

**PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS ABOUT PARENTAL
INVOLVEMENT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE KGATLENG
DISTRICT, BOTSWANA**

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degree of**

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This study is dedicated to:

My late grandparents, Sebidie Seithamo and Gaobonale Sebidie,

My mother, Gaotswedipe Sebidie,

My wife, Thato Bokamoso Sebidie and

My children, Keene Peo Sebidie and Kaene Pato Sebidie

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ABSTRACT

Student performance have decreased from 2008-2013 in the Kgatleng District, Botswana, despite efforts to encourage parents to actively be involved in their children's school. It is apparent that parents are not involved and leave the responsibility of child nurturing and development to the school with the teachers. Contributing factors to uninvolved parents at school are communication; employment; single parenting, and poverty. This lead to the research question: What are the perceptions of teachers about factors that contribute to parental involvement/non-involvement in Public Schools? The aim of the study was to determine teachers' perceptions on factors that contribute to parental involvement/non-involvement in public schools. The objectives to arrive at the aim was to explore and describe teachers' perceptions on factors contributing to parental involvement in public schools; to explore and describe teachers' perceptions on factors contributing to parental non-involvement in public schools and to make recommendations for improving parental involvement in public schools to the Ministry of Education. Social constructivism was used as theoretical framework because teachers' perceptions are shaped by their contexts and language. The study used a qualitative research approach and an exploratory, descriptive design. The population was teachers who teach standard seven in all primary schools in the Kgatleng district. There are 35 primary schools in the Kgatleng district. The sample was a non-probability, purposive sample consisting of four (4) urban and four (4) rural schools in Kgatleng district of which from each school, two (2) participants were purposefully selected. Data was collected by in-depth interviews and analyzed by using a thematic approach.

The research findings presented key factors that affect teachers and made recommendation

on how they can work with the parents and the community to successfully address the issue of non-parental involvement in schools. Tools for identifying specific needs and challenges for the uninvolved parents have to be developed and implemented. All relevant stakeholders should be included. A strong relationship with the social workers to address social challenges faced by the students, yielded positive results, hence recommending the need to have school based social workers. Recommendations include a partnership between the community, schools, teachers, parents and the Ministry of education to improve parental involvement in schools.

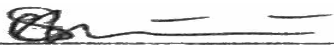


DECLARATION

I declare that Perceptions of teachers about parental involvement in public schools is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination to any other university and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been acknowledged as complete references.

Godfrey Sebidie



Signed: 

Date: 16/03/2016

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND MOTIVATION TO THE STUDY

In every country, students at the lower end of the social class distribution perform worse than students higher in the distribution. A study by Carnoy (2013) in the United States (U.S.A) found that the relative performance of U.S.A adolescents is usually better, when compared with other countries' national average performance. The average U.S.A. performance however appears to be relatively low during their last assessment in 2013, partly because they have had more students taking tests from the lower end of the social class distribution. A sampling error in the U.S.A administration of the most recent Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) test resulted in students from the most disadvantaged schools being over-represented in the sample. If U.S.A adolescents had a social class distribution that was similar to the distribution in countries to which the U.S.A is frequently compared, average reading scores would be higher than average reading scores in the similar post-industrial countries (such as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom), and average mathematics scores would be about the same as average mathematic scores in similar post-industrial countries.

Lower mean test scores are routinely obtained in South African Black samples relative to Euro-American samples and test norms. For example, Owen (1992) gave Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices (SPM) without time limits to 1056 White and 1093 African 14-year olds, which yielded a mean African IQ equivalent of 72, compared to 100 for Whites, using the percentile equivalents for the standardization data. A study by Skuy, Schutte, Fridjhon & O'Carroll (2001) found scores one to two standard deviations below American norms in 154

African secondary school students in Soweto, Johannesburg, on a variety of tests including the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R), the Rey Auditory Verbal Learning Test, the Stroop Color Word Test, the Wisconsin Card Sorting Test, the Bender Gestalt Visual Motor Integration Test, the Rey–Osterreith Complex Figure Test, the Trail Making Test, the Spatial Memory Task, and various Drawing Tasks. On the WISC-R, the African students were 1.81 standard deviations below American norms.

Despite improvements in universal primary education enrolments, countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) still face numerous education challenges. On average, less than 60% of SSA adults can read and write with understanding (UNESCO, 2005). There are a number of reasons why educational levels are low, for example, Africa has many under-fifteen students and governments are faced with the challenge of educating increasing numbers of school-aged children within tightly constrained budgets (DFID, 2001). In poorer households, education is not a priority when simply surviving is a challenge, and children are kept out of school to work; in cases of extreme poverty, children may contribute up to 40% of family income (DFID, 2003).

Education outcomes changed in Botswana. Performance of students in the Botswana 2013 Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) decreased slightly by 0.46% from 13.2% in 2012 to 12.74% for Grade A. There was however a massive decline of grade B in Kgatleng District by 13.5%, from 27.5% in 2008 to 14.0% in 2012 and a slight increase of candidates who achieved grade C from 37.4% in 2008 to 40.9% in 2012. The number of candidates in Kgatleng District who achieved grade D has increased from 27.1% in 2008 to 37.5% in 2012, (Botswana Examination Council, 2013). The Ministry of Education wanted to determine the reasons for failure when the failure rates in Kgatleng District are considered.

Evidence of the value to support education in order to achieve development is however convincing. A more equitable distribution of education correlates with reduced economic poverty and inequality and faster economic growth according to Birdsall & London (as cited in, Bruns, Mingat & Rakotomala, 2003). Education for girls has a positive impact on women's empowerment and lowers women's risk of being poor. It also generates indirect benefits in terms of the health of their infants and children, family nutrition, immunization rates and educational attainment for their children. It has been found in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) that education for boys and girls may be the single most effective weapon against HIV/AIDS since they will be able to understand the consequences and preventative programs as indicated by the World Bank (as cited in, Bruns, Mingat & Rakotomala, 2003).

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW: CONCEPTUALIZING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Parental involvement is a crucial force in children's development, learning, and success at school and in life. Children of involved parents have a much greater chance to develop into healthy, knowledgeable, responsible, and caring adults (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

1.2.1 Parental involvement in public schools

One of the important contributing factors to achievement in lower grades is parental involvement in the schools. Two-thirds of teachers surveyed in the U.S.A. believed that their students would perform better in school if their parents were more involved in their child's education, while 72% of parents say children of uninvolved parents sometimes fall through the cracks in schools. Studies in the U.S.A have shown that students with involved parents are more likely to earn higher grades, pass their class and be promoted, are more likely to attend school regularly and graduate and go on to post-secondary education, irrespective of

their socio-economic status (Johnson & Duffet, 2003; Wirt, Choy, Rooney, Provasnik, Sen & Tobin, 2004).

Research into parental involvement in diverse South African communities from the perspectives of teachers, parents and learners confirm the need for a broader conceptualisation of parental involvement (PI), which includes, but at the same time also transcends, parent participation in school governance. A comprehensive model of parental involvement is however uncommon in South African schools (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2006).

Reasons such as parental lack of understanding and illiteracy make it impossible for parents to be involved in the studies of their children. It is important that all education stakeholders, education ministers, members of parliament, counsellors, and chiefs team up to educate parents on the importance of this involvement and work with parents to develop effective programs that can improve school performance (Mannathoko, 2009; Samberg & Sheeran, 2000). Educationists, such as Robinson (1982), have long advocated for community involvement in children's academic work from curriculum planning and development through to its implementation. This approach may motivate parents as they would feel greater ownership of the lesson content and be more prepared to take part in its implementation.

1.2.1.1 The nature of parental involvement

Parental involvement in education has many faces and assumes varying degrees, starting with the simple question asked at the dinner table: "*How was school today?*" It may also include the daily monitoring and signing off on homework completion, to regular visits to the library, museums, cultural and art events, to participating in program evaluation and other decision making activities. "*Involvement*" may have various meanings such as involvement with fundraising for the school, or becoming members of the parent's teacher's association (PTA),

thus participating in school decision-making activities (Vaden-Kiernan & McManus, 2005; Stier, Barkers & Lamb, 2011; Wolfendale & Keith, 1996).

1.2.1.2 The impact of parental involvement in child-education

While great value was placed on improved parent-teacher-relationships, research suggested that parental involvement remained a challenging goal to meet in schools (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Brissie, 1987).

Any form of parental involvement appears to improve student performance and educators have long argued for a closer involvement of parents in their children's education. Parental involvement improves children's homework habits, reduces absenteeism and rates of dropout, as well as enhances academic attainment (Stier *et al.*, 2011).

Parental involvement contributes to child development and if they are involved with children from early years, there are better outcomes, particularly in terms of cognitive development. What parents do is more beneficial to for children's early development, for example home learning activities undertaken by parents is more important for children's intellectual and social development than parental occupation, education or income (Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj- Blatchford & Taggart, 2004). Parental involvement has a positive effect on children's achievement even when the influence of background factors such as social class and family size have been taken into account (Desfoges & Abouchaar, 2003). Positive academic outcomes stem from parental involvement ranging from benefits in early childhood to adolescence and beyond. The impact can be seen in improved attendance, behaviour, grades and efforts in completing homework it extended beyond elementary school and included the special needs population (Deslandes, Royer, Potvin & Leclerc, 1999; Hornby, 2011).

A variety of ways can be used to measure this academic achievement such as report card grades, grade point averages, standardized test scores, teacher ratings, other cognitive test scores, grade retention, and dropout rates (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Patrikakou, Weissberg, Redding, & Walberg, 2005).

Parental involvement contributes to social and emotional learning (SEL) and the prevention of high-risk behaviours in children. In several studies researchers have acknowledged the value that social and emotional factors have on learning and academic achievement (Zins, Weissberg, Wang & Walberg, 2004).

1.2.1.3 Social, emotional skills and parental involvement

Social and emotional learning can be defined as the process of understanding how to recognize and manage emotions, demonstrate caring and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish positive relationships with adults and peers, and manage challenging situations effectively. Social and emotional learning is fundamental to facilitate children's academic learning, social and emotional development, health, mental well-being, motivation to achieve, and citizenship (CASEL, 2003). It was found in a study on children in the U.S.A who participated in early childhood programs and whose families were actively involved, that they displayed less delinquent behaviour later in life than those whose families were not actively involved (CASEL, 2003, Greenberg, Weissberg, Brien, Zins, Fredericks & Resnik 2003; Patrikakou, 2008).

A meta-analytic review, included 317 studies involving 324,303 school children age 5-13 years was done in 2008, on the impact of school-based Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programmes on children in Chicago U.S.A. This report, which has been hailed as one of the most critical and potentially influential pieces of work to emerge in recent years, concludes that evidence-based programmes on social and emotional learning are intimately linked to

improving children's academic performance. The results from this review indicate that in addition to improving students' social and emotional skills, these SEL programmes also significantly improved children's academic performance. Notably, SEL programming yielded an average gain on achievement test scores of 11 to 17 percentile points. These results suggest that SEL programmes have the potential to elevate a child performing at the 50th percentile in terms of their school achievement (for example doing better academically than 49 percent of their peers) to the 61st percentile (for example doing better academically than 60 percent of their peers) – an 11 percentile rise (Payton, Weissberg, Durlak, Dymnicki, Taylor & Schellinger, 2008).

1.2.1.4 Factors that affect parental involvement

Three broad types of parental involvement are identified: involvement at home, at school and home-school communication. Communication is the key element that shapes parental involvement activities at home and at school and enhances school-family collaboration. Two-way communication between home and school helps build an on-going, productive and trusting relationship between parents and educators, which increases parent participation in learning activities both at home and at school (Sadovnik, Cookson & Semel, 2001; Patrikakou, 2008; Pansiri, 2008b; Molefe, Pansiri, & Weeks, 2009). Parental involvement is limited by their employment (Taliaferro, De Cuir-Gunby & Allen-Edkard, 2009). Some parents, especially those living in poverty, may have long, frequent, and unpredictable work hours and multiple responsibilities at home that prevent them from being involved as much as they would like. In many cases, school activities or events are held at times that are convenient for the school and not always convenient for the families (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007).

Pansiri (2008b) found that parents in rural areas are often simply too busy with subsistence activities to still be able to participate in school programs and that some parents in remote areas of Botswana are under the impression that the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) members represent them.

It is more challenging for parents to display high levels of involvement in their children's education in the instance of single-parent families (Hornby, 2000; Pang & Witkins, 2000; Fan & Chen, 2001; Bernard, 2004). It has been established that children from single-parent families display more academic and behavior problems than those from two-parent families (Kohl, Weissberg, Reynolds & Kaspro, 1994). Single parents have limited resources such as money, social support and time to invest in their children's education and development (Arnold, Zeljo, Doctoroff & Ortiz, 2008; Nord & West, 2001; Patrikakou, 2008; Pansiri, 2011).

Family poverty has a substantial impact on cognitive and academic outcomes of children. During elementary school, poor children earn lower grades and test scores and they are more likely to be retained or placed in special education than non-poor children (Gershoff, Aber, Raver, Lennon, 2007; Lee & Burkam, 2002; Yeung, Linver & Brooks-Gunn, 2002). Explanations for the association between poverty and low parental involvement focus on the barriers faced by poor parents for example; poor parents may work long hours in multiple and/or physically demanding jobs and have fewer means of transportation available. For these parents, a lack of time, energy, and access may constrain attempts at school involvement (Lareau & Weininger, 2003).

Learning involves not only cognition but also social and emotional processes but culture plays a key role in how individuals interact and learn (Greenfield & Cocking, 1994; Laosa, 1999). Cultural factors provide individuals with a sense of identity and a frame of reference

that help them to understand their worlds. Cultural discontinuities that is, culturally determined discrepancies between home and school can affect the child's success in school. Schools will likely be most successful in their educational mission when they integrate efforts to promote children's academic, social, and emotional learning in the context of each child's culture. Key characteristics include recognizing and managing emotions and caring about others, the need to be developed for children to be successful not only in school but also in life (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg & Walberg, 2004).

The type of school determines parents' involvement and academic achievement of learners. Pansiri (2008a; 2008b) found that in Botswana low academic achievement, high rates of absenteeism, early school withdrawals, and lack of interest in home work were high among boarders in remote primary schools, where the schools were not accessible to parents. One of the factors identified by researchers, which made Botswana private schools, especially English Medium Primary Schools, surpass Government schools was active parental involvement (Mannathoko & Mangope, 2013). This is also articulated in the Report of the National Commission on Education (RNCE), which notes that comparisons were made between state or public schools and the English Medium schools and a large proportion of people had a conviction that the better performance of private schools was due to active parental involvement (RNCE, 1993). McNergney and Herbert (2001) have identified parent-teacher conferences, school open houses and PTA's as effective approaches to draw parents into school activities to then assist with problems that arise.

1.2.1.5 Policy on parental involvement in schools in Botswana

The Botswana Ministry of Education's policy on education encouraged primary schools to establish effective parent-teachers' associations in order to improve children's academic performance. This idea was adopted by the government and included in the Revised National

Policy on Education to be implemented by government primary schools (RNPE, 1994). The initiative was meant to encourage parents to support their children's educational activities, promote parent-school relationships in educating the child, to provide a plan for interaction with the community and parents concerning problematic issues of learner-discipline and academic underachievement, and raise funds for school projects.

In the light of the fore mentioned, the importance of parental involvement at various levels of their children's school career, seems of high importance. Parental involvement is supported by all role players such as the teachers and education policies. Parents however sometimes experience challenges and serious hindrances that prevent them from being actively and effectively involved in their children's school activities. This apparent absence of parental involvement in their children's school careers impacts negatively on the progress and achievements of their children.

1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS UNDERPINNING THIS RESEARCH

For the purpose of this study, the researcher refers to the following theoretical frameworks as points of departure and as an orientation to this study. For a complete discussion of theoretical frameworks, see **Chapter 2: Parental involvement in schools.**

1.3.1 Epstein's theory of the three spheres of influence

Epstein's theory of the **three spheres** of influence (**school, family and community**) emphasizes building partnerships, connections and the recognition of the overlapping of these spheres. She identifies these three as '*major contexts*' in which children learn and grow (Epstein, 1995).

1.3.2 Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model of three level construct

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) generated a model to explain the parents' decisions to involve themselves in the education of their children. The model constitutes constructs on three levels, namely **parents' motivational beliefs, role activity beliefs for involvement and parental self-efficacy** in helping the child succeed in school.

In this study Epstein's theory of the three spheres of influence and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model of three level construct as a combined theoretical framework will contribute to a better understanding of the perceptions of teachers pertaining to parental involvement in their children's school careers.

1.4 PROBLEM FORMULATION

Student performance have decreased from 2008-2013 in the Kgatleng District, Botswana, despite efforts to encourage parents to actively be involved in their children's school work as stated by the RNPE (1994). It is apparent that parents are not involved and leave the responsibility of child nurturing and development to the school with the teachers. Contributing factors to non-involvement of parents at schools are lack of effective communication; challenging employment situations; single parenting, and poverty. Students' grades have dropped significantly in the Kgatleng District and the Ministry of Education has requested an inquiry into this matter. In the light of the fore mentioned, the absence of parent – involvement may be perceived as one of the contributing factors to the decrease in student's achievements.

In this study, the researcher has therefore asked the following research question: **What are the perceptions of teachers in public schools in the Kgatleng District in Botswana about**

factors that contribute to either parent – involvement or non-involvement in Public Schools?

1.5 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 The goal of the study

The goal often implies the broader, more abstract conception of something which the researcher plans to do to achieve, while the objective denotes the more concrete, measurable and more speedily attainable conception of such a plan (The Cambridge Advance Learner's Dictionary, 2005).

The aim of this study is to explore and determine teachers' perceptions on factors that contribute to parental involvement/non-involvement in public schools in the Kgatleng District, Botswana.



1.5.2 The objectives of this study

The objectives of this study are:

- To explore and describe teachers' perceptions pertaining to factors contributing to parental involvement in public schools;
- To explore and describe teachers' perceptions on factors contributing to parent - non-involvement in public schools;
- To make recommendations for improving parental involvement in public schools which may be utilized by the Botswana Ministry of Education in order to effectively address the absence of parent – involvement in public schools.

1.6 ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH PROCESS

In this section the research process and the relevant research methodology as applicable in this study will be briefly discussed. An extensive discussion of the methodology and application of the selected methods will however be described in **Chapter 3: Research methodology on perceptions of teachers about parental involvement in public schools.**

Official permission to undertake this research project was granted by the University of the Western Cape (See **Appendix E: Permission letter**).

1.6.1 The Research Approach and Design

A qualitative research approach was selected for this study, where the participants in this study (teachers), have shared the meanings they ascribe to parental involvement. The research was done in a natural school setting. Qualitative research addresses the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. This is done in a natural setting with people and places under study. The final written report or presentation includes the voice of participants (Creswell, 2013). The qualitative approach was selected because the researcher was interested in the subjective perspectives of participants in the Kgatlang district in order to conclude what the perceptions of these participants are pertaining to parent – involvement and achievements of children in public schools. Individuals are expected to construct their own meanings and under-standings, which is influenced by their cultural norms and environment as indicated in social constructivism as research paradigm.

1.6.2 Constructivism as Research Paradigm

Constructivism assumes that there are multiple realities, which influence people's lives and interaction with others. Individuals seek to understand the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings to their experiences directed towards certain objects or

things. Experiences are unique to individuals. These subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically and are formed through interaction with others and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individual's lives. It is therefore important to consider research participants' perceptions and social realities (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). Constructivism is relevant in this particular study as it seeks to explore perceptions (subjective meaning) of teachers in Kgatleng District, in rural and urban areas, with regards to parental involvement or non-involvement in public primary schools.

1.6.3 Research Population and Sampling

A population is the totality of persons, events, organization, case records or other sampling units with which the research problem is concerned (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont, 2011). The **population** of this research was all teachers who teach standard seven in all primary schools in the Kgatleng district, Botswana. There are 35 primary schools in the Kgatleng district (Kgatleg district council, 2002).

Sampling is done by selecting a portion or a small number of representing units of a population or having particular characteristics of that total population (Descombe, 2008; Depoy & Gilson, 2008). In this particular study, a **non-probability, purposive sampling technique** was implemented. Non-probability refers to any kind of sampling where the selection of elements is not determined by the statistical principle of randomness (Terre Blanche, Durrhein & Painter, 2006). The researcher selected individuals and sites for the study because they were able to purposefully inform and provide the information the researcher was interested in. Furthermore, they had a clear understanding of research the problem and central phenomenon in the study (Creswell, 2007).

The researcher purposefully selected four (4) urban and four (4) rural schools in Kgatleng district and selected two (2) participants per standard seven - group in each school. This

means that the sample for this study consisted of 16 participants or until the point of saturations was achieved.

Standard seven is a gate way to secondary education, and looking at recent failure rates in Kgatleng District, this research aimed to establish the role of parents in their children's academic performance.

The non-probability and purposive sample in this study consisted of sixteen (16) teachers, employed by four (4) urban and four (4) rural schools in the Kgatleng District, Botswana. These participants involved in this study, were all teaching grade seven students.

1.6.4 Methods of Data Gathering

An in-depth interview is sometimes referred to as a conversation with a purpose, based on the interest to understand the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience and is focused and discursive, and allows the researcher and participant to explore an issue. An in-depth interview is used to determine the individuals' perceptions, opinion, forecasts, and their reaction to initial findings and potential solution (De Vos *et al.*, 2011).

In this study, face to face, in-depth interviews were executed to collect data through probing engagement with participants. Probing for more information was executed by the researcher to gather more information from the participants. All interviews were recorded and transcribed for data analysis purposes. The goal of this study follows on the question and was to determine the teachers' perceptions on factors that contribute to parental involvement/non-involvement in public schools. For information on the interview questions, please see **Chapter 3: Research methodology on perceptions of teachers about parental involvement in public schools.** Also see **Appendix A: Open-ended Interview Schedule.**

1.6.5 Pilot study

A pilot study was executed in order to determine whether the relevant information would be collected in the data collection process. The pilot study may be viewed as the dress rehearsal for the main investigation, a small scale implementation of the planned investigation in an attempt to bring possible deficiencies to the fore timeously. The main purpose of conducting a pilot study is to assess the feasibility of the study and to test the interviewing - and probing skills, and also to test measuring instruments such as the interview and the questionnaire or the programme for analysis of data (De Vos *et al.*, 2011).

In this particular study a pilot study was done prior to the main research to be sure of whether it is answering the research questions. It also ensured that questions being posed provided the live experience of the participants. The participants to this pilot study provided the kind of information the researcher was looking for (**See Chapter 3: Research methodology on perceptions of teachers about parental involvement in public schools**).

The pilot study was executed utilizing four (4) teachers also from the Kgatlang District, who was **excluded** from the sample of twenty (16) participants.

1.6.6 Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis transforms data into findings. This involves reducing the volume of raw information, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal (Patton, 2002). Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of data. In this study the data gathered during the interviews was transcribed and the researcher had to order and interpret it in order to be able to describe the experiences of teachers. Data analysis was performed by an independent coder

in the instance of this study (Also see **Chapter 3: Research methodology on perceptions of teachers about parental involvement in public schools**).

1.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Trustworthiness is ensured by the application of the following principles: **Credibility** was maintained by the interviewer using an accurate reflection of the information provided by the participants (De Vos, 2011; Cho & Trent, 2006). The researcher did member checking with the participants, peer examination was be done by an external for data analysis and reflexivity (Guban & Lincoln, 1985). Credibility was further ensured by utilizing the service of an independent coder to conclude the data process. The independent coder conducted an independent data analysis process after reading each of the transcribed interviews. **Confirmability** refers to the point at which findings of the study can be validated by other people and it requires that the researcher maintains a neutral position by respecting the participant's opinions, not labeling them or influencing their views, thus ensuring that findings can be confirmed (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). In order to ensure confirmability consensus of themes, subthemes and categories presented were agreed upon, the researcher and independent coder independently coded the data collected. The researcher will use reflexivity and a reflective journal in order to ensure confirmability. **Reflexivity** emphasizes the importance of self-awareness, political/ cultural consciousness, and ownership of one's perspective. It involves a critical self-reflection of the researcher's potential biases, predispositions and modifications made in the methodology. Through reflexivity, the researcher was constantly reflecting on what would be happening to his values and interests, modification that will be made to the methodology and rationale behind such modifications (Patton, 2002).

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS RELEVANT TO THIS RESEARCH

Ethics are defined by Strydom (in De Vos *et al.*, 2002:63) as “a set of normal principles that are suggested by an individual or group, and are subsequently widely accepted, and offer rules and behavioral expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students.”

Since this research dealt with human lives, the utmost care was taken to ensure the highest level of ethical standards. The researcher was at all times guided by the following ethical considerations as discussed by De Vos *et al.*, (2002).

1.8.1 Avoidance of Harm

The researcher took special care such as, assistance with transport and having a psychologist available for debriefing, to ensure that the participants were not harmed in anyway or form as a result of being part of this study. Harm in this case includes physical, emotional, psychological, and financial harm (De Vos *et al.*, 2002).

1.8.2 Informed Consent

Acquiring informed consent implies that all information regarding the aim of the research, the processes to be followed as well as the benefits of and disadvantages of engaging in the research need to be disclosed to the participants of the study (De Vos, *et al.*, 2002).

Participants were informed of exactly what the study entailed, as well as what was required of them as explained in the information sheet of the research (**See Appendix B: Research Information**). After explaining the possible effects of taking part in the study to the participants, they were presented with a consent form (**See Appendix C: Consent to participate**) to sign if they agree to participate.

1.8.3 No deception of participants

The researcher ensured that no information regarding the study or the possible effects of taking part in the study was withheld from participants. Furthermore, every care was taken to ensure that participants were not deceived, because the process was executed in a transparent manner. Participants were also informed of their right to have feedback on the findings of the completed research (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2005). In this study the participants will each receive a copy of the findings and recommendations for their own interest.

1.8.4 Violation of Privacy/ Anonymity and Confidentiality

Care was taken to ensure that the identities of the participants remained confidential at all times (Also see **Chapter 3: Research methodology on perceptions of teachers about parental involvement in public schools**). This was in line with the ethical code for research and conduct by social workers (De Vos *et al.*, 2011), which the researcher is bound to. Confidentiality is not only the non-disclosure of information that has been shared in confidence, but also ensuring that data is not handled or stored carelessly where it can be accidentally accessed by others (Gregory, 2003). This was done by giving pseudo names to all participants and having the information on the computer with a password which was known only to the researcher

1.8.5 Action and Competence of the Researcher

The researcher was competent to conduct this study and was ethically bound to work within the ethical guidelines of the social work profession to which he belongs. The researcher originates from Botswana and in the absence of professional legislation in this country, the researcher adhered to the general ethical code of the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP:1978). However, in the absence of specific ethical regulations for

social work research, the values and principles of social work practice should without exception be applied during interacting with participants (De Vos et al. 2011) which was indeed the case in this particular study.

The researcher has also ensured that he has competence in doing the research by regularly attending supervision, as well as attending sessions where research methodology was discussed by the supervisor. Although the researcher originates from Botswana and supervision was provided in Cape Town, regular supervision was done via telephone or e-mail and the researcher visited the University of Western Cape at certain times during the course of this study to enhance knowledge and discuss research progress with the supervisor.

1.9 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

In this paragraph, certain key concepts relevant to this study will be defined:

1.9.1 Parent

For the purpose of this study, a “*parent*” refers to a person who is a father or a mother or a person who has a child. A parent can be a guardian, a protector, or a person who adopted a child. A parent can also be defined as one who begets, gives birth to, or nurtures and raises a child (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English language, 2011). Members of the extended family may also be included or any others that may take care of a particular child who are not staying with his/her biological parents.

1.9.2 Parenting

For the purpose of this study, “*parenting*” is seen as the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. Parenting may also be described as the activity of raising a child rather than only having a biological relationship, which is usually done by the biological parents of the child

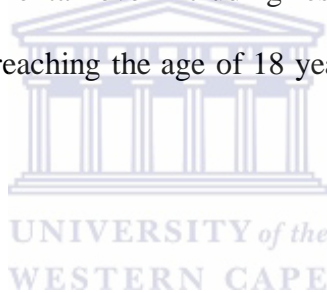
in question (Draft Integrated Parenting Framework Department of Social Development 2011).

1.9.3 Poverty

For the purpose of this study, the definition of the term, “*poverty*” includes those individuals who struggle to obtain adequate shelter, food and basic needs that are required for daily living (Russell, Harris & Gockel, 2008).

1.9.4 Child

The Children’s Act No. 38 (2005) of South Africa suggests that a “*child*” has responsibilities suitable to their age and developmental level including responsibilities towards their family, community and the State. Upon reaching the age of 18 years, the child becomes an adult as stipulated by the mentioned Act.



1.9.5 Parental Involvement

“*Parental Involvement*” is seen for the purpose of this study as the participation of parents in school activities. It is the commitment of time, energy, and goodwill to promote success for students. It can also be defined as: the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities including ensuring that parents play an integral role in assisting their child’s learning; are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s education at school; and are full partners in their child’s education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child (Wirt *et al.*, 2004). The term “parental involvement” will be used throughout this study when reference is made to this concept.

1.9.6 Child-wellbeing

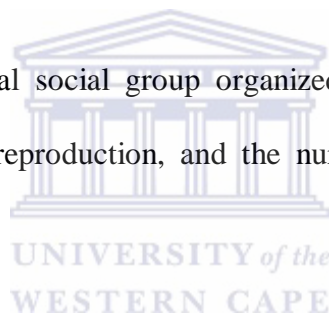
“*Child-wellbeing*” is a state of successful performance throughout the life course integrating physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional function that results in productive activities deemed significant by one’s cultural community, fulfilling social relationships, and the ability to transcend moderate psychosocial and environmental problems (Pollard & Rosenberg 2003).

1.9.7 Community

“*Community*” is a group of people within a society with a shared ethnic or cultural background, especially within a larger society (Butler, 2013).

1.9.8 Family

“*Family*” is an inter-generational social group organized and governed by social norms regarding descent and affinity, reproduction, and the nurtured socialization of the young (White, 1991).



1.9.9 Perception

“*Perception*” is the way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted or it can be a belief or opinion, often held by many people and based on how things are perceived (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2011).

1.9.10 School

“*School*” is an institution for the instruction of children or people including children in primary schools (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2011).

1.9.11 Teacher

A “*teacher*” is a person that teaches something; especially: a person whose job is to teach students about certain subjects. It also means that a teacher can be a person who teaches or instructs, especially as a profession, instructor including teachers for standard seven children (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2011).

1.10 CHAPTER LAYOUT

In the following paragraph, an overview of the chapters constituting this study as a whole is presented:

- **Chapter One:**

This chapter presents the orientation to this particular study.

- **Chapter Two:**

This chapter reviews relevant literature on the theoretical framework relevant to this study focusing on the perceptions of teachers regarding parental involvement with their children’s school activities. Different theories are reviewed and specific literature pertaining to Africa and Botswana is reviewed.

- **Chapter Three:**

Chapter Three presents the Research methodology utilized in this study. This chapter describes the research design, the research setting, study population, sample, inclusion criteria, and procedure of data collection, data analysis, ethical consideration and self-reflection during data collection. A review of the research design and methodology chosen as well as the motivation for this particular selection will be explained. The selected design in this study was social constructivism to allow the setting to inform the researcher about the

phenomenon. Further to this, in-depth interviews were selected to facilitate the participants to share their own subjective opinions and perceptions.

- **Chapter Four:**

Chapter Four presents the findings of this research study together with a literature control of the findings. Themes and sub-themes of the data analysis were compiled to facilitate the discussion of the findings. The researcher did not analyze the sub-themes further to categories, because a follow-up post-master's research project and article, focusing on pragmatic recommendations within the context of Botswana legislation and policies is planned.

- **Chapter Five:**

Chapter Five entails a discussion of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations emanating from the research findings. A review of findings, suggestion for implementing change and further research are made. In conclusion suggestions are proposed to the Ministry of Education in Botswana regarding effective parental involvement in schools

CHAPTER 2

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter one of this report introduced the reader to the topic and provided a general background and orientation to the study. This chapter reports on a literature review and a summary and motivation for the selected theoretical perspective pertaining to the issue of parental involvement in public schools.

The literature review is aimed at setting out the current state of knowledge regarding the research problem, to learn how others have explained and experienced similar problems, to narrow the focus of the project and to ensure that unnecessary duplication is avoided (Monette, Sullivan & De Jong, 2008). Literature review in qualitative research is furthermore also viewed as contributing to discovering new fields of study or exploring areas that are new and not elaborately studied yet. Therefore it is suggested by qualitative researchers that existing literature should not be used at all before data was to be collected (Flick, 2009). However, outlining the paradigm on which the study is based by the qualitative researcher, contributes significantly to better understanding the theme of study.

In this study the paradigm of Epstein's theory of the overlapping spheres is utilized as a point of departure. The literature review should be organized according to the theoretical framework (De Vos *et al.*, 2011).

In the following discussion the researcher will firstly present Epstein's theory of the overlapping spheres and link this approach to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model of the three level construct attempting to better understand the nature of the teacher's perception of parental involvement with their children's school activities.

2.2 EPSTEIN'S THEORY OF OVERLAPPING SPHERES

Different spheres influence a child's education during his or her school career. In order to understand these spheres of influences, it is of paramount importance to have an overview of these spheres from the perspective of the education system.

Epstein (1987) developed the theory of '*overlapping spheres*' from Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. Epstein identifies three major overlapping spheres or environments relevant to the education of children during their educational career: The family, the school and the community. At the center of all three spheres is the child. Epstein's (1987) **theory of overlapping spheres** of influence on families and schools in education suggests that the work of the family and the school overlaps and they share goals and missions in the student academic achievement. The theory of overlapping spheres assumes that the mutual interests of families and schools can be successfully promoted by the policies and programs of schools and the actions of teachers (Epstein, 1987). Students are at the center of this model and are perceived as the main players in their own education and as the reason for home, school, and community connections. **The theory consists of both external and internal structures.**

Certain **external structures** contribute to the fact that these three major spheres in which children learn and develop, may either be drawn together or pushed apart. Some educative practices are conducted separately by schools, families and communities; some are conducted jointly in order to reinforce children's learning (Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders & Simon, 1997). The external structure assumes that the shared responsibilities of home, school, and community for children's education are affected by forces of time. These shared responsibilities account for different patterns of interactions that occur at various ages and stages of children's growth, and experience. The mentioned patterns of interactions account for family, school, and community background characteristics, philosophies, and practices.

Schools and school management regularly have to make certain choices pertaining to the effective education of learners. They might conduct only a few communications and interactions with families and communities, keeping the three spheres of influence that directly affect student learning and development relatively separate. They also might conduct many high-quality communications and interactions designed to bring all three spheres of influence closer together. With frequent interactions among schools, families, and communities, more learners are more likely to receive common messages from various people about the importance of school, of working hard, of thinking creatively, of helping one another, and of further pursuing their school careers (Epstein, 1995).

The **internal structures** of interaction in schools, families and communities show where, how complex and how crucial interpersonal relations and patterns of influence occur between individuals at home, at school and in the community. These social relations may occur at an institutional level or at an individual level. The internal model further recognizes the relationships that occur between and among parents, children, educators, and members of the community, which may either positively or negatively influence student learning and growth. Two different levels of interaction at the institutional level may be identified, for example school-management invite all families or community groups to an event where, at the individual level, for example, teachers and parents may confer about one student's work and progress (Epstein, 1995).

The interactions of educators, students, parents, and others that happen in the internal structure of the model at the institutional - and individual levels represent social ties that may generate social capital. Social capital refers to resources such as information, attitudes, and behaviors that are the joint product of relationships and that may be collected or accumulated, and then invested to benefit students, families, schools, and the community (Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2000). For example, parents may meet and interact with other parents and other helpful

adults and then translate the ideas and information obtained into involvement at school, at home, or regarding actions to guide and support their children (Sheldon, 2002).

The school-community relationship as a strategy to achieve basic education has not been explored sufficiently in Botswana. The philosophy of school-parent partnership was introduced to the schools indiscriminately; it does not prove to be successful in all instances, for example, in rural areas where some parents are often not accessible. It is therefore of importance to consider the following overlapping areas of the internal model in Botswana. In this model contacts are made, information is exchanged, respect is built, and ties developed between and among teachers, parents, students, and others in the community. If resulting actions are based on effective information and sustainable, positive contacts, students will be exposed to similar messages from home, school, and the community about the significance of learning, attending school, doing homework, and fulfilling their roles and responsibilities as students (Sheldon, 2002). Additionally, wherever teachers make parental involvement part of their regular teaching practice, parents increase their interactions with children at home, they feel more optimistic about their abilities to assist their children in the primary grades and rate the teachers at a better level while at the same time and learners improve their attitudes and achievement (Epstein, 2001).

Epstein's ecological theory laid the basis for the model of six types of parental involvement. The six types identified include: parenting; home-school communication; volunteering; learning at home; decision making and collaborating with the community (Epstein *et al.*, 1997). Each type of involvement poses specific challenges for its successful design and implementation and each type leads to different outcomes for learners, parents and teachers (Epstein *et al.*, 1997). With regard to home-school communication, Epstein (1997) recommends that schools should implement effective forms of home-to-school - and school-

to-home communication regarding the programs offered by the school as well as the progress of the particular child.

Epstein's (1995) list of example practices for this involvement type is the regular parent-teacher conference characterized by mutual communication between parent and teacher. In the late 1980s, Joyce Epstein proposed the School-Family-Community-Partnership Model (Partnership Model), which soon became influential in parental involvement research. The model consists of two main components. The first depicts the partnership of schools, families and communities as overlapping spheres. The spheres entails that schools, families and communities each have a stake and influence in the education of a child. The overlap of the spheres represents the mutual interests and influences of all stakeholders in a child's education as visually demonstrated in **Figure 2.1:**

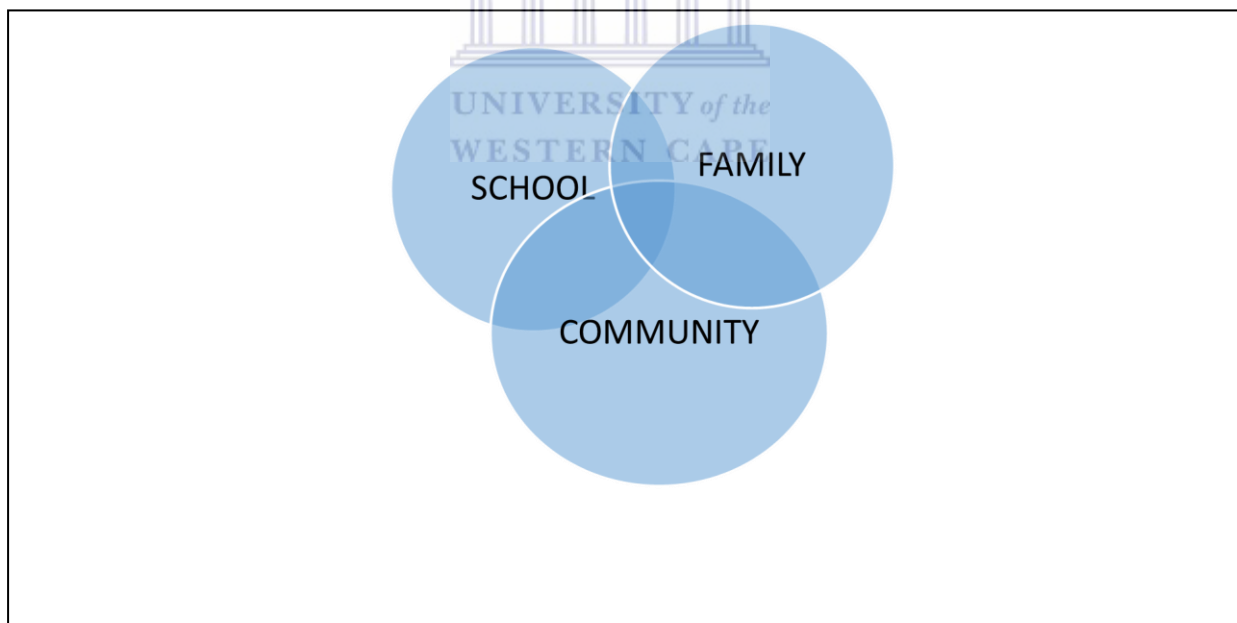
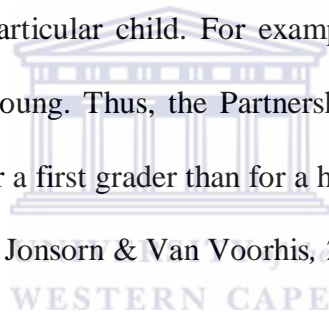


Fig. 2.1: Partnership Model indicating the overlap between different spheres of interest of stakeholders.

The above visual demonstration of Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence underlines the importance of the center point of overlapping which eventually guarantees the success to the

child in school. According to the above illustration, it may be assumed that two factors influence the degree of overlap of the spheres, namely time and experiences. Important aspects that need to be taken into consideration, especially in the Botswana context regarding the degree of overlap of the spheres are: time spent in schools, the age and experiences of the child within the family, as well as within the context of the school. Positive experiences of children within families and schools are imperative in Botswana as children mostly experience adversity in families and schools due to the degree of poverty, the effect of single-parenting and the impact of being a member of an extended family. This mentioned overlap of spheres can influence and even determine the extent of adaptation and progress experienced by a child because schools, families, and communities display mutual interests and degrees of influence on a particular child. For example, parents are more involved in school when their children are young. Thus, the Partnership Model would depict a greater overlap of parents and schools for a first grader than for a high school student (Epstein, 2001; Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salinas, Jonsorn & Van Voorhis, 2002).



The second component of the partnership model illustrates the relationships and patterns of influence that are most important during a child's education. According to the model, two types of interaction may be defined: Those within organizations and those between organizations. Additionally, there are various levels of interactions. Standard, organizational interactions occur between families and schools. This kind of interaction includes communication in the form of newsletters and reports about the school's activities and performance. Specific and individual interactions are those between parents and teachers. Notes sent home from the teacher or conversations at a parent-teacher conference fall into this category. At the center of this half of the model is the child, who interacts with schools and the family. The child is both changed by the interactions and produces change in others (Epstein, 2001; Epstein *et al.*, 2002).

The key concept that underlies both parts of the Partnership Model is that all stakeholders in a child's education have mutual interests and influences. The primary shared interest is a caring concern that the child should eventually be successful in his/her schooling career. Success is often described as the child's academic achievement followed by promotion to the next level. Additionally, the model suggests that stakeholders' shared interests and influences can be promoted by the policies, actions, beliefs, attitudes, and values of the stakeholders.

In particular, the Partnership Model revises earlier conceptualizations that families and schools exist in separate spheres, implying that they have separate responsibilities. It also revises perceptions of the school-family relationship as one that must be sequential. In a sequential relationship, parents are expected to have more of a role than schools, and vice versa, in certain periods of a child's life. While the Partnership Model acknowledges that schools and families often do have more or less influence at certain ages, the model also suggests that the overlap between families and schools can be increased with concerted effort by one or more of the stakeholders (Epstein, 2001).

Another important aspect of overlapping spheres of influence is that schools and families share similar characteristics. Epstein uses the terms "*school-like families*" and "*family-like schools*" to explain the behaviors of families and schools that believe in each other's importance (Epstein, 2001:32).

In school-like families, parents encourage, support and develop their children's academic skills. They may assist with homework or introduce educational activities as part of their regular family schedule. Similarly, they may use time in the same manner as the school or reward their children for accomplishments. These families teach their children to view school activities as part of the normal and natural rhythm of everyday life. In the context of this study, it can be done before the child goes out to play when the parent encourages them to

first do their homework or maybe before going to bed the parent may sit and read with the children assist them with their homework (Epstein, 2001).

Family-like schools, in a similar manner, take on the attitudes and characteristics of a caring family. Like families, they may individualize attention to meet the unique needs of each child. This could mean changing the standards or rules based on individual circumstances. It can also mean striving to create more open and reciprocal relationships between teachers and students. However, the significance of the pupil-teacher ratio is that the lower this ratio is, the greater the amount of time the teacher spends with each pupil and the greater the quality of instruction. The average pupil-teacher ratio in Botswana's public schools is 30-40:1 especially in rural schools (Adeyemi, Boikhutsho & Moffat, 2003). It is a huge challenge for any teacher to properly and effectively pay attention to a child's individual needs in a class consisting of 30 to 40 students without an assistant as stated by the model.

The Partnership Model emphasizes the shared attributes of schools and families. It also suggests that behaviors and attitudes of schools and families can increase the degree of overlap between schools and families, resulting in many benefits for students (Epstein, 2001).

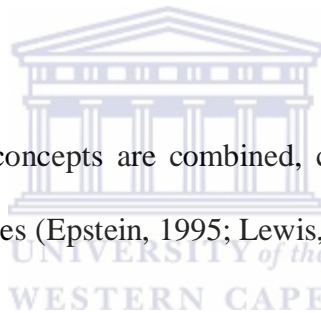
2.2.2 Epstein's Theory applied in Practice

In a partnership, teachers and administrators create more family-like schools. A family-like school recognizes each child's individuality and makes each child feel special and included. Family-like schools welcome all families, not just those that are easy to reach. In a partnership, parents create more school-like families. A school-like family recognizes that each child is also a student. Families reinforce the importance of school, homework, and activities that build student skills and feelings of success (Epstein 1995).

Communities, including groups of parents working together, create school-like opportunities, events, and programs that reinforce, recognize, and reward students for good progress, creativity, contributions, and excellence. Communities also create family-like settings, services, and events to enable families to better support their children. Community - minded families and students assist their neighborhoods and other families (Epstein 1995).

The concept of a community school is currently re-emerging due to the educational value thereof. A community school refers to a place where programs and services for students, parents, and others are offered before, during and after the regular school day. Schools and communities talk about programs and services that are family-friendly meaning that they take into account the needs and realities of family life, are feasible to conduct, and are equitable toward all families.

When all the above mentioned concepts are combined, children often experience learning communities or caring communities (Epstein, 1995; Lewis, Schaps & Watson, 1995).



2.3 THE CHILD AS CENTER OF THE PARTNERSHIP MODEL

In the following section the child as the center of the partnership model will be discussed:

2.3.1 The rights and welfare of the child

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, article 11, speaks to the right of every child to have access to an education (OAU, 1990). The education of the child needs to be directed to the following matters:

- The promotion and development of the child's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;

- Fostering respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms with particular reference to those set out in the provisions of various African instruments on human and peoples' rights and international human rights declarations and conventions;
- The preservation and strengthening of positive African morals, traditional values and cultures;
- The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society in the spirit of understanding tolerance, dialogue, mutual respect and friendship among all people ethnic, tribal and religious groups;
- The preservation of national independence and territorial integrity;
- The promotion and achievement of African Unity and Solidarity;
- The promotion of the child's understanding of primary care.

In applying the abovementioned, the assumption is that if children feel cared for and are encouraged to work diligently in the role of student, they are more likely to achieve regarding their ability to learn to read, write, calculate, and learn other skills and talents and to remain in school (Epstein & Sharma, 1998).

2.3.2 The Strength-based approach: Focusing on the strengths rather than deficits of the child

Epstein and Sharma (1998) define strength-based assessment as the measurement of emotional and behavioral skills, competencies, and characteristics that create a sense of personal accomplishment; contribute to satisfying relationships with family members, peers, and adults; enhance the child's ability to deal with adversity and stress and the promotion of personal, social, and academic development. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child builds further on the child's positive experience in school, feelings of being cared for, encouragement to work diligently in the role of student following their bigger

chance to more easily learn to read, write, calculate, including the acquirement of other skills and talents and remaining in school. As such, and according to Epstein and Sharma (1998), the definition of strength-based assessment offers a strategy for empowering children and their families by building on the personal strengths and resources that are frequently overlooked or given minimal attention in more problem-oriented approaches to assessment.

The following are four important assumptions that strength-based assessment is based upon:

- Every child, regardless of his or her personal and family situation, has strengths that are unique to every individual;
- Children are influenced and motivated by the manner in which significant people in their lives respond to them;
- Rather than viewing a child who does not demonstrate strength as deficient, it is assumed this particular child has never previously had the opportunities to his or her disposal that are essential to learning, developing, and mastering the skill;
- When treatment and service planning are based on strengths rather than deficits and pathologies, children and families are more likely to become involved in the therapeutic process and to use their strengths and resources in together looking for solutions.

A strength-based assessment approach provides several advantages for practitioners and the individuals they serve. Firstly, focusing on strengths allows practitioners to involve children and their families in service planning in a positive way by underscoring emotional development. Secondly, strength-based assessment provides a method for documenting a child's strengths and competencies and offers a way for establishing positive expectations for the child. Thirdly, through strength-based assessment family members are empowered to take

responsibility for the decisions that will affect their child's development (Johnson & Friedman, 1991; Saleebey, 1992).

2.3.3 The Learner's Social and Emotional Development

Educators, parents, and policymakers have become increasingly aware that in addition to the mastery of educational subjects, school achievement includes a comprehensive display of capabilities and behaviors. Non-fatal student discriminations (these are thefts and assaults) at school are serious but rare (Flaxman, 2001). However, according to The National Center for Educational Statistics and Bureau of Justice report, Indicators of School Crime and Safety in 1998, about 8% of all 6th graders to 12th graders stated being preys of criminal incidents and 7% of students stated being threatened with weapons. About 16% of public school principals reported a number of serious disciplinary problems at their respective schools (Kaufmanet, Plotsky, Nemeroff & Charney, 2000). About 11% of school board leaders report that school violence is a major concern in their districts (Hess, 2002). Information on antisocial behavior in school shows that students' gender, age, and race are linked with the incidence of fatal and nonfatal violent incidents. Male students are significantly more likely to bully others, be involved in fights, be threatened or injured with weapons, consume alcohol and smoke marijuana, and be involved in other delinquent and criminal offenses (Kaufman *et al.*, 2000; Nansel *et al.*, 2001).

In order for children to prosper during their school careers, there needs to be a positive interaction of many factors and a partnership between all the people and structures involved in a child's learning process. Academic success must go hand-in-hand with the attainment of qualities such as honesty, cooperation, fairness, respect for others, kindness, trustworthiness, the skill to resolve conflict, and the awareness to comprehend why such personality qualities are important (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2002).

Children who take part in early childhood platforms including certain family components, showed less delinquent behavior later in life as opposed to those who did not for example 40% less arrests for violent wrongdoings (Reynolds, 2000) were recorded. Likewise, teenagers who are equally supported at home and at school show more optimistic outlooks about school, superior attendance and conduct, and better class preparation (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Positive conduct at school is linked to positive learning outcomes (Haynes, Ben-Avie & Ensign, 2003).

Successful students not only perform better intellectually, but they are dedicated to lifelong learning, they also show accountable and respectful social behaviors, practice safe and positive health habits, and are involved with family, school and community activities (Greenberg *et al.*, 2003). Most parents want their children to be safe and healthy. But executing that desire can be a demanding and challenging struggle. A survey of American's health habits has indicated that American parents and children are more overweight, more stressed, they are less active, they pay less attention to food intake than ever before (Richter *et al.*, 2000). The most serious health and social complications facing humans today have their origins, and possible solutions, in health behaviors developed in childhood and adolescence (Spruijt-Metz, 1999).

There is currently also a growing awareness in the U.S.A among educators and policymakers about the importance of social and emotional development for successful student performance in pre-school and elementary school contexts (Camilli, Vargas, Ryan & Barnett, 2010; Denham & Weissberg, 2004).

Social and emotional learning (SEL) involves the processes of developing social and emotional competencies in children. SEL programming is based on the understanding that the best learning emerges in the context of supportive relationships that make learning

challenging as emphasized by the strength theory. Every child, regardless of his or her personal and family situation, has strengths that are unique to the individual.

Nurturing the academic and social–emotional development of every student is the primary concern of teachers, school administrators, and policy makers, nonetheless a large group of students in U.S.A schools are falling behind (Meyer, Madden & McGrath, 2004). Schools will be most effective in their educational mission when they incorporate efforts to promote children’s academic, social and emotional learning (Zins, Weissberg, Wang & Walberg, 2004). Educators, parents, and policymakers who know that the core SEL competencies are necessary for effective life functioning also recognize that these skills can be imparted. Literature indicates that school-based SEL programs can encourage and enhance students’ connection to school, constructive behavior, and educational success (Durlak, Weissberg & Dumnicki, 2011).

Social and emotional learning has been revealed to increase mastery of subject material and drive to study; decrease nervousness, improve attention, and improve study skills; and increase commitment to school and the time devoted to school work. Social and emotional learning has also been shown to improve attendance and graduation rates, as well as constructive employment, while at the same time, it reduces suspensions, dismissals, and grade retention (CASEL, 2003; Zins *et al.*, 2004).

Effective SEL programming begins in preschool and continues through high school. Classroom teachers can support students to cultivate social and emotional capabilities by directly teaching these skills, by using appealing curriculum materials, and by instigating specific instructional and classroom-management practices (Cohen, 2006; Durlak *et al.*, 2011; Weare & Nind, 2011; Zins, Bloodworth, Roger, Weissberg & Walberg, 2004).

Social and emotional skills are critical to being a good student, citizen, worker and many different risky behaviors (for example., drug use, violence, bullying and dropout) can be prevented or reduced when multi-year, integrated efforts develop students' social and emotional skills. This is best done through effective classroom instruction, student engagement in positive activities in and out of the classroom, and broad parent and community involvement in program planning, implementation, and evaluation ((Bond & Carmola-Hauf, 2004; Hawkins, Smith & Catalano, 2004). Children's social-emotional abilities encourage peer relationships and more progressive social skills be likely to achieve at higher levels at school (Baker, 2006).

SEL programs are to promote students' self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship, and responsible decision-making skills as well as to improve student attitudes and beliefs about self, others, and school. These, in turn, provide a foundation for better adjustment and academic performance as reflected in more positive social behaviors and peer relationships, fewer conduct problems, less emotional distress, and improved grades and test scores (Durlak *et al.*, 2011; Greenberg, Weissberg & O'Brien, 2003).

As stated by Sharma (1998) the strengths perspective includes the accurate assessment of one's strengths and limitations and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism. Therefore, CASEL (2013) agrees with above author by identifying five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies necessary for students to improve their social and emotional learning. The five competency clusters for students are:

- **Self-awareness:** The ability to accurately recognize own emotions and thoughts and its influence on behavior;
- **Self-management:** The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses,

motivating one self, and setting and working toward achieving personal and academic goals;

- **Social awareness:** The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports;
- **Relationship skills:** The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed;
- **Responsible decision making:** The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others.

The five sets of SEL competencies are important from very early in life but are especially relevant as children begin to spend time with adults outside the home and to socialize with peers. Social and emotional skills play a role in determining how well-equipped children will be to meet the demands of the classroom. They also help determine whether students are able to engage fully in learning and benefit from instruction (Campbell & Von Stauffenberg, 2008; Denham, Brown & Domitrovich, 2010).

2.3.4 The role of language and culture in education

Botswana's wealth of diverse languages and cultural traditions will be acknowledged, supported and strengthened within the education system. No Motswana will be deprived in the education system as a consequence of a mother tongue that differs from the country's two official languages (Vision 2016).

However education delivery for children of ethnic minorities is always challenging in terms of meeting their linguistic and cultural needs. At most, these children discover that non-usage of their language and lack of mention to their culture in classroom teaching-learning contravenes their interest and pursuit of schooling. An example in the Botswana context is the Basarwa hunter gatherer ethnic minority children. They drop out of school early; many do not complete school and most do not care to attend school at all and are sometimes labelled in official circles as the “*missing children*” from the school system. What is clear is that the dynamics of classroom interaction, amongst other things, highly contribute to failure to absorb these children in the school system (Tshireletso, 1997).

Language is an obstacle to effective communication between teachers and parents in the rural schools. Teachers do not know the language that is spoken in communities they teach and English is mainly the language utilized during teaching (Tshireletso, 1997; Le Roux, 2000). The teachers are not trained and do not receive adequate support concerning teaching Setswana as second and English as third language at the same time. As a result of insufficient teaching skills, the system promotes children from infant classes to upper classes before they attain the basic literacy skills. Schools are not capable enough to cultivate a reading culture, therefore, learner success of schools in rural areas is low, so that between 2002 and 2004, 88% children proceeded to secondary education with C and D pass grades (Pansiri, 2008).

Children who are English language learners (ELLs) speak a native language other than English. ELLs at present comprise more than 10% of all students in U.S.A public schools and are the fastest growing part of the school-aged population (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition [NCELA], 2010). A disadvantage of ELLs includes difficulty in learning effectively in English-only classrooms and may profit from different language support programs (Meyer, Madden & McGrath, 2004). Families of ELL children also tend to

communicate less often with teachers and participate in less school activities as opposed to English first-language families (Harper & Pelletier, 2010).

English as educational language however has advantages. Parents of ELL students have consistently high ambitions for their children's education throughout elementary school and consider that education is extremely important (Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese & Garnier, 2001). Therefore, the parents of ELL children can be strong partners in their children's education if teachers and administrators can find ways to value and make the most of the strengths of ELL families.

August and Shanahan (2006) state that parents of ELL children can be a valuable resource in their children's education, but schools often fail to include or involve ELL parents in an effective partnership. (Cosentino de Cohen, Deterding & Clewell, 2005) found important differences in parental outreach and backing between schools serving high-ELL populations and schools serving low-ELL populations. Specifically, high-ELL schools are more likely than low-ELL schools to arrange for interpreters, translated documents, parent outreach activities, and other services (For example., transportation or child care) to support involvement. Although there are differences between schools in the amount of parent support services provided, little research was done on how such services are related to parents' definite involvement in their children's education or how such services are linked to student outcomes. Therefore, there are many unanswered questions about the usefulness of family outreach services in improving the educational and individual success of ELL students. Literature explains thoroughly that ELL students receive more support in their home settings in addition to that received at school. (El Nokali, Bachman & Votruba-Drzal, 2010). Parental involvement is definitely related to academic achievement and learning during elementary school (Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins & Weiss, 2006). Higher levels of parental school

involvement are also related to increased reading and mathematics achievement for ELL children in elementary school (Han & Bridglall, 2009).

2.4 PARENTS/FAMILIES AS ENTITY IN THE PARTNERSHIP MODEL

From the beginning of a child's life, the family and relationships shaped among family members are profound promoters of social, emotional, and cognitive development. Educators, policymakers, and researchers have long focused on parental involvement as a counterpart to the fundamental importance of strong teaching and curricula to student achievement. Meeting the needs of students also involves meeting the needs of their families and building strong home-school connections (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008).

Researchers have been turning with growing frequency in recent decades to the role of families, namely parents, in the school achievement of children. In general, this literature has progressed in two separate, but related, streams of research (Ryan & Adams, 1999). The first stream comprises the exploration of parents' involvement with the school as an institution, such as parent-teacher communication and parent participation in school committees (Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins & Weiss, 2006; Hill & Taylor, 2004). The second stream of research, and the focus of the present study, comprises the investigation of parenting behaviors in the home that are specifically related to children's academic growth, such as assisting with homework (Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Jones & Reed, 2002).

The focus is on the general socioeconomic status of the family, as well as the mental health of the parents. It is well-known that parents' education and workforce participation are important predictors of involvement, with more educated parents being more involved and those in the workforce having limited time for participation (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Other significant parent/family characteristics likely to be important to involvement are social and psychological resources of the parents, parents' perceptions of their child,

parents' beliefs about their role in their child's education, parents' attitude toward school, parents' ethnic identity, socialization practices, and parents' prior involvement in children's education.

Though the bulk of studies exploring parental involvement have tended to focus on achievement as the primary outcome of interest (Fan & Chen, 2001; Nye, Schwartz & Turner, 2006), there is an increasing body of literature exploring relationships between parental involvement and children's social-emotional outcomes. As emphasized by (El Nokali, Bachman & Votruba, 2010), parents' connections with their children's teachers are often fixated on issues related to social and behavioral functioning, in addition to academics. Hence, parents' involvement in their children's education may improve social-emotional skills to the point that parents are working together with teachers and schools to address such concerns in the classroom and at home. Greater levels of parental involvement are related to more advanced social skills, less behavioral problems, and improved social-emotional adjustment (El Nokali, Bachman & Votruba-Drzal., 2010; Iruka, Winn, Kingsley & Orthodoxou, 2011).

Positive academic results stemming from parental involvement range from gains in early childhood to adolescence and beyond. Most common procedures used to define academic achievement are report card grades, grade point averages, consistent test scores, teacher assessments, cognitive test scores, grade retention, and dropout rates (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Research evidence on home-school relations and academic achievement has pointed out that children whose parents are involved with early childhood programs score higher on cognitive development scales, use better vocabulary and when speaking they use more complex sentences than children whose families are not part of such programs (Mathematical Policy

Research and the Center for Children and Families at Teachers College, 2001). Similarly, participants in early childhood programs that had a family association and support factor are more likely to score at or above national norms on scholastic readiness tests at school entry. Most importantly, these gains continue to be prominent in later educational performance, with fewer grade retentions and increased high school completion rates (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Patrikakou, Weissberg, Redding & Walberg, 2005).

Home–school communication and parental involvement remain strong predictors of academic achievement even in high school. Students whose parents continued to be well informed and held high hopes for them had higher grades, accomplished more academic credits, and were more likely to plan for college (Catsambis, 2002; Patrikakou, 2004).

Roles are composed of sets of expectations or beliefs held by individuals and groups for the behavior of individual members and beliefs about the behaviors characteristic of group members. These expectations or beliefs include patterns of ideas that guide the individual's choice of behaviors within specific contexts, as well as the individual's interpretation of others' behaviors within those contexts. Roles also reflect the individual's understanding of personal duty for behaviors within a context, and understanding of the range of behaviors that are suitable in the context. Therefore, roles are socially built by individuals in the context of their social groups. Because contributors to role construction (individuals and groups) are subject to change, individuals' role structures are also subject to change (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

These observations on role-fulfilling are supplemented by theory and research in developmental psychology. For example, parents' ideas about suitable roles in children's education are shaped not only by relevant social contexts (for example, family, school, culture), but are also guided by parents' beliefs and ideas about child-rearing, how children

develop and effective child-rearing practices (Stevenson, Chen, & Uttal, 1990). Overall, parents' role construction for involvement in children's education is created in the interaction of beliefs about appropriate and desired child outcomes; about who is responsible for these outcomes; perceptions of important group members' (for example, family, teachers, and other parents) expectations for parental behaviors and parental behaviors related to those beliefs and expectations. These bases of role construction under-score its grounding in families' cultural context, and propose the importance of attending well to differences across families and school communities in understanding role construction for involvement.

Work that has been conducted on parental role construction (Hoover-Dempsey & O'Connor, 2002; Hoover-Dempsey, Wilkins, Sandler, & O'Connor, 2004) proposes that role construction has two major manifestations: active and passive. An active parental role construction reflects trust that primary accountability for the child's educational outcomes belongs to the parent; trust that the parent should be active in meeting these duties and personal behavior that comprises active support for the child's school learning. The authors have observed two forms of active role construction: parent-focused (parent is ultimately responsible) and partnership-focused (parent and school ultimately share responsibility). In contrast an inert parental role construction (usually a school-focused orientation) reflects belief that the school holds primary responsibility for the child's educational outcomes; belief that the parent need act only when the school initiates interaction and behaviors that include dependence on the school and general acceptance of school decisions.

Educators, policymakers, and researchers have long focused on parental involvement as a counterpart to the fundamental significance of strong teaching and curricula to student success. Despite agreement that parental involvement has positive consequences (Fan & Chen, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002), educators and parents have reported obstacles to involvement, for example, parents have reported that teachers do not actually welcome their

involvement; they have also reported an unmet need for specific suggestions about how to help their children (Pena, 2000). Teachers, for their part, have reported low administrative backing for involvement efforts of parents and very limited training in effective involvement strategies (Hoover-Dempsey *et al.*, 2001). Thus, schools' and parents' involvement efforts often miss the mark.

2.4.1 Parents' Motivational Beliefs

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997, 2005) model proposes that major personal motivators of parental involvement comprised parents' role construction for involvement and parents' sense of efficacy for helping the child to effectively learn. As reported in Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005), substantial work with the construct of role construction led to abstracting it as constituting role activity beliefs (how active a parent believes he or she should be in relation to supporting his or her child's education) and role valence (the general positive-to-negative valence typifying the parent's experiences with schools and the influence of those experiences on the parents' emotional orientation toward engaging with schools). The two components may be used separately or in combination. Consistent with their study's purposes, they assessed parents' role activity beliefs: parents' beliefs about how active they should be in supporting their children's education.

2.4.2 Role Activity Beliefs for Involvement

Parent roles with schools can take a range of forms, such as communicating about academics, attending parent education workshops, serving on school advisory committees, or selecting educational programs for their children society (Patrikakou, Weissberg, Redding & Walberg, 2005).

Studies of varied groups of elementary and middle school students have recommended that role activity beliefs do influence parents' decisions about becoming and being involved in their children's education involvement (Hoover-Dempsey *et al.*, 2005). Green and Hoover-Dempsey (2007) for example, reported that most home school parents had particularly strong role activity beliefs related to involvement in their children's learning.

2.4.3 Parental Self-Efficacy in Helping the Child Succeed in School

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model (1995, 1997 and 2005) also recommended that parents' self-efficacy in helping the child prosper in school may influence their decisions about becoming involved in their children's learning. Self-efficacy is defined as a person's belief that he or she can act in ways that are likely to produce desired outcomes; it is an important factor shaping the goals an individual chooses to pursue and his or her levels of perseverance in working toward those goals (Bandura, 1997). Applied to parental involvement, self-efficacy theory suggests that parents make involvement decisions based in part on their thinking about the outcomes likely to follow their involvement activities (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler & Hoover-Dempsey, 2005). Personal self-efficacy beliefs have been associated with parental involvement for elementary, middle, and high school students (Shumow & Lomax, 2002).

2.4.4 Role of family in present society

Interaction with important social networks is related to families' economic prospects. For African-American adults the absence of economic resources is associated with contact and interaction with individuals' social networks. In times of need, adult males and females are likely to turn to family members, who in turn provide material and social support. For example, economic strain is associated with economic support from kin (Dressler, 1985). Research has shown that the more mothers report that family resources are not sufficient, the

more support they report from extended family members, including financial help and social and emotional support. Findings have also shown that social support from kin is positively related to parents' and children's social emotional well-being. In the existence of social support youngsters are more likely to show a host of social and emotional competencies at home and in school (Casten & Flickinger, 1993).

2.4.5 Role of culture and family in education

Scientific research increasingly shows that learning involves not only cognition but also social and emotional processes and that culture plays a key role in how individuals interact and learn. Culture also provides individuals with a sense of identity and a frame of reference that helps them understand their worlds. Culturally determined inconsistencies between the home and the school can affect the child's achievement in school. Schools will likely be most successful in their educational mission when they incorporate efforts to promote children's academic, social, and emotional learning in the context of each child's culture (Greenfield & Cocking, 1994; Laosa, 1999).

When looking at parental involvement within the ELL population, it is important to consider the diversity of socio-cultural factors involved, which can frequently serve as barriers that prevent ELL families from being active participants in their children's education (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008). Differing cultural backgrounds, and logistical complications, such as work schedules and transportation, are a few of the factors that can pose challenges for ELL families to build relationships with their children's schools.

2.4.6 Parent's racial socialization

Racial socialization refers to the degree to which parents teach and discuss matters of race (for example, culture, heritage, history) with their youngsters. In recent years, with the

growing cultural and linguistic diversity of families, the home and school environments may hold diverse and sometimes differing beliefs about the appropriate degree and nature of school–family partnerships. Being aware of such factors and addressing them in proper ways make home–school interactions more positive and productive for the benefit of all students in a multicultural society. By making culturally aware school–family partnerships, school systems can reduce cultural breaks, facilitate intercultural transitions, improve ethnic and racial perceptions and attitudes, and nurture interethnic friendships. For example, providing parents with materials and activities that are adapted to accommodate the needs of families from different, cultural and linguistic backgrounds will improve parental involvement and contribute to the creation of a positive home–school climate. In this way, more learning opportunities will be created and students will be better prepared to obtain not only knowledge, but also attitudes and skills necessary to interact positively and productively with people in a pluralistic society (Patrikakou, Weissberg, Redding & Walberg, 2005).

Peters (1985) has argued that African-American parents prepare their children for the experience of racism and racial discrimination by enhancing adolescents' self-perceptions and self-esteem regarding their race. By strengthening children's racial self-regard, parents safeguard their children from the hostility and negative experiences they expect their children to see or encounter in schools, the community, or the media. Research directly assessing the impact of parents' racial socialization on youngsters' adjustment is scarce. Nonetheless, research has indeed shown that African-American adolescents report incidents in which they have either individually or collectively experienced acts of racism (Seaton, 2002). Therefore, parents may have the opportunity to discuss racial discrimination with their youngsters if adolescents talk about their experiences at home. Substantiation of the correlation of racial socialization with youngsters' adjustment has shown that parents' emphasis upon their racial culture or heritage is positively associated with children's self-esteem (Stevenson, 1997).

Similarly, parents' deliberations of potential racial barriers to success and the effort needed to overcome them are positively associated with adolescents' grades and feelings of efficacy and negatively related to depression (Stevenson, Reed, Bodison & Bishop, 1997).

2.4.7 The family structure

The family is considered the basis for socializing children into well-adjusted adults (Amoateng & Heaton, 2007). Research focusing on the influence of family structure on human development has become of particular interest (Magnuson & Berger, 2009). Family structure frequently refers to the marital status of a family (Manning & Lamb, 2003) or the type of family in which a child is raised (Strohschein, Roos & Brownell, 2009). Family structure is normally indicated as single - and two parent households with the focus often being on single parent households (Davids & Roman, 2013).

Single parenting has an effect on the functioning of the family and these factors can also influence the parental involvement in schools. Single parents are more likely to be socially isolated, work longer hours, and provide lower emotional and parental support than families with married parents (Jackson, Brooks-Gunn, Huang & Glassman, 2000). Single parents have to manage the responsibilities of being a caregiver and provider to their children (Magnuson & Berger, 2009). Children raised in single parent households have less parental attention and supervision as opposed to children who are raised in households with married parents (Barrett & Turner, 2006; Davids & Roman, 2013). Single parent households more often have to battle with unemployment, poverty and a lack of resources (Roman, 2011). In comparison to single parent households, married parent's households seem to have a higher socioeconomic status (Rosenfeld, 2010). Married parent's households are seen as being more '*attractive*', because each parent brings his/her own resources that are used collectively, and a division of labour (responsibilities) exists within the household (Stoleru, Radu, Szigeti & Antal, 2011).

Furthermore, children from married parent's households tend to be more emotionally and psychologically well-adjusted than children from other family structures (Goodman & Greaves, 2010).

2.4.8 Socio-economic status of the family

Literature suggests that parents' emotional and psychological states and child-rearing practices are negatively affected by economic problems (Ge, Conger, Lorenz & Simons, 1994).

Families' financial resources, neighborhood conditions and social networks are connected to children and adolescents' social skills and capabilities through the association with parents' child-rearing practices and parents' psychological functioning. In contrast economic hardship in a variety of forms is associated with psychological suffering in parents (McLoyd, 1990, 1997). For example, difficulty paying bills and meeting families' material needs is positively related to mothers' and fathers' depression (Conger, Conger, Elder & Lorenz, 1992).

Mothers report that when their financial resources are insufficient they have a more negative attitude on the future (Taylor, Chadwick, Heptinstall & Danckaerts, 1996). Moreover, unemployment is connected to a range of psychological and emotional problems, including somatic complaints and depressive symptomatology. In addition, economic hardship has been linked to marital problems and discord.

Findings have shown that financial problems are associated with depressed mood and inconsistency in parenting (Ge *et al.*, 1994). Similarly, economic adversity has been linked to diminished parental emotional support and more disciplinary parenting.

McLoyd (1997) has noted that low socio-economic parents are more likely to use harsh discipline techniques, are more likely to issue directives without clarification, and are less

likely to reward children when they have behaved in desirable ways. Literature also indicated that mothers experiencing economic problems are less likely to uphold family routines and schedules (Taylor *et al.*, in press).

2.4.9 Parental Involvement in Children's Education

Parents' educational involvement has been linked to children's academic results in a range of ways, comprising higher academic achievement and more positive attitudes toward school (Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems & Holbein, 2005). One way that parents can effect children's academic results is through active participation in and management of learning at home. This typically involves activities such as engaging in cognitively stimulating tasks, like reading together, and managing children's school-related behaviors, such as organizing and monitoring children's time (Finn, 1998). Such active management from parents in the home environment can support children's educational endeavors and provide motivation to learn (Seginer, 2006). A large body of research has explored the influence of parental participation in children's homework (Xu & Corno, 2006) but with inconsistent results (Hoover-Dempsey *et al.*, 2001). Some studies have found parental involvement in homework to be positively associated with achievement (Callahan, Rademacher, & Hildreth, 1998), whereas others have found it to be negatively associated (Muller, 1995). It is noteworthy that the majority of published studies on parental involvement have done research primarily on parents' self-reported behaviors, whereas few studies have examined parental involvement from the children's perspective.

Researchers have concentrated on the style or emotional tone of parent-child interactions regarding school issues. When parents use a helpful and reassuring style of involvement, they provide their children with a sense of initiative and confidence in relation to learning. Helpful and reassuring parental involvement, such as rewarding learning-related behaviors with

encouragement and praise, is typically associated with higher school achievement in children (Simpkins, Weiss, McCartney, Kreider & Dearing, 2006). By contrast, pressure from parents through the use of orders, punishment, or coercive interactions is negatively associated with children's school outcomes. Parental punishment, intrusion, and criticism in reaction to children's grades and homework are related to lower academic performance (Niggli, Trautwein, Schnyder, Ludtke & Neumann, 2007).

Despite the increasingly central role of fathers in families of young children, the considerable majority of parental-involvement studies have examined mothers only. This is in spite of Grossman *et al.*'s (2002) suggestion that because fathers play a major role in mentoring and encouraging their children to explore and take challenges, fathers likely play a critical role in supporting their children's development outside the home. The limited existing research does suggest, however, that fathers can have an influence on child outcomes, above and beyond maternal involvement (Greif & Greif, 2004). Certainly, fathers' educational involvement has been linked to increased levels of academic achievement (McBride, Schoppe-Sullivan & Moon-Ho, 2005), more optimistic school attitudes (Flouri, Buchanan & Bream, 2002), literacy improvement, and improved teacher-child relationships in aggressive children (Ang, 2006).

2.5 THE SCHOOL AS ENTITY IN THE PARTNERSHIP MODEL

The way schools care about children is reflected in the way schools care about the children's families. If educators view children simply as students, they are likely to see the family as separate from the school. That is, the family is expected to do its job and leave the education of children to the schools. If educators view students as children, they are likely to see both the family and the community as partners with the school in children's education and development. Partners identify their shared interests in and responsibilities for children, and

they work together to create improved programs and opportunities for students (Epstein, 1995).

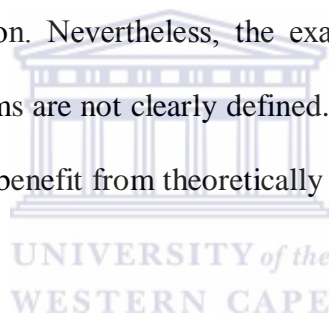
School–family relationships make the possibility of true partnerships characterized by non-stop exchange of information, mutual respect, shared power and responsibilities for the education and growth of children (Patrikakou *et al.*, 2005).

School–family partnerships have increasingly been the focus of research, policy, and practice efforts in recent years. Part of the interest in the topic has been the finding that children benefit when schools and families work closely and cooperatively. Such benefits include higher grades and test scores, as well as improved attendance, improved behavior at home and at school, better interpersonal skills, and more responsible decision making (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

There are many reasons for developing school, family, and community partnerships. Partnerships can improve school programs and school climate, provide family services and support, increase parents' skills and leadership, connect families with others in the school and in the community, and help teachers with their work. Though, the main reason to create such partnerships is to help all youngsters succeed in school and in later life. When parents, teachers, students, and others view one another as partners in education, a caring community forms around students and begins its work (Epstein, 1995).

The school/family partnership has been strengthened by supporting federal, state, and local policies. Strong findings have been reflected in major legislation implemented by the U.S. Department of Education. For example, in 1990 the National Education Goals Panel aspiringly proclaimed increased parental participation in education as a key goal: “*By the year 2000, every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children*” (National Education

Goals Panel, 1995:13). The panel suggested that state and local education agencies work together to cultivate partnership programs that would meet the changing needs of bilingual, disabled, or disadvantaged children and their parents. Programs would support the academic work of children at home, promote shared decision making at school, and hold schools and teachers answerable for high standards of achievement. In the years since the panel called for greater collaboration between schools and families, more attention has been placed on the significance of parental involvement, but the goal has not been fully met. Most recently, the No Child Left behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2002) in the U.S.A turn out to be the center piece of the department's education strategy. NCLB acknowledges that parents play an integral role in their children's learning, and that they should be given the opportunity to act as full partners in their child's education. Nevertheless, the exact roles that parents can assume within the various NCLB programs are not clearly defined. Therefore, states, districts, school personnel, and parents alike will benefit from theoretically and evidence-based approaches to enhance school-family ties.



Educators and parents have reported barriers to involvement, for example, parents have reported that teachers do not really welcome their contribution; they have also reported an unmet need for specific suggestions about how to help their children (Pena, 2000). Teachers, for their part, have reported poor administrative support for involvement efforts and very limited training in effective involvement plans (Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Jones & Reed, 2002). Thus, schools' and parents' involvement efforts often miss the mark.

Many of the barriers for ELL families are related to the school environment. One particular problem facing ELL parents is the manner in which they are perceived by teachers and school staff (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008). School staff often contributes to a lack of parental involvement, parental interest or assume that parents place little value on education (Finders & Lewis, 1994). However, parents of ELL students have consistently high aspirations for

their children's education throughout elementary school and believe that education is highly important (Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese & Garnier, 2001). Arias & Morillo-Campbell (2008) and Zehler *et al.*, (2008) offered numerous recommendations to help schools build stronger connections with ELL families: providing interpreters at school events, assigning a home-school liaison, offering bilingual newsletters, and providing educational classes for parents.

For years, federal, state, and local policies have impacted families and the roles they should play in public education. Based on research evidence indicating the positive impact on student academic, social, and emotional learning, major legislation has acknowledged the significance of school–family partnerships by mandating parent participation on numerous levels of policy design and implementation. The No Child Left behind Act of 2001, which reflects the U.S.A Department of Education's educational plan, provides a very broad definition of parental involvement. Such involvement is to comprise on-going home–school communication, and parents should be included as full partners in their child's education. Still, current policies could provide better research-based guidance, which practitioners need in order to better define and integrate school–family partnerships in their daily routines. Contributing to this ambiguity is also the lack of systemic pre-service and in-service training to prepare educators to engage students and their families in a positive, meaningful, and effective way. By preparing teachers and administrators to develop school–family partnerships, we have the potential to improve the learning opportunities for all students, so no one is left behind.

2.5.1 School Support

Various studies have examined the relationship between one specific type of school support (that is specialized language instruction) and academic outcomes among ELL's (Rolstad,

Mahoney & Glass, 2005). However, only one previous study has looked at the broader role of school support in promoting positive academic outcomes among ELL's (Han & Bridglall, 2009). Specifically, Han & Bridglall (2009) looked at general school support in elementary schools as measured by English as a second language (ESL) instruction practices, family outreach, school resources, and the teaching and learning environment at the school. In their longitudinal study, they found that ELL students made greater gains in either reading or mathematics achievement when there were more, family outreach services, availability of ESL aides, and teachers in the school who spoke another language in addition to English. Particularly in mathematics, ELLs attending schools with more school support were able to close the achievement gap with EP peers more quickly than ELL's in less supportive school environments.

Although Han & Bridglall's (2009) study gave an insightful examination of school support and ELL student success, there are still numerous questions that have yet to be examined. First, academic achievement (that is, standardized test scores) was the only student outcome examined in Han and Bridglall's study. Neither social-emotional outcomes (for example, internalizing and externalizing behaviors) nor self-beliefs (for example, academic self-concept) were considered, both of which are important correlates of achievement (Hamre & Pianta, 2005). In addition, Han and Bridglall did not consider the relationship between school support and parental school involvement, which is another variable linked with student achievement in elementary school (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008). Therefore, further research to the links between school support, parental school involvement, and a broad variety of student outcomes is necessary.

2.6 COMMUNITY AS ENTITY IN THE PARTNERSHIP MODEL

Communities have received growing attention for their role in socializing youth and ensuring students' achievement in a variety of societal domains. Epstein's (1987, 1995) theory of overlapping spheres of influence, for example, identifies schools, families, and communities as major institutions that socialize and educate children. A central principle of the theory is that certain goals, such as student academic success, are of interest to each of these institutions and are best achieved through their cooperative action and support.

School-community partnerships, can be defined as the connections between schools and community individuals, organizations, and businesses that are forged to directly or indirectly promote students' social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development (Epstein, 1995). Within this definition of school-community partnerships, community is not constrained by the geographic boundaries of neighborhoods, but refers more to the social interactions that can occur within or transcend local boundaries (Nettles, 1991b).

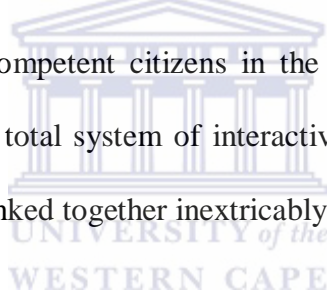
Heath and McLaughlin (1987) argued that community involvement is significant because the problems of educational achievement and academic success demand resources beyond the scope of the school and of most families. They identified changing family demographics, demands of the professional workplace, and growing diversity among students as some of the reasons that schools and families alone cannot provide sufficient resources to ensure that all children receive the experiences and support needed to succeed in the larger society.

When describing the importance of community involvement in educational reform, Shore (1994) focused on the mounting responsibilities placed on schools by a nation whose student population is increasingly placed at risk. She stated that too many schools and school systems are failing to communicate out their basic educational mission. Many of them in urban and rural settings are overwhelmed by the social and emotional needs of children who are

growing up in poverty. She contended that schools need additional resources to successfully educate all students and that these resources, both human and material, are housed in students' communities.

Toffler and Toffler (1995) have also emphasized the importance of schools, families, and communities working together to promote students' success. They asserted that school-family-community collaborations are one way to provide a caring component to today's often large, assembly-line schools. Benson (1997) and Dryfoos (1998) have suggested that schools must reach out into the community in an attempt to strengthen the social capital available to children.

Similarly, Waddock (1995) agreed that schools alone cannot provide children and youth with the resources they need to be competent citizens in the 21st century. She explained that respectable schools are part of a total system of interactive forces, individuals, institutions, goals, and expectations that are linked together inextricably.



2.6.1 Forms of School-Community Partnerships

School-community partnerships can take a variety of forms. The most common linkages are partnerships with businesses, which can differ significantly in focus, scope, and content. Other school-community linkages involve universities and educational institutions, government and military agencies, health care organizations; faith based organizations, national service and volunteer organizations, senior citizen organizations, cultural and recreational institutions, other community-based organizations, and community volunteers that can provide resources and social support to youth and schools (Sanders, 2001).

Partnership activities may have multiple focuses. Activities may be student-, family-, school-, or community-centered (Sanders, 2001). Student-centered activities include those that

provide direct services or goods to students, for example, mentoring and tutoring programs, contextual learning, and job-shadowing opportunities, as well as the provision of awards, incentives, and scholarships to students. Family-centered activities are those that have parents or entire families as their primary focus. This category includes activities such as parenting workshops, general education development test (GED) and other adult education classes, parent-family incentives and awards, family counselling, and family fun and learning nights. School-centered activities are those that benefit the school as a whole, such as beautification projects or the donation of school equipment and materials, or activities that benefit the faculty, such as staff development and classroom assistance. Community-centered activities have as their main focus the community and its citizens, for example, charitable outreach, art and science exhibits, and community revitalization and beautification projects (Sanders, 2001).

2.6.2 Role of Community Involvement in Partnership Programs

Involving community in school activities is an important part of a school's comprehensive partnership program, which comprises six major types of involvement: (1) parenting, (2) communicating, (3) volunteering, (4) learning at home, (5) decision making, and (6) collaborating with the community (Epstein, 1995). Several community activities can support or strengthen the other types of involvement. For example, community partners might provide meeting space for parenting workshops (Type 1), interpreters for school meetings with families (Type 2), volunteer tutors (Type 3), information on books that families can read to and with their children at home (Type 4), and meals to increase parents' attendance at school meetings (Type 5). Community collaborations also can be developed to enhance schools' curricula, identify and disseminate information about community resources, and further schools' community outreach (Type 6).

One school in the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS), for example, worked with its state department of environmental protection to help science faculty integrate local resources and environmental concerns into the science curriculum. Another NNPS school developed a community resource handbook for its families. Other schools partnered with a local library to hold a community art exhibit of students' work and with local hospitals, dentists, nurses, and dieticians to develop a low-cost health care site to provide preventive and maintenance health care for students, families, and community members. These and other reported activities show how important community partnerships can be for students, schools, families, and communities (Sanders, 2001).

2.6.3 Outcomes of School-Community Partnerships

Community partnership activities can lead to quantifiable outcomes for students and schools. Mentoring programs have been found to have significant and positive effects on students' grades, school attendance, and exposure to career opportunities (Yonezawa, Thornton & Stringfield, 1998). School-community collaborations focused on academic subjects have been shown to enhance students' attitudes toward these subjects, as well as the attitudes of teachers and parents (Beyerbach, Weber, Swif & Gooding, 1996). Positive effects of school-community collaborations with an instructional component on students' grades, attendance, and school persistence were also reported (Nettles, 1991a).

Recognized benefits of school-linked service integration initiatives include behavioral and academic achievements for students who receive intensive services (Newman, 1995). Research also has shown improved student attendance, immunization rates, and student conduct at schools providing coordinated services (Amato, 1996). Lastly, partnerships with businesses and other community organizations have provided schools with needed equipment, materials, and technical assistance and support for student instruction. School-

community partnerships, then, are an important element in schools' programs of improvement and reform and an important part of a comprehensive program of school, family, and community partnerships (Mickelson, 1999).

2.6.4 Factors That Promote Community Involvement

Case study research done by (Sanders & Harvey, in press) has identified four factors that support a school's ability to develop and maintain meaningful community partnerships. These factors are high commitment to learning; principal support for community involvement; a welcoming school climate and two-way communication with potential community partners about their level and kind of involvement.

2.6.5 Factors That Improve School-Community Partnerships

Community involvement in schools is an opportunity for a more democratic and participatory approach to school functioning that can revitalize communities, enhance students' achievement and wellbeing, assist families and build stronger schools. In reality, though, community involvement is too often a reminder of the difficulty of implementing comprehensive, collaborative policies for school improvement. Evaluative studies of different forms of school-community collaboration underscore key challenges that, if addressed, may help to move the reality of community involvement in schools closer to theory (Sanders, 2002).

Successful schools that have built a sense of community within their walls that is, schools that are collaborative, communicative, and comprehensive appear to have the greatest success in developing strong connections with the community outside their walls (Merz & Furman, 1997; Sanders & Harvey, in press). When the capacity to collaborate becomes a part of educators' professional identity and knowledge base, community involvement becomes

business as usual (Stroble & Luka, 1999). In complex school-community collaborations, challenges around turf, funding, roles, and responsibilities will surely arise (Epstein, 1995). Nonetheless, educators who have been prepared to collaborate will have the resources and skills to minimize and resolve these challenges (Epstein, 2001).

2.7 MEASURES TO ASSIST WITH PARTNERSHIP, COMMUNICATION AND REACHING COMMUNITY

It is possible to have a school that is excellent academically but ignores families. Nonetheless, that school will build barriers between teachers, parents, and children that affect school life and learning. It is also possible to have a school that is ineffective academically but involves families in many good ways. With its weak academic program, that school will short change students' learning. Neither of these schools exemplifies a caring, educational environment that requires academic excellence, good communication, and productive interactions involving school, family, and community (Epstein, 1995).

Some children succeed in school without much family involvement or despite family neglect or distress, particularly if the school has excellent academic and support programs. This is so because teachers, relatives outside the immediate family, other families, and members of the community can provide important guidance and encouragement to these students. As support from school, family, and community accumulates, significantly more students feel secure and cared for, understand the goals of education, work to achieve their full potential, build positive outlooks and good school behaviors and actually stay in school. The shared interests and investments of schools, families, and communities create the conditions of caring that work to over determine the likelihood of student success (Boykin, 1994).

Any practice can be designed and implemented well or poorly and even well-implemented partnership practices may not be useful to all families. In a caring school community,

participants work continually to improve the nature and effects of partnerships. Even if the interactions of educators, parents, students, and community members will not always be smooth or successful, partnership programs establish a base of respect and trust on which to build. Good partnerships endure questions, conflicts, debates, and disagreements provide structures and processes to solve problems and are maintained even strengthened after differences have been resolved. Disagreements and problems about schools and students that are sure to arise will be harder to solve without this firm base (Epstein, 1995).

2.7.1 The nature of partnerships

Some important patterns relating to partnerships have emerged in surveys and field studies involving teachers, parents and students at the elementary, middle and high school levels (Epstein & Sanders, 2000). These patterns include:

- Partnerships tend to decline across the grades, unless schools and teachers work to develop and implement appropriate practices of partnership at each grade level;
- Affluent communities currently have more positive family involvement, on average, unless schools and teachers in economically distressed communities work to build positive partnerships with their students' families;
- Schools in more economically depressed communities make more contacts with families about the problems and difficulties their children are having, unless they work at developing balanced partnership programs that also include contacts about the positive accomplishments of students;
- Single parents, parents who are employed outside the home, parents who live far from the school, and fathers are less involved, on average, at the school building, unless the school organizes opportunities for families to volunteer at various times and in various places to support the school and their children.

The following conclusions were also drawn from research:

- Almost all families care about their children, want them to succeed, and are eager to obtain better information from schools and communities so as to remain good partners in their children's education;
- Almost all teachers and administrators would like to involve families, but many do not know how to go about building positive and productive programs and are consequently fearful about trying. This creates a "rhetoric rut," in which educators are stuck, expressing support for partnerships without taking any action;
- Almost all students at all levels elementary, middle, and high school want their families to be more knowledgeable partners about schooling and are willing to take active roles in assisting communications between home and school. However, students need much better information and guidance than most now receive about how their schools view partnerships and about how they can conduct important exchanges with their families about school activities, homework, and school decisions.

These research results are important because they indicate that caring communities can be built intentionally; that they include families that might not become involved on their own; and that, by their own reports, just about all families, students, and teachers believe that partnerships are important for helping students succeed across the grades. Good programs will look different at each site, as individual schools tailor their practices to meet the needs and interests, time and talents, and ages and grade levels of students and their families.

However, there are some commonalities across successful programs at all grade levels. These include a recognition of the overlapping spheres of influence on student development as indicated in **Figure 2.2: Community, School and Family Partnership**. In this figure

attention to various types of involvement that promote a variety of opportunities for schools, families, and communities to work together and an Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) to coordinate each school's work and progress, is indicated (Epstein, 1995).

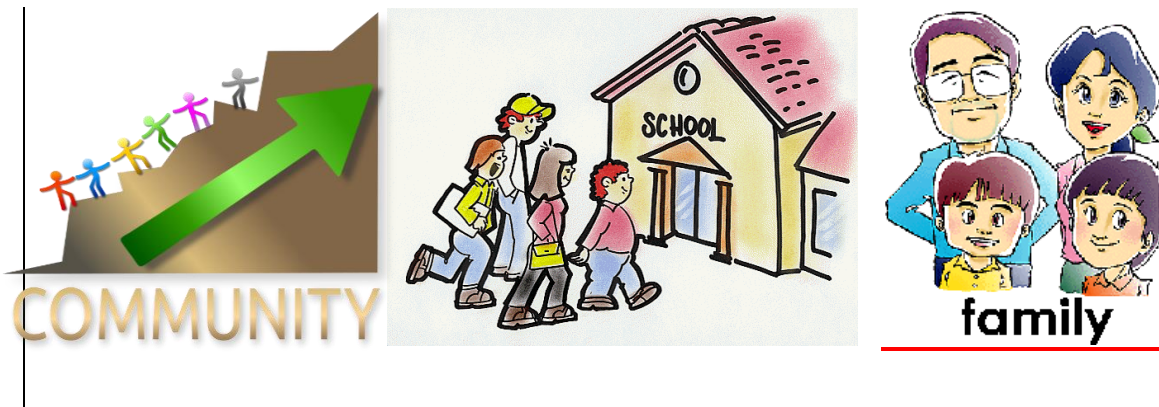


Figure 2.2: Community, School and Family Partnership

2.7.2 The nature of partnerships

The reason why parental involvement is a focus of so many programs and policies to promote child and youth outcomes is because it first and foremost indicates the amount of time children spend with their families. Children spend more time with parents and family members, especially in the first decade of life, than in any other social context. About one-quarter of children's time is spent in school and three-quarters at home during most of the formative years (Bronfenbrenner, 1975). Therefore, changing parental involvement by just a small amount can have a larger cumulative effect than behaviors that occur less frequently.

A second reason why parental involvement is a target of program and policy formulation, may be because parental involvement is open to be influenced by educators. This is due to the common interest of teachers and parents in educating and socializing children effectively and the many avenues that exist due to the multi-dimensional nature of parental involvement by which to encourage parental attitudes and behaviors, be it reading to children or participating in school.

Thirdly, encouraging parent participation and engagement in children's education may in and of itself provide important sources of social support and personal empowerment that promote the positive school and community climate so important for learning. Therefore, family involvement sets the conditions upon which other educational and personal experiences impact children's outcomes (Bronfenbrenner, 1975).

In most of the research on parental involvement, natural variation in parental attitudes and behaviors is associated with children's outcomes, including school performance, achievement test scores, and educational attainment. Overall, higher parental involvement is associated with higher academic performance for young children and adolescents (Patrikakou, 1997). These predictive relations usually remain after taking background factors into account, such as socio-economic status (SES). Furthermore, variables such as maternal education, SES, child sex, and child motivation levels have all been found to influence child academic performance by impacting parental involvement further supporting the importance of the parental influence. Parental involvement has also been related to social and emotional learning, including self-regulation and self-concept (Reynolds, 1989).

Many studies support the positive and significant link between measures of parental involvement and children's school success (Reynolds, 1992). A meta-analysis of twenty-five (25) studies by Fan and Chen (2001) found that parent expectations or aspirations had the largest impact (effect size of $z = .40$) in relation to measures of academic achievement, with parental supervision at home (effect size of $z = .09$) having the smallest effect size. The size of the impact of parental involvement on academic achievement was also larger for global (that is, GPA) as compared to subject-specific academic achievement measures. Parental commitment and volunteer behavior have smaller positive influences (Fan, 2001). Parental contact and supervision tend to have small but negative influences on achievement outcomes. It is likely that children receiving more supervision and contact with the school were more in

need of such supervision and contact, possibly because of prior problematic behavior or academic achievement.

Parental involvement also has been found to positively influence motivational outcomes such as academic self-concept, attributions for academic achievements, and self-regulation as well as high school dropout and truancy behaviors (Gonzalez-Pienda *et al.*, 2002). In reports from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (Patrikakou, 1997), parent expectations or aspirations for children's education were most consistently associated with eighth-grade achievement even after controlling for the influence of SES and ethnicity. Moreover, the association between parental expectations and achievement was strongest for higher-SES students. Relatively few studies have examined the relation between involvement and children's social and emotional learning, and even fewer have investigated effects across SES and ethnicity.

2.8 Parental Involvement in the Context of Botswana

Botswana is an independent state in Southern Africa. It is a former British colony that obtained self-rule in 1966. It is a multicultural and multilingual society with a number of ethnic groups, including rural minority groups usually referred to as remote area dwellers (RAD's) (Maruatona, 2005). At independence, Botswana adopted the principle of self-reliance and promulgated a policy of school-community partnership. This policy was destined to encourage parental involvement in school governance. Following a National Commission of Education in 1993, the 1994 Education Policy was developed. This policy focused on four main issues to improve the provision of basic education namely access, equity, quality and relevance (Republic of Botswana, 1994). This policy concurred with the country's Vision 2016 that has envisioned the building of "*An Educated and Informed Nation*", and the implementation of the Education for All (EFA) agenda targeting achieving universal access

to basic education (Gaolathe, 2005). The school community partnership policy was redefined by the 1994 Education Policy to read: *“as much as possible the community should partake in the development and management of education”* (Republic of Botswana, 1994, p. 11). This policy highlighted the importance of involving community, and parents in particular, in decision making on matters that affect education of their children. The policy aims *“to improve the partnership between school and community in the development of education”* (Republic of Botswana, 1994, p. 5). As a plan for the policy implementation, Parents Teachers Associations (PTA’s) are to provide a communication connection between the home and school that the child attends. PTAs provide opportunities for teachers and parents to jointly take decisions on educational issues, including development of school-based policies. School-community relationship as a strategy to achieve basic education has not been explored. The philosophy of school-parent partnership was introduced to the schools indiscriminately; it does not prove to be working in some places, for example, rural areas where some parents are not accessible. The policy overlooks the cultural diversity of the country and the nature of primary education in the rural areas (Pansiri, 2008b). Unlike for example, parents in urban areas, who choose a school for or their children (Suzuki, 2002), parents in rural schools have no choice. In an era of decentralization, commercialization and privatization of education, parental choice in urban areas may mean added responsibility and accountability in school governance. In rural areas, a school is an imposition by the central government. Parental participation in decisions about education of their children is limited. Suzuki (2002) illustrates the Ugandan situation of rural schools quite well, where he found that parents only carry out instruction from school authorities without contributing any inputs. The Ugandan rural situation is similar to the rural school set up in Botswana.

Given the level of attention that the Botswana government attaches to rural development, there is also a reason to expect schools from rural areas to be equally active in driving the

education development goal (Pansiri, 2008b). In public schools in Botswana, the community come together during the parents' teacher associations (PTA) meeting and also during prize giving ceremonies where students are rewarded for good progress, creativity and excellence.

In the instance of Botswana, Letshabo *et al.*, (2002) recommend the creation of child friendly schools particularly in rural areas. They argue that a child friendly school creates opportunities for parents to play a role in the teaching and the learning process to build a child friendly home-school relation. Such a relation improves the child' academic achievement, it improves the child attendance in school, it improves the child's behavior and it also improves community support for the school activities (Dekker & Lammer, 1993). Given the level of attention that Botswana government attaches to rural development, there is also a reason to expect schools from rural areas to be equally active in driving the education development goal (Pansiri, 2008b).



2.9 CONCLUSION

Epstein's theory of family, community and school partnership emphasized the importance of all the spheres working together in the education of the child. Parental role construction reflects trust that primary accountability for the child's educational outcomes belongs to the parent. Parental involvement comprises parents' role construction for involvement and parents' sense of efficacy for helping the child learn. Successful schools that have built a sense of community within their walls that is, schools that are collaborative, communicative, and comprehensive appear to have the greatest success in developing strong connections with the community outside their walls.

The next chapter of this report will present the research methodology as executed during this particular study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the execution of the research methodology as applicable in this study is explained. This chapter describes the research goal, objectives, approach, design, setting, study population, sample, inclusion criteria, procedure of data collection and data analysis. A lack of information and research in the field of parental involvement in public schools within the Botswana context has led to this research.

3.2 THE RESEARCH GOAL

The terms, goal, purpose, objectives and aim are often used interchangeably, that is as synonyms for one another. A research goal implies the broader, more abstract conception of something which is planned to do or to achieve (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). The aim can be defined as the researcher's intention or purpose, it is clear that it can be seen as a purpose of what the researcher seeks to achieve (Allen, 2002). Researchers have to account for the research they do by justifying key aspects of their work. Central to this is the requirement that researchers have a good, sound purpose for doing the research that they do. In other words, researchers have to specify the *aims* of their research (Howitt & Cramer, 2011).

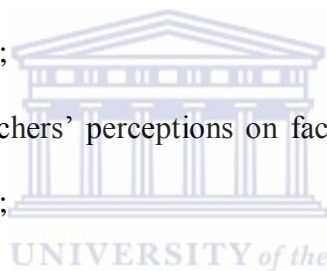
Based on the above the **goal of this study** was to determine teachers' perceptions on factors that contribute to parental involvement/non-involvement in public schools in the Kgatleng region, Botswana.

3.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Objectives are the steps the researcher has to take, one by one, realistically at grass-root level, within a certain time span, in order to attain the dream (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). Fouché (2002) states that an objective can be regarded as a more concrete, measurable and more attainable conception to which the ambition is directed. According to the researcher an objective can therefore be considered as the breaking down of the purpose into smaller steps that need to be undertaken in order to reach the ultimate aim.

The objectives in this study were:

- To explore and describe teachers' perceptions on factors contributing to parental involvement in public schools;
- To explore and describe teachers' perceptions on factors contributing to parental non-involvement in public schools;
- To make recommendations for improving parental involvement in public schools to the Ministry of Education, Botswana.



3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY UTILIZED DURING THE RESEARCH

Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. Research methodology consists of various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher in studying the research problem along with the logic behind them (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). Researchers also need to understand the assumptions underlying various techniques and they need to know the criteria by which they can decide that certain techniques and procedures will be applicable to certain problems and others will not. All this means that it is necessary for the

researcher to design his methodology for his problem, because methodology and accompanying techniques may differ from problem to problem (De Vos *et al.*, 2011).

3.4.1 The Research Approach

In this study a qualitative method was selected. The qualitative method in this instance focused on exploring the subjective perceptions or views of teachers about parental involvement in public schools. The qualitative approach was furthermore also selected due to its advantages to place emphasis on understanding the individual's life experiences through closely examining people's own words and actions. The qualitative approach also describes the situation as perceived by the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). When considering which research approach to select, the researcher has taken into account that the perceptions of teachers about parental involvement in public schools in Botswana was not sufficiently and extensively explored. The qualitative approach was thus used to explore and describe the perceptions of teachers about parental involvement in their schools, barriers encountered by teachers regarding parental involvement in schools and how these barriers affect children academic success. The aim of qualitative research is furthermore also to gather ideas of participants as much as possible by putting broad and general questions to the participants so that their perceptions can be constructed. The questions must be as broad and as general as possible so as to obtain and to accommodate the participant's subjective opinions.

3.4.2 The Research Design

A research design is a strategic framework of action that connects the research question, goal and objectives as well as the implementation of the research. Research designs are plans that guide the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. As a strategic framework for action, research designs should specify a series of activities, which will

ensure that valid conclusions can be drawn from research (Terre Blanche, Durrhein & Painter, 2006).

The researcher has used an exploratory design to explore the teachers' perceptions regarding various factors contributing to parents' involvement or non-involvement in public schools in Botswana. Exploratory research is used by the researcher to gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or individuals (Blaikie, 2000). There is little information about parental involvement in schools in Botswana available, therefore the exploratory design is an appropriate design exactly where there is little existing knowledge related to the research question available. Exploratory studies seek to explore what is happening and then ask questions about it (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). This study explored perceptions of teachers about parental involvement in schools, to gain new insights in parental involvement in schools and the factors that influence parental involvement especially in rural, as well as urban schools. It was appropriate because little knowledge is available on non-western and specifically the Botswana context of experiences about parental involvement.

Descriptive research presents a picture of the specific details of a situation, social setting or relationship, and focus on “*how*” - and “*why*” questions (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006). The descriptive design is a method of accurately describing the phenomenon and forming an overall picture of the subject. It is an intensive examination of a phenomenon, it provides a deeper meaning and leads to a thick description of the problem (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). In this study the researcher applied descriptive research during the data analysis. The findings are represented in chapter four (**Chapter 4: Findings of the perception of teachers about parental involvement in public schools in the Kgatleng District, Botswana**) of this study.

3.4.3 Constructivism as Research Paradigm

The culture, values and social settings of the participants influence their perceptions about phenomena (Creswell, 2009). De Vos *et al.*, (2011) state that human beings have no access to objective truth and thus individuals have no choice but to create or construct meanings and knowledge through participation in interpersonal, inter-subjective interaction.

Constructivism assumes that there are various realities, which influence people's lives and interaction with others. Individuals seek to understand the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings to their experiences directed towards certain objects or things. Experiences are unique to individuals. These subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically and are also formed through interaction with others and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individual's lives. It is therefore important to consider research participants perceptions and social realities (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). Constructivism views knowledge as temporary, non-objective, internally constructed, developmental, socially and culturally mediated. Individuals are assumed to construct their own meanings and understandings, and this process is believed to involve interplay between existing knowledge and beliefs and new knowledge and experiences (Richardson, 2003; Schunk, 2004).

Social constructivism emphasizes the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and the constructing of knowledge is based on this understanding. The constructivist perspective, therefore, posits that knowledge is not passively received from the world or from authoritative sources but constructed by individuals or groups making sense of their experiential worlds (MacLellan & Soden 2004).

Constructivism is relevant as it seeks to explore perceptions (subjective meaning) of teachers in Kgatlang District, in rural and urban areas, with regards to parental involvement or non-

involvement in public primary schools. This results in the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer (researcher) and the viewed (participants) and it aims to interpret the understanding of the participants' meanings, which was done in chapter four of this study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Social constructivism and social constructionism are postmodern theories. These concepts are often used interchangeably. Social constructivism focuses on the various realities that individual people construct. The ontology is relative and two people living in the same world may experience the same realities differently. Social constructionism focuses on constructing knowledge about reality and not reality itself as in constructivism. This knowledge is deeply rooted in the context, it is interpersonal, and it is legitimate and is based on the value base and culture of both educated and sophisticated people. Power is involved in this process as these peoples' views are accepted by the rest of the group as the '*truth*' (Patton, 2002; De Vos *et al.*, 2013; Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). Crotty in Patton (2002: 97) distinguishes between the ontology of these two concepts when they describe constructivism as "*meaning-making of the individual mind*" and constructionism "*the collective generation and transmission of meaning.*" In other words in this study the researcher is interested in the individual construction (unique perceptions) of the teachers therefore, constructivism. If the teachers in the rural areas display a collective worldview on the phenomenon of parental involvement in schools and the teachers in urban areas display a different view, this will then be social constructionism, where people in power in the teaching fraternity, construct meaning, which is then accepted by all teachers.

3.4.4 Research Population

The research population is the large pool from which sampling elements are drawn, and to which the researcher want to generalize findings. Theoretically speaking, the population

encompasses all the elements that make up the unit of analysis (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). This refers to individuals who possess specific characteristics. It is a distinct group with which the research question is concerned (De Vos, *et al.*, 2011). Babbie and Mouton (2001) describe a population as a group of people who have knowledge of a particular phenomenon. The study **population** in this study was teachers who teach standard seven in all 35 primary schools in the Kgatleng district (Kgatleng District Council, 2002).

3.4.5 Sampling

A sample is a small portion of a total set of objects from which a representative selection is made. A sample consists of elements or a subset of the population considered for inclusion in the study (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). As it is not possible to study all members of the population, a sample must be selected (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

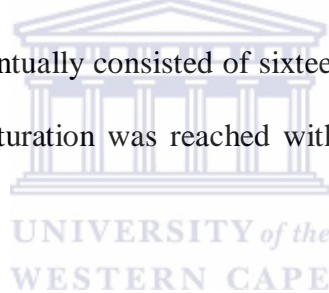
There are many different sampling strategies in qualitative research and the question of which to choose for a particular study is dictated by the actions needed to gather the information required. The size question of the sample is important when deciding on the sampling strategy. A general rule is not only to study a few sites or participants but also to obtain extensive detail about each site or participant. The intent in qualitative research is not to generalize information but rather to explain the particular or specific (Creswell, 2009).

In this study a **non-probability, purposive sampling** technique was utilized. Non-probability sampling refers to any kind of sampling where the selection of elements is not determined by the statistical principle of randomness (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). In non-probability sampling the odds of selecting a particular individual is not known as the researcher does not know the population size or the members of the population. All individuals do not have an equal chance of being selected for a particular study. Non-probability sampling is the term used for a method of drawing a sample in such a way that the

findings will require a judgment and interpretation before they are applied to the population; this method will be employed in the research as it fits well with the matter of perception of teachers and the way the questions are phrased (De Vos *et al.*, 2011).

Types of non-probability samples are accidental or incidence samples; quota samples; purposive samples; snowball samples; convenience samples and self-selection samples. The researcher selects individuals and sites for the study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study (Creswell, 2007).

In this particular study the researcher approached four (4) urban and four (4) rural schools in Kgatleng district, and purposefully selected two participants per standard seven from each school. The grade seven qualification allows access to secondary schools. From all the thirty-five (35) schools, the sample eventually consisted of sixteen (16) teachers depending on data saturation. In this study, data saturation was reached within the sixteen (16) interviews as planned.



As already mentioned, in qualitative research, the size of the sample depends on data saturation. Data saturation refers to the point where no further new information is forthcoming (Charmaz, 2006). This point was reached when sixteen (16) participants had been interviewed (8 urban and 8 rural), following no further new forthcoming material. Data saturation marks the point where the researcher concludes collecting new material. Saturation takes place when information no longer challenges or adds anything to the emerging account. It is also known as sampling redundancy, as further information is increasingly redundant because it simply becomes repetitive (Creswell, 2007).

3.4.6 Methods of Data Gathering

Data collection is an interrelated activity with many others in the different phases of research. The result in good quality information should be to clearly answer the emerging question, this

will include but extend beyond collecting the data (Creswell, 2007). In this study, in-depth interviews were employed to gather the necessary data. An in-depth interview is sometimes referred to as a conversation with a purpose. It is rooted on the interest to understand the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience. It is focused, expansive and allows the researcher and participant to explore an issue. It is used to determine individuals' perceptions, opinion, facts, forecasts, and their reaction to initial findings and potential solution (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). The aim of this study follows on the research question and was to determine teachers' perceptions on factors that contribute to parental involvement/non-involvement in public schools

3.4.6.1 Entry into the research site

Having identified potential respondent or sites of the study, the next step is physically making contact with participants and gaining their cooperation. In making contact, it is important to set a process whereby the researcher are able to first assess whether the potential respondent is really suitable or not before setting up an expectation that the researcher are going to include them in the study. Having found potential research participants, the researcher has to negotiate consent (See **Appendix B: Research Information and Appendix C: Consent to participate**). It often happens that consent is negotiated with a gatekeeper, and this is regarded by the gatekeeper as sufficient. However, the researcher has to establish informed consent with the participants themselves (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). The researcher visited the schools himself before the respective interviews in order to establish contact with whoever the school gatekeepers were. Visits were also paid to the Ministry of education, the principal of the school, and also with participants who in this case were standard seven teachers.

3.4.6.2 Methods of data collection.

In order to collect data for this research, the researcher considered it best to conduct in-depth interviews to allow the researcher to probe for more detailed response, as they are considered powerful means to get an answer to a research question (See **Appendix A: Open-ended Interview Schedule**). Field research interviews are normally informal and non-directive (Neuman, 2003). An interview is a more natural form of interacting with people as opposed to requiring them to fill in a questionnaire, do a test, or perform some experimental task, and therefore it fits well with the interpretive approach to research (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). The researcher used in-depth, open-ended questions for the interviewer to probe deeper. During the open-ended interview the researcher encouraged participants to talk to their area of interest and probed even more deeply in order to gain a deeper understanding (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Interviews are described as “*conversations*”, similar to interviews people have all the time, but at the same time they are highly skilled performances (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006; Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Neuman, 2003).

In-depth interviews were conducted with individuals using two open-ended questions. These questions were:

- **What do you think/perceive as the factors that contribute to parental involvement in schools?**
- **What do you think are the factors that obstruct/hinders parental involvement in schools?**

The researcher has stated four (4) questions on the original interview schedule (See **Appendix A: Open-ended Interview Schedule**). These questions were designed in accordance to the objectives of this study. The interview was recorded with the participant's permission. This was essential for accurate recording of information. The scripts were then

transcribed for purposes of data analysis (See **Appendix D: Example of a Transcript**). However, it was obvious that during the main study, the questions could be integrated to only the mentioned two questions. The reason for this action was mainly because of language challenges which was not a challenge during the pilot study. Some of the interviews were conducted in however, the researcher sometimes had to translate into Setswana, the mother-tongue of the participants. Data collection was executed with a tape recorder so that the researcher did not have to take notes during the interview.

3.4.6.3 Preparation of participants for interviews

The researcher should arrange the time and place in advance, follow this up in writing and confirmation closer to the date. A quiet environment, where no interruptions occur, and which will contribute to the facilitation of the process, should be selected. This setting should provide privacy, it should be comfortable, non-threatening and easily accessible. The researcher should provide seating arrangement that encourages involvement and interaction (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). In this study, the in-depth interviews happened exactly as was described above.

3.4.6.4 Interviewing skills used during data gathering

The participants must be motivated and willing to speak, to share their perceptions and the setting must be conducive for this to happen. The researcher made use of different interviewing techniques during the interview (De Vos *et al.*, 2011) which will be discussed underneath:

3.4.6.4.1 *Starting the interview*

The researcher engaged participants in an informal manner such as talking about matters pertaining to the weather in order to build rapport with participants. The researcher was not familiar with the participants prior to the meeting and it was necessary to first establish

mutual trust. The researcher also presented a short summary of what the research is about (See **Appendix B: Research Information, Appendix C: Consent to participate and Appendix D: Example of a Transcript**). Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) indicates that the starting of the interview is then concluded and the interview can be started with an open ended question to get the interviewee talking and help to put them at ease (**Also see paragraph 3.4.6.2: Methods of data collection**). It was important not to start the interview with difficult and sensitive questions (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006) in order to put the participants at ease.

3.4.6.4.2 Use of specific interviewing skills

Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) propose that even though the interview is recorded it still may be a good idea to scribble down questions or thoughts that might occur while the interviewee is speaking. The researcher should be familiar with the interview schedule so that there is no need to continually refer to the interview format and in doing so interrupt the contact and flow of communication that are characteristic of a good interview. The researcher should keep reminding himself why he is doing the interview, for example because the researcher wants to gather in-depth information about teachers' perceptions about parental involvement/ non-involvement in public schools.

The researcher should listen more than talk, follow up on what participants say, ask questions when the input of the participant is not quite clear, and ask to hear more about the subject, explore and probe even further. The researcher should ask open-ended questions, which do not anticipate a particular response, follow up and do not interrupt, keep participants focused and ask for concrete details. The participants can rephrase or reconstruct what they have said and the researcher is not supposed to reinforce the participant's response, tolerate silence and allow the interviewee to be thoughtful.

The following types of questions and interview-techniques were utilized in this particular study during the in-depth interview:

- *Relevant Questions*

In this study, relevant questioning was key to soliciting appropriate data from the participant. Probing was used to generate more information on a particular subject under discussion. It is always a combination of verbal and non-verbal cues, which give the interviewee a signal that the interviewer would like them to continue. These questions also assisted the interviewer with a method of maintaining control over the flow on the interview. The use of probes and flow of questions were used by the researcher to deepen the response to the question on the teachers' perceptions on parental involvement/non-involvement and to get rich responses (Patton, 2005). The researcher refrained from asking leading - or closed-ended questions and used prompts to elicit further information.

- *Attentive listening skills*

The researcher paid attention to the narratives of participants so as not to miss any vital information that might have emerged from the interview. Listening attentively helped the researcher selecting information which conveyed meaning and also to determine when he had to ask for more clarity from the participants (De Vos *et al.*, 2011).

- *Summarizing*

The researcher used summarizing skills to encourage deeper exploration of aspects before moving to new ones. Summarizing also helped to remind participants of what they have narrated so far as to avoid repetition of information (De Vos *et al.*, 2011).

- *Attending Skills*

Verbal and non-verbal cues such as nodding of the head, or saying “*uh-huh*” or “*okay*” were used by the researcher during the interview to encourage participants to provide more

information on issues being explored. This also helped to demonstrate to the participants that they were understood correctly (De Vos *et al.*, 2011).

3.4.6.4.3 *Ending of the interview*

During the data-gathering in this study, interviews typically lasted from 20 minutes to an hour or an hour and half, because the participants found it difficult to concentrate much beyond that. The researcher, however should not be driven by the time limits, but rather ensure not to get caught up in details that are extraneous to the study so that no time is left for relevant questions. The researcher asked the participant towards the end of the interview if there was anything more they would like to say. The researcher should always be aware of what the participant said after the recorder was switched off, because in many instances some very interesting information only then emerges. Finally the recorder should be stored in a safe place. It is also a good idea to make notes about the interview as soon as possible after completion (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). The researcher properly thanked each participant for their time and valuable contribution and undertook to inform them of the results after completion of this study.

3.4.7 Pilot study

Pilot studies are preliminary studies on small samples that help to identify potential problems with the design, particularly the research instruments. This contributes to the fact that the research has been carefully planned and thought through and will result in a scientifically sound study (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). The researcher interviewed two participants from an urban school and two from a rural school, thus a total of four (4) members to the pilot study. The pilot study members was completely excluded from the main study. A pilot study helped the researcher to establish whether appropriate and relevant information is being collected in the data collection process. Timeously amendments could be

made to the interview schedule. The researcher used the results of the pilot study to determine if appropriate data collection techniques were utilized and it also assisted the researcher to modify aspects of data collection to suit the aim of the study. The pilot study helped the researcher with interview techniques which were relevant to study, initially the researcher wanted to use an interview schedule as a guide for the interviews. However during the pilot study, the researcher decided to use probing as a form of gaining more information from the participants. The researcher learned to make more use of silences and to asked specific questions. This was undertaken so that prior to the start of the research, it was clear that the questions posed were indeed providing the answers that would eventually lead to an understanding of the perceptions of the participants. It also ensured that the method of selecting research participants who have experienced the phenomenon was effective and that the questions posed were understood and possible to be effectively answered (Creswell, 2007).

In testing of the data, the pilot study had to prove if the proposed study was feasible. It has to be established whether the goal of the study would be achieved by executing the planned research. At this point changes to the method of recruitment, the interviewing style or method of analyzing the data could still be made (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). However carefully the research was planned, the practical situation always remained an unknown factor until it was entered. One such a challenge which only appeared during the main study, was the fact that due to mother-tongue language of Setswana, the researcher was expected during some of the main interviews to integrate the initial four (4) questions to only two (2). After the pilot study it was clear that the study will indeed achieve its purpose which was to gain information on lived experiences of the teachers regarding their perceptions about parental involvement in schools, changes were made on the interviewing styles where necessary.

3.4.8 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of data as gathered. Broadly conceived this is the activity of making sense of, interpreting and theorising data (Schwandt, 2005).

In this study data analysis was executed according to a systematic approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). First, data was transcribed verbatim from the original recording (**See Appendix D: Example of a Transcript**). The transcriptions and translation (from Setswana to English) were done soon after finishing an interview. During qualitative research, it is common to start data analyzing along with the data collection, which the researcher did during this research. The transcribed interviews were read through several times to identify a list of statements about how the participant experienced the phenomenon. Data was coded by identifying words, sentences or meaning. Some of these codes were collapsed to create sub-themes. The relationship among these sub-themes was further refined and reduced in number by grouping them together, eventually producing the final sub-themes. The researcher did not further grouped categories from the sub-themes because a follow-up research and research article is planned where the categories will be further explored.

Qualitative analysis transforms data into findings and constructing a framework (See **Figure 4.1: Themes and sub-themes**) for communicating the essence of what the data reveals (Patton, 2002; Neuman, 2003).

An independent coder was also used during this research in order to get rich data and contribute to the credibility and dependability of the research. The independent coder used the same steps indicated in the section above. During the analysis and at the end of the process the independent coder has given feedback to the researcher and supervisor and this information was included in the final analysis.

3.5 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness is used in qualitative research to ensure validity of research. The researcher used the following strategies during trustworthiness: **Credibility** is maintained by the interviewer using an accurate reflection of the information provided by the participant (De Vos *et al.*, 2011; Cho & Trent, 2006). This was done by member checking with the participants after the interviews and analysis, peer examination for data analysis by the independent coder, prolonged field experience at various schools in urban and rural areas and reflexivity (Guban & Lincoln, 1985). **Confirmability** refers to the point at which findings of the study can be validated by other people and it requires that the researcher maintained a neutral position by respecting participant's opinions, not labelling them or influencing their views, thus ensuring that findings can be confirmed. The researcher has done this by validating the findings by the participants, independent coder and supervisor (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). The researcher used reflexivity and a reflective journal in order to ensure confirmability. **Reflexivity** emphasizes the importance of self-awareness, political/cultural consciousness and ownership of perspectives. It involves a critical self-reflection of the researcher's potential biases, predispositions and modifications made in the methodology. Through reflexivity, the researcher constantly reflected on his values and interests (Patton, 2002). The researcher was continuously conscious of his own perceptions, values and cultural orientations regarding parental involvement during the research and has written it in the journal in order to make sure that he still gathered the perceptions of the participants and not his own.

3.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the methodology used to achieve the aims and objectives of the study has been described as it was executed. A **qualitative approach**, using individual **in-depth interviews** as the method of data collection was used. The choice of the qualitative method

successfully allowed an open-ended development of the research question and enabling the experiences of participants to be uncovered in a non-directive manner with no prior assumptions being made. The events could be examined and understood when the transcripts of the respective interviews were read multiple times in order to gain the essence of the experience.

Chapter 4 to follow is presenting the findings of this study.



CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The findings from interviews with teachers on their perception about parental involvement in schools will be presented and discussed in this chapter. The goal of the study was to determine the perceptions of teachers about parental involvement in primary schools. The focus during data analysis was to therefore hear the voices of the teachers regarding their experiences about parental involvement in schools. The objectives of this research which are addressed as described in chapter one and three were:

- To explore and describe teachers' perceptions on factors contributing to parental involvement in public schools;
- To explore and describe teachers' perceptions on factors contributing to parental non-involvement in public schools;
- To make recommendations for improving parental involvement in public schools to the Ministry of Education, Botswana.

The exploration was done during the research process (See **Chapter 3: Research methodology on perception of teachers about parental involvement in public schools**).

This chapter focuses on the description of factors contributing to parental involvement/non-involvement in public schools as perceived by teachers and the recommendations will be presented in chapter five.

Sixteen (16) participants were purposively selected in this study whereby a non-probability purposive sampling was used with the selected standard seven teachers in the Kgatleng

District, Botswana. In-depth interviews were conducted in a pre-arranged location with a tape recorder for later transcribing (see **Paragraph 1.6.4: Methods of Data Gathering and Paragraph 3.4.6: Methods of Data Gathering**). A summary of significant statements about experiences was compiled, the meaning of these statements were conceptualized and then collated (categorized) according to common themes. A conclusion regarding the full picture of the essence of the experiences is made.

4.2 BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

The demographic details of the selected participants in this study are demonstrated underneath in **Table 4.1: Demographic details of participants**. It is clear from information according to Table 4.1 that the majority of participants were females (16) 80% as there were only 4 (20%) males interviewed. The half of the participants were teachers whose age ranged between 41 and 50 years old. The next age range included teachers from whom 25% were between 51 and 60 years of age. The study involved 15% respondents who were between 31 and 40 years of age. It also had 5% who were between 60 to 65 years of age and 5% between 21-30 years of age. In terms of qualifications, 50% held Degree in Primary Education, 50% held Diploma in Primary Education, and the length of service ranges from 2 years to 35 years. This indicates that participants were properly qualified and well experienced to be able to share their experiences about parental involvement in schools. With regard to marital status, 7 participants were married, 3 widowed, 2 divorced and 8 single participants. This indicate that most participants are parents and that they are familiar with the importance of parental involvement in the education of their children.

TABLE 4.1: Demographic details of participants

| Participant | Gender | Age Range | Marital Status | Length of Service | Qualification |
|-------------|--------|-------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Female | 41-50 years | Single | 22 years | Degree in Education |
| 2 | Female | 51-60 years | Single | 26 years | Degree in Education |
| 3 | Female | 41-50 years | Married | 26 years | Degree in Education |
| 4 | Male | 31-40 years | Married | 13 years | Diploma in Education |
| 5 | Female | 41-50 years | Single | 23 years | Degree in education |
| 6 | Female | 41-50 years | Married | 23 years | Degree in Education |
| 7 | Female | 51-60 years | Single | 28 years | Diploma in Education |
| 8 | Male | 41-50 years | Single | 21 years | Degree in Education |
| 9 | Female | 31-40 years | Single | 2 years | Diploma in Education |
| 10 | Female | 31-40 years | Married | 4 years | Diploma in Education |
| 11 | Female | 51-60 years | Widowed | 33 years | Degree in Education |
| 12 | Female | 51-60 years | Married | 28 years | Diploma in Education |
| 13 | Female | 51-60 years | Divorced | 39 years | Degree in Education |
| 14 | Female | 41-50Years | Widowed | 19 years | Diploma in Education |
| 15 | Female | 41-50 years | Married | 26 years | Degree in Education |
| 16 | Female | 61-65 years | Widowed | 35 years | Diploma in Education |
| 17 | Male | 41-50 years | Divorced | 25 years | Degree in Education |
| 18 | Female | 41-50 years | Married | 26 years | Diploma in Education |
| 19 | Male | 21-30 tears | Single | 5 years | Diploma in Education |
| 20 | Female | 41-50 years | Single | 18 years | Diploma in Education |

In the following **Fig. 4.1: Themes and sub-themes** below, the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis, is presented. Five themes emerged together with respective sub- themes. In presenting the data, the researcher will use quotes by the participants, followed by both new literature and reference to literature already discussed in previous chapters. In this manner the gathered data will be analysed. Educational theory and practice appear to support a constructivist viewpoint that learners build their own knowledge in response to sensory inputs from authentic experiences (Poole, 2000).

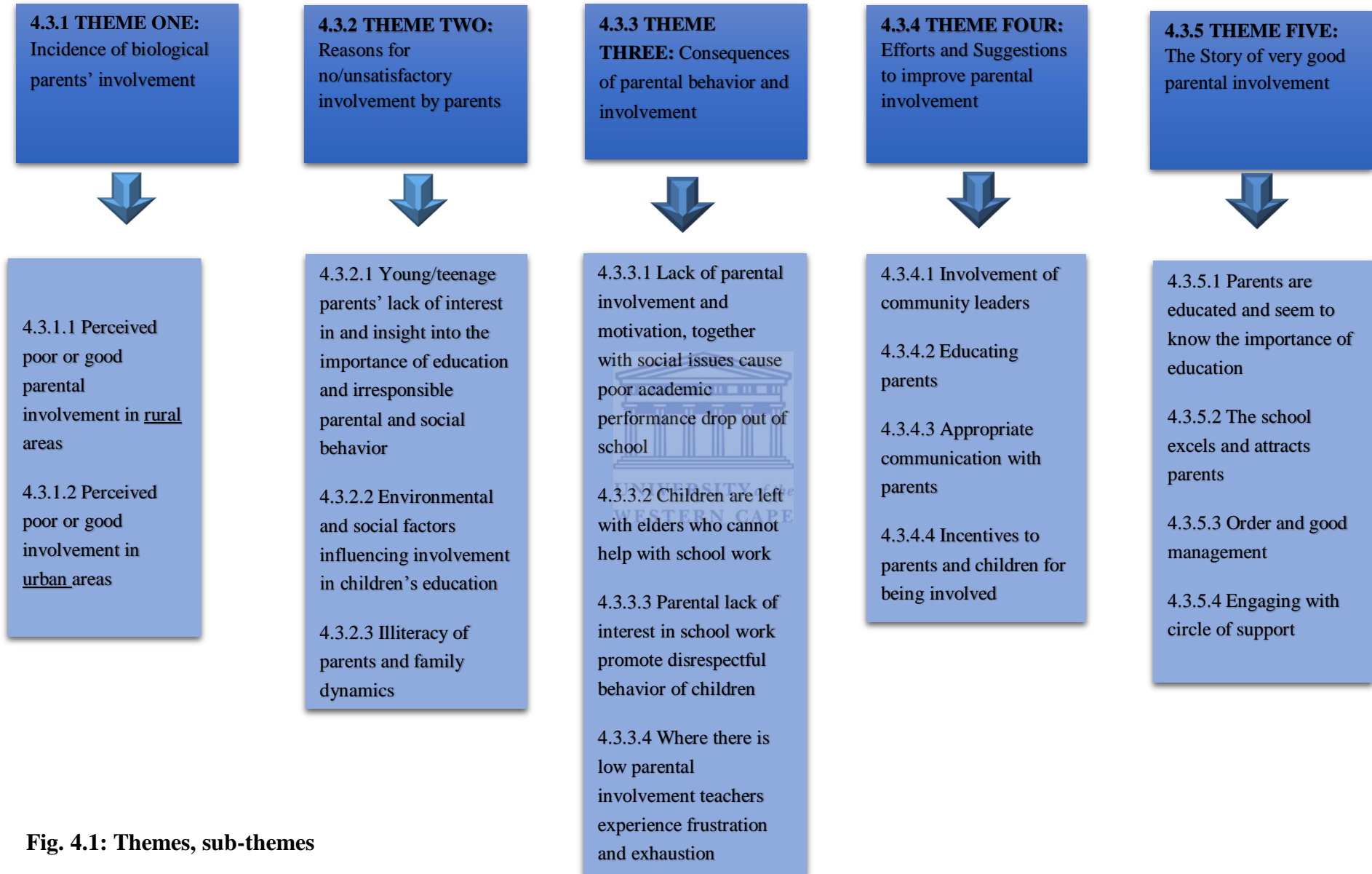


Fig. 4.1: Themes, sub-themes

4.3 THEMES AND SUB-THEMES AS A RESULT OF DATA ANALYSIS

In this particular study the researcher only indicates themes and sub-themes and further clustering of categories will be addressed at a later stage (See **Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations**). The themes and sub-themes of this study originated from data obtained in four (4) rural four (4) urban areas. Themes and sub-themes to be discussed underneath resulted from data analysis (**Also see paragraphs 1.6.2 and 3.4.5**). The first theme identifies the incidence of biological parental involvement, theme two identifies reasons for no/unsatisfactory parental involvement, theme three identifies consequences of parental behaviour, theme four presents efforts and suggestions to improve parental involvement and theme five presents the story of good parental involvement.

4.3.1 Theme 1: Incidence of biological parents' involvement

The majority of participants are not satisfied with parental involvement (15 out of 16) although the statements indicate, implicitly and/or explicitly levels of perceived involvement. The first theme of this study aimed to establish whether the participants were at all satisfied with parental involvement in schools in general. The data gathered for this theme was however divided into the perceptions of the participants with regard to firstly the **rural schools** and secondly with regard to the **urban schools**.

4.3.1.1 Sub-theme: Poor or good parental involvement in rural areas

This question was asked to determine the participant's perception on whether parental involvement is at all prevalent in their respective rural schools.

Participants at two different *rural schools*, indicated no parental involvement of biological parent(s):

- *InThere is **no parental involvement**, only the grannies come but their biological parents are alive and most of them are not working they just stay home (Rural P7:4);*
- *I cannot say a certain amount is involved but all I can say is that **there is no parental involvement at all** (Rural P9:2);*
- ***Parents are not there!** We do not see them at all... (Rural P20:2);*
- *Some are taking part while some are not... (Rural P 15: 3);*
- *Honestly our parents **are not really that** involved (Rural P 16:2);*
- *Parents **in this village seem a bit behind** when it comes to the involvement in their children's work (Rural P 17: 2);*
- *There are parents who do show up which shows that they know the importance of education but mostly they do not show interest (Rural P18:2);*
- *Parents **are not involved academically** but they do take part in school activities (Rural P13:10);*
- *When it comes to **academics, parents do not come**, they do not attend PTA meetings (Rural P14:3);*
- *Parents in this village are only **involved when there is an activity** in school but generally when it comes to academics they do not come (Rural P19:2).*

Parents are valuable citizens of the school community. Parental involvement plays a significant role in the academic achievement of primary and secondary students (Seyfried & Chung 2002). Comer and Haynes (1991) suggest that parental involvement is essential to school experiences and outcomes. Multiple systems significantly influence the psychosocial-educational experiences of youth. Although researchers have not found that parental involvement ensures or causes academic achievement, studies also indicate that parental involvement influences academic achievement (Gonzalez-Pienda, Nunez, Gonzalez-Pumariega, Alvarez, Roces & Garcia, 2002). These findings imply that other factors, such as

spending time with children and integrating home with school might also be important (Taylor, Hinton & Wilson, 1995). The abovementioned is further also confirmed by Epstein's theory of overlapping sphere of influence (**Also see paragraphs 1.3.1, 2.2 and 3.4.3**).

The situation in rural schools further reflected what was revealed by Lam (2004). This minimal parental involvement could be used as an explanation for the low level of performance, common in remote schools. Furthermore, lack of parental involvement combined with lack of educational and recreational materials for children in rural schools contribute to low motivation of pupils (Pansiri, 2008) (**Also see paragraphs 1.2.1.4; 2.12**).

Therefore, in the light of the above, it may be said that involvement both in school and at home seems to be essential for students and their progress at school. Participants in *rural schools* talked about the less involvement of parents in their children's education. As mentioned by participants there are some parents who realize the importance of taking part in their children's education. It is clear that some parents in the rural schools know the importance of parental involvement but still they seemed less involved in children's education and mostly they do not show interest, however, it may be concluded that it seems as if there are highly unsatisfactory levels of parental involvement in rural areas. Most of the reasons for this lack of involvement seem to be that biological mothers are not forthcoming even though they are not working, still only the grannies are the ones involved.

4.3.1.2 Sub-theme: Perceived poor/unsatisfactory parental involvement in urban areas

With regard to this question which was aiming to establish whether the limited parental involvement in urban areas was of a satisfactory nature, the participants responded as follows and in particular the teachers in *urban schools* indicated in the following quotes that:

- *Parent's participation is not satisfactory, **they are not active at all**, some come and others do not even bother (Urban P2:2);*
- *Parental involvement is **very low they do not help us at all**, at times (Urban P5:2);*
- *Some parents are involved and others are not involved, some come others do not come so **basically I would say parents' involvement is not there** (Urban P6:3);*
- *Honestly **roughly 35 % of the parents are involved and the others seem not to be interested** (Urban P 8:2;*
- *Participation is **50%** and from my point of view parents of this village **come and go** (Urban P 1:3);*
- *We meet with the **same parents' every time**, we have what is called open day and during that day **only 40% of the parents show up** (Urban P3:4);*
- *Parental involvement is there but **it's not satisfactory** because some parents come others do not come (Urban P4:4); I cannot say parents do not have interest but I can only say their involvement is **not that satisfactory** (Urban P10:3);*
- *Parental involvement is there, but it's **not all parents who come ...** (Urban P12: 2);*
- *Parents in P ... are **very much involved** in their children's education (P Urban 11: 3).*

Herrold & O'Donnell (2008) from the National Center for Education Statistics found that over 90% of parents of elementary school children reported attending general school meetings, such as the PTA or PTO, as well as participating in regularly scheduled parent-teacher meetings throughout the school year. Parental involvement is a key component of early childhood education programs, such as Head Start. These programs encourage parental involvement by inviting parents to participate in activities at school and facilitating parent-teacher communication (Duch, 2005) (**Also see paragraph 2.4**). Parental involvement refers to parents' physical presence on the school campus, including general participation, helping in the classroom (for example overseeing school activities) and involvement in school

governance (for example serving on the school PTA). In contrast, informal parental participation may refer to providing adequate and appropriate space for studying, helping with homework, discussing the daily events and engaging in teaching moments at home (for example counting while folding clothes). As evidenced by various typologies schools value parental involvement that they can see (formal or in school) versus what they cannot see (informal or at home) (De Gaetano, 2007) (**Also see paragraphs 1.2.1.1; 2.12**). Employment circumstances are major reasons often stated by parents for non-involvement in school activities. Conflicts between parent - and school schedules may mean parents cannot attend school events, help their children with homework, or in other ways become active participants in their children's education (Antunez, 2000).

From the above it seems that although parental involvement is seen as critical for children to make progress in schools, the involvement in urban areas of the Kgatleng district is also found to be unsatisfactory/low and even poor. Some parents are involved and some are not involved in the education of their children. It is clear that some parents understand the importance of their children's education but unfortunately there are those who are still behind in the involvement with their children's education as it was indicated by the above quotes for participants who were interviewed in the urban schools.

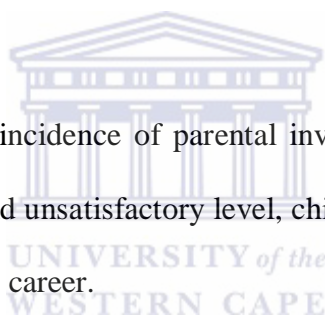
Good participation was highlighted by two urban participants in urban schools, however there are still some parents who are not involved at all. This might be due to the fact that most parents in the urban areas mostly belong to the working class, hence their understanding of the importance of their children's education. At the same time for those who do not show involvement, they sometimes at least send someone to represent them.

One participant indicated very satisfactory involvement of parents in their children's education. Parents in urban areas are mostly educated and know the importance of education

hence they are very much involved in their children's education. Parental involvement in education has been linked with high academic achievement and positive attitude towards the school in general. Parental involvement has also been more heavily focused on associations with student achievement, with less attention to social and emotional domains of children's development. This propensity may be attributed to the academic nature of many of the behaviors defined as parental involvement like helping with homework. Such activities should prompt more enrichment at home and attunement to a child's academic progress. However, teachers and parents may discuss children's behavior in the classroom as well, since behavior problems and social functioning may have immediate consequences for the classroom environment and teachers' instructional efforts (Machen, Wilson & Notar, 2004).

(Also see paragraph 2.4.4).

In conclusion it seems as if the incidence of parental involvement **both in the rural and urban** schools is of a very low and unsatisfactory level, children do not receive the necessary support to develop their schooling career.



4.3.2 Theme 2: Reasons for non-involvement/unsatisfactory involvement by parents

The following sub-themes emerged from data gathered in this theme:

4.3.2.1 Sub-theme: Young/teenage parents' lack of interest in and insight into the importance of education and irresponsible parental and social behavior

Parental lack of insight into the need for education by young parents was a recurrent issue voiced by nineteen out of the twenty participants. This sub-theme emerged by either being explicitly mentioned or implicated by referring to irresponsible behavior of young parents that demonstrate lack of interest into education:

- *Most of the parents are young adults, they dropped from school at form 3 and a few at form 5 so they are not always interested in this kind of gatherings because they did not have a chance to complete their studies so they see no importance in education. Students who drop out from school at standard seven due to pregnancy, it's like we are in a township where people drink, smoke, make shebeen (P1:8);*
- *...also they are not committed because they don't lose nothing so maybe if they were to pay something they would have a different perspective (P1:44);*
- *Parents who come, their children tend to do well and those with poor grades, their parents never show up at all, in some instances the academic year can just end and not having seen the parents not even once, the students' reports will just be piling up with no one to collect them (P3:7-11);*
- *I do not know if it's due to that they mostly are young parents so they do not know the importance of education (P6:28);*
- *...no contribution from parents because they are not educated (P13:6);*
- *I think this issue is caused by lack of education of parents (P14:29);*
- *They are more interested in working in farms not school so they have influenced their children to think that school is really not that important (P16:7);*
- *I want to believe they do not know the importance of education because most of them ended their studies at primary... (P19:33).*

Psychological barriers are related to the parents' feelings and confidence regarding contact with school personnel. In most cases the parents with less self-confidence also have low-income. Parents who perceive themselves as less capable intellectually and less educated, experience psychological barriers regarding school involvement. In the same perspective, parental perception of racism and self-experience of discrimination creates a negative connection with the school (Velsor & Orozco, 2007) (Also see paragraph 2.4.3).

Twelve participants explicitly referred to lack of education of young parents as contributing factors to their non-involvement with the education of the children. Most young parents dropped out school or did not finish their formal schooling hence they fail to understand the importance of education in their children's lives. Their perception might be that education did not change their own livelihoods and that education therefor will not bring about change in the lives of their children. Children with poor grades are associated with parents not showing up at schools at all and those who are doing well associated with parents being involved. The following quotes attest to this opinion:

- *They know the rights of children but **they do not know the responsibilities as parents. Honestly these parents are dead alive** (P7:7-9);*
- *They would tell you that **their parents are not home and their siblings are taking care of them** and they are taking care of themselves because their parent has run off to their boyfriend, I ... (P7:12-16);*
- ***Parents are really neglecting their children, a child can come to school with no shoes and we as teachers because we feel pity for them we pop money from our own pockets to help these children some are not in need but they just do not care** (P8:12-15);*
- *People leaving in... are not struggling it's just that they **are lazy they do not want to do anything, some parents resort to drinking** (P7:54);*
- ***These young parents are just roaming in the streets, I do not know maybe it's their culture; these parents have this mentality that it's the teacher's duty to do everything** (P9:38);*
- *They just send their children off to school just to have some peace and quiet at home or go to the shebeen to drink alcohol (P12:12-13);*

- *I once visited this other family at their homestead but **the parents hide the children and they deny that the children are around. I pretended to be going then came back later to find the children busy with home chores** (P17:17-20);*
- *I honestly do not know what could be the problem. **If you know that your child has dropped out of school and then when I come to your house you tell your child to go inside the house to hide** I do not know what would be the problem exactly, is it due to lack of knowledge or you are just being lazy **to do house chores** so you think if a child is around he or she can perform them for you. Children have **serious social problems** beyond their control, when they come and tell me their problems I just cry. They would tell you that their parents are not home and their siblings are taking care of them and they are taking care of themselves because their parent has run off with a boyfriend... (P7:11).*

Neglect occurs when adults do not provide for the physical, emotional, or developmental needs of their growing children. Neglect can include adults not providing children's basic needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, health care, supervision and protection. Neglect can also include not making sure a child attends school. Neglected school children are often described as inattentive, uninvolved, and lacking creative initiative. They also tend to be more teacher dependent, more helpless, passive and withdrawn and more easily frustrated (Grant & Ray, 2010) **(Also see paragraphs 2.4.7; 2.4.8).**

In the light of the for mentioned it seems that irresponsible and neglecting parental behaviors that demonstrate lack of insight into the value of education, such as leaving kids alone while they run off with their boyfriend, abuse alcohol, leaving the children without food, abusing the children to do household chores and even hide the children when the teacher come to visit, were major concerns by the participants. Many of these parents are still teenagers themselves and rather prefer to visit shebeens instead of supporting their children.

4.3.2.2 Sub-theme: Environmental and social factors influencing involvement in children's education.

Although some participants were skeptical about parents' excuses, there seem to be real interrelated external/social factors influencing attendance of meetings and supervising learners' homework. These issues include economic circumstances like work situations, travelling costs and time, and social factors like poverty and illiteracy.

Many people point to being poor and being single parents as the root causes of poor student learning. This may be the case in some situations, but many single parents actually spend more time with their children on homework and other school issues because they have no requirement to spend time on activities with their spouses. Their children are their centre of their lives (Bowsher, 2001) (Also see paragraphs 1.2.1.4; 2.4.7).

The following quotes substantiate economic issues mentioned by parents although some participants were outspoken about "excuses" and "laziness": Young parents working far from their children mostly have odd jobs with odd hours and are unable to be involved in their children's education and also due to lack of finances it is difficult for them to travel. Some participants mentioned the issue of parents feeling out of place due to the manner and level of language that is used in school gatherings. The following quotes support the mentioned:

- *I have asked the young parents the reason behind them not taking part and the reason they gave is that they **work at Gaborone** and they work with contractors **so it's very difficult for them to travel to and from** hence seeing it more beneficial to stay at Gaborone (P2: 9);*
- *They **make excuses about working at the farms so they are not allowed to take the day off** but I believe there is no job that can deny a parent from seeing their child's*

progress at school... These children's parents are usually the ones who resort to drinking (P2:20-23, 43);

- *When asked the reason behind them not coming to school they will tell you that they are held up at work ... Parents who come have a better economic background unlike those who do not come (P3:32-38);*
- *They would tell you they work at farms so they cannot take a day off and others they work at Gaborone in shops so they work 24/7 and do not have time to come to school (P9:13);*
- *We have realised that parents stay at the lands which makes it difficult for them to attend such activities and for the young adults they say they do not attend due to work...Others do not attend because they feel out of place ... and parents staying at the lands would tell you they do not have money so the child should stay and help them, there is too much ignorance in this society. (P4:20-24, 51).*

Low-income parents are less involved in their children's schooling than middle and upper-class families; therefore, children of lower income families receive less academic benefits than children who come from higher-income families (Smith, 2006). According to Mapp (2002), parents will create relationships and sustain respectful bonds with school personnel when the latter initiate practices that welcome parents, connect them to the school, and honor their presence (**Also see paragraphs 1.2.1.4; 2.4.8**).

Poverty is a difficult barrier to overcome in becoming successful. Those living in the lowest income levels are only 10% as likely to achieve a college education as those in the higher income level. One study found that when parents in generational poverty had a low education level, there is lack of conversation in the home about the importance of education and an

almost total absence of educational goals (Beegle, 2003b) (**Also see paragraphs 1.2.1.4; 2.4.8**).

Poverty is described as the state of being poor, the state of being lacking in quality and amount (Oxford English Dictionary, 2012). Poverty is perceived by poor South Africans to include alienation from community, food insecurity, crowded homes, usage of unsafe and inefficient forms of energy, lack of jobs that are adequately paid or secure, and disintegration of family. Unemployment is perceived as lack of opportunity to use oneself in a meaningful way to contribute positively to one's existence or survival (Mdladlana, 2005) (**Also see paragraphs 1.2.1.4; 2.4.8**).

One participant mentioned that excuses about their own work shows ignorance to their children's work, which I think it was a conclusion on their part why parents are not coming may that be wrong or right. Most young parents are not educated hence they have odd jobs like working in farms, shops, construction just to name a few, and work odd hours which can be a serious hindrance to them in participating in their children's education since they don't have the time and also because most of the school activities are done on weekdays:

- *They would give a lot of **excuses about work** and this shows ignorance to their children's work (P5:8).*

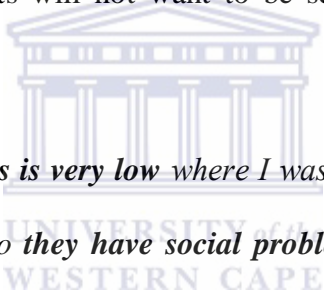
Research supports that teachers have a tendency to generalize and perceive parents of low-income students as not interested; research also shows lack of teacher preparation in establishing and sustaining a relationship with parents (Velsor & Orozco, 2007).

The following participant mentioned contradictory statements, she said that young adults are single and very poor and later on she also confirmed that if parents were to pay for their

children's school fees they will be involved in their education. The question now becomes if they are poor, how will they be able to afford school fees?

- *These young adults are single parents and very poor and only a few are better off (P5:37);*
- *...if parents were to pay parents would be involved because they would be paying (P5:42).*

Poverty was mentioned particularly about young single mothers who did not complete their education and do not have jobs. The living standards and social issues especially in the rural areas make parental involvement difficult. There is no one who wants to be associated with poverty hence poor young parents will not want to be seen in schools because of stigma associated poverty.

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- *Living standards this sides is very low where I was working I haven't seen the living standard this low and also they have social problems so I do not know the reason because I believe when one is suffering they would want to live better so I honestly do not want to say poverty is the cause of all this and I also believe they are just being lazy ... If you can observe most of the people living here live in abject poverty they do not have radios or televisions so they don't know what is happening outside their area, they are ... (P6: 31-35).*

People's perception of their own human value predicts how much they are able to access a sense of hope about their lives. Unemployment, because of the stress it produces, reduces the chances of living lives of hope. The unemployed are likely to have a sense of hopelessness and helplessness (Thompson, 2002) (Also see paragraphs 1.2.1.4; 2.4.8).

It has been found that economic and socio-cultural background has great influence on children's classroom performance in Botswana (Letshabo *et al.*, 2002).

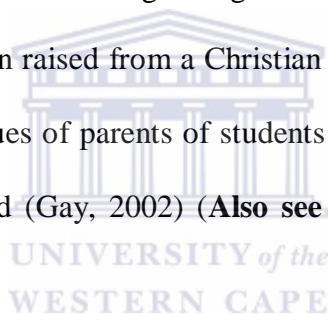
Besides young parent's irresponsible parental behavior as perceived as a valid reason for lack of interest in children's education, two participants working in remote rural areas thought that cultural influences might play a role in parental attitude towards children's education. The undermentioned quotes illustrate the influence of culture in children's academic life:

- *This village has a high population of And ... **culture** and according to the ... **culture a child is supposed get married at a young age hence the drop out in order to get married**, and last year one of our standard seven student dropped out to get married so generally this hinders them from studying because they never finish school. According to ... culture their children would only be taught how to write, read and add up sums and they never participate in anything not even sports. We can have a child who is talented in sports but their parents will refuse them to participate ... (P1:46;*
- *I think maybe it's their culture because if you can see the statistics in this K...region you will realise that people who live here are not B... but instead B... (P20:18, 33-35);*
- ***They are detached from the rest of the world** (P19: 27-33, 34-36).*

Literature acknowledge the role of culture in the field of education. It is the educator's obligation to learn as much about the culture and background of their students as possible (Antunez, 2000). A culturally responsive teacher uses students' cultural orientation, background experiences, and ethnic identities as channels to facilitate their learning. This requires that teachers first understand the influences of family experiences, race, culture, and ethnicity on learning, including becoming critically aware of their own cultural backgrounds

and how these affect their attitude about children and families that are different from their own (Gay, 2002) (Also see paragraphs 1.2.1.4; 2.3.4; 2.4.5 and 2.4.6).

However, it will not be enough to only focus on teaching strategies that are culturally responsive. Since children cannot be isolated from their home, community, or cultural settings, teachers will also need to use family involvement strategies that are responsive to the families' cultural and community backgrounds. Students will be more successful in their education when there is continuity between home and school; when teachers are supportive of families and communicate in ways that are congruent to each family's culture, better educational outcomes are seen in children (Keyes, 2002). It may be difficult for teachers when working with children and families originating from the cultures different to their own. For example, if a teacher has been raised from a Christian perspective, it will be challenging to be sensitive to beliefs and values of parents of students who are Jewish, Muslim, or even without any religious background (Gay, 2002) (Also see paragraphs 1.2.1.4; 2.3.4; 2.4.5 and 2.4.6).



In the light of the above mentioned, it seems that these findings confirm that environmental factors such as poverty, unemployment and socio-cultural values indeed play a significant role in parents not sufficiently supporting their children's school careers.

4.3.2.3 Sub-theme: Illiteracy of parents and family dynamics

Participants mentioned illiteracy of parents as a possible reason to terminate children's education or to keep them out of school when needed home. The following quotes attest to this assumption:

- *I don't know if it's right to say **they are illiterate** because I noticed the day when we were filling the junior schools form and some parents came with someone to help*

them fill the form since they cannot write, maybe those are some of the things that make parents not participate in their children's schools work (P3:14-18);

- *Our PTA committee is not active, we realised that our chairperson even though he was willing to be a **chairperson he could not read**... (P3:53);*
- ***Parents who cannot read and write, we have to know how** we can assist them but that has a negative impact on their children because at the end of the day they get frustrated since there is no one to help them, they are just waiting for that time to leave and its paining on them as well as teachers. **These young parents are just roaming in the streets I do not know maybe it's their culture; these parents have this mentality that it's the teacher's duty to do everything** (P9:38-44).*

The fact that parents cannot read or write might contribute to non-involvement of parents in schools. This might be frustrating to parents if they cannot help their children with their homework and it can also be frustrating for children knowing that there is no one to help you with your homework. This also contributes negatively in the parents volunteering their service to school - activities (for example Parent Teacher Association Committees) as they have to read some documents. Because of this issue parents end up leaving the educational responsibility of children to teachers alone because they believe that they know best.

Parents in rural areas are largely illiterate and therefore often do everything under the authoritarian of the Ministries of Education and teachers (Pansiri, 2008). Some parents are illiterate, either they were failures in school or the school system failed them. They hated school and never felt comfortable there, which meant that they did not have the knowledge or skills to help their children with schoolwork. In fact, many of these people can barely carry a conversation with the teacher Therefore schools can offer after school programs that enable students to do their homework before they even go home in the afternoons (Bowsher, 2001) **(Also see paragraphs 2.2; 2.4.3; 2.4.4).**

Most parents in rural areas are not working and whilst there are so many shebeens they spend all the time drinking, when children get home there is no one at home to give them food and also to help them with their homework and they end up doing chores which parents were supposed to do. This can also lead to children misbehaving since there is no adult supervision at home. The statements below indicate children live in harsh conditions:

- *I once told my students to write what is the main reason that makes them not do their homework and read, some said their parents drink and fight afterwards they are told to go to the bush to look for fire woods so as they could cook (P14:35);*
- *Some (reasons) are not due to social backgrounds, environment for example there are shebeens in the village so if a parent is drinking he or she will not have time for their children (P15:3-5).*

The issue of timely notification of meetings have been mentioned by one participant and another participant indicated that it is impossible to speculate if you never see the parents to learn from them:

- *The fact that they say they receive letters at short notice hence making it difficult for them to leave their jobs and come to attend (P5:20);*
- *You can know someone's reasons when they tell you but since they never show up you will never know (P6:23).*

Communication for parents to attend meetings has to be done long before the date of the meetings, so that parents could be able to ask for leave from their employers for those who are working and also for those staying at the lands or cattle posts to make arrangements to attend. If it is short notice the school makes it impossible for parents to attend.

Effective parent and community involvement features appear to be good communication from schools to parents and community and vice versa. Home to school communication may be constrained by conditions such as legal regulations, district policies and history. It is the responsibility of the school to initiate communication and provide an atmosphere in which parents need and accept such communication (Marzano, 2003) **(Also see paragraphs 1.2.1.4; 2.10.2; 210.4 and 2.11).**

In view of the above it seems that the level of illiteracy and a myriad of challenges such as not being able to read notifications from the school, contributes hugely to parents not showing the necessary involvement to their children at school.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Consequences of parental behaviour and involvement

4.3.3.1 Sub-theme: Lack of parental involvement and motivation, together with social issues cause poor academic performance, drop out of school

Participants perceived a relationship between poor parental involvement with children's education and learner's motivation, poor progress; losing of interest in school work and drop out of school:

- *The only ones who availed themselves are the very same **parents that always come and we noticed change in their children's grades** (P1:24, 25);*
- *These students **are not failing because they do not know ... it is because they lack a parent figure to guide them.** These challenges are caused by young single parents as well as parents who leave their children. The government offers these children uniforms but they never wear them. Parents only come when you have beaten their child, there was one incident a parent came to school to beat a teacher because she had beaten her child (P7:27);*

- *For those students who their parents attend they tend to perform well because it shows that their parents are encouraging them to study at home and **those that their parents do not show interest they only come to school just because they have to** (P16: 40).*

It is very clear from above statements that children whose parents are involved in their school work perform better because there is clear guidance and they also have a relationship with teachers. And for those whose parents are not involved they perform badly because they don't have anyone to encourage and support them.

Participants talked about lack of interest in education particularly of young parents as the driving force behind learner's motivation to study. If parents don't see the importance of education they cannot encourage or motivate their children to go to school and since home is the first contact the children have when they grow up, they end up adapting what is being practiced at home. These children end up not doing their work because there is no supervision and not attending school regularly and no parents will even bother to inform the school because to them it is acceptable.

- *We give children books but they tear them up and when given to cover them at their homes they just return them the way we gave them and even assignments parents don't sign which shows lack of interest. Honestly parents participation is passive, none existent. (P1:95);*
- *Those who attend their children perform well and others their grades are really poor (P4:27);*
- *They do not care not even to check if the child has gone to school and what he has eaten before going to school and due to that their concentration level becomes very low, students can come to school very dirty (P5:21);*

- *A student can take four days without coming to school and the parent will not come or even call to say why the child has not been coming to school, it does not even bother the parents to say anything (P6:10-11);*
- *When we give students homework they just come without doing it and sometimes when you think the student has done the assignment you would see that the parent is the one who did (P6:17);*
- *A student can take two weeks without coming to school just like in my class I have four students who can take three weeks without coming to school but they are standard 7 (P20:4-9;*
- *When parents are not supportive this discourages children to work hard because their parents show no interest and in that way it makes the child think education is not important. Young parents are really neglecting their children, a child can come to school with no shoes and we as teachers because we feel pity for them we pop money from our own pockets to help these children some are not in need but they just do not care (P8:7-15);*
- *I once visited this other family at their homestead but the parents hide the children and they parent deny that the children are around. I pretended to be going then came back later to find the children busy with house chores. When a child does not go to school to parents it is a blessing because they can help them with chores at home. (P17:17, 18);*
- *..., there is a lot of absentees then you will just hear a parent saying I just wanted him or her to rest from school (P18:21-24).*

Low-income parents view schools as an incomprehensible and purposefully exclusionary system. Lack of trust is often the result of misunderstanding the perceived intentions of each party. The lack of involvement that results from mistrust and apprehension is often

misperceived by schools as a lack of concern for the children's education (Antunez, 2000). Parental involvement is furthermore also related to more advanced social skills, less behavioural problems, and improved social emotional adjustment (El Nokali *et al.*, 2010) **(Also see paragraphs 1.2.1.3; 2.3.3).**

Children live under difficult conditions and these are the driving force to children dropping out of school. Conditions such as neglect, poverty abuse just to name a few contributes negatively in the progress of the child as is confirmed in the following quotes:

- *Children will **not have done their assignments as well as eaten anything** because their **parents only come home after 10 pm**. Students always faint in the morning due to the fact that they have not eaten anything yesterday (P19:49);*
- ***Children drop out of school** but when they came back these children tend to be shy and ashamed of what happened and when we ask the reason behind them dropping out they say **parents are always fighting at home and the living condition at home is difficult** (15:17...).*

In sub-Saharan Africa alone, about 10 million children drop out of primary school each year. Household poverty, inequalities linked to language and ethnicity, and rural-urban differences all contribute to the problem, along with the poor quality of education in schools where are overcrowded, books are scarce and teachers are poorly motivated. The school dropout crisis diminishes the life chances of highly vulnerable children, closing down a potential escape route from poverty and reducing education's power to strengthen social mobility (Alexander, 2008). Children from poor homes are more likely to drop out as opposed to children from wealthier homes, underlining the interaction of poverty with education costs (Hunt, 2008) **(Also see paragraphs 1.2.1.4; 2.4.8).**

It seems clear from the above mentioned that a lack of parental involvement in the school career of their children contributes hugely to a rising drop-out rate from official schooling.

4.3.3.2 Sub-theme: Children are left with elders who cannot help with school work

Some participants indicated that young parents leave their children in the care of grandparents and although the grandparents care for children and some come to school when invited, they are not able to support with school work as indicated in the following quotes:

- *Their parents are youth parents so they are the ones who should be more active unlike elders because **elders are old and at times they complain about not understanding the syllabus** but at least they show interest (P2:8-9);*
- *The ones that come are **mostly grandparents**, they are always willing to help but they have grown **and it's not possible help on exercises such as assignments** (P4:10-12);*
- *Most of the parents are young parents and they hardly come to school because they work at the city **so their grandparents come on their behalf** (P8:7).*

Contrary to above statements, grandparent-headed households are linked to positive schooling outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa. In particular, grandmothers are associated with increased school enrollment for children, particularly those not living with their mothers. Given the increased absence of mothers due to migration or early death, their findings illustrate the need to consider the complexity of the family context as well as household structure (Bures, 2009) **(Also see paragraphs 2,3.4; 2.4.7).**

In the light of the above, it seems confirmed that the elders in certain communities play a vital role in the schooling career of children. The role of elders should therefore be accommodated by schools and their programs regarding the involvement of parents.

4.3.3.3 Sub-theme: Parental lack of interest in school work promote disrespectful behaviour of children

Where there is low involvement of parents in children's school work and progress participants indicate disrespectful behaviour of children, because parents do not want their children to be disciplined with the result that children misbehave and also do not respect parents:

- *Parents will not show up when there are meetings but **when their child has been beaten or was involved in a fight they will show up** (P3:25, 26);*
- *Teachers in the village we are afraid to use public transport because **parents insult us because they do not want you to discipline their children when they are doing wrong** (P8:52-55);*
- *I foresee us building a **generation of rascals and thief's because of how we have brought up** our children (P8:64);*
- *Others are just not interested, **they just they misbehave and do not respect their parents. Some control their parents others rape their parents I do not know but I believe they learn all this from the media** (P12:29);*
- ***Parents are being over protective hence teachers are not able to correct them and what amazes me is that parents have time to come and complain when their children are being beaten but they cannot show up when it comes to their academics** (P13:49);*
- ***Some parents have no hope in their children but if parents were involved I think children would improve** (P14:15).*

Where there is no parental involvement children behave badly because they know that teachers cannot do anything to them. They also know that teachers do not have contact with their parents they can do as they please and it will never reach home. Some parents are the

ones encouraging these kind of behaviours because they are overprotective of their child. This is where the issue of socialization comes from because the manner in which children are handled will be reflected in their lives.

Hornby (2000) asserts that despite the fact that parental involvement contributes to the achievement of school goals, minimal parental involvement in school is a worldwide issue. In most cases, parents involve themselves when they feel that the school has violated their expectations, for instance, when a school eliminates a program that parents value for their children, parents will respond without delay or when the children are disciplined. Otherwise, many of them believe that it is the school's responsibility to educate their children, thus, many parents are far away from the school (Benhamtye, 2000). The case in Botswana is not different from Hornby (2000) and Benhamtye's (2000) observations as Mosime's (2000) revealed that parents seldom visit the school to check on their children's performance. She explains further that some parents respond coldly when and if they are called concerning the behavior of their children.

Parental involvement is generally thought of as an avenue for promoting academic performance. However, parental involvement may also enhance children's behavior at home and in the classroom as parents and teachers work together to enhance social functioning and address problem behaviors (El Nokali, Bechman & Votruba-Drzal, 2010). **(Also see paragraph 2.3.3).**

Although it seems a worldwide scenario that a growing lack of discipline is emerging, the role of parents in containing this phenomenon should be acknowledged and parents should be involved in as many ways as possible to avoid children growing up to be more ill-disciplined and disrespectful.

4.3.3.4 Sub-theme: Where there is low parental involvement teachers experience frustration and exhaustion

Although the focus of this study was on perceptions of teachers, this sub-theme indicates that participants also share their lived experiences of low parental involvement. Participants from schools with low involvement of parents voiced their frustrations and feelings of being regarded as the primary carer for children and feelings of being overburdened and in selected cases health consequences are also reported. Some parents believe that the role of the teacher is to educate the child and that the family's role is to rear the child, and not be directly involved in educational practices (Kim, 2002). The following quotes confirm the fore mentioned:

- *After all **your sacrifices** you see parents not being involved and that really frustrates, I become **angry and demoralized** by the whole situation. ... **I used to have massive headaches due to a lot of stress, I would wake up in the morning around 2am and wonder if my students will be able to write since they are not serious with their work and also parents are not involved as well. We are always going to the clinic due to high blood pressure because of all this, parents are not concerned but we as teachers we are** (P1:133-141);*
- *It's really **demoralising** because they come with this mentality that they will only be good at one particular subject* (P2:58);
- *I think **in primary school we are not being treated well** because they are scarce skills allowances ...* (P5:49).

Participants mentioned they go an extra mile and make sacrifices to make sure that children pass their standard 7 examination the non-involvement of parents really frustrates and demoralise them since as teachers, they take education seriously. These health challenges to

teachers due to a lack of parental involvement are mostly caused because they are worried whether the children are going to do well in their exams. Since standard seven teachers are assessed by how well the student performs in their final examination it become very stressful for them when parents are not involved.

Participants cited similar problems of being overloaded in various ways. The participants pointed out that parents expected them to do more than they could manage as educators. Participants also complained that usually they are expected to produce good results at the end of each year although the parents were not working with them (Mediratta, Frucher & Lewis, 2002).

Participants mentioned that parents believe that since they are employed and paid by the government it is their responsibility to educate their children. They see teachers as jack of all trades and their attitude towards them is very negative and might influence the children not to respect teachers. The following quotes indicate these feelings of the participants:

- *In ... we have kids and we are used **as a dumping site by parents** (P7:1);*
- *The problem we are facing is that **parents have the mentality that teachers are being paid to take care of their children** while they are not being paid so they believe it's our responsibility to care for them (P8:18-21);*
- *My duty is to act like a **mother, a teacher, a father and a guidance teacher** all in one and imagine I have 35 students (P9:10);*
- *... these parents have this mentality that it's the **teacher's duty to do everything** these parents insult us they send their children to deliver this insults to us (P9:46-47);*
- *Social workers provide everything for their children and families and parent's duty is just to love their kids but they do not do that. **This is really frustrating and we are struggling as teachers** (P18:42-44);*

- *The child will come back and tell you **that their parent said we as teachers are being paid to do such things** (P7:43);*
- *Honestly parents **leave their responsibilities as parents** to their grandparents and teachers. (P17:70).*

Taking into account the importance of the partnership between stakeholders pertaining to schooling of primary school children (Epstein), programs should be in place to promote also the emotional condition of teachers which is currently under tremendous stress because they cannot rely on the support of the parents.

4.3.4 Theme 4: Efforts and suggestions to improve parental involvement

There was no consensus coming from the participants in this study on how to improve parental involvement. The educating of parents and getting support from community leaders where there is low parental involvement was mentioned by 5 out of 20 respectively.

4.3.4.1 Sub-theme: Involvement of community leaders

Community leaders such as the chief, members of parliament and councillors are key important figures in the communities and utilising and involving them in this matter might assist. These are the most respected people in the community and since parents are part of the community, using the input of these community leaders to spearhead issues of parental involvement might help teachers to eventually also reach the parents. Strategies about parental involvement should be geared towards involving community leaders as also indicated by the participants:

- *The **community leaders** do help even though they do not know what to do anymore; we have met as guidance teachers to come with solutions because the community leaders will be asking us why these things are happening (P1:153);*

- *This time we came up with a strategy that **involves the village chief** when we call parents and they do not show up the Chief will call them on our behalf and the parents will find us there to discuss our issues (P6:46);*
- ***The Chief** also suggested that when we have PTA meetings we should always call him or even give him letters so as he can distribute them around the village he and their parents we should write their names down he will deal with them (P7:58);*
- *I think the generation of today has changed and I think we should involve **the Chief**, the Chief should be given the power to solve such issues (P8:40...);*
- *We have involved **the Chief** and social workers but still there is no change, even those who dropped out of school even now they do not go to school (P18:34).*

In attempting to answer the question about possible solutions to the absence of parental involvement in the children's school progress, community organizing might provide some answers. (Mediratta, Frucher & Lewis, 2002) developed five criteria that define groups doing community organizing. Such groups are:

- a) Building a base of parents, young people and/or residents who engage in collective action to address poor performance and create excellent public schools for all children;
- b) Focusing on winning concrete changes in schools and employing such strategies as mobilization (bringing together large numbers of people), direct action (picketing and demonstrations), negotiation, training, and forming coalition with other groups;
- c) Supporting democratic decision making by members in all aspects of the organization;
- d) Developing leaders from within an ever-growing membership and

- e) Building a strong, lasting organization to alter the power relations that lead to failing schools.

This work is unlike the forms of parent and community involvement considered in the other. Firstly it is based outside schools and is designed, led, and controlled by parents and community members. Secondly it is overtly political — that is, it seeks to change the power relations that create and sustain poorly functioning schools. A key goal of community organizing and constituency building is to give parents and residents more power over what happens in schools and in the distribution of resources among schools.

Thirdly it aims to change conditions that underlie poor student performance. These include low standards and expectations, mediocre teaching, inadequate learning materials, and weak instructional leadership. These stem, in turn, from poorly distributed resources, insufficient funding, and policies that tend to place highly qualified teachers and administrators in more advantaged schools. Fourthly its ultimate goal is creating the local leadership and skills needed to rebuild troubled communities. Community groups, churches and other religious organizations, and local residents are heavily involved.

Achieving universal access and retention to basic education depends on the partnership between schools and their larger community (Republic of Botswana, 1994) (**Also see paragraphs 1.2.1.5; 2.10; 2.10.1 and 2.12).**

4.3.4.2 Sub-theme: Educating parents

Five participants suggested educating of parents as a strategy to help improve parental involvement. If parents are taught the importance of taking part in the education of their children however, for illiterate parents' education might not be a solution but rather find ways in which they can be involved and feel less intimidated for example encouraging them to help

during school activities like open days, prize giving so that they can also feel appreciated. The government with the help of teachers and parents should come up with strategies that benefit both parties and that are child centred as are indicated in the following quotes:

- *I think we should **educate them first on the importance of the children's education**, we thought we could attract them with snacks during meetings but that does not bring any change (P2:72);*
- *I believe if you do not teach parents it will not matter if they pay or not so what is really important is **parents being educated** (P10:44);*
- *I think this issue is caused by lack of education but we do teach them about the **importance of education** (P14:24);*
- *Education is something that takes time but if you **enrol them in seminars to teach them the importance of parental involvement in school**, they should bench mark and teach others and it's not like all of them are not educated those who are educated should be trained so as they can encourage others but all this can be done if the ministry funds these activities instead of just saying parents should be involved because others do not have radios so such announcement by pass them (19:40);*
- *The government does **talk in radios to encourage parents to be involved in the children's work** (P18:25).*

Literature refers to the development of families' political knowledge and skills. Political capital consists of assets like understanding how the system works and how to have an effect on public decisions. It also means having access to the people who run the school system and a voice in the policymaking process (Mapp, 2002). The following activities are suggested by Mapp (2000) to assist in building political capital:

- (a) Make the school a laboratory of democracy. Support families' involvement in decision making. If you have a school governance council, offer training for parent and community members of the council;
- (b) Ask the superintendent, board members, and district staff to meet with families at the school and explain what they do. Work with families to develop an agenda for the meetings so they can voice their concerns;
- (c) Give families information about how the education system (and local government) works. Make field trips to district offices and school board meetings;
- (d) Keep voter registration forms and information about local government agencies in the school office or family center. Develop a student-run voter registration drive;
- (e) Invite candidates for school board and other local offices to speak to families at the school.

Furthermore, there should also be an attempt to support families' efforts to improve the school and community in the following manners:

- (a) Open the school to community meetings;
- (b) Make home visits to ask parents their ideas about the school;
- (c) Go with families to approach local officials about needed funding, programs, or law enforcement;
- (d) Work with families to develop action research skills to document problems in the neighborhood.

Parent education is provided to parents by schools and agencies to aid them with parenting skills and developmental, academic, social and health issues of their children (Hiatt-Michael, 2001) **(Also see paragraphs 2.9; 2.9.1).**

4.3.4.3 Sub-theme: Appropriate communication with parents

There were perceptions of some participants that proper communication with parents is essential, but in some cases do not really have a positive effect as indicated in the following quotes:

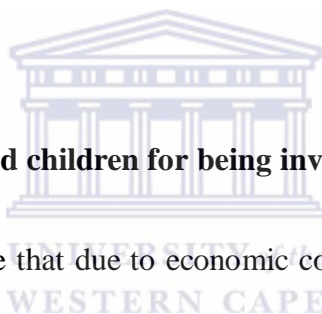
- *I think we should tell parents when to attend meetings in advance because at times they take us for granted since **we do not tell them well in time** (P5:3);*
- *We call parents by telling their children or writing letters to parents, parents are trying and there are those who need a little push in order to take part in their children's work (P16:42);*
- *We announce in assembly and write letters to parents well in advance for them to come (P7:58).*

The most common form of teachers' communication with parents is letters. In rural areas most children stay with their grandparents who are illiterate, hence written letters are not effective. It is important for teachers to be familiar with the kind of parents they are dealing with so that they know how best to reach them because they can be sending letters out but nobody reading them hence parents do not attend meetings.

The main issue relates to the way parents and teachers perceive the initiation of communication efforts. While teachers prefer to use institutional methods of communication, the parents prefer an individualized and more personal approach. As a consequence, both sides become discouraged by the mismatch (Halsey, 2005). For example, teachers will call parents to report on issues related to unacceptable behavior. Parents understand a phone call related to unacceptable behavior, nonetheless, parents also want to receive phone calls when their children accomplished something positive, as well.

Communication does not occur automatically, specific vehicles and avenues must be established to facilitate the flow of information to and from the school. Schools must develop a long-range plan to enhance communication between the school site and parents. Suggestions include all school communications should be issued in the major languages of the school's linguistically diverse students; all public meeting should be translated from English into major languages of linguistically diverse students. Public meetings should be conducted on a regular basis in the language of the parents and translated into English (Antunez, 2000) (Also see paragraphs 1.2.1.4; 2.10; 2.10.2; 2.10.4 and 2.11).

Communication between schools and communities in remote areas schools are weak. Language is a barrier to effective communication between teachers and parents in RAD's schools (Maruatona, 2005).



4.3.4.4 Incentives for parents and children for being involved

It seems as if perceptions indicate that due to economic conditions parents need to get some concrete incentives for promoting involvement as indicated as follow:

- *I think maybe if they are called and told that refreshments will be served maybe they will come (P12:25);*
- *We suggested to conduct a prize giving ceremony so as to motivate others, because our first prize giving parents were attended in large numbers and were also encouraging their children to work hard so as they could receive prizes next time. We as teachers are not the only ones who are to bench mark even parents are supposed to do that and help us with solutions on how to improve their children's grades;*
- *I go to their houses to know the reason behind that. I personally went to the clinic and asked for the names of children who qualify to be doing standard one then I went and asked people to help me find them. Ever since I came results have improved*

drastically. Parents are involved when they are told well in advance, parents are always willing to help if you tell them the importance of doing all this but we are quick to judge that parents are not being involved when we do not teach them (P15:43);

- *I think we have tried everything including study camps, prize giving but they never show up only the same people show up (P18:34);*
- *Parents are not willing to join the PTA committee so I think if there were given an allowance like what is happening with the Village Development Committee (VDC) they would be interested (P3:56).*

While the above sub- theme seems to suggest that school committee members volunteer their services, some participants feel that if they were given some allowances parents might be motivated to take part. Sustaining parent interest and participation in schools is very difficult, the most important incentive for parents is, of course their children. Parents want their children to be successful in school. Feedback on children's progress in school helps, they also want to know how to be better parents. The school can build upon these needs to foster parental involvement. If parents believe they are helping their children, they will freely help the school. Few schools can pay parents with money. A few publicly funded programs can offer reimbursement for out of pocket expenses. But mostly encouragement, knowledge, and positive reinforcement are the coin of repayment (Click & Karkos, 2013).

In addition to the above, the following significant individual suggestions were made about letting parents pay school fees, and also about providing accommodation for students where they could be fed and get help with homework:

- *You can imagine me not enrolling my child in this school but instead at a private school so I think **if they are given a chance to pay this can make parents participate more because they would not want their money to be waste** (P 2:72);*
- *I think a **hostel should be built which can accommodate students where they can study and eat well**. There was a time where a standard seven parent had asked her child to stay at her relatives during the exams since they stayed at the lands which was too far so one time the child had a misunderstanding with the relatives and left home, she was walking in the dark and the security guard saw her and informed us and we asked the parent if the child can stay over at a teachers house till the exams finish and she agreed.*

4.3.5 Theme 5: The story of very good parental involvement

4.3.5.1 Sub-theme: Parents are educated and seem to know the importance of education

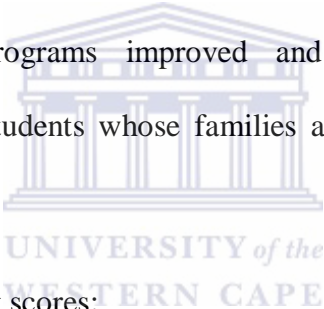
What seems to stand out in the story of school number 11 (urban) according to the perception of the individual participant are is that parents are educated and seem to know the importance of education as confirmed in the following quote:

- *Parents are **educated** and also they are **young adults**;*
- *We have experienced issues where parents have left their children with relatives or grandparents so we have worked with other parents as well as the social workers to **help address these issues**.*

These quotes indicated very good parental involvement of parents in the education of their children and it is educated young children who are working. Issues are dealt with by the school and involved relevant stakeholders like social workers. This kind of feedback needs to be explored more to establish the avenue followed by this particular school in trying to have

parents more involved and which may also at the same time benefit the whole education system. The teacher's focus is probably on developing teaching and assessment strategies, classroom management skills, becoming an expert on the content of teaching and learning a myriad of knowledge. However, a crucial aspect of becoming an outstanding teacher is to know how to work effectively with students' families. The most effective teachers and schools are those with strong family involvement programs (Henderson & Mapp, 2002) (**Also see paragraphs 2.4; 2.4.9).**

A New Wave of Evidence called "*The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connection on Student Achievement*" (Henderson & Mapp, 2002) reviewed a significant number of studies in the field of parental involvement and it was overwhelmingly indicated that high quality family involvement programs improved and support student achievement. Specifically, it was found that students whose families are involved in their education in some way:

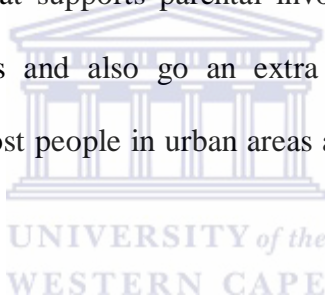
- 
- earn high grades and test scores;
 - are less likely to be retained in a grade;
 - are more apt to have an accurate diagnosis for educational placement in classes;
 - attend school regularly;
 - like school and adapt to it;
 - have better social skills;
 - have a fewer negative behaviour reports and
 - graduate and go on to post-secondary education.

A key finding to this research was the importance of encouraging families to support their children's learning at home. Other researchers have found that family involvement may account to 10% to 20% of the variance in student achievement levels and that family

involvement at elementary levels was a strong predictor of student achievement in urban schools (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2005; 2007). Family involvement appears to have a long range effect as children progress through school, and the more families support their children's learning the better they do in school over time (Henderson & Mapp, 2002) (**Also see paragraphs 2.4; 2.4.9; 2.10**).

4.3.5.2 Sub-theme: The school excel and attract parents

Schools excelling proves that where there are parental involvement children tend to perform well and since it is excelling everybody want to be associated with it hence they want the children to go there. The school is excelling and part of the reasons why the school excels is that they have good structure that supports parental involvement; have open minded and active PTA committee members and also go an extra mile to educate parents on the importance of education since most people in urban areas are educated. The following quote indicates the for mentioned:



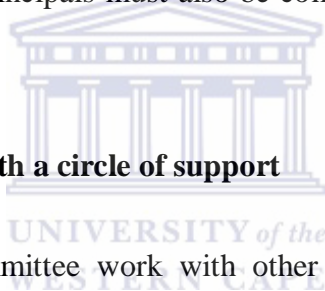
- *This **school is excelling** and just yesterday we won a trophy. In that way it makes parents want their children to school here, it's **basically an English medium which is very cheap** (P11:8 – 9).*

Griffith (2000) asserts that school climate affects parent empowerment and involvement in school. He says that if parents perceive school climate as positive, their involvement increases as long as the school allows them to do so. This implies that parents will be involved in their children's school activities if the school climate encourages them to do so.

4.3.5.3 Sub-theme: Order and good management

- *Teachers we should take a stand, we should show them that in school there is order, and we should not have an attitude towards certain students when given a class that does not perform well as a teacher **just try your best to make that class improve.***

The above statement indicates that law and order by teachers can also contribute to parental involvement, where teachers are disciplined, parents will want to send their children there. Flexible policies, a welcoming environment, and a collegial atmosphere all require administrative leadership and support. As with other educational projects or practices that require innovation and adaptation, the efforts of teachers alone cannot bring success to parental involvement projects. Principals must also be committed to project goals (Antunez, 2000).



4.3.5.4 Sub-theme: Engaging with a circle of support

The school and their PTA committee work with other stakeholder not only to address education issues but rather other social issues that might hamper the children's progress. The school have a system that they use to try and improve every year, they go an extra mile in improving their school which make them a success. This school can be used as an example to illustrate that parental involvement is critical in children's academic success. The under-mentioned quotes confirm the mentioned statement:

- *Our PTA committee is very active, we work hand in hand with the VDC to solve issues we are facing, and we have circles of support. We have experienced issues where parents have left their children with relatives or grandparents so we have worked with other parents as well as the social workers to help address these issues (P11: 13 – 16);*

- *First term teachers came here to bench mark on how to improve student's grades in their schools. We also bench mark at other schools to see how we can improve at certain stages, Agriculture is a subject that students are failing so as a school we went and bench marked at Molepolole where there is a teacher who is very good at that subject to see what he is really doing to excel. We also had a regional meeting and at that meeting teachers were coming up with ideas on how to improve student's grades (P11: 21 - 27).*

According to Mapp (2002) parents will embrace school involvement when school personnel initiate and engage in practices that welcome the parents; honor their contributions and connect them to the school's community through their children (**Also see paragraphs 2.4; 2.4.9; 2.10**).

4.4 CONCLUSION

Except for the "no involvement" or very "low involvement" which seemingly comes from participants in remote rural areas there are really no different themes between the urban and rural perceptions. Therefore separate analysis of the rural and urban did not seem relevant. Of course participant 11 is the exception and the only one that reports very good involvement. (**Also see 4.3.5.4 Sub-theme: Engaging with a circle of support**).

The findings correlate with literature as discussed in chapter 2 which was literature focused on parental involvement in western world. Parental involvement is critical for the child during his/her school career in order to establish effective progress. A variety of reasons are provided why many parents are not involved with their children's school activities, however, it needs to be determined what these reasons may be following a proper management plan to successfully address the lack of parental involvement.

From the data as presented in this chapter, it may be found that a complete absence of parental involvement pertaining to the primary schools in the Kgatleng District, Botswana, is clear hence the low performance of children. Various factors that may contribute to low parental involvement in the Kgatleng District, Botswana seem to be related to culture, poverty, and even parents' level of education particularly in the rural areas.

It is evident that parental involvement is key to the student's academic achievement and learners' social emotional development. In the next and last chapter certain conclusions and recommendations based on this research study will be made and presented.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The goal of the research was to determine the perceptions of teachers about parental involvement in public schools. The objectives included:

- Exploration of teachers' perceptions on factors contributing to parental involvement/non-involvement. During the execution of the research process the data was gathered as was indicated in chapters 1 and 3 during the discussion of the research methodology;
- Description of teachers' perceptions on factors contributing to parents' involvement/non-involvement in schools, which was the focus in chapter 4 where the findings of the research were presented;
- The last objective of this research study was to make conclusions and recommendations for improving parental involvement in public schools to the Ministry of Education in Botswana.

This chapter constitutes the conclusions and recommendations of this research. The researcher used the results of the findings yielded by the empirical study to come to conclusions and recommendations and this section will therefore be done in accordance with the layout of chapter four (See **Chapter 4: Findings of the perceptions of teachers about parental involvement in public schools in the Kgatleng District, Botswana**).

The incidence of biological parental involvement, reasons for no/unsatisfactory parental involvement, consequences of parental behaviour, efforts and suggestions to improve parental

involvement and the story of a very good parental involvement will be concluded and followed by corresponding recommendations.

5.2 THE INCIDENCE OF BIOLOGICAL PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

This section discusses the incidence of the involvement of biological parents in their children's education.

5.2.1 No parental involvement

Teachers in both *urban and rural schools* indicated that there is no parental involvement of biological parents.

5.2.1.1 Conclusion

- There is lack of biological parents' involvement in the education of children, both for children in the rural and the urban areas. The reason is that, most children stay with their grandparents as some of the children are orphans and some of the children's biological parents are working in the urban areas. However, even if the biological parents are present they do not take an active role in the child's education and the grandparents take all the responsibility. Some biological parents spend most of their time on drinking sprees. Some biological parents are not educated and therefore do not take education seriously, hence serious neglect of children together with neglect of their schooling career appear;*
- Parents are involved in other activities of schools but not in the academic part; this might be due to lack educational background, since they are mostly grandparents who are involved in chores necessary in rural areas. The activities that participants talked about that normally attracted large numbers of parents include prize giving ceremony, fun and open day activities. Participation in these activities is a form of*

involvement because parents can encourage or motivate their children to work hard so as they could also receive prizes next time.

5.2.1.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations on the fact that parents in the Kgatleng District, Botswana are not involved with their children's education, are proposed:

- Teachers should involve other relatives available in the village to work hand in hand with the grandparents who care for the children especially with involvement in schools. This should be done especially where grandparents are elders and have limited literacy;
- Going forward with the school education of children in the Kgatleng District, Botswana, the Ministry of Education should make available a budget which will sustainably enable stakeholders to implement multi-sectoral and holistic programs in the education communities to enhance the support of children in their primary years of schooling;
- The Ministry of Education should train and employ extension workers/assistant social workers to be employed to assist the grandparents in the education of their grandchildren after school and also act as mediator between the school and grandparents;
- An outreach programme, spearheaded by the parents should be developed to reach out to uninvolved parents. This should involve identification of the needs and challenges faced by the uninvolved parents and development of strategies and feasible programmes to assist them to take part in the education of their children;

- The school should support parents in their involvement in the non-academic activities as this will encourage parents to perceive the school as a place where they can share their ideas on how to help improve with improvements at school;
- There should be a needs assessment on what activities parents want and if they are involved in non-academic activities a relationship of trust and partnership can develop which can contribute to further involvement;
- Parental involvement is also not only about academic achievement but also developing emotional social skills. Parents may be utilized to teach children about discipline, morals and behaviours. In addition to basic educational skills, children must develop skills comprising self-awareness and self-management. In order for the children to prosper in school there needs to be an interaction of many factors and a partnership of all people and structures involved in a child's learning.

5.3 REASONS FOR NON-INVOLVEMENT/UNSATISFACTORY INVOLVEMENT BY PARENTS

5.3.1 Young/teenage parents' lack of interest in and insight into the importance of education and irresponsible parental and social behavior

Teachers in this research study have voiced the fact that many parents of children seem to be still young or teenagers themselves. They display a lack of insight into the need for education and accompanying support to their children and this often also lead to serious neglect of their children.

5.3.1.1 Conclusion

- *The majority of teachers referred to lack of education of young parents as contributing factors to their non-involvement in the education of their children. Most*

young parents have dropped out school or did not finish their formal schooling themselves, hence they do not see the importance of education in their children's lives. Children with poor grades are associated with parents not attending school activities at all where children with good grades are associated with parents being involved;

- *Participants referred to irresponsible parental behaviors that demonstrate lack of insight into the value of education. Irresponsible behaviors indicated by participants include, leaving kids alone while they stay or run away with their boyfriend. Other forms of irresponsible behavior displayed by young parents is alcohol abuse, which was also a major concern by the teachers in this study because the children were always left alone with nothing to eat while their parents are drinking in the shebeens.*

5.3.1.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed:

- The government of Botswana has an ongoing programme for young people who dropped out of school and those who did not go to school at all known as the “Back to School”-programme. The community leaders and its people should encourage young people to enroll in this programme and offer continuous support so that they finish school and have a better understanding of the importance of education in their lives and the opening up of opportunities for themselves as well as for their children;
- Communities need to develop recreational facilities so that young parents can rather spend time with positive recreation as opposed to engaging in alcohol and other negative forms of recreation;
- Social workers and community workers should be involved and even assigned by policy and legislation to do preventative, developmental and rehabilitative work with

young parents and to intervene where children are neglected. School social workers can be employed that work specifically with the children's needs as member of a multi-disciplinary team.

5.3.2 Environmental and social factors influencing involvement in children's education

The existence of environmental and social factors impacting on the parent's lack of involvement with schools seem to be a reality in the Kgatleng District, Botswana. These factors include economic circumstances such as work situations, unemployment, travelling costs and available time, as well as other social factors such as poverty and illiteracy.

5.3.2.1 Conclusion

- *Young parents working far from their children mostly have odd jobs and work for odd hours earning low wages. Therefore, they are unable to be involved in their children's education due to lack of time and finances to pay for the travel costs. Some teachers mentioned the issue of parents not fitting in with the other parents and teachers due to the manner in which meetings are held or the spoken language used;*
- *Poverty was mentioned particularly about young single mothers who did not complete their education and do not have jobs. The living standards and social issues especially in the rural areas make parental involvement difficult. There is no one who wants to be associated with poverty hence poor young parents will not want to be seen in schools because of stigma associated poverty;*
- *Teachers perceive young parent's irresponsible parental behavior, remote and rural origin and parental attitude as reasons for the lack of parental involvement.*

5.3.2.2 Recommendations

The social and cultural factors should be considered in the schools and the following recommendations are proposed:

- Schools should introduce weekend meetings to accommodate working mothers;
- A common official local language (Setswana) should be used in meetings. Where English is used as a medium of communication in the meetings, a translator should be engaged so that everyone should feel included;
- The school should reach out to the communities and build relationships and ultimately partnerships with the communities, chiefs and parents;
- Teachers should learn local language that is spoken in communities they teach for better understanding of parents (grandparents) who is unable to in English. They should also be aware of cultural contexts especially in rural areas.

5.3.3 Illiteracy of parents and family dynamics

Teachers indicated a concern about the illiteracy of parents, which easily causes the parents to terminate their children's education, especially when the parents want to keep the children out of school when they have to do chores or is needed at home.

5.3.3.1 Conclusion

- *The fact that parents cannot read or write might contribute to non-involvement of parents in schools. This might be frustrating to parents if they cannot assist their children with their homework and it can also be frustrating for children knowing that there is no one to assist with homework when needed. Illiterate parents easily leave the responsibility of education of children to the teachers.*

5.3.3.2 Recommendations

The following proposals are made to possibly address the illiteracy of parents:

- The government of Botswana should increase non-formal education/adult education to all rural areas and parents need to be encouraged or even rewarded to enrol to these programmes. This include involvement of the illiterate elders who are the ones taking care of the children in the rural areas. Teachers/schools can easily be involved in such programmes;
- Teachers/schools should use parents to spearhead extra-curricular activities such as sports, open days and price giving as a way of bringing parents closer to the children and their education and for the parents to develop interest in education. This can be achieved by teaming up both involved and non-involved parents so that they support each other;
- Schools should invest in more consumer-friendly forms of communication with parents, other than written notes and letters for example with regard to the open days. The community at large may even be involved as a partner for the development of parents to be involved in their children's school activities.

5.4 CONSEQUENCES OF PARENTAL BEHAVIOUR AND LACK OF INVOLVEMENT

It is clear from Epstein's theory that the community, family and school should be partners in order for children to develop academically but also emotionally. If parents are not involved it will have a negative influence on school performance and development of the child.

5.4.1 Lack of parental involvement and motivation, together with social issues causing poor academic performance and drop out of school

Teachers perceived a relationship between poor parental involvement and children's education. In the instance of poor parental involvement, learners display lack of motivation, lack of interest in school work, poor progress and eventually they dropout from school.

5.4.1.1 Conclusion

- *It is very clear that children whose parents are involved in their school work perform better because more effective guidance and support to the child is provided. Better involvement also leads to a more positive relationship with the teachers. For those children whose parents are not involved in their education, bad performance is the only avenue because they do not receive any guidance, and they perform badly because the children do not have anyone to encourage and support them;*
- *Teachers referred to the lack of interest in education particularly by young parents as the biggest obstacle to any learner's motivation to study. Parents have to be convinced of the value of education themselves to be able to encourage or motivate their children to go to school. Since home is the first social contact known to children, it is obvious their perception of school will be influenced by what they see and experience at home.*

Children who are not supported at home, end up not doing their work because there is no supervision, not attending school regularly and parents will not even bother to inform the school because they perceive this as normal. Children live under difficult conditions for example neglect, poverty and abuse which impact negatively on their progress and are the driving force for children dropping out of school.

5.4.1.2 Recommendations

- School social work services as indicated in paragraph 5.3.1 should be utilized to the benefit of children who experience neglect, abuse, or other family or social problems;
- Schools should develop standard operating procedures for identifying and reporting abused and neglected students. The standard operating procedure should encompass identification of parents who neglect and abuse their children;
- Teachers should receive in-service training on identifying neglected and abused children and to make proper referrals to the relevant stakeholders such social workers and the police.

5.4.2 Children are left with elders who cannot help with school work

Elders and extended families have often to take care of children because parents are not involved, they even are completely absent or they experience social problems themselves. It is a challenge for elders to not only take care of the children but also to be involved in their education.

5.4.2.1 Conclusion

- *Some participants indicated that young parents leave their children in the care of grandparents and although the grandparents do take care of the children and some come to school when invited, they are not able to assist with homework due to their own lack of education and resources.*

5.4.2.2 Recommendations

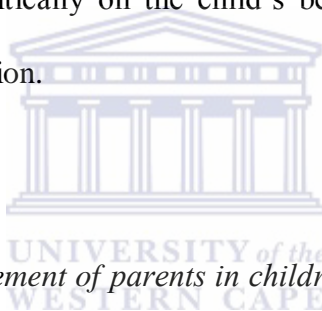
- Schools should identify and reach out to grandparents in order to understand their challenges. It should be done in more ways than meetings and correspondence as

grandparents might be illiterate, don't have the physical or social capacity to attend meetings. Support groups can be introduced for grandparents;

- Schools should also initiate support groups for children staying with their grandmothers so that they can assist each other with homework and motivate each other. Community members can be invited to coach and mentor these children on voluntary bases.

5.4.3 Parental lack of interest in school work promote disrespectful behaviour of children

Lack of parental involvement in schools has an influence on their children in a number of areas which all might impact critically on the child's behavior and especially the child's motivation towards school education.



5.4.3.1 Conclusion

- *Where there is low involvement of parents in children's school work, teachers clearly indicated disrespectful behaviour of children to teachers, as well as to their parents.*

5.4.3.2 Recommendations

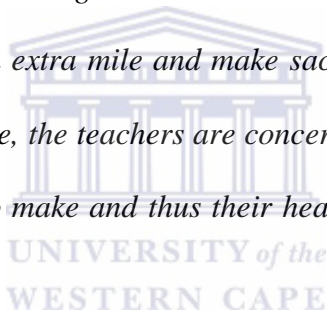
- In Botswana, most young parents who stay in the rural areas work in the government poverty eradication programme called "*Drought relief*." Teachers need to liaise with the drought relief coordinators to use the programme to teach the parents about the importance of their involvement of the family, children's education and even work together with the parents to develop common strategies on parenting and child behaviour. It would be feasible to arrange for monthly discussions with communities especially in the rural areas.

5.4.4 Frustration and exhaustion experienced by teachers in instances of low parental involvement

Teachers from schools with low involved parents voiced their frustrations and feelings of being overburdened with children's problems because they have to fulfill both the role of teacher and parent.

5.4.4.1 Conclusion

- *In Botswana, standard seven teachers are assessed by the final performance of the students in the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE), which is the final examination. With parents being uninvolved in their children's education, teachers mentioned that they go an extra mile and make sacrifices to make sure that children pass their PSLE. Therefore, the teachers are concerned that they are overwhelmed by the sacrifices they have to make and thus their health has been affected as some are stressed and depressed.*



5.4.4.2 Recommendations

Teachers have to take on the responsibility to care for the children which have negative consequences on their functioning. The following recommendations are proposed:

- There should be debriefing sessions for teachers each term to vent their challenges and frustrations so as to support each other and discuss strategies to improve their work environment;
- Teachers should be encouraged to go for counselling where other professionals for example social workers and psychologist assist them to handle the stressful situation of being responsible for children without proper involvement of their parents;

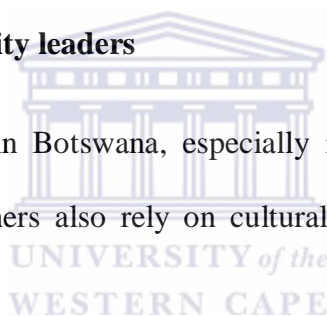
- Teachers of various schools can get together and have group discussions where they can share problem solving methods and identifying their strengths and assets, which can assist them in dealing with challenges.

5.5 EFFORTS AND SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

There was no consensus on how to improve parental involvement by the teachers during this research study. The educating of parents and facilitating of support from community leaders, in order to support children, parents and teachers, were mentioned and may be further investigated.

5.5.1 Involvement of community leaders

Culture is an important aspect in Botswana, especially in the rural areas. It is therefore important that schools and teachers also rely on cultural resources to contribute to better education of children.



5.5.1.1 Conclusion

- *Community leaders such as the chief, members of parliament, councillors are key important figures in the communities and utilising them might certainly create a more beneficial environment for parents and children to value their education more. These are the most respected people in the community and since parents are part of the community, involving these leaders to spearhead issues such as a lack of parental involvement in school activities, might assist teachers to eventually reach the parents and facilitating better school involvement.*

5.5.1.2 Recommendation

- Community leaders should work as a support structure to the teachers by supporting the above mentioned recommendations;
- The Ministry of Education should be more involved, both with budgetary matters and capacity, to enable such a new structure in communities.

5.5.2 Educating parents

Various recommendations above focus on the education and development of parents. Teachers have also indicated the education and orientation of parents as an important contributing factor to parental involvement and ultimately better outcomes for children and schools.



5.5.2.1 Conclusion

- *Teachers suggested that parents need to be educated on the importance of parental involvement on children's education. Specific needs and challenges of each uninvolved parent need to be identified and addressed.*

5.5.2.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations regarding the education of parents are made:

- Further research should be done on the skills gap among uninvolved parents and specific methods for imparting education that could be beneficial to their needs;
- The Ministry of Education should develop tools for identifying specific needs and challenges for the uninvolved parents;

- The Ministry of Education should develop strategies for addressing the identified needs and challenges. This should involve all relevant stakeholders in child care and protection like social workers and educational psychologists.

5.5.3 Appropriate communication with parents

Teachers have clear perceptions that proper communication with parents is essential. Communication being used is not always effective and should be adapted in order to reach the parents and enhance their involvement with the schools.

5.5.3.1 Conclusion

- *The most common form of teachers' communication with parents is written letters. In rural areas most children stay with their grandparents who are illiterate, thus, letters are not effective. It is important for teachers to know the kind of parents/carers they are dealing with so that they know how best to reach and inform them.*

5.5.3.2 Recommendation

- Schools need to develop a letter template with a return slip that needs to be acknowledged and signed by parents, showing their availability and or unavailability. If unavailable, they should put their reasons. The return slips need to be kept properly and assessed at the end of each term to identify common reasons for failure to attend school meetings and activities for improvement;
- Schools in conjunction with the village leaders such as the chief, the councillor and the Member of Parliament should use the village activities such as weddings and funerals, as well as village meetings to announce school meetings and school activities so that the announcement covers the larger population including the illiterate

who cannot read and write. The school can also make announcements at the drought relief programme as it is the main employer in rural areas.

5.5.4 Incentives for parents for being involved

Teachers indicated that due to poor economic conditions of some parents, provision of incentives could help in promoting parental involvement in school - committees such as Parents Teachers Association (PTA).

5.5.4.1 Conclusion

- *PTA is a voluntary committee without incentives and parents are not interested in volunteering in the committee as there are no incentives or monetary benefit. Teachers felt that if the parents were given some allowances like other committees in the village such as Village Development Committee (VDC) they might be motivated to take part in the education of their children's school activities.*



5.5.4.2 Recommendations

- The Ministry of Education should give PTA committee members' allowances as a motivator so that more parents can have interest in volunteering in the committee and take an active role in school activities and the education of their children.

5.6 BEST PRACTICE: THE STORY OF VERY GOOD PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

One school in the Kgatlang District did report of exceptional parental involvement. This was an urban school. This school have educated parents, who seem to realize the importance of education, the school excels and attracts, and it has good management and maintains order and has a support in parents who participate. The four (4) subthemes in this theme about the

good story will be discussed in a combined manner. The four sub-themes were, educated parents, the schools excel, the school has good management and parents can rely on a support network.

5.6.1 Conclusion

- *The teacher indicated very good parental involvement in the education of their children. Most of the parents are young and educated with stable jobs. The school excels academically and is a clear example of what can be achieved if parents are involved to better the performance of their children. The school is a school of choice with many parents. The contributing factors to the school excellence is a good structure that supports parental involvement, an open-minded and active PTA committee and teachers that do more than expected to educate parents on the importance of education. Teachers instil law and order to children with parental support. The school and their PTA committee work with other stakeholder for example social workers to deal with social issues that might hamper the children's progress.*

5.6.2 Recommendations

- The Ministry of Education should allow other schools to bench mark the strategies that the best practices are implementing to attain parental involvement and even accommodate these strategies in Education policies;
- The Ministry of Education should liaise with the management of this school to explore what the school does to have parents involved in the education of their children and school activities and struggling schools can be assisted and empowered by this knowledge to develop similar strategies;

- This school has a strong relationship with the social workers to address social challenges faced by the students which yielded positive results. It is therefore recommended that the Ministry of Education should employ school social workers who will be able to deal with students' social issues promptly;
- This school works closely with local social workers in addressing students' psychosocial needs. The relationship between the school and the social workers has yielded positive results. This emphasizes the importance of social workers in the education system. It is therefore recommended that the Minister of Education appoints school social workers who will specifically deal with students, their parents and guardians. The school social workers can also be used as a support structure for teachers, as well as the auxiliary members in schools.

5.7 RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Having heard the voices of teachers in Kgatleng district the following recommendations for future research in the district and in Botswana are proposed:

- Representative quantitative studies, as well as qualitative studies where the perceptions and needs of parents, extended families, learners and the community with regards to parental involvement, barriers to involvement, needs and psycho-social aspects are included;
- Participatory action research to be done with communities where assets and needs are established within the school, families and community;
- The writing of an article to be published, which may lead to invitations to conferences in the social work field and thus networking with global social workers to share knowledge on this matter.

5.8 CONCLUSION

The research was successful in that it contributed to rich findings from teachers' perception and recommendations can contribute to partnership between school, family and the community to benefit children's education.



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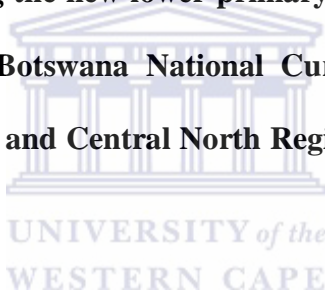
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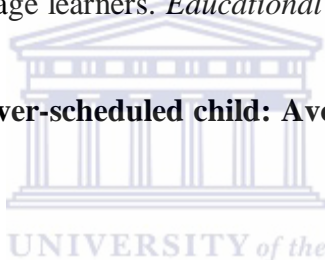
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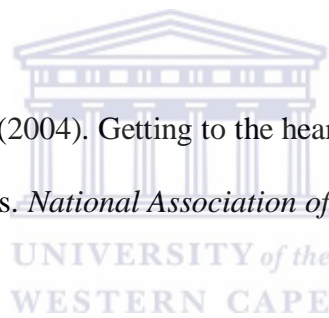
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APPENDIX A: OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

QUESTIONNAIRE

PARTICIPANTS NO:

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

DATE: _____

START TIME: _____

END TIME: _____

SEX:

| | |
|--------|--|
| Male | |
| Female | |

AGE:

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 21-30 years | |
| 31-40 years | |
| 41-50 years | |
| 51-60 years | |
| 61-65 years | |



MARITAL STATUS:

| | |
|----------|--|
| Single | |
| Married | |
| Divorced | |
| Widowed | |

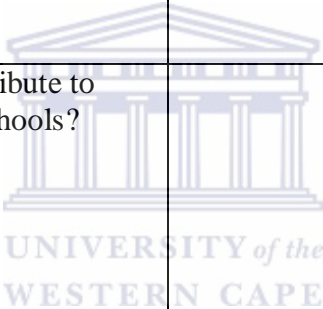
LENGTH OF SERVICE: _____

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION: _____

INTRODUCTION

This is a research project being conducted by Godfrey Sebidie, a Master student in Child and Family at the University of the Western Cape. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you have experience and knowledge about various factors that contribute to involvement/non-involvement of parents in schools in Kgatleng District, Botswana. The purpose of this study is to explore and describe teachers' perceptions on factors contributing to parental involvement in public schools in Kgatleng and to provide recommendations for improved parental involvement in public schools.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

| | |
|---|--|
| 1. Tell me what you think about parental involvement in schools? | |
| 2. What are factors that contribute to parental involvement in schools? |  |
| 3. What are factors that hinder parental involvement in schools? | |
| 4. What can be done to improve parental involvement in primary schools? | |

APPENDIX B: RESEARCH INFORMATION



UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel: +27 21-959, Fax: 27 21-959

Godfrey Sebidie (researcher) g_sebidie@yahoo.com

Dr. A. Beytell (supervisor) ambeytell@uwc.ac.za

INFORMATION SHEET

Project Title: Perception of Teachers about Parental Involvement in Public Schools in Kgatleng District, Botswana

What is this study about?

This is a research project being conducted by Godfrey Sebidie, a Master in Child and Family student at the University of the Western Cape. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you have experience and knowledge about various factors that contribute to involvement/non-involvement of parents in schools in Kgatleng District, Botswana. The purpose of this study is to explore and describe teachers' perceptions on factors contributing to parental involvement in public schools in Kgatleng and to provide recommendations for improved parental involvement in public schools.

What participants be asked to do if they agree to participate?

- *Participants will be asked to take part in an interview which will last for approximately one hour. The interviews will be done privately in an office as arranged prior to the meeting. The interview will be approximately one hour. A tape recorder will be used with your permission. The questions which will be asked are: What do you think/perceive are the factors that contribute to parent involvement in schools?*
- *What do you think are factors that hinder/obstruct parent involvement in schools?*

Would participation in this study be kept confidential?

All data will be confidential. Your name will not be on the interview or on transcriptions of interview, which the research will use in order to get information for the research. A code will be placed on the collected data and the researcher will be able to link the study to the participants' identity with a code.

Codes will be used to identify data collected. No one else other than the researcher will have access to the data and the data which will be stored in a safe place, locked place. When writing a report or an article about this study, your identity will be protected.

What are the risks of this research?

There may be an emotional risk if you share your experiences. The interview may result in anger and feeling of frustrations. You can however withdraw any time from the research and if necessary you will be referred for debriefing or therapy if necessary.

What are the benefits of this research?

The participant will not directly benefit from this study but, but the outcome of the study will help improving understanding of others and provide recommendations regarding suitable interventions in involvement/ non-involvement of parents in public schools.

Do participants have to be in this research and may they stop participating at any time?

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. Participants may choose not to take part at all. If they decide to participate in this research, they may stop participating at any time. Participants will not be penalized.

Is any assistance available if participants are negatively affected by participating in this study?

If need arise that participants need assistance, they will be referred to the relevant person for help. Should they have any questions regarding this research and their rights as a research participant or if they wish to report any problems they have experienced related to the study, please contact the supervisor.

This research is being conducted by the Social Work Department at the University of the Western Cape. If there are any questions about the research study itself, please contact my supervisor Dr. A. Beytell at ambeytell@uwc.ac.za or telephone number (021) 959 22821 or (021) 959 2012. The address is: Social Work Department, University of the Western Cape, Private Bag X17, Belville 7535.

Should you have any questions regarding this study and the rights as a research participant or if any problems experienced related to the study need to be reported, please contact:

Prof. R. Schenck

Head of Department: Department of Social Work

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17

Belville 7535



Tel: (021) 959 2011

E-mail: rschenck@uwc.ac.za

Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences:

Prof José Frantz

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17

Bellville 7535

chs-deansoffice@uwc.ac.za

This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Senate Research Committee and Ethics Committee.

APPENDIX C: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE



UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel: +27 21-959, Fax: 27 21-959

Godfrey Sebidie (researcher) g_sebidie@yahoo.com

Dr. A. Beytell (supervisor) ambeytell@uwc.ac.za

CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: Perception of Teachers about Parental Involvement in Public Schools in the Kgatleng District, Botswana

The study has been described to me in language that I understand. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand what my participation will involve and I agree to participate of my own choice and free will. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed to anyone. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without fear of negative consequences or loss of benefits.

Participant's name.....

Participant's signature.....

Date.....

APPENDIX D: EXAMPLE OF A TRANSCRIPT

Transcript 1: Participant 1 Urban School

Sex: Female Age Range: 41-50 years Marital Status: Single

Length of service: 22 years Qualifications: Degree in Education

| Speaker | Dialogue | Code |
|---------|---|------|
| 1 | What do think about parental involvement in your school? I have been | |
| 2 | teaching here for 3 years and as a guidance teacher ahh! I realized that | |
| 3 | parent's participation is 50% and ahh! from my point of view armhh! parents | |
| 4 | of this village come and go because this village is near Gaborone so most of | |
| 5 | them work at the city. When we call parents they send grandmothers or aunts | |
| 6 | and for the grandmothers their participation is not as much as we expect | |
| 7 | ahhm! for the aunts they just come and we are not really sure if they pass on | |
| 8 | the message. Most of the parents are young adults, they dropped from school | |
| 9 | at form 3 and a few at form 5 so they are not always interested in this kind of | |
| 10 | gatherings because they did not have a chance to complete their studies so | |
| 11 | they see no importance in education even if we try and show them the | |
| 12 | importance of all this, they do not see the importance. We call them time and | |
| 13 | again and they do not come at all so I am still saying its 50/50 because there | |
| 14 | is no change and even when they come they do not do anything and this is so | |
| 15 | frustrating, like I said I have worked here for 3 years started with these | |
| 16 | children at standard 5 and I tried my level best to improve their grades, I try | |
| 17 | every year to improve their grade, this classes are combined the other class | |
| 18 | performed well and the other their grades were very low and still there has | |
| 19 | not been any change concerning their parents participation. Parents do not see | |
| 20 | the importance of all this I have called parents to come and discuss their | |
| 21 | children's performance but they never come only a few show up. I think | |
| 22 | these parents do not know the difference between standard 5 and 7 and I told | |
| 23 | them that standard seven is a very critical stage. I called them beginning of | |
| 24 | this year for the standard seven review meeting and the only ones who | |
| 25 | availed themselves are the very same parents that always come and we | |
| 26 | noticed change in their children's grades, we encourage them to take part | |
| 27 | errh! as a way this helps guide the children because they can be able to see | |
| 28 | that there is a relation between their parents and teachers. We have what we | |
| 29 | call patrons and we meet with them to discuss issues affecting us as a school. | |
| 30 | As for parents I have told them to come see me if they do not understand | |
| 31 | what I have given their children in order to assist their kids with assignments | |

32 by going to libraries and surfing the net to research information which is
33 relevant and teaching their children so that when we discuss a particular
34 concept it will be more like revision but they never come. This weekend I
35 have also started weekend lessons which only take 2 hours because I have
36 realized that there is not much time left for this kids which and we also have
37 monthly tests which we try to push parents to participate. We are really trying
38 but parents never find time and we are wondering what more can we do, like
39 you have said the difference between a private school and public is that at
40 private schools parents are committed because they pay and also most of the
41 parents at private schools have an academic background and they value
42 education and like I have said earlier here its different because they don't
43 have interest in all this because they lose nothing, they don't value education
44 that much because they did not complete their studies and also they are not
45 committed because they don't lose nothing so maybe if they were to pay
46 something they would have a different perspective about school. I head you
47 earlier talking about patrons can you elaborate more on them... Furthermore
48 to elaborate about patrons, our patrons have been provided by the
49 government, so schools have to decide if they want to be adopted, so as the
50 school we decided we wanted to be adopted so they wrote letters back to say
51 they are interested in adopting us. Mmmhh! our patrons the other one runs his
52 own business and the other one is a lecture at Botswana Accountancy College
53 (BAC) and the last one she is a former government employee and she has
54 retired so she said she wanted to give back to the community and the other
55 two say they are part of this village so they want to see it grow, they have
56 decided to come up with suggestions to improve the developments of the
57 school. Last year they bought ahh! trophies for prize giving others were given
58 at individual level and others were given to classes. Looking at the issue of
59 young adults, do they contribute during meetings? With the issue of young
60 adults their contribution is very low and only a few contribute during the
61 meetings and others will be quiet so you never know what does their
62 quietness really mean, do they agree with us or not and we assume that they
63 agree with us only to find later on that they were not really agreeing with us
64 or they were not interested looking at the results. For those who come what

65 motivates them to come? Aaahh! we have asked them about this and those
66 who are not working say they are interest as well as those working, they all
67 say they understand the importance of taking part in the childrens education.
68 We call these parents twice per term, the first meeting at the beginning of the
69 term and the other at the end of the term to come and discuss the performance
70 of both the teachers and students in order to check where the problem is, if
71 it's the way the teacher presents concepts or is it just that the students are
72 slow learners. I honestly have no problem if a parent comes to asses me and
73 see if I teach his or her child well, there was this one time a particular parent
74 came to class to see how I taught and did not really give me feedback. In
75 general when we call meetings parents do not come out of 37 students only 2
76 parents would show up and these shows they do not care we are in trounle as
77 teachers. What form of communication do you use to invite parents to
78 school? Aaahh! when we call these meetings we usually call them by writing
79 letters and they will have to indicate if they will be able to attend or not. For
80 weekend lessons that I said I have started I wrote letters to ask if they agree
81 and one replied that she agrees but I should call her because the child had to
82 go somewhere that weekend not because she was refusing. What hinders
83 parental involvement in schools? I don't really know the issue of parents not
84 participating I think it's also due to the level of education, if one left school
85 they end up not seeing the importance of education. These young adults are
86 mostly influenced by the fact that they did not go to school. We also have
87 questionnaires and suggestion boxes which are there to help both parents and
88 students but none of them ever write anything because they lack interest, they
89 don't look at the long term effects of life but instead they look at life in a
90 different way. Do you have Parents Teacher Assosiation Committee? We do
91 have Parents Teaher Association (PTA) meetings which also involve chiefs
92 in order to assist where possible and also we have mentor who is a retired
93 teacher who was identified to come and assit, we really don't know what to
94 do to encourage parent to come to school. We give children books but they
95 tear them up and when given to cover them at their homes they just return
96 them the way we gave them and even assignments parents don't sign which
97 shows lack of interest. Honestly parents participation is passive, none

98 existent. How are poverty issues around here? The young adults are really
99 affected by poverty around hence this influences them. Most of the needy
100 children how are registered with the social workers belongs to yong adults.
101 Our patron has suggested that we provide them with vegetables because a lot
102 of mothers here are young and they are lazy to look for jobs, and also our
103 students are distracted by sexual activities because we had students who drop
104 out from school at standard seven due to pregnancy, it's like we are in a
105 township were people drink, smoke, make shebeen. Yeah!! This village has
106 a high population of Bazeruro and Baherero culture and according to the
107 Zeruro culture a child is supposed get married at a young age hence the drop
108 out in order to get married, and last year one of our standard seven student
109 dropped out to get married so generally this hinders them from studying
110 because they never finish school. According to Zezuru culture their children
111 would only be taught how to write, read and add up sums and they never
112 participate in anything not even sports. We can have a child who is talented
113 in sports but their parents will refused them to participate because they are
114 supposed to end at a certain level and that's after learning how to read, write
115 and to do culculationes so this culture really hinders education. We asked the
116 chief to call parents in order to inform them about PTA meetings. How can
117 we improve parental involvement in schools? I think there is awareness of
118 these issues because it is discussed on radios, television and also newspapers.
119 Mmmhh! In order to address this issue I think talking to parents would help
120 but parents have to change their mind set in order to be assisted because we
121 are really trying. If parents were allowed to pay school fees maybe this may
122 forced parents to take the education of their children serious but honestly I
123 don't know what can be really done, at times when you look at these children
124 there are some who don't have uniforms meanwhile their parents are working
125 and then we call in the parent then she or he will see no need to come. This
126 issue as a teacher it's really frustrating. I told them that I was supposed to be
127 furthering my studies and I freezed my studies so that I can be with them till
128 they write their exams which means I'm going to continue with my program
129 in 2016. That is my commitment to them because when I am at the university
130 I will not have enough time do my work and study. And after all your

131 sacrifices you see parents not being involved and that really frustrates, I
132 become angry and demoralized by the whole situation. I provide counseling
133 for my students, I can withhold teachings just to counsel my students for 30
134 minutes and invite other people to talk to them, I call teachers, retired nurses,
135 priets because at times when students are used to you they may not take you
136 seriously and during those talks they will just stare at these quests and not
137 listen. I'm still wondering if this is all due to the style nowadays or what. But
138 only a little will be listening but I pray to the lord that they may write. I used
139 to have massive headaches due to a lot of stress, I would wake up in the
140 morning around 2am and wonder if my students will be able to write since
141 they are not serious with their work and also parents are not involved as well.
142 We are always going to the clinic due to high blood pressure because of all
143 this, parents are not concerned but we as teaches we are. At the beginning
144 and end of the term we sit down and analyze everything that's where we talk
145 about everything including students' grades and what we as teachers have
146 experienced. I honestly don't know aaah! I have tried. At times we hope that
147 days go by so as we can retire. I'm a teacher by passion not by qualifications
148 only I always want to do my best no matter the situation because I can
149 withhold my duties at home and focus on teaching. Whats the role of
150 community leaders? The community leaders do help even though they do not
151 know what to do anymore; we have met as guidance teachers to come with
152 solutions because the community leaders will be asking us why these things
153 are happening. When we investigate the matter we found out that some
154 children do not come to school because they have debts with the ladies
155 selling sweets and fat cakes outside school, so a parents will know that their
156 child has come to school while they did not even show up.with the issues of
157 debts I have taken a list of those who are involved and wrote letters to their
158 parents so as their parents can deal with the whole issue and as for the ladies
159 outside the school premises I have taken it upon me to write down their
160 names and when leaders have taken their decision we can go and talk to them
161 and if they are not willing to cooperate the law will take its cause and will be
162 chased away from our school. Do you have any questions? I don't have any
163 questions but I'm hoping with this exercise it can help us and that it will have

| | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 164 | an impact and bring change, I hope this recommendation brings change. | |
| 164 | Thank you | |

Key:

- **Researcher**
- **Participant**



UNIVERSITY *of the*
WESTERN CAPE

APPENDIX E: PERMISSION LETTER



**UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE**

OFFICE OF THE DEAN
DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

11 March 2015

To Whom It May Concern

I hereby certify that the Senate Research Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the following research project by:
Mr G Sebidie (Social Work)

Research Project: Perception of teachers about parental involvement in public schools in the Kgatleng District, Botswana.

Registration no: 15/2/7

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse event and/or termination of the study.

*Ms Patricia Josias
Research Ethics Committee Officer
University of the Western Cape*