AN ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AS A TOOL FOR IMPROVING PUPIL LEARNING IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF LUSAKA

BY

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A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in collaboration with the Zimbabwe Open University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Masters of Education in Educational Management

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DECLARATION

I, Brendah Moonga do declare that this dissertation is my own original work, and that all the other sources of information and literature on related works used in the production of this dissertation have been dully acknowledged by the author and it has not been previously submitted for a degree at this or any other University.

Student's signature---   Date----------------------

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation by Moonga Brendah is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Educational Management of the University of Zambia in conjunction with Zimbabwe Open University.

EXAMINERS' SIGNATURES

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this piece of work to my husband Hilary Chilala Hazele, my children Hilary Jnr, Clementina and Raphael, and my friends for their love, encouragement and moral support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to assess how community participation can be used as a tool to improve pupil learning in selected primary schools of Lusaka District. The research design was a case study. Qualitative methodology was used to collect and analyze data. The methods used were interviews and focus group discussions. The study applied two sampling methods, simple random and purposive sampling in coming up with the sample. Purposive sampling was used in selecting Emmasdale zone of Lusaka due to proximity. Once the zone was selected, all the schools in the zone were numbered. Four random numbers were then picked to select the participating schools. Once a school was selected, its head teacher, Parent Teachers Committee chairperson and grade teachers automatically became part of the sample. Further, simple random method was used to select parents to be interviewed and participate in the focus group discussions. The data was analyzed thematically by grouping identical data into themes generated from the research objectives. The research findings showed that, there was vast evidence that various stakeholders understood the need for their participation in the education system. There was also clear understanding among stakeholders of what form this participation ought to take. All stakeholders equally had good knowledge of some of the challenges and hindrances to community participation in Emmasdale zone. However, one other key finding of the study was the evident variation in understanding what and how various stakeholders could and should participate in the education system to improve pupil performance. School authorities were clear on how parents can help while among parents and community leaders some had no clear idea while other completely knew nothing and did not care. The research findings also revealed that the difficulties experienced by parents across all the four schools were as follows: alcoholism, lack of school policies on parental involvement, parents' poverty status, illiteracy, lack of understanding, parents' defensive attitude, lack of cooperation among parents, poor attitude among some pupils and parents, apathy and high unemployment levels. It was concluded that, the selected schools were all from densely populated areas with high levels of illiteracy, unemployment and poverty. With illiteracy, it is expected that there would be little appreciation of education and/ or understanding of roles that parents and community could play in the system to enhance pupil learning. It is by and large incumbent on the school authorities to cultivate the knowledge and culture to believe in education and show them that education is the way for their children to escape the status they themselves are in. There is also need for vigorous sensitisation programs by schools aimed at enlightening parents on the value of education and how parents can contribute to improved learning of the children.

ACRONYMNS AND ABREVIATIONS OF TERMS

BESSIP…………Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Programme

CSSP ……………Contracts for School Success Programme

DEBS…………...District Education Board Secretary

EFA…………….Education For All

FPE……………...Free Primary Education

MOE…………….Ministry of Education

MOGE…………...Ministry of General Education

PTC……………...Parent Teacher Committee

SETB……………School Education and Training Board

SNDP……………Seventh National Development Plan

TEVET………….Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training

UNESCO……….United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

UNICEF…………United Nations International Children Emergency Fund

USAID…………..United States of America International Development Aid

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

Chapter one outlines the background to the study focusing on the aspects of community participation as a vital tool for improving pupil learning. In this chapter, the researcher has stated the statement of the problem, purpose, specific objectives, the research questions, significance, limitation, and delimitation of the study. It further highlights the theoretical framework; conceptual framework, operational definitions of terms, abbreviations of the terms and lastly the summary of the chapter.

1.1 Background to the Study

Globally, schools have been noted to be one of the basic institutions responsible for educating children in various communities. Dunne et al (2007) states that the involvement of communities in the activities dealing with the lives of the schools are of a great importance. The benefits of collaborative initiatives with parents, teachers and the corporate world in decision-making leads to the creation of a greater sense of ownership, morale, responsiveness to emerging issues in time and promotes positive commitment to school work.

UNESCO (2000) puts on record several family and community engagement programs and practices that have been shown to have a positive impact on student outcomes and school improvement not only in United States of America, Europe, Australia, but also in other parts of the world. For Forojalla (1993), the community is the legitimate engine that drives the education and socialization of the children within the schools. Thus, World Bank (2010) affirms the need for communities to participate in the education of the children at various levels in order to improve the delivery of quality education.

In Africa, schools and communities have a long history of working together in the shaping the lives and future of the children. For example, strategies related to student achievement include engaging parents in their children's learning through social networks, empowering parents with leadership roles in the school environment, providing parents with classes to help with their own education or their

child's education, and providing families with opportunities to engage with their children's education at home and at school have proven to be vital tools of success.

In Zambia, a review of the Education for All (EFA) reports highlights important progress made by the government in implementing the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Education for All (EFA) and the 2000 Dakar framework of action. The report evaluates Zambia's performance against targets and actions outlined in the 2005 EFA National Framework which are in line with the national educational aspirations espoused in various policy documents including Educating Our Future (Ministry of Education, 1996), the Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TEVET) Policy (1996), the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Child Development Policy, the Ministry of Community Development Policy, the Basic Education Sub-sector Investment Programme (BESSIP) Implementation Plan, the Education Sector Plan (2002 -2007) and the Six National Development Plan (SNDP,2011-2015)

Most importantly, the country has greatly expanded the primary education signifying perhaps the most remarkable success as a result of government determination to overcome intractable constraints to participation, a resolute effort by communities and civil society organizations to help out and the generosity and commitment of cooperating partners.

Despite Zambia having made significant progress on access, the aspect of improving quality remains a huge challenge and subsequently the learning achievement of pupils in many primary schools reveals that most of them are underperforming particularly in important foundational skills such as literacy and mathematics (MESVTEE, 2015). Hence, it calls for concerted efforts from all the stakeholders to devise interventions that offer better opportunities to enhance effective communities' participation in primary schools where it is low. Ultimately, this may necessitate quality of life, work and learning prospects of children at primary level.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Ministry of Education in the Education Act recognises and spells out the need for partnerships between the Government, school owners such as church bodies, and the communities where the schools are located (Ministry of Education, 2011). The Act seeks to promote participation of

communities and parents in education. This provision in the Act was first reflected in the National Policy on Education of 1996 titled 'Educating our Future' which points out the need for formation and functioning of the Parent- teacher Committees in schools (MOE, 1996).

Furthermore, the National Decentralisation policy of 2002 equally encourages community participation in the life of schools. The policy titled, 'Towards Empowering the People' was developed under the premises of taking decision making and operations of government closer to the people believing they would then better be involved and contribute to development efforts (MOE, 2002). The Decentralization Policy was embarked on with an understanding that closer involvement of people in their localities in developmental planning, decision making, and implementation would result in better ownership at local level and thus sustainability. This was to include the running and sustenance of schools as well for better provision of education.

However, despite all these policy and other efforts aimed at encouraging stakeholder participation in the provision of education for both private and public institutions, there remains a gap in this participation (Siyumbwa, 2010). This researcher, therefore, sought to explore this gap by assessing how communities around four selected schools in Emmasdale zone participated in promoting pupils' learning in primary schools.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study is to assess how community participation can be used as a tool to improve pupil learning in selected primary schools.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were:

i.   to investigate whether or not communities in Emmasdale Zone understood how they could participate in improving pupil learning.

ii.   to explore types of parents/community participation to improve pupil learning in selected primary schools in Lusaka District.

iii.   to assess the factors that motivated or hindered local community participation in improving pupil learning in selected primary schools.

iv.   to recommend ways of improving local community participation in Emmasdale zone to improve pupil learning.

1.5 Research questions

The research questions of the study were:

i.   Did parents in Emmasdale zone understand how they could participation in improving pupil learning in Lusaka District?

ii.   How did parents/communities contribute to improving pupil learning in selected primary schools of Emmasdale zone of Lusaka District?

iii.   What were the factors that motivated or hindered the community from participating in improving pupil learning in selected schools of Lusaka District?

iv.   What were the recommendations of improving pupil learning in Emmasdale zone of Lusaka District?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of the Study will help the policy makers in government and the Ministry of General Education, in particular, to have a clear picture and understanding of how the participation of the community can help to improve the learning of pupils in primary schools. In addition, it will be of great use to parents, guardians, school administrators, teachers and other key stakeholders to take part in the mobilization of finances, materials, other vital initiatives aimed at promoting the learning of the children, and ultimately the positive implications may propel the momentum to other primary schools in Lusaka District of the Lusaka Province.

The data might be of great help to the Ministry of General Education to quickly address the challenges and put in place appropriate strategies to enhance effective community participation as the medium for promoting the learning of pupils in selected primary schools in Lusaka District.

In addition, this research may contribute to gain robust understanding of community inclusiveness in the teaching and learning processes. Furthermore, this study may inform the practitioners on how to formulate and implement policies related to quality teaching and learning as well as stimulating further future efforts in educational research about the study. Finally, this research will help the researcher to gain more knowledge and deeper understanding on community participation and it may reward her with a qualification of Master's Degree.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

In order to carry out this research, the researcher anticipated facing the following challenges: time and financial limitations, which could have influenced the scope of the study, data accessibility, and unanticipated occurrences. However, the researcher made efforts to overcome the projected problems by sacrificing time and money so that the study was be conducted successfully.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

The research sites for this study were restricted to the four selected primary schools; Mutambe, Justine Kabwe, Emmasdale and Chaisa in Emmasdale Zone in Lusaka district

1.9 Theoretical framework

A wide range of frameworks and models explaining the link between schools and their surrounding communities exists. Baradei et.al (2010) discussed five theories in their study of community participation in education in the Fayoum governorate in Egypt. They pointed out that community participation can be conceptualized using any of the five theories; Theory C; the Paradigm of Inclusive Education; site-based management; community schools' theory; or the Overlapping Spheres Model.

Theory C, so commonly referred to by its proponents, is basically about putting the communities central in the education dispensation such that they play a key role in determining the educational goals and school locations so as to ensure the schools answer to local needs, and there is ownership from the communities (Cummings, 1997).

Related to this theory is the Paradigm of Inclusive Education, which can be said to be the drive behind education reforms in most countries, especially at primary education level. It is based on seven principles: right of all children to primary education; commitment to child centered concept of education; improvement of quality; provision of a responsive education; shared responsibilities for provision; recognition of diversity of needs; and commitment to holistic approach to education (Kochhar and Gopal, 1998). The principle of shared responsibility for provision points to recognition that education provision and thus schools ought to have stakeholders who participate in the planning and implementation of programs. It also illustrated that schools do not exist in a vacuum but part of the communities where they are and the communities are part of the stakeholders. Considering the seven principles, this theory or framework in a way speaks to the rights-based approach to education discussed in a paper titled, 'Community Participation in Schools in Developing Countries: Characteristics, Methods and Outcomes' (Russel et.al, 2009)

The third theory discussed by Baradei et.al is the site-based management (SBM). SBM is a framework where the education system places emphasis on a democratic school management system that allows participation by stakeholders such as principal/head teacher, teachers, parents, students, support staff and other community members in the decision-making processes (Crump, 1999). Central to this theory is an assumption that the head teacher, teachers and parents at a given individual school have better knowledge of the needs and resources in their school and therefore should make decisions in a more effective manner. This comes from belief by some of the theory's proponents who say that any education decisions are likely to be more effective the closer they are made to those affected by them (Crump, 1999). There is evidence of the implementation of the SBM framework in American schools starting from 1995 (Hess Jr. 1999: 217).

Another theory put forward by the same writers is the community schools' theory. This framework is one very true essence of community participation in education. It is about community members having strong involvement in the school system to the extent of either paying teachers or even volunteering as teachers. A number of scholars have written that this framework provides an effective strategy for educating all children to their full potential (Blank 2003; Bodine 2005, 95; Dryfoos 2003, 204).

The fifth framework is the Overlapping Spheres Model, which talks about the three most important spheres of influence for a child's education namely, family, school and community. The gist of this theory is that each of these three spheres has an obligation to fulfil when it comes to the full education of a child (Davies 1999, 52-3). In summary, the overlapping spheres of influence model is centered on the need for complementarity between schools and parents (Epstein, 1987, 1996). The theory is based on a social and organizational perspective (Litwak and Meyer, 1974; Seeley, 1981, cited in Epstein, 1987, 1992, 1996) with the view that many efficient families and schools have overlapping, shared goals and a common mission regarding children, and therefore carry out some of their tasks collaboratively.
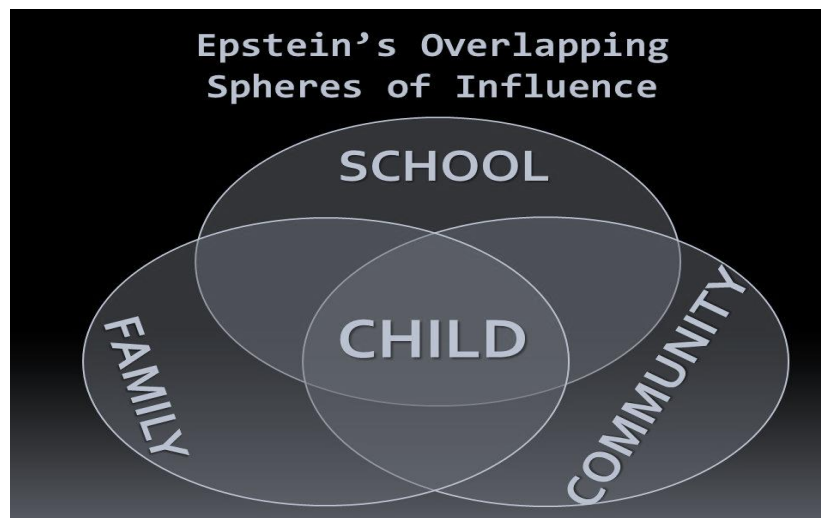
Source: Epstein, J.L et.al, 1997 (modified)

As shown if diagram above, the theory of overlapping spheres of influence stipulates that there are three major contexts in which a learner gets impacted in their education life, namely the family, the school and community. The model locates the learners at the centre of the interactions among the three. Epstein and others (1997) indicate that this is so because "the inarguable facts are that students are the main actors in their education, development and success in schools".

School, family and community partnerships do not automatically produce successful learners. Rather, partnership activities should be developed to engage, guide, energize, and motivate learners to produce their own success (Epstein et al. 1997). Epstein and others (1997) assume that if children feel cared for and are motivated to work hard at their role of learners, they would do their best to learn to

write, read, calculate, learn other skills, develop yet unearthed talents, and remain in school. The theory of overlapping spheres of influence implies that learners are crucial for the success of school, family and community partnerships. This is so, not only because learners constitute key components around which interaction between the three spheres takes place, but also because learners are often their parents' main source of information about their schools (Epstein et al. 1997). According to Epstein (2009) the assumption of the theory of overlapping spheres of influence is that there are common interests of families and schools that are to a greater and lesser extent promoted by policies and programmes of organizations in the community, as well as the actions and attitudes of individuals in the community's organizations. Epstein (2009) also posits that when teachers and parents stick to their shared responsibilities, they support the generation of skills needed by both teachers and parents to produce educated and successful learners. Their combined labour pushes the spheres of family and school influences together, increases communication between parents and school personnel that concerns the developing child, and creates school like families and family like schools.

The community as a sphere of influence, in conjunction with groups of parents, creates school-like opportunities, events and programmes that reinforce, recognize, and reward learners for good progress, creativity, and excellence (Epstein, 2009). Communities also create family-like settings, services and functions to enable families to increase support for their children. Community minded families and students help their neighborhood and other families. Combined efforts help children experience learning and caring from and for communities. The ideal partnership would be when all the three spheres, namely school, family and community develop comprehensive partnership programmes (Epstein and Sheldon, 2006).

The theory of overlapping spheres of influence recognizes that while some practices of the family and the school are different, others are shared tasks of both parents and teachers. If parents and teachers support the viewpoint of separate responsibilities and stick to their specialized skills, the respective spheres of the family and the school are separated from each other; thus, the two work independently. Conversely, if the teacher and the parent uphold their shared responsibilities and combine skills, they facilitate the creation of better and successful learners.

According to Van W.k, (2008) the theory of overlapping spheres of influence implies that the extent of overlap between family, school and community may vary and that it can be increased or decreased

according to the actual practices of teachers, parents and children. According to Van Zyl (2013) two or three spheres may interact and the unfortunate situation that none of the spheres overlap is also a possibility. Communities can create school-like opportunities and programmes that recognize and encourage the development of learners' creativity and excellence. However, the possibility exists that schools which are academically excellent and communities that tend to focus mainly on promoting learner performance at schools could lead to non-interactive gaps between teachers, parents and community in terms of learners who do not perform well which negatively affect their intellectual development. In a caring school community, the stakeholders work tirelessly to improve partnerships through establishing trust and mutual respect which are required for solving problems (Brown and Duku, 2008).

There are various reasons for having school, family and community partnerships. According to Epstein (2001), partnerships can improve the running of school programmes, school climate, provision of family services, and support parent skills, leadership and relations between families, school and the community, as well as motivate teachers to do their work better. However, the main reason would be to help all learners to succeed in school and their subsequent careers in life. When pupils, parents, teachers and community members view each other as partners in education, everybody benefits. Brown and Duku (2008) observed that schools in many instances adapt their family and community involvement programmes and practices in line with the needs and interests, time and talents, and ages and grade levels of its learners. According to Epstein (2001) commonalities that have been identified across successful partnership programmes at schools include an emphasis on promoting opportunities which would advance the overlapping spheres of influence of schools, families, communities, as well as having an Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) to organize each school's work and progress in terms of family and community involvement. Community involvement would mean that community leaders plan and execute their support to learners' learning processes.

1.10 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework consists of concepts that are placed within a logical and sequential design (Musabila and Nalaila, 2013). A conceptual framework is an outlining of concepts and prepositions

derived from empirical observations and perceptions that guide the flow of the research thought from the problem to the questions and anticipated result of any intervention.

In literature, several conceptual frameworks exist on how effective community participation can occur in any school. According to the overlapping sphere of influence model, the ultimate reason for parental and or community participation is to influence the child's acquisition of knowledge, skills and instill a sense of reason for succeeding in school. The model further suggests that parents or communities' participation is dependent on their construction of the parental role, their sense of efficacy for helping their child succeed, and the invitations, demands and opportunities for involvement presented by the child and the school. For the purposes of this study, the researcher adopted these as they fit well with the research objectives and questions. For the purpose of this study, the parental role is interpreted to be part of the 'how communities participate', the efficacy for helping is interpreted to be covering the understanding of how parents/communities can participate to improve pupil learning while the invitation, demands and opportunities are covered under the objective of factors that motivate or hinder participation.
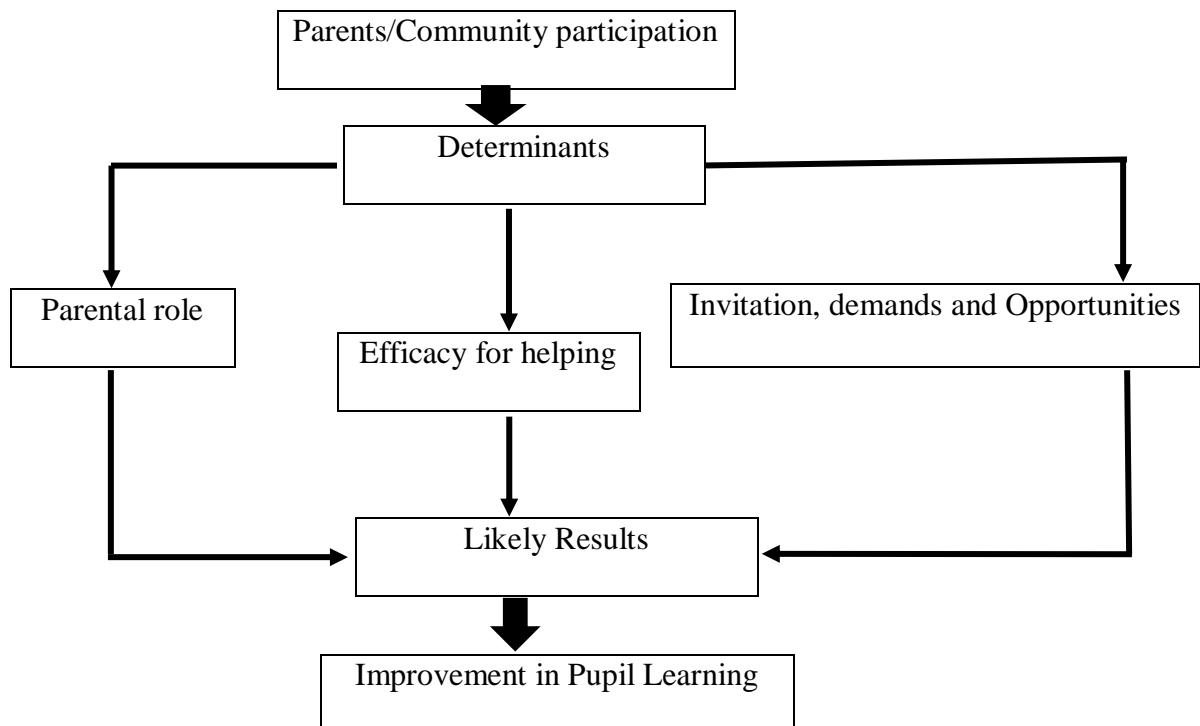
Source: Review of various literature (customized)

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1.11 Operational Definition of Terms

Community : Refers to the people who live in the vicinity of and who have stakes on the activities of a school.

Community participation : Refers to the involvement of parents and community representatives in supporting educational activities to improvement the teaching and learning of pupils in selected primary schools.

Parent involvement : Refers to the participation of the students' parents in supporting the teaching and learning activities.

Parent : Refers to an individual who has a child learning in one of the selected primary school

School : Authorities refers to a teacher holding a supervisory position such as head teacher, deputy head teacher, or senior teacher in one of the selected primary schools.

Teacher refers : To a trained personnel teaching learner in selected primary schools.

Learners : Refers to pupils enrolled in selected primary schools.

1.12 Summary of the chapter

Chapter one outline at the background of the study focusing on the aspects of community participation as a vital tool for improving pupil learning, stated the statement of the problem; purpose; specific objectives, research questions, significance, limitation, and delimitation, of the study. It further highlighted the theoretical framework; conceptual framework; operational definitions of terms, abbreviations of the terms and the next to be discussed is the literature review in chapter two.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

This chapter gives a review of literature related to the studies on the assessment of community participation as a tool for improving the learning of pupils in selected primary schools. The chapter presents literature review based on the objectives starting with understanding meaning of community participation, then examples of how communities participate and then factors affecting participation, each presented at global, continental and National level.

Development has always been a preoccupation for all nation's world over. One key indicator for development is human development to which education is central. For many years, it has been thought that education is best provided by central governments. However, the resulting deficiencies in education provision over decades have not only proved this thinking wrong but also resulted in other non-state actors (church or mere community members) entering the education provision scene. Sometimes the need for non-state actors' involvement in education is a necessity and only option, the case of conflict areas. Laura Brannelly and Joan Sullivan-Owomoyela came to exactly this conclusion in their paper, 'Promoting Participation: Community Contributions to Education in Conflict Situations'. The study done in Jordan, Liberia and Palestinian West Bank found that when due to conflict the state retreats, it creates a gap in the provision of education and none state actors, sometimes communities themselves recognizing the intrinsic value of education, step in to fill the gap. Brannelly and Sullivan-Owomoyela (2009).

2.1 Global View on Parental and Community participation in education (USA, Canada, France, Jordan, Palestine)

It is widely recognized world over that provision of education for all school age as well as many overage children in any country cannot be achieved by the government alone without participation of non-state actors, including local communities. To achieve education for all, community participation in several aspects including school leadership and management, contribution of money, labor and

local material for classroom construction, and curriculum evaluation are essential. UNESCO (2006) Stated that access and the provision of quality education can be best realized through the appropriate level of community participation. Dr. Joyce Epstein, a renowned education researcher and director of the National Network for Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University, sums up her findings this way: "Schools, families, and communities all contribute to student success, and the best results come when all three work together as equal partners" (Epstein, 2006).

Several researches done internationally show the connection between family and community involvement to student success. Literature exists that shows that not only are most parents aware, in differing levels, but indeed active, meaningful engagement from parents and others helps schools boost student achievement and produce graduates who are prepared to be productive, globally-competitive citizens.

Organizing Schools for Improvement, a study from the Consortium on Chicago School Research identifies strong family and school partnerships as one of five key elements in accelerating progress (Bryk et al., 2010). This rigorous study compared Chicago public schools that had made significant improvements with those that had stagnated or declined, over two separate five-year periods. The characteristics of the improved schools in both data sets were the same. From these characteristics, the researchers brought together five "essential ingredients" to the success of turnaround efforts. They found that all five ingredients contribute about equally to a school's improvement and that a school's chances for success declined precipitously with the loss of only one or two elements. One of these five essential ingredients is "close ties with families and the community." When a school establishes close ties, its educators are familiar with students' cultures and community concerns. They conduct home visits, become knowledgeable about the community and its culture, invite parents to observe in classrooms, and see strong attendance by parents at school events. The Chicago study confirms that engaging families and communities in student learning is a core strategy for school reform, and that its impact on a school's prospects for success are as powerful as the impact of strong leadership and quality teaching. This finding builds on 30 years of research about the impact that engaging families can have on student outcomes (Bryk et al., 2010).

In a comprehensive review of the research, A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement. Henderson and Mapp (2002) concludes:

> "*The evidence is consistent, positive, and convincing: families have a major influence on their children's achievement. When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more*".

It was further stated that, students whose families are involved in their learning earn better grades, take higher-level classes, have higher graduation rates, and are more likely to enroll in post-secondary education; Children do best when parents can take on various roles in their learning such as helping at home, participating in school events and activities, guiding them through the system, and taking part in key decisions about the school program; When families actively support learning, students have attitudes that are more positive toward school, attend more regularly, and behave better; Children from diverse backgrounds tend to do better when families and school staff collaborate to bridge the differences between home and school cultures; and, Middle and high school students whose families remain involved make better transitions to their new schools, maintain the quality of their work, develop realistic plans for the future, and are less likely to drop out. Shaver and Walls (1998) who say that, 'students with high levels of parental involvement are better in reading and math than those with a low level of parental involvement', support this.

Parental involvement can take many forms. Traditionally, these included activities that support students both in the school and at home. Typically, these activities include volunteering at school, helping with homework, communicating with the school and attending school events or meetings. Zarate M.E (2007) studying Latino parents' involvement in their children's schooling concluded that they were aware of the need to be involved and their perception on involvement could be divided into two, academic involvement and life participation. Academic involvement included activities related to children's homework, educational enrichment, and academic performance. Life participation was about the way parents provide life education and a more holistic integration in a child's schooling. Simpson (1988) pointed to information exchange through informal feedback, progress reports, conferences, program information, parent coordinated service programs, counselling therapy and consultation as the most common way parents get involved in the schools of their children.

Epstein (2009:44-63) gives a list of six ways in which parents and communities may participate in a school's life:

> *Parenting- Assist families with parenting and child-rearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development; Communicating- Communicate with families about school programs and student progress; Volunteering- Improve recruitment, training, work and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school or other locations to support students and school programs; Learning at home- Involve families with their children in learning activities, including; Decision-making- Include families as participants in school decision, governance, and advocacy; Collaborating with the community- Coordinate resources and services for families, students, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups.*

The mobilization of the community may bring many benefits, which include providing funds for the construction of classrooms and sanitation facilities, providing food, offering paid and unpaid labour for building school's structures, planting trees, sourcing land and supplying locally procurable materials among other duties (UNICEF, 2009). Years of research on learning environments' contribution to student's learning achievement and development have led to a general recognition that, beyond students' own innate abilities, motivation, and prior knowledge, learning occurs when systems of the home, community, schools and peers come together to form a protective circle that nurtures and develops student's growth (Ministry of Education, 2009).

The internal management of school is often taken care of by teams or councils with various members of the school structure. This includes the school heads, deputies, senior teachers, department heads and school board members. Burrup (1972) also stated that partnership between teacher and parent forms the basis and the only real hope for a superior school program at all levels Head teachers have to sensitize, motivate and welcome the community education committee and the whole public to the school. Much of the schools' success depends on the quality and effectiveness of the schools' leadership. The role played by the school head teachers either hinder or facilitate community's participation in the school management.

When it comes to factors that influence parents' participation, several are identified in literature. Some literature divides the challenges into either parent related, school related or indeed student/pupil related.

Involvement by parents in their children's education can be affected by socio-political factors such as socioeconomic status of the parents and their prior school experience (LaRocque et al., 2011). Pena, 2000; Lee and Bowen, 2006; Jordan et al., 2001; Potvin et al., 1999; Crozier, 1999; Baeck, 2010 all agree that the educational background of the parents has an effect on whether they actively participate in their children's education or not. Generally, parents with low levels of education tend to be less involved owing to lack of self-confidence to engage with school staff (Lee and Bowen, 2006). Interestingly, Pena (2000) concluded that there is an interesting paradox where parents with low levels of education volunteer more frequently in various types of school activities compared to those with higher education levels.

Sometimes involvement of parents is affected by school related factors. LaRocque et al. (2011) argues that sometimes parents are discouraged from participating in their children's education by the language used by schools, either too academic or maybe not familiar to parents. This is correlated by (Aronson, 1996) who adds that often schoolteachers and other staff do not know how to contact parents who have a different language and or background. Epstein (2006) supports Aronson's argument in the statement '*educators say that engaging families is a key challenge and that it is an area where they feel under prepared'*. Family engagement is often avoided or ignored because schools do not have the tools or strategies to implement effective services to families. Pena (2000), and Corner and Haynes (1991) point out that another factor that affect parent involvement is how teachers engage and stimulate their participation, which often is ether lacking or rather confusing and thus demotivating to parents.

At the same time, parents may get involved driven by their child. Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001 wrote that parents might be more likely to get involved if they sense an expectation for it from both the school and students. The desire by the student for their parents to be involved is itself affected by a number of factors, which then indirectly affect the parents' involvement, such as age and gender. Hornby and Lafaele 2011 explain that as a child grows, their desire for parent involvement in their 'affairs' reduces, which explains why parental involvement in child's education tends to reduce

progressively in grades. Deslandes and Potvin (1999) found that mothers to male students tend to contact teachers more often. However, Cooper et al. (2000) found that this was only the case during primary elementary grade and the picture is the opposite at secondary level.

Referring to a list by the Family Support America posted in the National Center for School Engagement, Sapungan Gina and Sapungan Ronel (2014:44) gives the following list of common barriers to parent involvement in children's education:

> *Attitudes – Staff do not feel comfortable talking about issues in front of families. Families do not trust staff; Logistics – Schools and programs cannot pay for childcare. Transportation is unavailable for families to get to meetings; System barriers – No systems are in place for paying parent leaders for their time and contributions, lack of resources available for supporting parent and family involvement; and Lack of skills –Families are unaware of applicable procedures and policies and there is lack of information about the role of families and staff.*

2.2 Studies conducted in Africa on Parent and Community Participation in Education (Tanzania, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Madagascar)

Just like at International/global level, literature exists in Africa on the importance as well as challenges of parental involvement in education of their children. In a case study of Zaka District of Zimbabwe, Chindanya (2011) concluded that there was significant evidence of benefits for parental involvement. The case study revealed that parental involvement promotes pupil motivation, teacher motivation, improves school attendance and promotes good behavior.

In Tanzania, Marshland (2006) reports that the concept of 'participation' has continued to revolve in people's minds and practices with the continuity of the language that favors the notion development practices both in the past and in today's post-socialist Tanzania. Furthermore, Ledwith (2011) contends that the effective use of the philosophy of socialism and self-reliance still fits with the current thinking of community participation. As such, 'participation' will remain a vital component of self-help and community development process, as a democratic principle and a basis of community development practice both in school and community life.

In Kenya, Serem and Kipkoech (2012) conducted a study of the role of Community in the Management of Free Primary Education in in Keiyo District, Kenya. The study's findings indicated that there was a problem on lack of community participation in the improvement of education quality for learners; and neglected the key elements of what the real problem on the ground was, which lead to the community's lack of participation. They further argue that Free Primary Education (FPE) was hastily implemented hence there was no time to prepare the school management as well as sensitize stakeholders on the requirements and expectations of FPE. In addition, it notes that most of the head teachers have consequently had difficulties in planning and managing the school's funds among other managerial challenges. The research found that the parents did not assist the school management in the implementation and the public needed to be sensitized further to support the government efforts in the provision of FPE if the initiative was to succeed. This study however, recommended that a further investigation into the involvement of the entire community was essential.

Another study done by Ondieki (2011) investigated how secondary school principals (head teacher/ school managers) build trust in Kenyan secondary schools. The research revealed an urgent need on the part of principals to build trust with parents, which principals were doing by closing the gap between the community and the schools. Modelling, mediation, showing genuine interest and participation in community activities and issues, good instructional leadership, balanced management practices, and free and open communication with the parents, were some of the methods used by the principals to close these gaps and consequently build trust with the parents Ondieki (2011).

In Rwanda, a study by the World Bank (2001) observed that the aspect of strengthening and establishing collaboration relationships between the school, families, children and stakeholders helps to create one of the key dimensions of a Child-Friendly School education. It asserts that school infrastructures can be designed and managed collectively because of having well-developed strong partnerships between the community and school. The study further recommended that communities' involvement must be considered throughout the decision-making process; from planning, designing to construction and maintenance which is in agreement with the aspirations of the policy on education for partnerships and serves as a pivotal yardstick to improving the welfare of the children's education.

 In Madagascar, UNICEF (2004) observed, as they were providing technical and financial support to the Ministry of Education for the development, experimentation and implementation of the Contracts

for School Success Programme (CSSP), that the program became a good avenue for community and parental participation in the education system. The CSSP is a voluntary commitment among local stakeholders to improve primary school education. The process commences at the beginning of the school year, when the school directors, pupils, parents and community leaders or local authorities come together to review and discuss school results and learning conditions. The intent of the review was to identify those actions that were required to improve the school in general and retention rates in particular.

With regards to factors that influence parental involvement, literature at Africa level gives the same conclusion as Western literature observed at global level that these factors can be at three points, parent related, school related and student related (Magwa and Mugari, 2017).

2.3 Studies Conducted in Zambia on Parent and Community Participation in Education

In Zambia, education has been at the center of development efforts for many years, resulting into several reforms. Consequently, considerable research has been done on Zambian education covering a while range of topics and areas of interest. Some of the research have guided reforms while some have been reviews of reform programs. A discussion on education in Zambia can be incomplete if it does not touch on various methodologies of provision. Zambia has since existence seen a considerable array of approaches to providing education ranging from central government provided education, church or missionary education to private and or community education. The church through missionaries are considered as the pioneers of bringing education to the local people of Zambia as witnessed by Lubwa and Chikuni missions that were among the first to set up education systems in rural Zambia. However, just after independence the country saw a phase where the central government tried to nationalize all education provision. Nevertheless, the government eventually realized the role other non-state actors had to play in the provision of education. With this, there existed a number of government schools as well as several run by the church across the country.

The recognition of the role non-state actors play in education provision was further cemented in Zambia when it was first explicitly laid down by the 1996 Zambia education policy and then enshrined into law by the Education Act number 23 of 2011. The two documents expressed this recognition by

spelling out the need for partnerships between the Government, school owners such as church bodies, and the communities where the schools are located (Ministry of Education, 2011).

A study assessing the nature and extent of partnerships between schools, communities and other stakeholders in educational provision in Chingola District of Zambia revealed that nearly all the head teachers, teachers, PTA executive members and education board members were aware of the policy on partnership in education. However, some parents and community members expressed ignorance of knowledge of the existence of the policy on partnership (Chileshe, 2011). Another study done in Luapula Province found education provision arrangements and partnerships such as Faith Based Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations, Community Based Organisations, and Local Communities. The involvement by all these took varying methods such as working with the schools through Parent Teacher Associations/Committees and or School Boards. The study also found involvement such as provision of school bursary schemes to pupils, transport, participation in infrastructure development and maintenance, staff support programs and resource mobilization Mukunta (2012)

A survey conducted in Eastern Province of Zambia by Mumba, Chikalanga, Sikwibele and Nkhata found that majority of the parents in the region had limited contact with schools (Mumba, et.al, 1998). The same study also revealed that despite the lack of contact with the schools, the parents' attitude towards their children's education was generally positive. The researchers thus concluded that it was evident that effective involvement by the parents to provide the necessary support for their children to excel in school was still a long way. Similarly, Mulenga (2005) did a study that looked at community participation in managing school finances in selected schools in Mansa District. As the others found on parents' participation, Mulenga's study revealed local communities had very little involvement in the management of the school finances, mostly controlled and spent by heads of schools.

Mwansa (2006) did study one form of community involvement in education provision, community school, by assessing the quality and relevance of this mode of education provision in Mkushi District. The study revealed that community schools generally lacked educational materials and professional staff in terms of qualified teachers. The study also revealed that the schools were equally lacking in

terms of core technologies for teaching and learning, all a sign of poor collaboration between the communities and the government.

Another study in this line done by Mwanza (2013) who explored the contribution of Non-Governmental Organisations to the reforms in basic education provision in Zambia came to a similar conclusion of poor or lack of coordination between non-state actors and government. Mwanza (2013) noted that there was clear lack of congruence in terms of objectives in the education reforms as they were mainly driven by neo-liberal influence in the NGOs. She argues that, NGOs, do not take into consideration, nor serve to forester the wellbeing of either the schools or the local communities.

Mukunta (2012) in a study on challenges in Educational Partnerships in Rural High Schools of Luapula Province of Zambia identified a number challenges. The study lists some of the challenges as: (i) lack of support from local business houses; (ii) absence of linkages among the various stakeholders; (iii) lack of transparency in schools, lack of capital injection for bigger projects; and (iv) absence of sensitization of local communities on the importance of partnerships. Mukunta (2012) concluded that continued sensitization, improved communication between schools and stakeholders, involving stakeholders in planning school programs and openness on the part of school authorities on resource requirement and use would help enhance the partnerships.

2.4 Summary of Reviewed Literature and gaps identified

Review of literature from the Global, Africa, and Zambian studies on community participation provides abundant evidence of a clear connection of family and community involvement to student success. Literature shows that this requires active and meaningful engagement from parents and others to help schools boost student achievement and produce graduates who are prepared to be productive, globally competitive citizens.

Although literature exists indicating, a considerable amount of research on the topic of parental and community involvement in the provision of education, not much exists showing how the parental involvement should happen, especially in Zambian set up. While at both Global and Africa level there is literature detailing the 'how', in Zambia this researcher could not find concrete studies to show

this. At the same time, most of the studies done in Zambia on the issue of involvement were in regions away from the capital city with a more diverse population. Despite Studies such as Mukanta (2012) and Mwansa (2006) bringing out some Challenges faced by partnerships in education provision, their area of study are predominantly rural provinces of Zambia. The studies are also short on bringing out the barriers to involvement by the community in a sacrosanct manner and comparing them to international literature and theories.

It is therefore, the interest of this research not only to fill the gap on how the local community participate in improving pupil learning, but also to assess if local communities in Lusaka are conversant with the concept, whether they do get involved or not and why. This study also sought to add to the knowledge on challenges and barriers to involvement by parents and communities by investigating the case for selected schools in Lusaka. The research therefore, sought to compare if the picture found in the rural provinces of Zambia by earlier studies would be the same in Lusaka. It also wanted to compare the status of parental and community participation in Lusaka's Emmasdale Zone with International literature and theories.

2.5 Summary of the chapter

Chapter two reviewed literature related to the studies on the assessment of community participation as a tool for improving the learning of pupils in selected primary schools. It started with global studies that were carried out, followed by the studies conducted in Africa, and Zambia in particular. It also reviewed the strategies employed worldwide and finally the summary of the chapter. Next is the discussion of the Methodology that was used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

In this chapter, the research methods, research design of the present study, the target population, sample size, and sampling procedure was discussed. Also, the research instruments, data collection techniques, data analysis, trust worthiness and the ethical considerations was discussed.

3.1 Research Method

In conducting the research on community participation in primary school as a tool for improving pupil learning in Lusaka, the researcher applied qualitative methodology since the study wanted to get in depth information about the phenomena. Qualitative, research assists to gain a deeper understanding of how a particular group of people make sense of their social world or environment (Munhall, 2007). In addition, it provides insight in the development of concepts which help us to understand social phenomena in natural (rather than experimental) settings, giving due emphasis to the meanings, experiences, and views of all the participants (Shadish, et al., 2002).

3.2 Research Design

In conducting research, the researcher applied a case study technique; the researcher took four (4) primary schools in Emmasdale Zone of Lusaka District as the case study. These schools are in urban setting and helped the researcher to understand how people in urban areas participate in school/learning development/improvement activities. Kothari (2008) recommended the case study method as the popular form of qualitative analysis and involved a careful and complete observation of the social unit such as a person, a family, an institution, a cultural group or even the entire community. The case study method provided the researcher with more information about community participation as a tool for improving pupil learning. Moreover, the researcher chose the case study because it of its suitability and ability to investigate specific aspects. In this study, such specific aspects could be factors that motivate or hinder community participation in improving pupil learning in selected school of Lusaka District.

Furthermore, a deductive approach was also employed because the population has to identify how community participation can be a tool for improving pupil performance by bringing out factors on community participation that explain the variations in pupil's academic performance. Also, an explorative or descriptive design was applied because it examines the interaction of variables or constructs. In this study, variables that must interact for effective learning to take place are teachers, learners, parents and the community. Salvam (2017)

3.3 Study Sites

This study was conducted in four selected primary schools in Emmasdale Zone in Lusaka District. These included; Mutambe, Justine Kabwe, Mandevu and Emmasdale school in Emmasdale Zone in Lusaka district. The schools were chosen on the basis that they have many pupils learning in the afternoon as a catch-up strategy.

3.4 Target Population

A population is a group of individuals, objectives or items from which samples are taken for measurements (Ng'andu, 2006). Therefore, the population of this study included school administrators, teachers, parents/guardians, and community members in the four selected primary schools: Mutambe, Justine Kabwe, Emmasdale and Mandevu school in Emmasdale Zone in Lusaka district.

3.5 Sample Size

In this research, the sample size was 54 participants consisting of 4 school administrators, 4 P.T.C chairperson, 8 prominent community members, (pastors, councilors, NGOs) Grade teachers 12, 3 per school, parents 6 per school, parents for focus group discussions 20, 5 per school. Mutambe, Justine Kabwe, Emmasdale and mandevu in Emmasdale Zone in Lusaka district.

3.6 Sampling Technique

This research used two sampling techniques which were simple random sampling and purposive procedure. Sampling, according to Sidhu (2006), is the process of selecting a sample from the

population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group. Its merits include greater accuracy, speed. convenience and saves time.

Simple random sampling is outlined as the method of sampling in which each individual in the population is selected from the total population in such a manner that all members of the population have the same probability of being chosen (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Its advantage is that it is free from bias and prejudices, and easy to use and is representative of the population. This research used the simple random sampling technique to select teachers and parents to the children who learn in these four schools selected.

Purposive sampling was used to select the desired sample because it is hoped that they will help the researcher to collect rich and relevant information related central to the phenomena being studied. Therefore, school administrators, parents and community members were selected using the purposive sampling method for this study.

3.7.0 Research Instruments

The instruments of data collection that were used in this study are mainly four; interview guide schedules, focus group discussion guides, and qualitative analysis of documents. The use of more than one method of data collection also permitted for the combination of the strength of each method while correcting some of the deficiencies as to increase trustworthiness of the data generated.

3.7.1 Semi - Structured Interview Schedule

An interview guide is qualitative research tool comprising of a set of questions which is used by a researcher to gather oral information from the respondents (Mouton, 2005). Interview guides were used because they are flexible, and enables the researcher to get a complete and comprehensive information right at the source. Also, Sidhu (2006) defines semi structured interview as a two –way technique which permits an exchange of ideas and information. It involves the collection of data through direct interview between the interviewee and the interviewer. Its advantage is that it promotes rapport and opportunity to give opinions on the subject matter by the interviewee. In this study, semi structured interviews were used to collect data the school administrators, parents and prominent members of the community.

3.7.2 Focus Group Discussions

In this research, the focus group discussion was used to collect information from the parents. Four Sessions of focus group discussions were held, one for each school with 5 parents at each. All the parents selected had children in the school selected. The interview guide had pre-written questions to avoid straying away from the focus of the discussion. Combo and Tromp (2006) states that focus groups produce a lot of information in a quick way. This is because the number of participants is more than one hence ideas and opinions in a community are easily shared.

3.7.3 Trustworthiness

This section discussed trustworthiness of the qualitative instruments. A qualitative researcher's tools should be geared towards trustworthiness and encompass issues such as credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability (Sinkovic, Penz and Ghauri 2008). Data was collected using interviews from administrators, teachers, P.T.C chairpersons, parents and prominent members of the community.

3.7.3.1 Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1984), argued that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. In this study credibility was achieved through triangulation. This was achieved through the use of different methods of data collection. The researcher used personal interviews and focus group discussions. According to Brewer and Hunter (1989), the use of different methods in concert compensates for their individual limitations and exploit their respective benefits. Another attribute to trustworthiness is transferability.

3.7.3.2 Transferability

Since the findings of qualitative research are specific to a small number of particular environment and individuals, it may not be possible to demonstrate that the findings and conclusions are applicable to other situations. Bassey, (1981), noted that in practice, conventional generalisation is never possible as all observations are defined by the specific contexts in which they occur. A contrasting view is offered by Stake (2010) who suggested that although each case may be unique, it is also an example within a broader group and as a result, the prospect of transferability should not be

immediately rejected. Bassey (1981), proposed that, if the reader believes that their situation is similar to that described in the study, they may relate the findings to their own position. In this case, the researcher ensured that sufficient contextual information about the site is provided to enable the reader to decide whether to make a transfer or not. The third attribute of trustworthiness is dependability.

3.7.3.3 Dependability

Dependability and credibility are related in that demonstration of the later goes some distance in ensuring the former. Lincoln and Guba (2000) stressed the close ties between credibility and dependability. In order to achieve dependability, the processes within the study were reported in detail, thereby enabling a future researcher to repeat the work if necessary and gain the same results. Such in-depth coverage will enable the reader to the research on the report to develop a thorough understanding of the methods and their effectiveness. Another attribute of trustworthiness is conformability.

3.7.3.4 Conformability

Conformability is concerned with the investigator's objectivity. The researcher made sure that as far as possible this research's findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher. Triangulation has a role of reducing the effect of researcher bias. Miles and Huberma (1994) consider that a key criterion for conformability is the extent to which the researcher admits his or her own predispositions

3.7.4 Reliability

Sidhu (2007) outlines reliability as the accuracy of the statistics to be measured in this study, triangulation of data collected by means of qualitative methods were used to enhance the accuracy of the results for the issues understudy.

3.7.5 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection refers to the collection of information to serve or prove some facts. Its merit is that it helps in the dissemination of accurate information and development of meaningful programmes

(Kombo and Tromp, 2006). However, in this research, data was collected from the semi-structured interview schedules and focus group discussions by qualitative means from the school administrators, parents and community members which were selected using the purposive sampling method.

3.7.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis refers to the manipulation of the collected data for the purpose of making inferences that reflect the interests, ideas and theories that initiated the research (Ng'andu, 2006). Data analysis is a very important stage in doing research, the researcher collected data from the field and made themes and interpreted the data through qualitative techniques. In this study, data was analyzed and presented in form of tables, texts, charts and percentages. The research is a qualitative research, therefore, the data collected from the field was analyzed qualitatively.

3.7.7 Ethical Considerations

In this study, the researcher ensured that consent from the research ethics committee at University of Zambia and the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) in the Ministry of General Education was sought before carrying out the research in the four selected primary schools in Emmasdale Zone in Lusaka district. The researcher also respected the human right of free choice of the participants and the informed consent was completed before carrying the interviews. Anonymity was rendered to all participants and those who wished to withdraw from the research were permitted as it is their right. Also, the researcher did not force the participants who were not willing to participate in the study. Confidentiality was strictly observed and all the data collected was used for academic purposes.

3.7.8 Summary of the chapter

Chapter three discussed the research methods, research design and site of the study. It also highlighted the target population, the sample size, and sampling procedures, research tools, data collection procedure data analysis, and ethical considerations have been discussed. Trustworthiness of the study was also discussed. Next is the presentation of the findings in chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.0 Overview

The aim of this chapter is to report on findings pertaining to the assessment of community participation as a tool for improving pupil learning in selected primary schools of Lusaka District. Interview guides and focus group discussions were used to collect data. The research findings are based on data collected from four primary schools in Lusaka District where head teachers, class teachers, PTC chairpersons, prominent community members, and parents in four primary schools were interviewed.

The data is presented in accordance with the research questions which were:

  i.   How do parents understand the meaning of community participation in selected primary schools of Emmasdale zone in Lusaka District?
  ii.   How do parents/communities contribute to improve pupil learning in selected primary schools of Emmasdale Zone in Lusaka District?
  iii. What are the main factors that motivated or hindered the community from participating in improving pupil learning in selected primary schools of Emmasdale zone in Lusaka district?
  iv.   What are some of the recommendations that would improve pupil learning in selected primary schools of Emmasdale zone in Lusaka District?

Analysis of the data collected from parents and the community members was conducted to learn and document how they experience and demonstrate parental and community involvement. It also determined what parents and the community as a whole want to do to improve their involvement in the academic education of their children.

4.1 Background Characteristics of Respondents

From the methodology, the study sample size was fifty-four (54) participants. This was broken down into the various methods of data collection, that is, twenty (20) for parents focus group discussions, eight (8) parent in-depth interviews, head teacher interviews, Parent teacher Committee chairperson

interviews, eight (8) prominent Community Members interviews, and twelve (12) grade teachers interviews. The parents focus group discussions were planned for each school with each having five people. The in-depth interviews for parents were planned for two parents at each school, the same for prominent community members. Each of the head teachers in the four school were also sampled, as were the chairpersons for the selected schools' PTCs and three grade teachers, for grades 5,6 and 7, from each of the participating schools. However, as can be seen from the presentation in the table below, only 51 out of the targeted 54 participated, giving a nevertheless very good response rate of 91 percent The table 1 below shows the number of participants and groups that took part in the study.

Table 4.1: Categories of Respondents

Category	Conducted Interviews	Male Participants	Female Participants	Total Participating
Parent Focus Groups	4	3	12	15
Parent key informants	8	4	4	8
Head Teacher key informants	4	4	0	4
PTC Chairperson key informants	4	4	0	4
Prominent Community Member key informants	8	6	2	8
Grade Teacher key informants	12	6	6	12

Source; Field Data (2018)

Figure 1: Breakdown of participation by category in percentage terms broken by gender
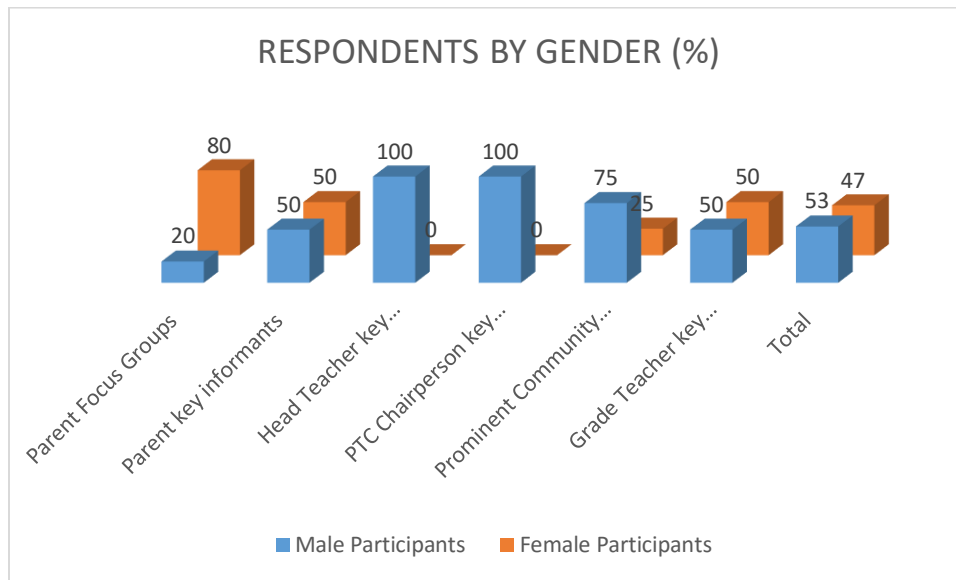
Source: Field Data (2018)

One other significant characteristic of note was the location of the schools selected and the communities around them. The selected schools lie in Emmasdale zone and are all surrounded by high density neighborhoods. Most of the people in these communities were unemployed with next to nonexistent meaningful business opportunities in the communities leaving them doing petty businesses such as trading in the market to earn a living. Consequently, literacy levels among most people in these communities are at the barest minimum. For most of the people are all the time preoccupied with making ends meet and anything else is secondary and of little consequence. Two of the schools were actually surrounded by communities predominantly comprising of immigrants from Zimbabwe, some of whom have been in Zambia for many years and have since naturalized.

4.2 Main Research Findings

In order to get the full picture parental/community involvement in the selected schools, the researcher began by firstly trying to establish how the parents, communities and school authorities (head teachers and grade teachers) understood the concept. Secondly, an effort was made to find out parents' experiences of involvement in terms of what they do to support schools in educating their children academically and how they felt their actions affect the schools in terms of student performance. The

study then sought to uncover some of the factors influencing participation in terms of limitations and difficulties experienced in the process of involvement. These three angles therefore were the basis on which data was collected and thus findings will be presented as such.

4.2.1 Understanding of community participation/involvement in Education

In terms of understanding parental/community involvement the study revealed varying levels from all respondents. While a number of them expressed understanding in terms of involvement with own children, general involvement in education provision was largely not understood. Additionally, some respondents showed lack of belief that they actually had any further role to play in education for their children other than sending the child to school and providing school requirements such as uniforms and books. In-depth interviews revealed that even for those that have some understanding of parent/community involvement, their understanding is basically limited to ensuring the child goes to school with all requirements and occasionally helping the child with homework. The understanding of parental/community involvement was much better among head teachers and grade teachers who had a more concrete and broader idea of what it meant.

The table below is a tabulation of how each of the respondent category responded to the question of understanding the meaning and how parents/communities can participation to improve student performance.

Table 4.2.1: Understanding of parental/community involvement in Education

Categories	Responses
Head Teachers	• Giving of education to the pupils must not be done by teachers alone, but together with parents through activities like family pack where parents are invited to have a seat down with teachers and learners at school to see how best to the child can be helped school wise. • Termed as bringing the community closer to the school, sharing of ideas that can bring positivity in the development and management of the institution. It can also be a way of sharing the school vision, core values with the community to make them participate and understand what school stand for. • The involvement of the parents in the projects of the school. • The process by which the people voluntarily participate in school activities be it learning or infrastructure development.
PTC Chairpersons	Both parents whom have children at a particular school, the teachers and the community in general should have a role to play in the life of the children's education.
Prominent Community Members	Where the parents come together to ensure that the environment is peaceful for the proper learning and development of children. For example, no violence in the community, school property not stolen, there is no noise around the schools so that children learn in a quiet and conducive environment.
Grade Teachers	Where the community take the full responsibility of school programmes and activities. For example: the community will come up come with school projects (fundraising, structure improvement); monitor learner performance; attend all meetings organized by the school; bring ideas they see workable.

Parents	• When the child has been given homework (school activity to do at home) parents are supposed to make sure and help the child do that work. • We parents are supposed to help our children in literacy development. For example, teaching the child the alphabet and the vowels.
Parent Focus Groups	When the child is at school, they are in the hands of the teachers and when they are not at school they are in the hands of us parents. So, it is up to us to help that child with their school work so that they can grow to become better adults in the future. So, there is need for the school and us the parents to work together because us parents cannot know what is going on at school with the children.

Source: Field Data (2018)

The data collected from interviewing head teachers and class teachers revealed their perceptions of parental involvement was that it is through parents' cooperation with teachers, participation in lesson presentations and assistance for learners' activities in classrooms and at home. They also indicated belief that involvement entails parents endeavor to provide learning materials, health care, childcare and general basic needs to the students. For instance, a teacher from Emmasdale primary School defined parental involvement as:

> *The parents come to school and present something to the learners, may be the teacher might not really aware of, like the cultural issues. The parents can come and explain more and more about that. Or maybe is when the parents come in and look after learners' activities in the classroom, and then see where the learners need help and then from there maybe they help the learners to do their activities better. (Emmasdale, 6th August 2018).*

One head teacher gave the following verbatim opinion or definition:

> *When we talk about parental involvement, we mean parents visiting the school to see what their children do, their good performance, making sure that their children arrive at school on time, seeing if their children do their daily activities, making sure whether teachers teach properly and learners are engaged in teaching and learning. ... They assure themselves of their children' presence at school (Mandevu, 8th August 2018).*

The concept of parental involvement was defined by head teachers as parents' commitment to education, where they establish a good working relationship with teachers for the sake of learners' progress and visit the schools to observe, participate in teaching and do other schools activities (for example, active participation in fundraising events). The head teachers further pointed to parents; observing lessons and participating in learners' classroom activities as well as ensure learners' attendance and punctuality, and assist learners with the application of what they learn at school. In relation to this, one headead teacher said:

> *Yes, I understand it that parents should ask their children what they learn from school, assist them when they experience a problem in learning at home, come to visit and observe how their children are performing. They can also teach children stories, etc. (Mutambe, 3rd August 2018).*

4.2.2 Parental/Community participation in pupil learning

This study revealed quite some interesting insights on how parental involvement was being practiced in primary schools in Emmasdale Zone. Among those interviewed who indicted understanding of the concept, majority of the parents indicated having, supported the schools, pointing out various activities they get involved. Parents reported that they support schools to educate learners academically. They stated their contribution as being the provision of required school learning materials (like exercise books, pens and pencils, school bags) to their children; their service on school committees; their encouragement of learners to study hard; payment for school development fund;

and making sure that learners attend classes on a daily basis. To these claims, a parent from Justin Kabwe stated:

> *I chase them to school every day. Go to school, do not absent yourself from school. If one of them happens not to go to school or goes half way, I take him/her myself to school. I follow them until I see that they enter the school yard. (Justin, 10th August 2018).*

Parents also stated that, they participated in the learning of their children by reminding them about and assisting them with homework. A response from one parent from Mutambe primary school serves as an example:

> *When a teacher complains about children coming to school late, I try for my child to be punctual. If they say children do not learn hard, I commit myself by asking my children what they have done at school on a daily basis and assist the child in doing his/her school work. (Mutambe, 3rd August 2018).*

On the other hand, school authorities responded the question of how my indicating that they provide parents with various opportunities in which parents would gain knowledge and skills needed for supporting their children's academic education. They mentioned some of the opportunities as: asking and allowing parents to observe teachers teaching; observing their children's classroom work; convening parent meetings to discuss the importance of education; providing literacy education classes; advising parents about the importance of feeding their children before they come to school; discussing school needs with parents; identifying how parents are expected to assist schools; and showing parents how to assist their children with reading at home. The head teacher at one of the schools elaborated more on the examples of how schools reach out to parents, engaging them in authentic conversations. The head teacher explained;

> *Inviting them to attend meetings, discuss with them learner performance, also invite them on open day to experience how teaching is done in the school. The other way is inviting them to discuss the short comings of their children and giving them homework and parents sign. (Justin, 10th August 2018).*

When asked why they thought it was important for them to be involved in their children's academic education and whether they saw any impact of their involvement, there were again mixed reactions from parents. Some outright indicating belief that it was important to get involved was that, stating for them education was one of the most important aspect of life. This category of parents went on to reveal that for them community involvement creates good relationships among community members, parents and teachers, and contributes to the progress of the school as well as the progress and future of the children. It was their view that parents support their children's academic education because they do not want to be the cause of children missing education. furthermore, they expressed a position that their life experiences had taught them that to cope with life, education is needed. This was emphasized by one parent from one of the schools who said:

> *Education is the most important thing in the whole world, everyone who has not progressed in life in terms of education feels it is his or her parents who are to blame. Now we are living in a progressed and civilized world, we want our children to be educated. (Emmasdale, 6th August 2018).*

In the focus group discussion, parents maintained that parent support encourages children do their homework, become committed and perform well. Parents believed that if they support their children's education, their children may obtain success in life than them (parents). That means children would become professionals, secure employment and become useful citizens in the community. A parent from Mandevu primary school expressed their confidence in the potential of parents' support to influence their children's future saying:

> *Our children should not be like us. I did not attend school in my life. My school was 'following my mother to sale at the market', and from there I stayed home. It was my peer group who taught me reading and writing. Nowadays, our children are educated in school. Education produces teachers, nurses as well as police officers. If your child does not have a certificate, he/she will not get a job. (Mandevu, 8th August 2018).*

Furthermore, the data indicated parents' belief that the school development would be realized if the community gets involved and parents support their children's education today, because they

(children) may determine the nation's future success or lack of it. If children develop today, they will develop the school in the future. The data across the groups suggest the following effect of parental involvement: encouragement of teachers to work hard, improvement of learners' performance, support for newly qualified and inexperienced teachers, development of good relationships between teachers and parents' commitment of learners, guarantee of learners' successful future.

4.2.3 Factors that motivate or hinder Parental/Community involvement

In pursuit of objective three of the study, the researcher sought to find out some of the limitations and difficulties experienced in trying to foster community participation for the selected schools in Emmasdale Zone of Lusaka. Both school authorities in head teachers and grade teachers as well as parents shared a number of challenges and limitations when it comes to community participation in the education system of the schools

From the viewpoint of school authorities as expressed by head teachers and teachers participation or lack thereof is about the attitude of the parents and communities as they themselves as school authorities do try to extend opportunities for participation. They stated that Parents' tend to have their priorities on other issues away from education of their children, often not providing enough financial support to their children. The school authorities further stated that even when they endeavor to call for meetings, there is low turnout from the community and parents in these schools. Lack of understanding, unemployment, poverty, inability of elderly and illiterate guardians to assist children's learning, were also indicated as some of the barriers schools experience across the groups. The table below lists some of the barriers as identified by head teachers and teacher.

Table 4.4.1: Summary of Barriers according to Heads and Teachers.

BARRIERS	UNDERLYING CAUSES
Lack of and/or insufficient participation in meetings and other school activities.	Lack of understanding; ignorance and fear of embarrassment.
Parents and guardians prioritize other things than the education of their children.	Unemployment and poverty; limited understanding about the importance of education; and lack of time due to too much domestic work.
Parents are unable to assist their children academically.	Illiteracy; and lack of commitment on the side of parents.
Lack of financial support and payment of the school development fund.	Unemployment and poverty; lack of understanding; and ignorance.

Source: Field Data (2018)

In an effort to ensure triangulation and verification of the opinions given by the Head teachers and teachers, the researcher asked parents on school authorities' attitudes towards community and parent involvement. Parents indicated that they experience a very positive attitude from school authorities. One parent from Mandevu primary school commented*:*

> *"They behave very well. They respect parents. Parents play a major role during parent meeting discussions. The Head teacher and teachers indicate satisfaction when we parents participate in discussions." (Mandevu, 6th August 2018).*

Some parents even went on to state that often the problem is with the parents themselves. A parent from Justin Kabwe primary school lamented that some parents have an 'I don't care' attitude towards invitations from the school. The parent (Justin Kabwe) testified that when those parents are called for meetings they refuse and say,

> *Let the school expel my child if it so wishes, I will not go there. (Justine, 10th August 2018)*

The data across most of schools indicated that parents experienced a welcoming attitude, positive behaviour, cooperation, good relationships and mutual respect from professional educators.

Nevertheless, parents still indicated experiencing some difficulties when it came to them getting involved in their children's education. The difficulties expressed ranged from school related to personal ones as parents, as tabulated below.

Table 4.5: Difficulties experienced by parents in the process of parental involvement

Prominent	Intermediate
Alienation.	Lack of cooperation and collaboration among parents, as well as parents who are defensive about their children' faults.
Lack of communication between parents and professional educators.	Lack of income.
Lack of understanding of the value of education.	Parents are too busy and dedicated their time to domestic and other income generating activities.
Low self- esteem and lack of confidence.	Lack of school policies on parental involvement.
Parents' preference for drinking rather than attending to their children's education.	
Illiteracy.	

Source: Field Data (2018)

4.6: Summary of this chapter

The findings presented in this chapter showed that the challenges faced by parents in all the four schools were; alcoholism, lack of school policies on parental involvement, parents' poverty status, illiteracy, lack of understanding, parents' defensive attitude, lack of cooperation among parents and unemployment. The next chapter discusses the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.0 Overview

This chapter discusses the findings on the assessment of community participation as a tool for improving pupil learning in selected primary schools of Lusaka District. The discussion of findings flowed according to objectives of the study. The discussion also related the findings to what literature review established on related issues to make a comparison of conformity or lack thereof. The objectives of the study were:

i. to investigate whether or not communities in Emmasdale Zone understand how they can participate in improving pupil learning.

ii. to explore types of parents/community participation to improve pupil learning in selected primary schools in Lusaka District.

iii. to assess the factors that motivate or hinder community participation in improving pupil learning in selected primary schools.

iv. to state the recommendations that would improve pupil learning in selected primary schools of Emmasdale zone of Lusaka District.

5.1 Understanding of community participation/involvement

From the Findings as presented above, there is amass evidence that various stakeholders do have an understanding of the need for their participation in the education system. There is also clear understanding of what form this participation ought to take. All stakeholders equally have a very good account of some of the challenges and hindrances to community participation currently. However, one other key finding of the study is the evident variation in understanding what and how various stakeholders can and should be participating in the education system to improve pupil performance.

For respondents closely involved currently in the education system such as head teachers, grade teachers and PTC chairpersons, there is clearer and broader understanding of what community

participation really means. The study found out that these categories of respondents do believe that the active participation of parents and community in school programs is important to the creation of an environment conducive for effective teaching and learning. This finding clearly conforms to research findings by Henderson and Mapp (2002); and Bryk and others (2010). Both these studies recommend that when parents and community members around any given school establishment are adequately informed and involved about the school's needs as well as progress or improvements from their involvement based on evidence, they contribute significantly to school improvement.

On the other hand, findings from parents, though still in agreement with literature, seem to indicate a limited understanding of how a community can help improve the learning environment in a school. while some of the parents do agree that they have a role to play in improving pupil learning, there are those that are either clueless or simply do not care. Even among those that show understanding of importance of their involvement, their view of participation seems to be limited to helping their own children with school work such as homework. This clearly justifies the conclusion and recommendation by Simpson (1988) that communication and information sharing is key to community and parent participation. The skewed notion by parents of their potential contribution is a sign that there is lack of information flow and partnership building by the schools.

The divergence of opinion of involvement from the parents and community can be partly explained by how the communities around the four sampled schools where the study was done understand or perceive education which can be divided into two groups. The first group consisted of people with better understanding of the value and importance of education and thus their roles in the education of their children. This group are motivated to want their children to succeed in academics and are more likely to expected schools to deliver quality education that should be able to make their children productive citizens. This expectation and desire tends to push them to engage with the schools where their children are schooling. The other group consisted of people with little or no understanding of value of education and for whom it matters less whether their children excel or not. For such a group, what the child does in school is of less interest and are unlikely to ever engage with the school. Such are the people reported in the findings as having negative attitude towards participating in school activities. The two distinction of people in these communities are largely a result of levels of education among the community members themselves as well as the poverty levels. For the illiterate

very poor, their daily preoccupation is making ends meet and have very little time to even spend with their children, let alone help them with their academics.

Nonetheless, findings showing that parents are aware and of the opinion that they should be, helping their children with homework is in itself an indication of their willingness to participate in the education of their children. This shows that parents and communities are willing, no matter their socio-economic status, to support their children's education especially when they are engaged and motivated by the school leadership. This is in line with recommendations from a study by the World Bank (2001) in Rwanda.

5.2 Current Community Participation

Findings presented above show that though there is understanding of the importance of parent and community participation in improving quality of education, the study revealed little evidence of meaningful parental and community involvement currently. Responses from Parents and community members when asked what they currently do to assist schools in educating children reaffirmed the narrow understanding of what they can do to help or participate in the school system. Although, some of the indicated activities actually do fall within what community participation would entail, as reflected in literature such as providing learning materials, helping children with homework, and ensuring children do go to school daily, there is still a great gap in effective involvement. The lob sided participation which seem to be mainly centered around own children by parents could be blamed on information asymmetry. It can be argued that while school authorities are fully aware of the wider range of possibilities in terms of participation, they do little to encourage these communities and parents to do more. There is no evidence of any deliberate engagement programs by the school authorities with the communities informing them the school needs and how they can help. The current situation parental/community participation can best be illustrated using the six types of community participation in education as presented by Joyce Epstein et.al (2009).

5.2.1 Parenting

In terms of parenting as a factor to aiding learning, evidence from the study does show that both the education system as well as the parents and community leaders do appreciate the concept. They all

pointed out that parenting has a role to play, though in a variety of ways. Some parents were clear that how they relate with their children at home play a role in the education of the children. For such parents, they came out that a good relationship between them and their children is important to aid learning. They gave examples of being able to help with homework and well as ensuring the child goes to school as required. At the same time, it came out clear from the study that a good number of the parents are clear that the responsibility of a child when home is theirs while when the child is in school it lies with the teachers. This demonstrated that they do understand that parenting during schooling years of the child is a shared role. This understanding was also shown by the teachers and head teachers who clearly expressed that in their understanding educating a child takes efforts from both parents at home and themselves in school. They demonstrated that they understand and believe that there is an intersection between educating a child and parenting.

However, it is worth noting that despite the clear indication of understanding of parenting role in education and how it can be a contribution to learning, the reality of where the schools that were studied are gives a divergent picture. Given the poverty levels among most parents near the schools sampled, it is a harsh reality that they have very limited time for proper parenting. For most of them, time is of the essence for survival. Usually in such communities once the mother weans a child, they see very little of her as she spends her entire time trying to make ends meet for the family. As for fathers, they are literally nonexistent in regards to parenting in such communities. They hardly even know their own children, spending long hours away from their homes hustling for survival. The little time, during which they are not hustling, they spend drinking and so very rarely, if ever, do they even bother to know what is going on with their children's life, let alone school. Such reality of poverty then becomes a huge barrier to parents playing their role in parenting for education. Often in such communities it is taken for granted that once the child is enrolled into school, they will get all the support relevant for them to get an education from there. It is a little wonder that often children from such schools perform poorly and are usually bad mannered, as testified by teachers interviewed

5.2.2 School-Community Communication

Literature is plenty explaining how communication between school authorities and the community of parents is vital for improved learning for pupils. However, this is one area, which is often just on the

surface literally in all schools in Zambia, as proven by the study. While both school authorities and parents affirmed the presence of communication, a closer look reveals just how lacking this is. In all the sampled schools, it was quite alright indicated that schools do endeavor to communicate with parents about the education of their children, the communication that was pointed out falls short of real meaningful communication. More often than not its one-way communication, like the school inviting parents to open day to discuss academic performance of the children, or rare one off Parent Teacher Committee (PTC) meetings. All the schools do have committees of parents and teachers for discussing school affairs. However, these discussions hardly ever involve the rest of the communities as even the non-committee member communities individuals do not even take interest in them. One key shortfall in terms of this school-community communication is the absence of clear direction and ambitions of the schools. Schools operate without a strategic direction that they could use to engage with communities to say they help them achieve something. Teachers also do make efforts of inviting parents to discuss their children's performance but this again is often inadequate and one sided with very little other issues discussed.

On the other hand, the low literacy levels in these communities renders any communication efforts futile. In as much as school authorities try to initiate some communication with parents, the poverty reality these parents live under come to the fore again. For those parents who could be interested in engaging with the schools either to discuss the academics of their child or simply the well-being of the school, they hardly have any time as they spend most of their time trying to make ends meet. Then there are those to whom education is just a pass time which children do while growing up before they can start hustling. For these, any engagement would be a waste of time and as such would not even get to engage.

5.2.3 Parent/Community Volunteering

Another way proposed by Joyce Epstein, volunteering by community members, seen to have the potential to improve recruitment, training, and work and schedules to involve families either as volunteer workers or as audiences at the school, or in other locations to support students and school programs. Useful as this may be in terms of providing stopgap filling of staff when there is a shortfall, or bringing closer parents to the school and hence creating a better knight learning environment for

pupils, it is rather farfetched for communities like those under study. Indeed, there was no significant evidence of any community members in any of the four schools volunteering to do any work for the school. This again goes back to the type of neighborhoods the schools service. With minds preoccupied with survival and making a living, there is no room for thinking of volunteering in most of the people in the communities. Moreover, these are communities in which there are abundant elements of lack of appreciation for school.

5.2.4 Learning at home

Mean to involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum- linked activities and decisions. This is the one way of involvement that most of the parents interviewed indicated awareness. Majority of the parents interviewed pointed out this as one way they currently participate in the education of their children. However, even this is rather limited to helping with homework and ensuring children do go to school. There was no evidence of them participating in activities linked to the curriculum. Moreover, the Zambian education system does not really give room for parents to input in curriculum or for curriculum to be discussed at school level for that matter. Largely this type of community involvement would therefore only be applicable in Zambia as far as assisting with homework.

5.2.5 Parent/Community Involvement in Decision-making

This type of involvement proposes to include families as participants in school decision, governance, and advocacy through PTA/PTC, school councils, committees, and other parent organizations. As alluded to earlier, this is a type of involvement that is a given in all schools in Zambia. Every school does have a committee or association of parents and teachers that helps in the management of the school affairs. However, in most cases this ends up being a preserve of a few community members who either are more enlightened than others, or are more available to do the work. More often than not these groupings end up being a disservice to the administration of the schools as at times they get low caliber candidates occupying offices. Such scenario is more frequent in communities such as those from which the sampled schools are from, where levels of education are very low and there is high poverty.

5.2.6 Collaborating with the community

Another type of involvement proposed is to coordinate resources and services for families, students, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups, and provide services to the community. Again this looks a good way for schools to better learning environments for pupils but in the context of the communities in which the schools are, not easy to do. There are no businesses of note in most of these neighborhoods that could easily be engaged to help uplift the schools. Nevertheless, this is one area where all the schools have done something about, as they all have physical indication of such collaborations. All the schools have utilized space in their vicinity and rented it out to telecommunication companies. For one school, Justin Kabwe, they have even engaged with the road and safety agency who provided them with a safe crossing point for pupils right in front of their gate, realizing they are on a busy road.

5.3 Factors that hinder community participation

When it comes to factors hindering parents and community participation, findings showed glaring differences in opinion between school authorities and community. While the school authorities pointed out some structural issues, they mainly put the blame on the parents that they just do not take interest in participating. The school authorities pointed out that some of the locations where the schools are, have high rates of illiteracy and poverty. With illiteracy, parents fail to fully appreciate the value of them being part of their children's education. At the same time, the high poverty means that for most parents, education is never a priority as they struggle to make ends meet. Despite these issues, the findings indicate that school authorities equally feel that some parents simply have an 'I don't care' attitude. There equally is an opinion from school authorities of some parents simply not putting effort to understand and appreciate how they can be part of their children's education, they say that there tends to be too much apathy even when the authorities try to engage with the communities and parents.

On the other hand, although parents to agree to some extent with the school authorities and accept part of the blame, they also t point to school authorities' lack of proper communication as being central to lack of community participation. Parents feel the school authorities do not communicate enough with them in terms of what they can do and what the needs of the schools are.

One concrete revelation from the study was the agreement between the school authorities and parents/community that poverty and illiteracy are contributing factors to low participation. This was also illustrated by Larocque et al (2011) who stated that parents' involvement in their children's education can be affected by socio-political factors such as socioeconomic status of the parents and their prior school experience. This study came to the same conclusion given found that parents expressed awareness of their illiteracy levels hampering them from appreciating and understanding exactly how they can participate. The parents however went further to indicate that sometimes participation was barred by fear of embarrassment due to illiteracy and lack of knowledge. At the same time, they agreed that due to the levels of poverty, education involvement was not really a priority for most of them to some extent this explains the existence of seemingly lack of care for children's education among some parents. A peculiar finding was that some parents simply did not value or care about education such that they would rather go drinking than attend school meetings or program.

The research findings on barriers to parent/community participation did generally conform to literature suggestions of the types of barriers. The various barriers pointed out by respondents, both school authorities and parents can be classified in the three main categories well documented in both global and African studies, that is; parent related, school related or student/pupil related. Parents and community members did point to lack of proper communication from the school authorities on school needs and how they can help. This is a clear example of school related barriers to involvement. On the other hand, school authorities' opinion on attitude from some parents as well as the poverty and illiteracy levels of the communities are examples of parent related barriers. However, it must be said that this study did not bring out any clear-cut example of student related barriers, which could be said to be a result of having not included learners among respondents.

5.5 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has discussed the findings of the study. The findings presented in chapter four showed that the difficulties experienced by parents across all the four schools include among others alcoholism, lack of school policies on parental involvement, parents' poverty status, illiteracy, lack of understanding, parents' defensive attitude, lack of cooperation among parents and unemployment.

Consented effort by the policy makers, teachers and parents is required in order to improve pupil learning in primary schools of Lusaka District.

CHAPTER SIX

CONLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Overview

This research was done to assess the community participation as a tool for improving pupil leaning in selected primary schools of Lusaka District. This chapter sums up the entire study by looking at the conclusion and recommendations.

6.1 Conclusions

Just as literature showed at various levels, effective education can only best be achieved if it is holistic and involves all stakeholders such as communities, parents, school leadership and teacher. This partnership however is never a given and, in many schools, even mere understanding of the concept is still missing. It is no wonder policies such as provision of education to all and the decentralization of education provision remains just an aspiration for the country. This study revealed that even within Lusaka, the capital city of the country, majority of the people are yet to grasp the concept of partnerships in education provision to the level where there is effective involvement of all to enhance learning environment and quality of education.

As alluded to earlier, the selected schools were all from densely populated areas with high levels of illiteracy, unemployment and poverty. With high illiteracy, it was no surprise to find little appreciation of education and or understanding of the role parents and community can play in providing quality education. In such communities, it is largely incumbent on the school authorities to cultivate the knowledge and culture of valuing education and show them that education is the way for their children to escape the status they themselves are in. It is no doubt a matter of school authorities realizing that if they are to be effective in educating the children in these areas, they need to take it that even the parents need some education of some sort. There is need for vigorous programs by schools meant at enlightening parents on the value of education and how they as parents can contribute to the improved learning of the children. School authorities have to impress it upon the

communities that the school is there to provide a basis on which children shall be educated by it takes the whole community to actually educate the children and sustainably run any school. It is a matter of simplifying the theory of overlapping sphere of influence and implanting it in the communities where the schools operate. For the majority of parents in these communities, education does not really appeal as they are still striving to attain the most basic of needs, food and shelter. Their daily preoccupation is to make ends meet, leaving them with little or no time to even think of participating in the school programs even if they wanted to.

6.2 Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made

1. There is need for continued sensitization by headteachers to the parents of the concept of parental involvement to improve pupil learning in selected primary schools.
2. There is need for parents to change the mindset and utilize more the opportunities for involvement in education that exist such as Parent Teachers Committees or School Boards.
3. School authorities need to realize and acknowledge the need for them to effectively engage communities in the localities of their schools, including involving them in the planning and identification school programs.
4. The Ministry of General Education should work with Local leaders such as councilors to engage with communities to identify barriers, to effective community participation in schools and work on finding solutions together.
5. The Ministry of General Education should develop a national sensitization program on the value of education, targeting high density, low literacy communities.

6.3. Recommendation for Future research

This study was restricted to high-density areas with high poverty levels and its findings suggest that socioeconomic status has an influence on parental involvement in the education of their children. Future research should triangulate this finding by studying low-density areas with better socioeconomic standing.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Guide for Parents

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA/ ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Title of Research

An assessment of community participation as a tool for improving pupil learning in selected primary schools of Emmasdale Zone in Lusaka District.

1. What is your understanding of community involvement in education?
2. How should you as parents be involved in the education of your children?
3. What are some of the challenges that you face as a parent in terms of parent involvement?
4. Do you think it is a good idea to be involved in the learning of your child?
5. Do you usually attend school functions? How often are these meetings held?
6. How does the school communicate with you parents?
7. What strategies do you think can be employed in schools to improve your involvement in the education of your children?

Thank you for your participation

Appendix B: Interview Guide for Prominent member in the community.

(NGO/CSO Managerial Staff, Pastor, Local Government Official, etc.).

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA/ ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Title of Research

An assessment of community participation as a tool for improving pupil learning in selected primary schools of Emmasdale Zone in Lusaka District.

1. What is your perception of community involvement in education?
2. How should parents be involved in the education of their children? How are you involved in the education of your children (if have children in school)?
3. What do you think are the benefits of community involvement?
4. How do you usually communicate with community members?
5. How do you consider the state of parent involvement at this school?
6. What are the challenges faced by parents on parent involvement at this school?
7. In what ways can community involvement be improved at schools?

Thank you for your participation

Appendix C: Interview Guide for PTA Chairperson

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA/ ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Title of Research

An assessment of community participation as a tool for improving pupil learning in selected primary schools of Emmasdale Zone in Lusaka District.

1. As the PTA chairperson, in a managerial position, have you attended any workshop on the improvement of parent involvement?
2. What do you understand by the term community involvement in children's education?
3. How should parents be involved in the education of their children?
4. What are the advantages of community involvement?
5. Have you ever organized workshops for parents on parent involvement?
6. How should parents be involved in parent education at your school?
7. How do you communicate with the parents? How can communication with parents be improved at school?
8. What are the challenges of community involvement at this school?
9. What strategies can be employed to improve community involvement?
10. What are your final words?

Thank you for your participation

Appendix D: Interview Guide for Head Teacher

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA/ ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Title of Research

An assessment of community participation as a tool for improving pupil learning in selected primary schools of Emmasdale Zone in Lusaka District.

1. Have you attended any workshop on the management of community involvement?
2. What is your understanding of the term community involvement?
3. How do you think parents should be involved in the education of their children?
4. What do you think are the benefits of parental involvement?
5. Do you consider community involvement to be successful at your school?
6. What are the challenges that affect community involvement at your school?
7. What can be done to improve parental involvement at your school?
8. What are your final words?

Thank you for your participation

Appendix E: Interview Guide for Class Teacher

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA/ ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Title of Research

An assessment of community participation as a tool for improving pupil learning in selected primary schools of Emmasdale Zone in Lusaka District.

1. As a class teacher, what is your understanding of community participation?
2. How can community participation improve pupil learning at primary level?
3. As the class teacher, handling all class matters, have you attended any workshop on the improvement of parental involvement?
4. What do you think are the benefits of parental involvement?
5. Do you consider community involvement to be successful at this school?
6. What kind of participation is the community involved in at this school?
7. What are the challenges that affect community involvement at this school?
8. What can be done to improve parental involvement at your school?

Thank you for your participation

Appendix F: Focus group discussion guide

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA/ ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Title of Research

An assessment of community participation as a tool for improving pupil learning in selected primary schools of Emmasdale Zone in Lusaka District.

1. What is your understanding of community involvement in education?

2. How should you as parents be involved in the education of your children?

3. What are some of the challenges that you face as a parent in terms of parent involvement?

4. Do you think it is a good idea to be involved in the learning of your child?

5. Do you usually attend school functions? How often are these meetings held?

6. How does the school communicate with you parents?

7. What strategies do you think can be employed in schools to improve your involvement in the education of your children?

8.What are your last words?

Thank you for your participation

Appendix G: Consent form for participants

Consent Form

I am Brendah Moonga a postgraduate student at the University of Zambia/ Zimbabwe Open University pursuing a Master of Education Degree in Education Management. I am conducting a research entitled "An assessment of community participation as a tool in improving pupil learning in selected primary schools in Emmasdale zone of Lusaka District." I need to get your earnest opinion in order for me to accurately write on the topic. I am assuring you that the information you are going to give will be kept confidential. If you are willing to take part in this study, please write your name in the spaces provided below. Should you fill at any point of the study, like during a discussion or interview that you cannot continue, you are free to withdraw.

Participant ……………………………………………………

Name …………………………………………………………..

Signature …………………………………………………….......