships between the firm 'school' and the external environment 'local community and parents.

3.2 Level of Community Participation in the Implementation of SSRC in School Progress in Public Secondary Schools

The second specific objective was to examine the level of community participation in implementing SSRC in school progress. The study sought to examine the structure/design and application of SSRC on the school community involvement, and the participation of the school community in the school appraisal, preparation, implementation, and shared information.

3.2.1 Structure/Design and Application of the SSRC Promotes Community Participation

Since most respondents did not know what SSRC was and what it looked like, the researcher showed them a copy of the same and explained the meaning of the contents of the SSRC. Then, the respondents were asked to give their opinion as to whether the structure and use of SSRC could support community participation. The responses from teachers in Table 4 revealed that 80% (n=36) of them were of the view that the structure and use of SSRC support community participation, and 13% (n=6) of them

disagreed with the idea of the SSRC supporting community participation and 7% (n=3) said that they did not know. In general, teachers in Mpanda district agreed that the SSRC has the potential to increase community participation in school matters. However, this is only possible if the content of the summary card is properly reacted upon.

Table 4. SSRC Can Promote Community Participation in School Matters (n=45)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Yes	36	80.0
No	6	13.0
Don't know	3	7.0
Total	45	100.0

Source: Field Data (2022).

During FGD with community members, there was the same reaction after they were shown the SSRC by the researcher. Most of them said they had not seen it before. They were informed that the design and use of SSRC is a good move for promoting community participation as it helps to know what is observed by school quality assurance. For example, in one of the schools, the one of SSRC indicators shows that the number of students dropping out in the year 2021 was 210. This is one of the indicators that there was no commitment by parents and teachers to make sure children attend school. In FGD community members argued that SSRC is a very good initiative that will make them know more about schools than before. He continued by saying that, this is a very good initiative to increase transparency in schools. However, parents advised that, for it to work properly there must be some initiatives to introduce it to the whole school community.

Also, the results conform to WEOs and heads of schools who informed this study that the design and use of SSRC is a good idea as it allows the community to access information concerning the appraisal of school during a whole school visit conducted by the school quality assurance officers, and hence allowing the community to participate in school matters. During in-depth interviews with heads of schools, the study was informed that the design of SSRC is good as it exposes some of the information to the community and through the SSRC everything is open now and stakeholders will find it easy for them to see and rectify observed challenges immediately. Also, SSRC provides a real picture of the school that helps the school to evaluate itself by knowing its strengths and weaknesses as well as an overview and direction.

Therefore, the study concludes that the design and use of SSRC is a starting point for promoting community participation in school matters written by quality assurance reports. These findings are consistent with earlier studies (Olumade & Olatoun, 2015; Tench & Yeomans 2006), which found that feedbacks show how open systems theory applies to public relation practices as they

improve relationships between an institution and its sub-systems, whether internal or external. Moreover, the findings are in line with Goodlad's model of evaluation that the design of SSRC can improve the attainment of the desired outcome. A simple design that is understood by all stakeholders can increase the impact of SSRC as people will be able to read and interpret what is written on the card. As such, the findings imply that the design and use of SSRC can bring positive results.

3.2.3 Participation in the School Appraisal

This study evaluated if secondary school teachers had participated in the appraisal of their schools. The findings in Table 5 show that 71% (n=32) of all surveyed teachers said they had participated in school appraisals when quality assurance officers visited their schools. Those who did not participate were 29% (n=13). Moreover, the respondents reported that they had participated in areas such as curriculum implementation (teaching and learning process), providing information regarding the school environment and infrastructures such as classrooms, laboratories, and toilets, and advised about the need to increase the number of science and basic mathematics teachers.

Table 5. Teacher Responses on Participation in School Appraisal (n=45)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Yes	32	71.0
No	13	29.0
Total	45	100

Source: Field Data (2022).

Similarly, in an interview with five heads of schools, 5(100%) of them agreed that they have participated in school appraisal. When the researcher asked them about the area they had participated in, the head of the school said that they had been involved in the area of the school environment, and facilities by providing information to SQA about the number of teachers and students. Furthermore, all 3(100%) WEOs agreed to have been involved in the school appraisal by providing the needed information, and one of them said that he also participated in the classroom observation of teachers during the teaching and learning process.

3.2.4 Involvement in the Preparation of the SSRC

The study sought to understand the involvement of the school community in the preparation of SSRC after the whole school visit. The findings in Table 6 show that only 13% (n=6) of teachers agreed to have been involved in the preparation of SSRC while an overwhelming majority 87% (n=39) of them disagreed to have been involved. Thus, this study's point of view is that the school community is not involved in the preparation of SSRC. Those who said they were involved when asked to explain the way their involvement was, said they were involved in preparing teaching and learning aids, advice about the need to increase the number of science and basic mathematics teachers, to provide important

information to school regarding academic issues, and information concerning school infrastructure. In essence, teachers do not participate in the preparation of SSRC, and the school community does not have a say on what and how the quality assurance officer is going to write in the summary card.

Table 6. Teacher Responses to Participation in Preparation of SSRC (n=45)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Yes	6	13.0
No	39	87.0
Total	45	100

Source: Field Data (2022).

Fundamentally, after a whole school visit, the quality assurance officer is required to prepare and submit the SSRC to the respective school within two months (URT, 2017). The school community especially teachers and the school management team participate in appraisal only. The issues in which they have been involved such as to prepare teaching and learning aids and the construction of school buildings are not part of SSRC content. The findings corroborate with what was found in the interviews with heads of schools and Ward Executive Officers who informed the study that the school community does not participate in the preparation of SSRC.

In Gambia, Knudsen (2021) reports that School Report Cards as a tool for informing the school community about school performance increase their involvement, and help in the planning & implementation of school improvement plans. The findings of this study contradict the report of the California Department of Education (2020) which stipulates that school report card increases community involvement in school management. Also, in Pakistan Andrabi *et al.* (2017) found that school report cards influenced large improvements in enrolment and learning outcomes such as improvement in student test scores. Similar findings were reported by Jacobsen *et al.*, (2013), Cheng & Moses (2016), Poisson *et al.* (2019), UNESCO (2019), Gomez and Bah (2020), Aryeh-Adjei (2021), and Oregon Department of Education (2021). The study concludes that community members were not involved in the preparation of the SSRC. This is contrary to the open systems theory which advocates for the interaction of the internal and external environment. Failure to involve the local community can reduce the effectiveness of SSRC to attain the potential effects. UNESCO (2018) argues that there are different kinds of report cards that are used in various ways, depending on the audience and purpose. Therefore, SSRC is top-down created by governments to improve basic information sharing and transparency, and to improve education quality.

3.2.5 Schools Share SSRC Information with the Community

Under this concept, the current study examined if the community was usually informed of the information observed during whole school visits through the SSRC. The findings in Table 7 show that

22% (n=10) of teachers agreed that the community was informed and 78% (n=35) of them disagreed that the community was informed regarding the information observed in the school appraisal.

Table 7. School Management Team Share Information with Community (n=45)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Yes	10	22.0
No	35	78.0
Total	45	100

Source: Field Data (2022).

In an interview with the heads of schools, 5 (100%) of them agreed that the community members were informed about the shortfalls observed in the school quality assurance report card. When the researcher asked how the community was involved, they said that the community was involved through school meetings. Likewise, the WEOs agreed that the findings observed by SQAOs are shared through meetings. For that matter, the researcher cross-checked the information given by the heads of schools and WEOs by reviewing the parents' meeting minutes file which showed that no agenda discussed the findings written in SSRC. During meetings, they discuss different agendas, some of which are within the SSRC. For example, in the documents reviewed in one of the schools, the agenda of the meeting conducted on 4th June 2021 were: (1) Congratulation to parents for their contributions, (2) Academic matters (3) Students' results of the first term, and (4) Motivation.

This finding suggests that information sharing between the school management team and the community at large was very low. A follow-up question to examine if the school community was aware of the information contained in the SSRC found out that very few of them knew that SSRC contains information such as school information, teachers available and absenteeism, students enrolled and dropout, capitation grants, student-teacher ratio, textbook ratio, examination results, facilities, and services, and teacher teaching and students engaging.

The findings are against the theoretical foundation of open systems theory which argues that for the school to be able to rectify the bad situation and attain high performance, it is imperative to involve the whole school community in planning, decision-making, and implementation of different school plans. The SSRC as a strategy to increase the involvement of the community in school administration, its implementation has to consider school community involvement. Poisson *et al.* (2019), Gomez and Bah (2020), and Aryeh-Adjei (2021) reported contradicting results with this study.

3.2.6 Community Involvement in the Implementation of SSRC in Public Secondary Schools

This study examined the involvement of the community in the implementation of SSRC. Specifically, it examined whether or not the school community was involved and how it was involved in the implementation of SSRC. The findings of this study in Table 8 show that the majority 82% (n=37) of

school surveyed teachers disagreed that the school community had been involved in the implementation of SSRC. Those who said the community was involved when asked to explain how it was involved, said that the community is involved through parents' meetings and the school board meetings.

Table 8. Community Involvement in Implementing SSRC (n=45)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Yes	8	18.0
No	37	82.0
Total	45	100

Source: Field Data (2022).

The findings conform to what was reported during an in-depth interview with heads of schools and ward education officers. They both claimed that the school community was involved in the implementation of SSRC through reading what was in the card during parents' meetings and in the school board for actions to be taken to improve the situation if the overall appraisal rates the school as having bad progress. Moreover, the heads of schools informed the researcher that, students were involved in the implementation of SSRC through the school baraza where the school management team read the information from the SSRC and told the students about the strategies that needed to be implemented to correct the situation.

However, the documentary review revealed that the minutes from parents' meetings, school board meetings, and school baraza show the opposite results, as there was no agenda in those meetings regarding SSRC. On top of that, the research verified from students during FGD if they had received feedback from school quality assurance reports. Students in sampled schools stated that they had never discussed such reports even the community members/parents reported that they never discussed it as an agenda in the meetings but when they meet, they discuss different issues including dropouts, shortage of science teachers, and shortage of toilets.

Based on these responses, the researcher concludes that the majority of the community members and teachers in secondary schools had not seen the SSRC or heard about it. It means the heads of schools do not share and involve teachers in reacting to the SSRC. This is a disaster for SSRC implementation and expectation of the benefits it would bring. In that way, nothing good should be expected from SSRC in public secondary schools. The finding is not in line with the theoretical foundation of open systems theory since it does not support the involvement of the school community in the implementation of SSRC. The open system theory proposes that by allowing interaction with communities, students, and other education stakeholders, the school is at the best chance to effectively and efficiently react to SSRC issues as stipulated by the quality assurance officer.

Though the findings are contrary to the theory, they are in line with a study conducted in Ghana which revealed that students' involvement in the quality assurance process is impeded by mistrust and fear of conflict among different stakeholders (Essel, Boakeje, Yiadom, & Kyeremeh, 2018). However, Poisson *et al.* (2019), Gomez and Bah (2020), and Aryeh-Adjei (2021) found dissimilar results that school report card influences school community involvement in its implementation.

3.3 Challenges of Implementing SSRC in Public Secondary Schools

The study explore the challenges of implementing SSRC in public secondary schools in Mpanda District. In addressing this objective, the study posed one fundamental question; what are the challenges faced by the school community in implementing SSRC for school progress and the following are responses and discussions of the findings.

3.3.1 Challenges in Implementing SSRC in Public Secondary Schools

It was imperative to know the challenges secondary schools face in the implementation of SSRC. The findings from the survey indicate that school community members did not know the challenges of implementing SSRC because even the concept of SSRC itself was not known to them. However, the head of schools reported that the translation of some symbols on some sections of the SSRC, such as the toilet and utility section is a challenge to school community members. Also, observation of SSRC findings revealed that there was a mismatch between ratings of SSRC indicators and final valuation provided by the District school quality assurance officer in filling the card and the criteria used in the general evaluation of the school are questionable.

The findings are in line with Jacobsen *et al.* (2013) reports that parents find it difficult to interpret school report card data even after training. Also, Knudsen (2021) in Gambia found similar results that the way school report card is presented it is difficult for parents and local community members to read and interpret the issues written in them. Thus, this study argues that the design of SSRC has to take into consideration the level of comprehension of its users. Also, the literature shows that information is only applicable if data are understood and used and also emphasizes that SSRC efforts should centre on allowing parents to recognize the data by presenting them in a simple format (Florez, 2012).

For that matter, the study concludes that awareness programs should be initiated on the use and importance of SSRC for effective school management and hence school progress in terms of teaching and learning, reduced truancy, increased community participation, and higher academic performance (URT, 2017). Furthermore, training on how to read and understand the information contained in the SSRC should be conducted on an ongoing basis for teachers, students, and the community in general.

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