

Communication Between Parents and the Higher Institute of Medical Technology ISTM Nyankunde: Case of Parents of Students Residing in Bunia City

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Abstract

Introduction: The main objective of this study was to describe the institutional communication between the parents or guardians of students and the Higher Institute of Medical Technology ISTM Nyankunde in Bunia, Ituri Province in the Northeast of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Materials and Methods : The study population consisted of the parents/guardians of students at the Higher Institute of Medical Techniques of Nyankunde residing in Bunia . The sample comprised 248 parents/ guardians. The snowball sampling or network sampling technique was used to select participants. A cross-sectional method was employed to conduct the research.

Results: After analyzing and processing the data, the results obtained were:

- The Short Message Service (SMS) is the most commonly used communication channel between parents/guardians of students and the Higher Institute of Medical Technology ISTM Nyankunde ; and the letter constitute the traditional channel
- The majority of parents felt that the institutional communication was clear, relevant and understandable ;
- Slightly more than half of parents appreciate the responsiveness and accessibility of institutional communication.
- Less than half of parents (48.8%) believe that the influence of institutional communication is the institution's bad reputation;
- Approximately two-thirds of parents appreciate their students' positive engagement with the institution. In light of the results of the study mentioned above, the quality of institutional communication between students' parents and ISTM is not optimal. There is a need to review and improve communication strategies with key partners in order to strengthen their engagement and the institution's reputation.

Keywords: Institutional communication, Parents of students, Higher Institute of Medical Technology

INTRODUCTION

Collaboration between families and medical training institutions should be based on fluid, transparent, and two-way communication, enabling active parental involvement in their children's academic and personal development. This constructive interaction would not only strengthen trust between stakeholders but also improve the quality of mentoring and, in the long term, the quality of healthcare provided by future professionals (Epstein, 2021).

In Europe, Pavel et al. (2017) observed in countries such as France and Germany that parents are increasingly involved in their children's educational monitoring. However, the lack of transparent communication remains a major obstacle to accessing relevant information.

The results of a study conducted with 180 parents at three medical colleges in India revealed that 65% of parents felt institutional communication was insufficient. They expressed a need for regular meetings, reports on their children's performance, and direct dialogue with academic staff. The authors concluded that a structured and proactive parental communication strategy was necessary (Rajeshwari et al., 2018). Similarly, in Indonesia, Putri and Sari (2019), in a mixed-methods study of 120 parents of health sciences students, found that 72% of parents felt poorly informed about academic programs. They called for the use of effective digital channels (WhatsApp, SMS), regular newsletters, and the appointment of a communications officer. According to them, the lack of clarity in communication leads to a feeling of exclusion, hindering family involvement.

In the United States, close collaboration between parents and schools has been shown to strengthen student engagement and improve academic performance (Epstein, 2021).

In Africa, several studies converge on the idea that parents' perceptions of institutional communication are a determining factor in students' academic success and well-being. This triangular relationship between parents, students, and institutions fosters better educational integration (Davis et al., 2019).

In West Africa, a study by Bivoua and Adou (2023) revealed that parents directly influence their children's academic choices. Increased communication with institutions is associated with better management of academic pathways. Students whose parents are regularly informed demonstrate greater academic satisfaction.

Ngoma and Kayembe (2024) studied the challenges related to accessing academic information in universities in sub-Saharan Africa. According to them, 60% of parents report that information arrives too late or is incomplete, thus limiting their ability to intervene effectively. The study also highlights a marked disparity between urban and rural areas, with rural families having less access to digital tools.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), few studies have addressed this topic, but several highlight similar challenges. For example, Bokungu (2016) emphasized the lack of transparency and effective communication in universities, leading to a loss of parental trust. Bemba (2018) demonstrated that infrastructural and organizational shortcomings limit access to academic information. Mbala (2018) further noted that despite their crucial role, parents are often excluded from academic processes. Similarly, Ilunga and Diongo (2023) revealed that a large proportion of Congolese parents are unaware of how to access academic results online and express a pressing need for improved digital communication.

Ituri Province, and specifically at the Higher Institute of Medical Techniques in Nyankunde, no known research has yet explored the effectiveness of communication between students' parents and the institution. However, several observations from the field indicate growing dissatisfaction among parents. They complain about a lack of clarity in communication, poor transmission of administrative information, and a less than welcoming reception. This leads to misunderstandings, undermines transparency, and could

jeopardize academic progress. Ultimately, this could damage the image and reputation of the Institute in Bunia.

The objective of this study is to describe the institutional communication between parents and the academic authorities of the Higher Institute of Medical Technology ISTM Nyankunde in Bunia.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted at the Higher Institute of Medical Technology ISTM Nyankunde in Bunia. The survey method was used to conduct this study and the semi-structured interview technique was used to collect the relevant data.

Three-stage sampling allowed us to select 248 parents or guardians of students residing in the city of Bunia.

The following ethical research principles were rigorously applied throughout this study: informed consent of respondents, anonymity, and confidentiality. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Higher Institute of Medical Technology ISTM Nyankunde after review of the research protocol. Subsequently, the requirements for obtaining consent, anonymity, and confidentiality were also consistently upheld.

Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 20 software; percentage indexes were used to present the results in tabular form.

RESULTS

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES FROM SURVEYS

Table 1. Sociodemographic profiles of respondents

		N=248	%
Sex	Male	149	60.1
	Female	99	39.9
Age (year)	20-30	8	3.2
	31-40	83	33.5
	41-50	85	34.3
	51-60	47	19.0
	≥ 61	25	10.1
Level of education	Primary	35	14.1
	Secondary	120	48.4
	University	93	37.5
Occupation	State agent	158	63.7
	Health worker	23	9.3
	Private agent	67	27.0
Address	Bankoko	55	22.2
	Kindia	34	13.7
	Yambi Yaya	21	8.5
	Rwankole	24	9.7
	Lembabo	22	8.9

	Saio	12	4.8
	Ndibe	30	12.1
	Mudzi -Pela	21	8.5
	Bigo	11	4.4
	Dhele	1	0.4
	Hoho	17	6.9
	Total	248	100.0

This table shows that 60.1% of respondents were male, 34.3% were aged 41 to 50, 48.4% had a secondary education, 63.7% of respondents were state agents and 22.0% resided in the Bankoko Quarter.

INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Table 2: Institutional communication channels between parents or guardians and the Higher Institute of Medical Technology ISTM Nyankunde

Variables	Terms	Appointment			WhatsApp		SMS		E-mail		Phone call	
		N	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex	Man	149	1	0.7	13	8.7	95	63.8	1	0.7	39	26.2
	Women	99	2	2.0	6	6.1	60	60.6	0	0.0	31	31.3
Age (years)	20-30	8	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	87.5	0	0.0	1	12.5
	31-40	83	2	2.4	5	0.0	49	59.0	0	0.0	27	32.5
	41-50	85	1	1.2	10	11.8	50	58.8	1	1.2	23	27.1
	51-60	47	0	0.0	1	2.1	33	70.2	0	0.0	13	27.7
	≥ 61	25	0	0.0	3	12	16	64.0	0	0.0	6	24.0
Level of education	Primary	35	0	0.0	3	8.6	24	68.6	0	0.0	8	22.9
	Secondary	120	3	2.5	4	3.3	80	66.7	0	0.0	33	27.5
	University	93	0	0.0	12	12.9	51	54.8	1	1.1	29	31.2
Occupation	State agent	158	3	1.9	8	5.1	98	62.0	0	0.0	49	31.0
	Health worker	23	0	0.0	4	17.4	12	52.2	0	0.0	7	30.4
	Private agent	67	0	0.0	7	10.4	45	67.2	1	1.5	14	20.9
Address	Bankoko	55	0	0.0	6	10.9	34	61.8	0	0.0	15	27.3
	Kindia	34	1	2.9	2	5.9	24	70.6	0	0.0	7	20.6
	Yambi Yaya	21	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	33.3	1	4.8	13	61.9
	Rwankole	24	0	0.0	1	4.2	14	58.3	0	0.0	9	37.5
	Lembabo	22	0	0.0	5	22.7	15	68.2	0	0.0	2	9.1
	Saio	12	0	0.0	1	8.3	7	58.3	0	0.0	4	33.3
	Ndibe	30	0	0.0	2	6.7	19	63.3	0	0.0	9	30.0
	Mudzi -Pela	21	0	0.0	0	0.0	15	71.4	0	0.0	6	28.6
	Bigo	11	2	18.2	2	18.2	7	63.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Dhele	1	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Hoho	17	0	0.0	0	0.0	12	70.6	0	0.0	5	29.4
	Total	248	3	1.2	19	7.7	155	62.5	1	0.4	70	28.2

This table shows that 62.5% of respondents revealed that SMS was the communication channel between parents or guardians of students and the ISTM . Nyankunde

Table 3. Parents' correspondents at the ISTM Nyankunde

Variables	Terms and conditions	General manager		Academic Secretary General		Administrative Secretary General		Secretary of the office		Section Chief		Teachers	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex	Man	149	2.13	6	4.0	26	17.4	101	67.8	10	6.7	4	2.7
	Women	99	0.0	4	4.0	13	13.1	59	59.6	162	16.2	7	7.1
Age (years)	20-30	8	0.0	1	12.5	2	25.0	3	37.5	2	25.0	0	0.0
	31-40	83	0.0	3	3.6	13	15.7	57	68.7	9	10.8	1	1.2
	41-50	85	1.2	2	2.4	16	18.8	54	63.5	6	7.1	6	7.1
	51-60	47	1.2	1	2.1	5	10.6	32	68.1	5	10.6	3	6.4
	≥ 61	25	0.0	3	12.0	3	12.0	14	56.0	4	16.0	1	4.0
Level of education	Primary	35	0.0	1	2.9	5	14.3	23	65.7	5	14.3	1	2.9
	Secondary	120	1.0	5	4.2	18	15.0	73	60.8	17	14.2	6	5.0
	University	93	1.1	4	4.3	16	17.2	64	68.8	4	4.3	4	4.3
Occupation	State agent	158	1.0	9	5.7	31	19.6	99	62.7	15	9.5	3	1.9
	Health worker	23	0.0	1	4.3	3	13.0	13	56.5	3	13.0	3	13.0
	Private agent	67	1.5	0	0.0	5	7.5	48	71.6	8	11.9	5	7.5
Address	Bankoko	55	0.0	0	0.0	6	10.9	32	58.2	14	25.5	3	5.5
	Kindia	34	0.0	6	17.6	5	14.7	21	61.8	2	5.9	0	0.0
	Yambi Yaya	21	0.0	0	0.0	5	23.8	12	57.1	1	4.8	3	14.3
	Rwankole	24	0.0	0	0.0	3	12.5	18	75.0	2	8.3	1	4.2

	Lembabo	22	0	0.0	1	4.5	3	13.6	13	59.1	3	13.6	2	9.1
	Saio	12	1	8.3	0	0.0	1	8.3	10	83.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Ndibe	30	0	0.0	1	3.3	3	10.0	21	70.0	3	10.0	2	6.7
	Mudzi - Pela	21	1	4.8	2	9.5	5	23.8	13	61.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Bigo	11	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	36.4	7	63.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Dhele	1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Hoho	17	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	23.5	12	70.6	1	5.9	0	0.0
	Total	248	2	0.8	10	4.0	39	15.7	160	64.5	26	10.5	11	4.4

This table shows that 64.5 % of the parents' correspondents at the ISTM Nyankunde were the secretaries of the offices.

Table 4. Traditional communication channels between parents or guardians and the ISTM Nyankunde

Variables	Terms and conditions	<u>Appointment</u>			<u>Letter</u>		<u>Personal visit</u>	
		N	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex	Male	149	13	8.7	120	80.5	16	10.7
	Female	99	7	7.1	85	85.9	7	7.1
Age (years)	20-30	8	2	25.0	6	75.0	0	0.0
	31-40	83	5	6.0	69	83.1	9	10.8
	41-50	85	6	7.1	71	83.5	8	9.4
	51-60	47	5	10.6	37	78.7	5	10.6
	≥ 61	25	2	8.0	22	88.0	1	4.0
Level of education	Primary	35	0	0.0	31	88.6	4	11.4
	Secondary	120	9	7.5	101	84.2	10	8.3
	University	93	11	11.8	73	78.5	9	9.7
Occupation	State agent	158	9	5.7	134	84.8	15	9.5
	Health worker	23	3	13.0	17	73.9	3	13.0
	Private agent	67	8	11.9	54	80.6	5	7.5
Address	Bankoko	55	2	3.6	48	87.3	5	9.1
	Kindia	34	4	11.8	27	79.4	3	8.8
	Yambi Yaya	21	4	19.0	17	81.0	0	0.0
	Rwankole	24	1	4.2	19	79.2	4	16.7
	Lembabo	22	3	13.6	16	72.7	3	13.6
	Saio	12	0	0.0	11	91.7	1	8.3
	Ndibe	30	2	6.7	27	90.0	1	3.3

	Mudzi -Pela	21	0	0.0	17	81.0	4	19.0
	Bigo	11	1	9.1	9	81.8	1	9.1
	Dhele	1	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Hoho	17	2	11.8	14	82.4	1	5.9
	Total	248	20	8.1	205	82.7	23	9.3

This table shows that 82.7% of communication channels between parents/guardians and the ISTM are traditional. Nyankunde were the written letter.

INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Table 5. Clarity, relevance, and understanding of communication between parents or guardians and the ISTM Nyankunde

Variables	Terms and conditions	N	Yes		No	
			N	%	N	%
Sex	Male	149	110	73.8	39	26.2
	Female	99	78	78.8	21	21.2
Age (years)	20-30	8	7	87.5	1	12.5
	31-40	83	65	78.3	18	21.7
	41-50	85	62	72.9	23	27.1
	51-60	47	34	72.3	13	27.7
	≥ 61	25	20	80.0	5	20.0
Level of education	Primary	35	24	68.6	11	31.4
	Secondary	120	95	79.2	25	20.8
	University	93	69	74.2	24	25.8
Occupation	State agent	158	119	75.3	39	24.7
	Health worker	23	16	69.6	7	30.4
	Private agent	67	53	79.1	14	20.9
Address	Bankoko	55	43	78.2	12	21.8
	Kindia	34	31	91.2	3	8.8
	Yambi Yaya	21	15	71.4	6	28.6
	Rwankole	24	18	75.0	6	25.0
	Lembabo	22	14	63.6	8	36.4
	Saio	12	8	66.7	4	33.3
	Ndibe	30	22	73.3	8	26.7
	Mudzi -Pela	21	17	81.0	4	19.0
	Bigo	11	8	72.7	3	27.3
	Dhele	1	1	100.0	0	0.0
	Hoho	17	11	64.7	6	35.3
	Total	248	188	75.8	60	24.2

The majority of surveys (75.4%) attest that institutional communication was clear, relevant, and understandable between parents/guardians and the ISTM Nyankunde .

Table 6. Assessment of responsiveness and accessibility of institutional communication between parents or guardians and the Higher Institute of Medical Technology ISTM Nyankunde

Variables	Terms and conditions	N	<u>Excellent</u>		<u>Alright</u>		<u>GOOD</u>		<u>Bad</u>		<u>Poor</u>	
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex	Male	149	10	6.7	40	26.8	91	61.1	4	2.7	4	2.7
	Female	99	6	6.1	36	36.4	54	54.5	0	0.0	3	3.0
Age (years)	20-30	8	0	0.0	3	37.5	4	50.0	0	0.0	1	12.5
	31-40	83	5	6.0	30	36.1	47	56.6	1	1.2	0	0.0
	41-50	85	6	7.1	19	22.4	55	64.7	2	2.4	3	3.5
	51-60	47	1	2.1	14	29.8	29	61.7	1	2.1	2	4.3
	≥ 61	25	4	16.0	10	40.0	10	40.0	0	0.0	1	4.0
Level of education	Primary	35	0	0.0	16	45.7	18	51.4	0	0.0	1	2.9
	Secondary	120	8	6.7	28	23.3	79	65.8	1	0.8	4	3.3
	University	93	8	8.6	32	34.4	48	51.6	3	3.2	2	2.2
Occupation	State agent	158	9	5.7	50	31.6	92	58.2	4	2.5	3	1.9
	Health worker	23	1	4.3	8	34.8	13	56.5	1	4.3	0	0.0
	Private agent	67	6	9.0	18	26.9	40	59.7	2	3.0	1	1.5
Address	Bankoko	55	3	5.5	14	25.5	34	61.8	3	5.5	1	1.8
	Kindia	34	1	2.9	7	20.6	24	70.6	0	0.0	2	5.9
	Yambi Yaya	21	3	14.3	4	19.0	14	66.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Rwankole	24	4	16.7	6	25.0	13	54.2	1	4.2	0	0.0
	Lembabo	22	2	9.1	9	40.9	9	40.9	0	0.0	2	9.1
	Saio	12	0	0.0	4	33.3	8	66.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Ndibe	30	2	6.7	15	50.0	11	36.7	0	0.0	2	6.7
	Mudzi -Pela	21	0	0.0	8	38.1	13	61.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Bigo	11	0	0.0	6	54.5	5	45.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Dhele	1	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Hoho	17	1	5.9	3	17.6	13	76.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Total	248	16	6.5	76	30.6	145	58.5	4	1.6	7	2.8

58.5% of respondents appreciated institutional communication between parents or guardians and the ISTM . Nyankunde was good .

INFLUENCE OF INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION

Table 7. Influence of institutional communication between parents or guardians and the ISTM Nyankunde towards the institution

				<u>The institution has a bad reputation</u>	<u>Lack of innovation and lack of trust between institutions and parents</u>
			<u>Lack of transparency</u>		

Variables	Terms and conditions	N	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex	Male	149	43	28.9	74	49.7	32	21.5
	Female	99	19	19.2	47	47.5	33	33.3
Age (years)	20-30	8	3	37.5	2	25	3	37.5
	31-40	83	20	24.1	42	50.6	21	25.3
	41-50	85	20	23.5	47	55.3	18	21.2
	51-60	47	14	29.8	21	44.7	12	25.5
	≥ 61	25	5	20	9	36	11	44
Level of education	Primary	35	10	28.6	16	45.7	9	25.7
	Secondary	120	29	24.2	58	48.3	33	27.5
	University	93	23	24.7	47	50.5	23	24.7
Occupation	State agent	158	39	24.7	77	48.7	42	26.6
	Health worker	23	7	30.4	11	47.8	5	21.7
	Private agent	67	16	23.9	33	49.3	18	26.9
Address	Bankoko	55	14	25.5	22	40	19	34.5
	Kindia	34	8	23.5	19	55.9	7	20.6
	Yambi Yaya	21	5	23.8	14	66.7	2	9.5
	Rwankole	24	4	16.7	12	50	8	33.3
	Lembabo	22	4	18.2	11	50	7	31.8
	Saio	12	5	41.7	7	58.3	0	0
	Ndibe	30	5	16.7	13	43.3	12	40
	Mudzi -Pela	21	3	14.3	11	52.4	7	33.3
	Bigo	11	2	18.2	7	63.6	2	18.2
	Dhele	1	0	0	1	100	0	0
	Hoho	17	12	70.6	4	23.5	1	5.9
	Total	248	62	25	121	48.8	65	26.2

This table reveals that 48.8% of the influence of institutional communication between parents or guardians and the ISTM Nyankunde's view of the institution was the institution's bad reputation.

Table 8. Level of influence of communication on parental engagement

Variables	Terms and conditions	N	Excellent		Very good		Good		Bad	
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex	Male	149	10	6.7	44	29.5	95	63.8	0	0.0
	Female	99	12	12.1	24	24.2	62	62.6	1	1.0
Age (years)	20-30	8	0	0.0	4	50.0	4	50.0	0	0.0
	31-40	83	6	7.2	24	28.9	52	62.7	1	1.2
	41-50	85	9	10.6	18	21.2	58	68.2	0	0.0
	51-60	47	6	12.8	12	25.5	29	61.7	0	0.0
	≥ 61	25	1	4.0	10	40.0	14	56.0	0	0.0
Level of education	Primary	35	5	14.3	10	28.6	20	57.1	0	0.0

	Secondary	120	11	9.2	24	20.0	84	70.0	1	0.8
	University	93	6	6.5	34	36.6	53	57.0	0	0.0
Occupation	State agent	158	8	5.1	45	28.5	104	65.8	1	0.6
	Health worker	23	3	13.0	5	21.7	15	65.2	0	0.0
	Private agent	67	11	16.4	18	26.9	38	56.7	0	0.0
Address	Bankoko	55	6	10.9	12	21.8	37	67.3	0	0.0
	Kindia	34	2	5.9	9	26.5	23	67.6	0	0.0
	Yambi Yaya	21	0	0.0	10	47.6	11	52.4	0	0.0
	Rwankole	24	4	16.7	3	12.5	17	70.8	0	0.0
	Lembabo	22	1	4.5	5	22.7	16	72.7	0	0.0
	Saio	12	1	8.3	4	33.3	7	58.3	0	0.0
	Ndibe	30	3	10.0	14	46.7	13	43.3	0	0.0
	Mudzi -Pela	21	1	4.8	3	14.3	16	76.2	1	4.8
	Bigo	11	3	27.3	1	9.1	7	63.6	0	0.0
	Dhele	1	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Hoho	17	1	5.9	6	35.3	10	58.8	0	0.0
	Total	248	22	8.9	68	27.4	157	63.3	1	0.4

This table shows that 63.3% of institutional communication between parents or guardians and the ISTM Nyankunde 's commitment to the parents was deemed good.

DISCUSSION

Profiles of respondents

The research results showed that 60.1% of parents or guardians surveyed were male, 34.3% were aged 41 to 50, 48.4% had a secondary education level, 63.7% of respondents were in the profession of "state agents" and 22.0% resided in the Bankoko Quarter .

The age characteristics of the respondents corroborated those of the study conducted by Ngobeni (2020), with parents involved in academic communication ranging in age from 30 to 50. The study's results also aligned with those of Ngoma and Kayembe (2024), noting that the majority of parents involved in academic monitoring were of working age and possessed a medium level of education. Kouadio (2014) observed a male predominance among the respondents, with fathers playing a central role in interactions with educational institutions.

Institutional Communication Channels

A. Institutional communication channels between parents or guardians and the the Higher Institute of Medical Technology ISTM Nyankunde

The the Higher Institute of Medical Technology ISTM Nyankunde authorities and the parents of students is the short message (SMS) system, 62.5%. This result is consistent with that of Ngobeni (2020). It differs from that of the study by Mwangi et al. (2020), which discusses the use of announcements during end-of-quarter meetings.

We believe that the large proportion of communication channels with the parents of the the Higher Institute of Medical Technology ISTM students Nyankunde 's use of SMS is justified by the fact that students are

required to provide the phone numbers and identities of their parents/guardians during registration. Therefore, it is easy to send short messages to these individuals when needed, given that the vast majority of parents own a mobile phone.

B. Parents' representatives at the the Higher Institute of Medical Technology ISTM Nyankunde

The administrative secretaries are the primary point of contact for parents (64.5 %) of ISTM students . Nyankunde . This result does not corroborate that of Mwangi et al. (2020), which revealed that the parent liaisons were the institutional authorities during end-of-term meetings. We believe that the office secretaries were the parent liaisons since they are responsible for receiving parents. Furthermore, they relay parent messages to the institutional authorities.

C. Traditional channels of communication between parents or guardians and the the Higher Institute of Medical Technology ISTM Nyankunde

Regarding traditional communication channels, written letters were used in 82.7% of cases. This finding contradicts that of Morgan et al. (2024), who reported that parents used text messaging (SMS) and phone calls as communication channels with university administrators.

Similarly, in the study carried out by N'zué (2016), the channels used were documentary information, direct communication and press relations.

Written letters were predominantly the means of communication between parents and ISTM Nyankunde ; this trend could be explained by the lack of mastery of the use of modern channels by most parents on the one hand and on the other hand by the inaccessibility of these new means of communication (mail, internet).

Institutional communication skills

A. Clarity, relevance, and understanding of communication between parents or guardians and the Higher Institute of Medical Technology ISTM Nyankunde

The research results show that for 75.4% of parents, institutional communication was clear, relevant, and understandable. These results are consistent with those of Boussouf and Mokrani (2019), who found that in North Africa, phone calls are often used in addition to SMS messages, but their use remains limited due to high costs and the limited availability of parents and institutions.

These results differ from those of a study conducted in Europe by Dupont and Lévy (2024) stating that more than 62.0% of parents use WhatsApp to communicate quickly with educational institutions, demonstrating widespread adoption in technologically advanced countries.

Parents' appreciation of communication would depend on their socio-cultural and economic level.

B. The institution's responsiveness and accessibility to parents' concerns

More than half of Parents (58.5%) appreciate the good institutional communication between parents or guardians and the ISTM Nyankunde regarding responsiveness and accessibility . However, for González et al. (2021), high institutional responsiveness strengthens collaboration and reduces misunderstandings. Meanwhile, Ngoma and Kayembe (2024) observed that in the DRC, administrative delays and the lack of staff dedicated to parent relations slow down the institutional response. Similarly, Mbiya and Kabamba (2024) stipulate that the exclusive use of letters and in-person meetings delays the flow of information and exacerbates the problem of responsiveness.

Furthermore, Dupont and Lévy (2024) conclude that in European institutions, responsiveness is improved through the use of digital platforms, instant messaging systems, and dedicated communication officers. This observation is similar to that made in Norway by Larsen and Skar (2022), who stated that institutions

with a specific communication service respond to parental requests within an average of 24 to 48 hours. This result could potentially be attributed to a structural problem related to the lack of effective mechanisms for quickly addressing parental requests. At the Higher Institute of Medical Technology ISTM/ Nyankunde , communication relies primarily on traditional, relatively inactive methods. This slow responsiveness is a major obstacle to parental involvement and may explain the decline in their trust in the institution. Unlike practices observed in countries with modernized education systems, ISTM's communication remains slow and unstructured.

Influence of institutional communication

The institution's poor reputation (48.8%) is attributed to the negative influence of communication between parents and managers on the institution's image. These results are similar to those of Ngoma and Kayembe (2024), Mbiya and Kabamba (2024), noting that the lack of regularity of information, the absence of interactive communication and administrative slowness lead to parental dissatisfaction with the communication system in Congolese higher and university education institutions.

Regarding the level of influence of communication on parental involvement , 63.3% of them consider their involvement to be good. These results are consistent with those of Mbaye and Yaya (2018), demonstrating that regular information sharing strengthened parental involvement in communication with university authorities. However, Nguyen and Cortes (2020) noted that 32% of unconvinced parents cited barriers related to cultural differences or institutional mistrust.

We believe that the institution's poor reputation among parents stems from a lack of structured communication with the institution. Therefore, academic authorities are urged to establish mechanisms that ensure smooth and transparent communication with students' parents.

CONCLUSION

In light of these results, it is clear that there is a communication gap between parents and the academic authorities or administrators of the Higher Institute of Medical Techniques in Nyankunde , Bunia. To address this, it is essential to improve communication channels and optimize the use of modern technologies to facilitate exchanges between parents and administrators.

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