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Exploring the Digital Bridge of School-family Collaboration: Efficacy and Challenges of Teacher-Parent Communication via Online Platform in Macao SAR China

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Abstract

The rapid advancement of technology continues to transform instructional and communication practices within educational contexts. Since 2020, the Macao SAR government has promoted the development of “Smart Campuses”, encouraging schools to adopt online platforms for facilitating home-school collaboration and parent-teacher communication. This qualitative study employs semi-structured in-depth interviews with eight homeroom teachers from private elementary schools to examine usage patterns, effectiveness, strategies, and challenges associated with the use of WeCom. Findings reveal that teacher communications can be categorized into three main types: academic notifications, individual student support, and parental feedback. Teachers adopted different communication strategies—such as combining group announcements with private chats, and employed differentiated approaches to sensitive issues, thereby fostered mutual trust between home and school. These digital communication models demonstrated notable advantages: the official nature of the platform enhanced message credibility, real-time interaction improved efficiency, and layered communication balanced privacy with accessibility. However, challenges were also identified, including blurred boundaries between work and personal life due to communication outside working hours, insufficient emotional communication, and privacy concerns. This study not only addresses a gap in the literature regarding online parent-teacher communication, but also offers valuable insights for education policymakers, school administrators, and teachers both regionally and internationally. Furthermore, it provides a theoretical foundation and practical guidance for constructing healthy and efficient home-school communication ecosystems within the context of smart education.

Keywords: Parent-Teacher Communication, Digital Communication Platform, Home-School Collaboration, Trust Building, Layered Communication Strategies