

**FACTORS INFLUENCING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT
IN THE EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN IN SELECTED PUBLIC SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN KITWE DISTRICT**

BY

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation of Sophia Agness Njovu has been approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Educational Management.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors influencing parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district. The objectives of the study were to identify factors influencing parental involvement in the education of their children in selected secondary schools in Kitwe district. Find out barriers affecting parental involvement in the education of their children in selected secondary schools in Kitwe district. The study also sought to identify strategies which can be used for an improved parental involvement in the education of their children in selected secondary schools in Kitwe district. The research design is descriptive and mixed method approach- both qualitative and quantitative for data collection and analysis. The study used semi-structured interview guide for head teachers, questionnaires for teachers and PTC members, focus group discussion for parents. While Data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) windows and Microsoft Excel. It was then presented using distribution tables, bar and clustered graphs. While qualitative data was in the form of explanation as themes emerged. The findings of the study were that the performance of the children and behavior of the children might drive parents to involve themselves in the learning of the children. Further, busy schedules level of education and importance of education might hinder parental involvement. Strategies which might be employed for an improved parental involvement include sensitizations on the importance of parental involvement, conducting regular meetings and conducting termly open days. The study further demonstrated that sometimes teachers' attitudes and at times, parents' own inadequacies negatively affected effective parent-teacher partnerships. The study recommended that the schools should use various mechanisms and strategies besides meetings in order to promote parental involvement practice. Issues of parental involvement should be included in the teacher training curriculum either as pre or in-service training. This would assist in equipping teachers and school administrators with skills and positive attitude needed in enhancing parental involvement in education.

Key words: Parental involvement, barriers and strategies.

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to the Almighty Jehovah for giving me the power; wisdom and strength that I had needed to carry out the research, my husband for his encouragement and support financially, also to my lovely children for their encouragement throughout my studies. Finally to Mr. Sikota for his tireless effort and time

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CPC	Child-Parent Centers
ECD	Early Childhood Development
DEBS	District Education Board Secretary
DESO	District Education Standards Officer
EFA	Education for All
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationists
FAST	Families and Schools Together
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOGE	Ministry of General Education
NCLB	No Child Left Behind legislation
PEO	Provincial Education Officer
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
PTC	Parents Teachers Committee
SHN	School Health and Nutrition
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Culture Education
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VCT	Voluntary Counseling and Testing

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the study

Parental involvement in the child's education is a call for concern. According to Stanikzai, (2017) parental involvement refers to caregivers of children that are parents and guardians becoming involved in their children's learning, both in and out of school. It involves parents reading to their children, checking homework daily, discussing children's progress with teachers, voting in school committees/boards, helping the school to set challenging academic standards and becoming an advocate for better education in communities. Students need to know that their parents have a vested interest in their success. Parental involvement can be a major component of school improvement and planning (Owolabi, 2016).

Parental involvement is considered as one of the contributing factors towards poor performance of the secondary schools in the study area. Vellymally (2021) summarised the six effective characteristics and involvement models for building parental involvement namely: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaboration with the community. These, if adequately adhered to, will improve the parental involvement in schools.

The study aims at investigating factors that influence parental involvement in the education of their children in secondary schools. These factors can enhance but can also impede the learner performance. The parent commitment, participation and support are keys from the child's especially at secondary school level. There are those parents who do not participate in the education of their children also, and such parents' children are not doing well at school. Given that, the study investigated the factors that influence parental involvement either positively or negatively (Editorial Team, 2015).

In Zambia, the Ministry of Education realizes the importance of parental involvement in the education of their children. The 2010 Basic Education Sub-Sector Improvement Programme (BESSIP) stated that access to quality education can be improved by enhanced community participation in basic education (Ministry of Education, 2017).

1.2 Statement of the problem

In Zambia in general and specifically in Kitwe, parents' participation in school activities is not up to the required standard. For example, learner work is hardly supervised and monitored by parents when they are given tasks through home works and assignments to do at home, only few parents do it and this low level of participation tends to have undesirable implications for the school performance, particularly for the selected schools in Kitwe District. This problem is evident in the poor attendance of parents at parent meetings, open days and limited involvement in fundraising projects.

The researcher, as an educator, also observed that in most cases school activities given to children to perform at home were never completed but half done and some learners were forced to write in the morning in class. This implies that the work was never supervised by parents or the parents fail to give some guidance to the child. This affects continuity in class and the children are unable to follow the next activities in class as the home works are sometimes the evaluation of the previous and preparation for the next class activities. Against this background, the study attempted to investigate factors influencing parental involvement in their children's education in Kitwe urban area.

1.3 Rationale of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine factors influencing parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe District. The researcher was motivated to undertake this study due to poor parental involvement in the education of their children. Parents always feel discouraged when it comes to school matters, particularly in Kitwe. Active parental involvement makes learners to perform optimally. As an educator, the researcher observed that parents lack interest to participate in their children's education. The researcher wants to revitalize the parents' knowledge about the importance of participating in their children's education as the fundamental key to their children's future and find out factors that contribute to parental involvement in the education of their children.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

- Classify factors influencing parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district.
- Find out barriers affecting parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district
- Identify strategies which can be used for an improved parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district

1.5 Research questions

The study sought to have the following research questions answered:

- ❖ What factors influence parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district?
- ❖ What are the barriers to parental involvement in their children's education in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district?
- ❖ Which strategies can be used for an improved parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district?

1.6 Significance of the study

Considering government's policy of encouraging community participation in education, policy makers may find data generated from this study useful in coming up with strategies of encouraging and enhancing meaningful parental involvement in the education process of their children. Findings from this study may help education planners, teachers, parents and schools to develop suitable approaches for encouraging parental involvement in the education of their children.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

The study was confined to selected public secondary schools in Kitwe District. It did not target private secondary schools because of the different prevailing factors and situations from those in public schools. As a result, factors influencing parental involvement may vary from one school to the other. The findings were therefore only generalized to other parts of the country and schools with caution.

1.8 Ethical considerations

Creswell (2019) argues that ethical issues need to be anticipated and effectively dealt with by the researcher in the research process. It is important, therefore, to emphasize on the need to take into serious consideration all ethical issues whenever a research is being conducted, be it with human or animal subjects. Researchers need to take responsibility to secure the actual permission, interests and rights of people in the study as well as their privacy and sensitivity. All of these ethics must be honoured unless there are other special reasons to do so, for instance, any illegal or terroristic activity.

The current study took into account all the possible ethical issues. The researcher sought permission from the Ethics Committee, University of Zambia. All participants gave written informed consent. They were told that participation was completely on voluntary basis. Regarding privacy, the participants were told that they were free to keep to themselves some information they did not feel comfortable disclosing and not ready to disclose. They were assured that they would not be punished for keeping private information to themselves. Confidentiality was assured to participants after agreeing to participate in the study and signing the informed consent. They were assured that the information they provided was for research purpose only and would be kept in a locked place accessed only by the researcher. There was also an assurance that the recordings done during the research would be destroyed when done with the research process. Anonymity was assured. Participants' names remained undisclosed. The principle of anonymity as pointed out by Trochim (2020) essentially means that the participant will remain anonymous throughout the study, even to the researchers themselves in some cases. Clearly, the anonymity standard is a stronger guarantee of privacy and very necessary. Therefore, withholding the identity of respondents ensured their safety as results generally did not reflect the views of particular individuals but the community as a whole (Sidhu, 2013).

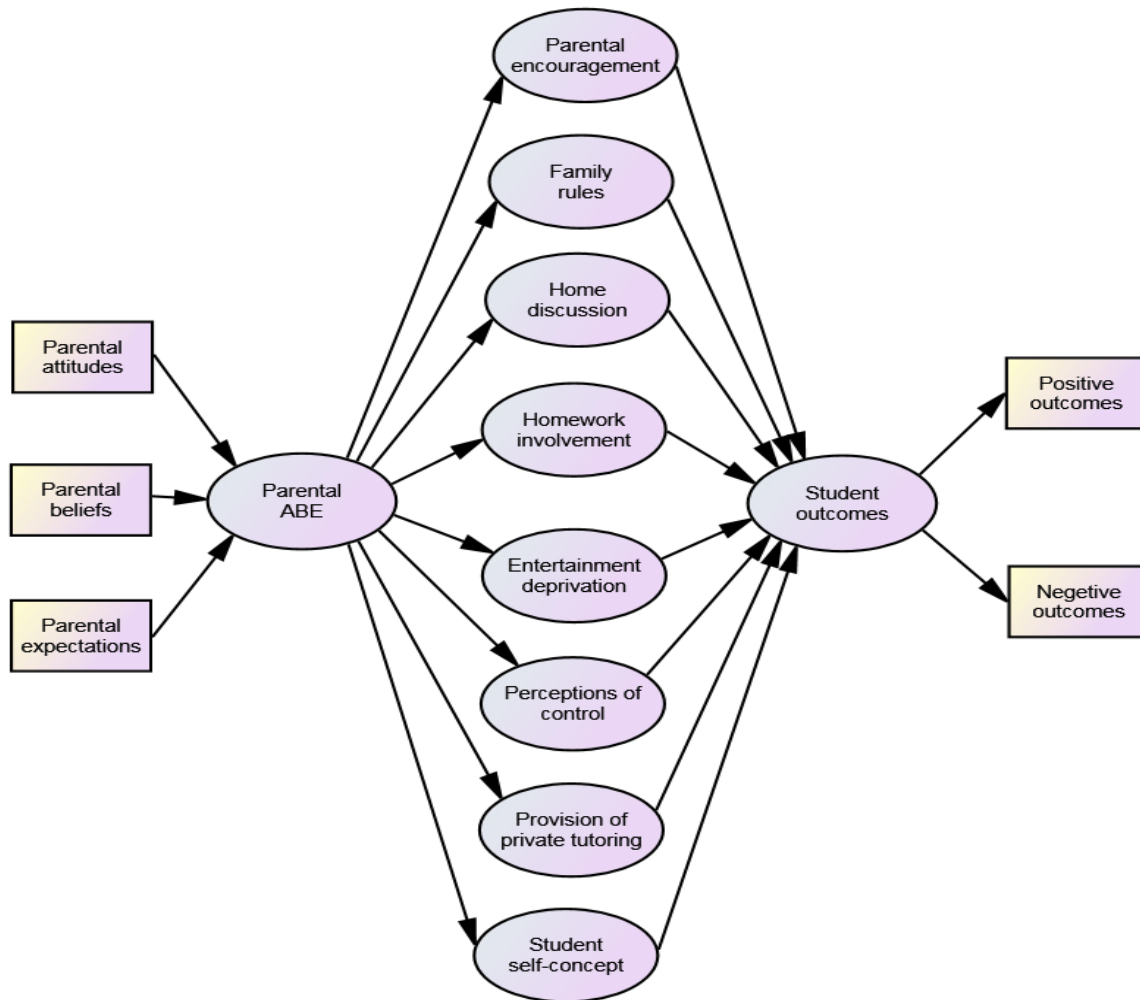
1.8 Theoretical framework

The study was guided by Epstein (2016) who points out that a strategic model that accommodates different types of parental involvement which will result in accelerated school performance. This theory emphasizes family and school relations. “Relationship between the parents and schools makes parents be involved in a more formal and structured partnership which relates to the child’s education” (Mbokodi & Singh, 2019). Sharing responsibilities between the school and home consolidates coordination, cooperation and collaboration between the school and the family (Epstein, 2016). When the parent gets involved in the education of their child and other related activities, the school performance tends to develop. There are formal platforms in which the parents can involve themselves for effective learning and teaching, the desired implication in school development.

The proposed strategic model is relevant for the proposed study in Zambia in recent years because the education system has been reformed to accommodate the full participation of parents; their contribution is still not up to the required standards and is not influencing teaching and learning. It is clear that child-rearing and creating supportive home conditions are the skills that parents within the family structure, need to have as early as early childhood development. Therefore, a two-way communication, school to home and vice versa requires close relationship between parents and teachers which is not very good now in Zambian schools (Lungu, 2015). Parents and the children themselves are part of such advocacy for starting and continuing their education. The platform that provides the space for parents to volunteer and collaborate with school is the School Management that Ministry of Education requires each school to have. It is against this background that this study focuses on finding out factors influencing parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe District.

1.9 Conceptual-framework

The diagram on the next page illustrates the relationship between parental involvement and the performance of the learner. It can be noted that when parents are involved in the education of their children, the performance will be good. When the parents are not involved, the performance will be negatively affected. Further, it can be realized that school and family collaboration improves learner achievements.



Source: Researcher

1.10 Definitions of key Terms

Parent: a person who undertakes to act as a parent of a learner for the purposes of the learner’s education at school (Brown, 2020). .

Parental involvement: can mean in any way in which an adult is involved in the education of the child. This reflects how much are parents to these children involved in the education of their children if at all they are, do they check their homework and do they talk to their children on the importance of education (Crosnoe, 2015).

Education: For this study, education is defined as the grade or degree last completed. Further refers to academic activities involving children both in school and at home such as doing

homework and being taught in class by their teachers. It can also refer to the process of learning and acquiring information (Brown, 2020).

Academic Achievement: means children excelling in their school work in terms of performance. Academic performance also goes beyond performing in the classroom. It can also relate to positions or jobs that people get at the end of their school years (Crosnoe, 2015).

Barrier: is something that causes difficulty or prevents one thing from happening (Brown, 2020).

1.11 Summary

This chapter provided the background to the study, clearly stating the study problem and the purpose of the study. The chapter also stated the objectives that guided the study as well as research questions which were derived from the objectives. Also covered in this chapter include the significance of the study, theoretical framework, delimitations of the study, operational definitions of terms and finally provides a summary of what was covered in the chapter. The next chapter focuses on the review of the related literature to the topic under study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The previous chapter provided the introduction to this study while the present chapter focuses on reviewing literature that relates to parental involvement in education. The chapter deals with analyses of related works done internationally and locally on parental involvement in education in relation to the themes developed from the research objectives. The purpose of this chapter is to consider what other researchers have done in relation to the area under study. In this study, the literature was deliberately searched and selected based on relevance to parental involvement in Zambia. Additionally, to learn from what other scholars have done on the topic and establish boundaries within which the current study could be placed. The subsequent sub-section describes the notion of parental involvement in education.

2.1 An overview of parental involvement in Education

The context of parental involvement is used in this research to describe a situation in which parents are regarded as active partners in the process of educating their children. When schools collaborate with families to support governance at the school, children are inclined to succeed (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2018). Makgope and Mokhele (2016), as cited in Okeke, (2014) perceive parental involvement as a “combination of supporting student academic achievement and participation in school-initiated functions.” Adequate parental participation leads to quality education. This clearly shows that parental involvement plays a critical role in building the successful future of a child. Singh *et al*, (2016) view parents as a very useful resource. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Education (MoE) is struggling in its efforts to improve the quality of public education due to the absence and passive nature of the township parents in school activities.

From the above definitions it is clear that the parent is always by the child’s side from infantile until his or her dependency. The parent takes responsibility to stiffen some bolts and nuts before the child goes to school and supports that child throughout by getting involved in that child’s education. In this study, the concept of parent involvement implicates the active and significant involvement of the parent in all aspects, where a parent is interacting with the child for guidance and support.

Additionally, many techniques were noted useful by the Family Support America (2018) in explaining successful parental involvement in children's education. These include creating a motivating home environment for pupils, volunteering by organising support for the parents and effective two way communication to keep both parents and the teachers informed of the welfare of the child at school as well as at home. Parental involvement, therefore, requires a dedication of resources by the parent to the child within a given domain. Parents need to be involved in every area of their child's life including cognitive development in order to ensure success in a child's education

In education there are different ways in which parental involvement can be understood and in this study the term participation is used interchangeably with the term involvement. The different meanings of parental involvement in this study amount to active roles played by the parents in the governance process of the school for maintaining quality education and school development. Sheldon (2017) defines parental involvement as "parents' investment of resources in their children" while Mmotlane, Winnaar and Kivulu, (2019) view parental involvement as parental participation in school activities which include volunteering in the classroom, attending school events, open houses and back-to-school nights. According to Epstein (2013), parental involvement has been defined as parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. It involves a wide range of responsibilities such as ensuring that children have breakfast before they go to school, volunteering at school, helping children with homework and holding positions on School Governing Bodies (Epstein, 2018). It is the responsibility of parents to participate in school activities and ensure that learners are participating in school activities. Assisting the learners is of paramount importance in this regard and the schools expect parental assistance for the benefit of the learners. In the current study, parental involvement implies that parents participate in school governance.

Okeke (2018) argued that parent involvement as a concept, "entails awareness of and achievement in schoolwork, and necessitates an understanding of the interaction between parenting skills and learner success in schooling, and commitment to consistent communication with educators about learner progress". From this definition, it is clear that when a parent is mindful of his or her role, such a parent will assist the child to achieve better in the schoolwork.

2.2 Factors influencing parental involvement in schools

This segment focuses on outlining the key variables that contribute to parental involvement. According to Lungu, (2016), there are factors that contribute to parental involvement in the education of their children. Even if several reasons are accredited to parental involvement, the present investigation concentrates on major factors attributed to parental involvement. The next segment discusses the factors influencing parental involvement in schools.

2.2.1 Poverty and Unemployment:

Many Zambians are stricken by poverty and unemployment. Mavhungu (2017) relates poverty with unemployment, meaning that if there is no employment in the family, the family results in poverty and that poverty will affect the child's performance. Parents from such families find it difficult to support their children in education due to un-affordability and therefore end up in a limited opinion of education.

Parental involvement as alluded to by Motala and Lexumo (2020) depends on the family economic background. When the family's economic status is poor, the parent feels inferior to get involved in educational matters, whereas on the other hand, as indicated by Vellmally (2018), parents from a higher social class show greater achievement. Poorer families, have the less ability to furnish home remedies for educational ailments and the richer the family the more ability to provide for its children, the more enhancements the child progress. As viewed by Ngwaru (2017), low income grossing parents appeared not to place a high value on the educational and intellectual achievement of their children. In some instances, wealthier parents are biased to be given advantage than poorer parents. Such kind of imbalance discourages parents with low or no income to get involved from their point of strength.

In Nigeria, Msila (2016) indicated that parents are busy with their economic pursuits, leaving their children in the hands of teachers and nannies, leaving it all to be their responsibility. Some of the parents were found to be swinging their responsibilities to educators and that was exactly what was happening. Their poor involvement in education leads to poor child performance because, among others, parents do not care about their children being late for or absent from school, learner's home works being done or not. Msila (2016) also emphasised that such parents have a

tendency of moving back in their responsibilities, maintaining that teachers have the necessary skills as professionals to lead the school without their support not recognising how the performance of their children is affected.

Parents are found to be not empowered on how to work with teachers, hence their poor relationships. Parents do not attend meetings, let alone collection of learners' progress reports, as they fear to be undermined by teachers. On the other hand, teachers view parents as not being supportive to them. There is lack of home-school communication lines opened between them for freely flowing information from school to parents at home and vice versa. Despite the effort by government to try and improve access levels of pupils at primary school through the introduction of free basic education (Free Education Policy, 2016), reduction of secondary user fees to six hundred kwacha per year (MoE, 2019) and the re-entry policy (Re-entry Policy, 2017), these parents do not want to meet the schools' financial obligations where applicable, some due to unemployment or living on Support Grants, and some on the reasons best known to them. Some parents get discouraged due to their perception that the school management is not financially accountable. Lack of parental involvement contributes to teachers to decide for the parents and it solely affects the quality of education.

In Zambia, parents are expected to contribute towards cost of schooling at all levels. At primary level, despite the pronouncement of Free Primary Education, there is inadequate funding provided for maintenance of schools and learning materials and therefore, most of these inputs are provided by parents and communities. In some rural areas of Zambia, parents, through the School Management Committees, contribute towards extending classroom blocks and constructing teacher accommodation.

Despite the above mentioned parent-school relations, a survey conducted by Mumba, Chikalanga, Sikwibele and Nkhata in the Eastern Province of Zambia in 2008 revealed that most parents had limited contact with the school. However, findings from the survey on parental attitudes towards their children's education were generally positive.

The survey recommended that every school should have a policy on parental involvement and work out a mechanism of putting it into practice. It has been repeatedly found that a child's success in school correlates positively with parents reading to their children. The survey report by Mumba et al., (2018) revealed that there was a long way to go before parents would be able to provide their

children with the necessary support to excel in school. The pupils interviewed revealed that although many parents signed their children's homework and were seen as showing more interest in their education, concrete assistance was less prevalent. Only about half of students were welcomed from school and asked about what they had learned. According to children, illiteracy and a shortage of reading materials almost certainly contributed to this.

Mulenga (2016) conducted a study on community participation in managing school finances in selected schools in Mansa District which revealed that schools' finances were mostly controlled and spent by heads of schools with very little involvement of local communities. This was despite the fact that most parents of children who attended the schools that were under study were economically constrained.

2.2.2 Institutional (School) Organisation

Most parents want to get involved in education but are discouraged by the operational structures within the school (Okeke, 2017). The organisational structure that does not promote student learning, for example, the staff that is not committed to the success of its learners demotivates parents from involving themselves in education. In some of the schools, the line of operation or school organ gram that is not clear confuses the parents. Parents may not know who to approach on certain issues or may be transferred from pillar to post until the parent gets discouraged. Structures that are orderly make parents not to perceive schools as negative environments and frustrating areas that expose them. As a result, their involvement becomes abundant and learners will perform well.

School Management Teams and educators may contribute towards discouraging or demotivating parents from getting involved in the education of their children. This, as outlined by Okeke (2018) parents also feel inferior to approach some educators on issues that affect their children due to the unwelcoming facial expressions. Educators, who are harsh and rude, also, discourage parents from getting involved at school or volunteer to perform some of the activities that will help their children to perform better. Some parents are discouraged by educators who will tell them how illiterate they are and undermine their social life. Parents then get disappointed and will never come again.

2.2.3 Communication

Communication is a bridge that conveys information to parents at home from school and to educators at school from home. It is one way in which parents are well-versed about the child's progress and the school is informed about the concerns that affect the child development. Kirkwood, (2016) raised a very crucial proclamation that "Communication is the foundation of a solid partnership. When parents and educators communicate effectively, positive relationships develop. Problems are more easily elucidated, and students make superior progress." This is true because many of the school activities are well conversed during parents' meetings or parent evenings and this becomes the prospect for parents to engage with the educators about the child. As outlined by Mbokodi and Singh (2018), communication in most cases is one way, that is, teachers to parents only. He indicated that teachers are the ones who want to converse with the parents whereas parents do not. Research has shown that verbal communication may be distorted on the way whereas written documents do not reach home or parents cannot read them.

The language factor is also causal and influential in determining parental involvement in schools. The language of correspondence serves both parents and educators to deliberate and understand how important parental involvement is. Thus, parents are able to communicate effectually and are encouraged to get tangled in the education of their children. The language which parents do not apprehend may discourage some parents to engross with the school activities.

Porumbu and Necsoi (2017) alluded that the extent to which parents and their children communicate about school activities is one variable of parental involvement in child's education. According to the researcher, such communication can be extended to the teacher to communicate with the child about school activities. But if a parent cannot do that, or does not know how to do it, he or she feels deprived and pulls back from education related matters. Technological communications used today, emails, text messages, and so on, also frustrates most of the parents as it is written in English and they cannot understand it (Reynolds, *et al*, 2018). Whereas letters and notices are found to be ineffective as most of the parents are illiterate and depend on their children to read for them, on the other side, mouth word communication also, is not reliable and therefore some schools end up without communication (Mbokodi and Singh, 2016).

However, See and Gorard (2016) highlight that in England parental involvement is legislated in the government policies to keep parents informed, encouraged in partnerships with schools and

involving them in partaking in the school decision making. One of the initiatives promoted by policy is Families and Schools Together (FAST), were developed to promote the link between the school and home in order to establish a two-way communication for the enhancement of the child's performance. This two-way communication becomes helpful hence, the FAST came into existence. Many of the school activities were well conversed during parents' meetings and evenings, to become the prospect for parents to engage with the educators about the child. Electronically contact such as social networks, phone calls and newsletters are assistive, as long as parents are kept well-versed about their child's educational progress, the parents get more and more involved (See & Gorard, 2017).

2.2.4 Education Level

The level of education is also a contributing factor to the parental involvement. Although many of the parents place much significance on the child's education so that their children do not experience the hardship of life like them, some use the low level of education as a justification not to get involved in education. Although some of the parents disregard their roles and responsibilities in the education of their children due to their low level of education, research has shown that, some parents, even if they are not highly educated, they are highly ambitious for their children and would want them to prosper in life (Vellymallay, 2016). They do not want their children to go their way but would engage in activities that suit their level of education.

Research has shown in Mbokodi and Singh (2019) that illiterate parents fear that because they are illiterate they cannot contribute anything to the school and cannot help with the work that they do not understand. Most parents as alluded to by Okeke (2018) complain of having nothing to contribute to the school or fear of academic victimisation and language barriers. Sometimes, as Keane (2017) indicates, because teachers view themselves as the highly respected people, parents feel that their interference as they attempt to comment may be stared disrespectful. On the other hand, the issue of low income, unemployment and low qualification, to name but a few, also contributes to their inferiority complex. They feel much degraded to work parallel with the educators whom they rate high. Porumbu and Nescoi (2019) added that the educational level of parents predicts more of variability in academic achievement than do other family demographic characteristics.

As for Chicago, Child-Parent Centres (CPCs) are established to collectively revitalize parental involvement, home-school support and classroom strategies to enhance education of the country (See & Gorard, 2017). The centres provide numerous programmes to promote parenting skills, improve classroom quality and family programme to teach parents on strategies to manage children's behaviour and equip teachers with skills to identify and address learner needs at school. These programmes would also augment energetic parent participation in education to emphasize child's social and cognitive development. Nevertheless, See and Gorard (2017) report that little or no evidence was reported that parental involvements in this country enhance learner attainment in schools.

The major conclusion of this study was that staff in schools showed reluctance to incorporate local communities in the financial operations of schools. Findings from a study conducted by Mumba, Chikalanga, Sikwibele and Nhkata in 2018 revealed that illiterate parents were not able to play roles of supporting children's education at home. With the high levels of illiteracy, especially in rural Zambia, it is difficult for illiterate parents to contribute meaningfully to the education of their children in the form of assisting them academically. As a result of high rates of illiteracy in Zambia, many families may not have literate members who may assist children academically. It is suggested that in such cases, members of other families who are literate may be asked to assist. While this is possible, it may not work always as the assistance rendered by the parents of the child is not the same as that rendered by a member of another family.

In summary, the above discussion suggests that various factors influence parental involvement in schools. These include poverty and unemployment, communication, institution organisation and parent's education levels. These factors if not addressed cause parents to not fully involve themselves in their children's education. The next section examines barriers to parental involvement.

2.3 Barriers to parental involvement in their children's education

While it is ideal for parents to be involved in school activities, there are also some barriers that decrease participation. Baker et al., (2016) spoke with parents to gain an understanding of such barriers that prevent parent involvement at school. Parents identified language and communication barriers, which included insufficient notice of school events. Parents preferred more notice than

they were given. They also reported that they received contact from the teachers more often when their child was demonstrating negative behaviors, rather than sharing positive information (Baker et al., 2016).

The education system is transforming not only in Zambia but also internationally. As the major stakeholders parents are expected to play a significant role in school governance (Rosenblatt and Peled, 2002). In some schools parental involvement is hindered by the school environment and teachers' attitudes towards parents. (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2020). This hostile school environment is not thoroughly researched and current study wishes to underpin them out.

The researchers in Zambia seem to overlook the issue of a school ethical environment for effective participation. Like all organizations, schools have an ethical environment, in other words, they provide their students, employees and parents with guiding acceptable moral values. In order for those values to be useful, they need to be aligned to the development of the schools effectiveness (Rosenblatt and Peled, 2018). Parental involvement is effective when parents influence the decisions taken particularly in the governance of schools. Rosenblatt and Peled (2018) believed that in order for parents to make huge contributions in school governance, parent empowerment is of utmost importance. This empowerment contributes to the effectiveness of parental involvement in schools and has been reported to contribute to better parent-school relationships.

A study conducted in Israeli schools showed that parental empowerment leads to higher involvement; the more the parents are empowered, the more they will be involved and trust schools (Rosenblatt *et al*, 2019). Trust is one of the most important elements in a well-functioning institution. Cunnings and Browley (2020) defined trust as the belief that another individual (or group) makes good-faith efforts to behave in accordance with commitments and does not take advantage of another, even when the opportunity is available (Rosenblatt & Peled, 2019). It is very easy to work when people trust each other. In school governance, teachers, principals and parents need to trust each other in the best interests of the school. Teachers and principals have better exposure and understanding of school activities as compared to parents who have little or no knowledge, so they must not take advantage of parents' limited knowledge, particularly in townships where parents' literacy levels are low.

Sithembele (2016) noted that although the legislation allows professional staff to create conducive environment for parental involvement, teachers are not adequately complying with legislation of parent and community involvement. In its Code of Conduct, the South African Council for Educators (Republic of South Africa, 2016) has clearly stipulated that teachers should recognise the parents as partners in education and establish working relationships with them. Therefore they must adequately keep parents informed about the progress of learners. It is also clearly stipulated in the National Education Policy Act (Republic of South Africa, 2016) that community participation should be regarded as one of the guiding principles in education and that all interested parties must be involved in all aspects of the education system.

This involvement consolidates the active collaboration of all stakeholders of education such as teachers, principals, parents, learners and professional support personnel (Mestry and Grobler, 2007). The participation of parents in school activities varies from school to school on how parents are encouraged and motivated to participate. Legislation alone cannot encourage parental participation but the parents must demonstrate an interest. It will be difficult for parents to determine the norms and values of the schools without this platform.

Parents are willing to participate in school governance. There is a lack of adequate skills for effective participation in school governance. Parents are not the only reason for their lack of involvement (Mestry and Grobler, 2017). This argument is confirmed by the research conducted by Alliance Schools Initiative (2017) that parents are unable to adequately participate in their children's education due to negative communication from schools. In addition, there is insufficient training for teachers on how to reach out to parents. Parents do not feel welcomed in schools, which is not motivating them for effective participation in school activities.

According to research by Moon and Ivin, (2018) and Mubanga, (2016), there are factors that contribute to inconsistency of parental involvement in the education of their children. These factors can improve but can also impact on parental involvement in education. These factors are discussed here under.

2.3.1 Working Parents

Most parents as outlined by Okeke (2018) complain about lack of time and work commitments that make them incapable of making any contribution to the school. This is because most of the

times they will be at work, sometimes in another province, for example, leaving their children with grandparents. These parents do not have time to collaborate with the school or engage in the child's school work. These parents can only see their children once a month because at most they are busy with their social matters than engaging in their children's school work. Even for those who are working in the proximate places become stressful and find parenting being overwhelming due to work demands, house work and child's school work.

If the school has arranged the parents' evening, whereby parents meet with the teachers to communicate the child's progress, such parents can hardly attend. Meetings that are convened during the day or weekends also fall outside those parents' attendance schedule. Such parents miss lots of opportunities, either to make contributions or discuss his or her child's progress. As stressed by Okeke (2017), parents cannot attend meetings because the timing of meetings clashed with their own personal engagements. The type of work and the nearness to the school, time off from work-demands determine both possibilities and restrictions on parental involvement activities. Added by Watson (2018), working parents find themselves to have multi responsibilities of work, school and family that lead to a serious dilemma due to the less time they devote to their children and as a result they lose interest to become part of the child's education. They miss the important aspect of interacting with their children or the school. Continuous interaction with the school as a parent mends learner performance at school. When Porumbu and Necsoi (2017) demonstrate the importance of child interaction, they emphasised the impact that is brought by homework recheck before it is handed to the educator. This will be demonstrating the supportive and helpful parenting approach the parent has. Research has shown in Topor et al (2016) that parent-child interaction is crucial in manipulating a child's academic development resulting from developmental theory of parenting. It is profiting for a parent to interrelate timorously with his or her child as well as the child's teacher to enhance good communication that provide a direct parent coaching and influence. The parent is able to detect areas that need development in his or her child and the child is able to articulate to his or her parent what challenges he or she bumps into that enable the best performance through the good relationship.

According to the researcher, parents who never interact with the school and educators in particular, lack the confidence to get involved in education as they are far from the child's education or school activities. Nevertheless, working parents are also important as they can add value to the progress

and learner performance of the school. These parents can make contribution to the school in the form of donations and other resources that enhance learner performance at school.

2.3.2 Lack of Knowledge

To some parents, it is not like they are not interested in getting involved in education, but they lack knowledge of what parental involvement is all about, and how to get involvement in their children's education unlike those who are knowledgeable. Such parents are uncertain of their responsibilities as parents and can hardly raise the value of how education at home serves as the basis for education at school. As asserted by Vellymally (2021), it will be of significant if the school gives devotion and support to such parents because parents will easily acquire the knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities. The provision of information based on the child's educational development and potential creates a greater awareness on the part of those parents who lack knowledge as they develop that need to be involved in education.

According to Surujlal and Dhurup (2019) parents who lack knowledge will also get exposed to the challenges faced by educators with their children. So, if they get involved it will become healthier for them to devastate such challenges by consistent contact with the teachers. Bhekimpilo (2016) concluded that many of the parents who lack knowledge on parental involvement wish to know and get involved but most of *Zambian* schools fail to establish connection with them.

2.3.3 Parent –Teacher Relationship

Effective education requires a close cooperation between teachers and parents and therefore it is much worthy those parents and teachers have the healthy relationship because both of them benefit from the relationship. Parental involvement as alluded by Vellymally (2021), is impossible without the direct involvement from the school because good relationships in education provide stimulation to good learning and the same relationship must be matched with the support and the latitude given to children to learn. Parents' and teachers' relationship of mutual trust and understanding make them to be partners in education for the benefit of both the school and the child, hence the enhancement of learner performance and fruitful parental involvement. But if parents and educators are not in good relationships, it demotivates the parent to visit the school and the educator to visit the child's home.

According to Bhekimpilo (2016), good relationships free parents to consult teachers on issues relating to their children and teachers to report to parents on issues that need urgent attention. The parent acquires more about his child from the teacher whereas the teacher acquires much about the child from the parent as well. It is sometimes difficult for children to explicate to the parent what he did or troubles him or her at school, but easy when the teacher and parent have a direct communication about the child. Parents help teachers to know learners better if there is that relationship and cooperation between them. The relationship of parents and teachers, therefore, is emphasized to be a two-way process, that is, there must be the dependency between the parents and the teachers. Mbokodi and Singh (2019) declared that the powerful relationship between schools and parents must be well realigned to embrace parents as equal partners in their children's education to lead to a greater achievement irrespective of whatever the challenges they may encounter.

Listening to parents, encourages participation and gives them more power and responsibility which results in a better functioning school. Parents who participate in decision-making, experience greater feelings of ownership and are more committed to supporting the school's mission (Jackson and Davis, 2020). It is important for the school to have a working relationship with the community they serve. Partnerships must not be forged only through PTA as there are many school activities in which the parents can be involved. The current parental involvement through partnerships needs to be taken beyond the statutory requirements such as a School Governing Body (Lemmer and van Wyk, 2020). There appears to be little evidence of effective partnerships between parents and schools at this stage in Zambia (Lemmer and van Wyk, 2018). The parents are not effectively participating in school activities as required by the school governance legislation.

The MoE Act of 2018 identifies parents as the official partners in the governance of their children's school. Through the involvement of parents, the school can develop working partnerships with all stakeholders and communities it serves. Partnership refers to the collaborative relationship between the schools and parents (Mncube, 2019). The above mentioned relationship plays an important part in parental involvement, in view of how parents perceive the school and its teachers. Mbokodi and Singh, (2016) argued that MoE Act of (2019) describes the ideal for stakeholder participation in school governance as, "partnership between parents and schools is an instrument to improve and develop the school as the parents involve themselves in the school activities in order to benefit their children's education".

However some literature suggests importance of parental involvement. The literature suggests that parental involvement improves the academic achievement of learners. Parental involvement has shown to exert a positive influence on the child's educational success. Epstein (2016) believed that in order for school to achieve maximum effectiveness, parents and school must develop a working partnership (Heystek, 2017). According to a popular African proverb, *it takes a whole village to raise a child*. When parents are actively involved in their children's education, children tend to model their parents' attitudes and actions. The literature on parental involvement in children's education demonstrates that parental involvement benefits children's learning (Davids, 2017). The term, 'parental involvement' can mean in any way in which an adult is involved in the education of the child. According to Mncube (2019) "parental involvement in education has been associated with a variety of positive academic outcomes including higher-grade-points averages". The positive effect of parents getting involved in their children's education has been validated by many researchers. It is only natural to assume that children whose parents show an interest in their education will be more motivated and have more self confidence in school. These children would know they have the support of the parents and this knowledge will have positive effects in general on their attitude towards school as well as at home (Mncube, 2019). Effective parental involvement will benefit the learners which will ultimately develop the entire schooling performance. When the parents are involved in the schools, they get to know what is happening at their learner's schools. According to the literature, parental involvement is extremely emphasized for the smooth operation of schools (Epstein, 2019), including deviant teacher behaviour is detected timorously so that remedial action can be considered.

The contribution of parents in school activities is highly valued and motivating. Singh *et al*, (2016) noted that through maximum parental involvement the parents develop the power to influence the behaviour they expect from teachers and principals. For school development and quality education; they further argued that no matter which class a learner belongs to, parental involvement is crucial in school governance. Okeke (2018) suggested that "there is sufficient evidence in suggesting that parents' involvement in education of children can make significant difference in the development of education system as a whole." Parental involvement has a positive effect on school performance for this reason, it is important to explore strategies to be used for an improved parental involvement.

Other barriers described by parents included time conflicts, a lack of resources (Reece, Staudt, & Ogle, 2016), scheduling conflicts with older siblings (Kang, Horn, & Palmer, 2017), or feeling nervous about going to the school due to their own personal experiences (Baker *et al.*, 2016).

Over all, the research presented here promotes parent involvement in school activities. Unfortunately, as discussed in this paper, there are barriers preventing parents from participating. One goal of this study is to begin thinking about ways to break down the barriers and provide support to families. By asking families directly about the barriers they face, we can gather more accurate information.

2.4. Strategies used for an improved parental involvement

Volunteerism in school activities is another form of participation. Lemmer (2017) suggested the consideration of volunteers' deployment in school activities due to its cost implications but involving the community in the school tends to be very difficult. In order for parents to avail themselves for voluntary responsibilities and working partnerships, training and motivation programmes must be conducted to develop their interest in school activities. Heystek (2020) believed that participation of parents in non- academic school activities is better in comparison with other activities in township schools.

Teachers spend a lot of time on these activities which can be used for academic related activities, so parental involvement can assist teachers for them to spend more time in classrooms. Baker *et al.*, (2016) suggested that parents be involved in coaching or training learners, in the maintenance and upgrading of the school buildings. This involvement of parent in non-academic activities can be done via the PTA, or sub-committees of the governing body but the parents in working class and rural areas are not availing themselves to assist schools in these activities. Participation of parents in school activities is very poor and parents in some communities do not have a tradition of involvement in school activities. The parents have little time for volunteer activities and those who do have time are not availing themselves for school activities in Kitwe District.

Kirkwood, (2016) suggests that an increase in the partnership between parents and schools, leads to an increase in student achievement. In addition Kang, Horn, and Palmer, (2017) confirmed that “key to school reform is the parent” and that transformation must occur at local level where school authorities play a critical role in translating national directives into local policy to ensure that these

directives are being adequately practiced. The learners and teachers expect parents to be actively involved in school activities but parents are not committing themselves in school activities which lead to frustration of children resulting in poor performance as cited by Kirkwood, (2016).

Ji and Koblinsky (2017) conducted a research in China's view of parental involvement and found it as bringing higher grade point average at school, better scores in reading and Mathematics and lower dropout rate for greater academic benefits. When comparing Chinese American parents with Whites in this country, Chinese American parents were found to have low participation in school matters than Whites. This was enhanced by their higher socio-economic backgrounds and fluency in both English and Chinese. But, it was discovered that they were actively involved in home learning activities than Whites. At home the Chinese American parents would encourage their children for Mathematics, Science and Technology subjects as they remark them for future careers.

Although many of the countries signify the involvement of parents in education, educators in Israel view it more as interference on teacher proficient territory than involvement in education (Lungu, 2016). In this case, these educators took it all to themselves and do not need any support from the parents. Such educators become too formal that they compel parents to make appointments if they want to see them, failing which they will be returned without being attended to, discourage and demotivate them to be involved in the education of their children. This, as outlined by Okeke (2018) makes parents feel like they are at school to be lectured or disciplined, as such they feel degraded to approach some educators on issues that affect their children. Some of the educators, due to their working or social class, instead of talking to parents in the language that they understand, they will use a foreign language when communicating with the parents even if they know that the parents cannot understand it, with the intention to avoid them. The parents then get disappointed and will never come again and that is what the Israeli educators would want as they perceive parental involvement to be interfering and disturbing them.

According to the Hong Kong educational context, (Shun and Lee 2018) the following levels to involve parents in education have been developed, namely: communication, parenting, learning at home, volunteering, decision making and collaboration.

The above mentioned levels, if collectively affected, would enhance parental involvement in the education of their children. If parents in Hong Kong are really providing their children with

learning at home, they will be extending what the child shall have learnt at school and the child is likely to do well. It is also found in Shun and Lee (2018) that Hong Kong had also initiated measures that would gradually involve the parents through the reform movement of implementation of school based management and this, is believed to be bringing about positive school improvement and effectiveness through parental involvement.

In America, as indicated by Watson, *et al*, (2017), the education policy mandates parental involvement for reformation in the development of educational programmes. As cited by Epstein (2019) in Watson, *et al* (2017), discussion of the No Child Left Behind legislation (NCLB) of 2001 of United States, highlighted that parental involvement should be revamped to allow for more equitable and effective programmes of school, family and community partnerships. In the researcher's view, working in partnerships positively impact on the child as a learner, community member and child in the family.

Makuba, and Mafa, (2016) recall that Parental involvement takes many forms, including good parenting in the home, the provision of a secure and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussions, and contact with schools to share information, participation in school events, participation in the work of the school and participation in school governance. Although there are many classifications of parental involvement types, Epstein's classification appears to be the most influential in parental involvement literature and it is worthwhile to explore her classification in more detail.

According to Epstein and her colleagues from Johns Hopkins University, there are six types of strategies which can be used for an improved parental involvement (Epstein, 2017).

2.4.1 Parenting

This category includes the basic responsibilities of families such as providing housing, health care, nutrition, clothing and safety and creating home conditions that support children's learning, for example, purchasing the necessary books and being responsive to their children, communicating with them and supporting their development (Epstein, 2017). Parenting is very important for schools to assist families to develop child-rearing skills and setting home conditions to support learning, for instance instilling the culture of reading to encourage education. Learners can be

assisted in their homework by parents and taken to the library during the weekends for doing research and reading.

2.4.2 Communicating

Epstein, (2017) recognize that these kinds of involvement assume that schools keep parents informed about school matters by sending those newsletters or progress reports, visiting parents and employing other means of communication. The school principals have the power to influence the form, frequency and the results of information sent from school to the homes of learners

Improved communication was identified as an area of need by parents and educators. Increased, positive communication makes parents feel more comfortable and welcomed into the school. Parents want to hear beyond the negative and learn about their child's achievements (Baker et al., 2016). Also, teachers can show that they value parent involvement by communicating what the parent's role in education could look like and invite them to school. When parents feel that the school really values and encourages parent involvement, they are more likely to participate (Hornby & Lafaele, 2018).

Larson (2019) points out that the key to productive and positive parent engagement is a good flow of communication between school and home, and that communication should encompass every stakeholder, including parents, teachers, administrators, specialists, club leaders and coaches, and the parent-teacher organization. The strategies here can help schools increase parent engagement in the community at large.

2.4.3 Volunteering

This refers to anyone assisting with children's learning or development in any way at any time and place without monetary compensation. According to Lemmer (2017) volunteers are a cost effective way of doing school activities. The parents' talents and contributions to the school are recognized by the authorities. Forms of parental involvement at school include assisting teachers in the classroom, on class trips, or at class parties, assisting teachers in the cafeteria, library, playground, computer lab in places which require adult supervision, assisting the school governing body, fundraising and community relations. (Epstein 2017).

2.4.4 Learning at home

This entails the provision of information and ideas to families about how to help students with homework and other curriculum related activities occurring at home. Examples include assisting with homework, discussing books with their children and brainstorming ideas for school projects.

2.4.5 Decision-making

Parents who are involved in decision making, advocate children's interests (Owino, 2018). These parents are acting as the key stakeholders in making decisions that will impact on student learning and often participate in parent-teach. The other type of involvement is Collaborating with the community and this type of involvement relies on identifying and integrating resources and co-services from the community to strengthen school programmes and student learning and development.

Okeke (2018) highlighted the importance of different types of involvement, as positive parenting helps to create a sound academic environment in the home. Okeke names the following: a friendly home environment for their child; assist in designing effective forms of school-to-home communication about the school programmes and child's progress; recruiting and organizing parents help and support child home learning and developing parent leaders and representatives at school which will collaborate with the community. Lemmer and van Wyk (2018) noted that each type of involvement poses specific challenges for its successful design and implementation and can lead to different outcomes for learners, parents and teachers.

Schools use different and varied approaches to parental involvement. In some schools, the Head teacher leads in promoting parental involvement while in others teaching and support staff drive parental involvement. Epstein (2017) assumed that it is the principal's role to orchestrate activities that will enable staff to understand parental involvement and he or she must select, design, evaluate and revise programmes for parental involvement. Michael, Wolhuter and van Wyk, (2017) assert that parental involvement is an essential part of school management and its effectiveness and failure lie in the hands of the principal.

Michael *et al*, (2017) believe that school management is supposed to play a greater role in the facilitation of parental involvement rather than considering family background such as race,

ethnicity, socio-economic level or marital status in the determination of the extent of parental involvement in children's education (Selolo, 2016). The parent's participation lies in the hands of the teaching staff. In considering the above mentioned approaches, the nature and extent of parental participation can either be hindered or enhanced by the Head teacher or principal and the teaching staff.

To this end the researcher feels there is need for this study to be conducted especially in the urban area of Kitwe for various reasons. Obvious Sithembele in 2016 conducted a study in some public primary schools on "Examining parental involvement in governance at primary schools: Case study of three township primary schools in the Western Cape" whose purpose was to examine parental involvement in governance at primary schools in the Western Cape. The researcher used simple random sampling method to select the participating schools in Western Cape. Simple random sampling was whereby the individuals in the total population were equal and independent chances of being selected as a member of a sample. The study sample however involved only 15 parents of which most of them were not members of governing board committees. Above all, the study was about Examining parental involvement in relation to governance at primary schools which findings cannot be generalized to the secondary school level which is the case of this study.

On the other hand, the researcher argues that some factors highlighted in the literature review have solutions that were designed to address their challenges they impose on the governance of schools with the involvement of parents for the purpose of educating their child. Hornby, and Blackwell, (2018) supports that some factors cannot be generalized due to the differences that exist in cultural beliefs, regional and geographical locations which do not guarantee the existence of such factors to other places of the global world and Zambia specifically.

Selolo in 2018 conducted a similar study on "Factors that influence Parental involvement in the education of their children at Primary School level in Bahananwa Circuit in Blouberg Municipality, Limpopo Province". The researcher used purposive sampling which is a non-probability type of sampling to select the sample size of respondents. Further the researcher used both qualitative and quantitative research methodology.

Above all, the findings on the Factors that influence Parental involvement in the education of their children at Primary School level in Bahananwa Circuit in Blouberg Municipality, Limpopo Province. The study was more concerned with Parental involvement in the education of their

children at Primary School level not the secondary schools and it was done at primary school level which the researcher feels the findings cannot be generalized to the secondary school level.

2.6 Summary

The chapter reviewed the related literature on the governance of schools by examining different writings and research done by other researchers at local and international levels. Furthermore, this chapter highlighted the gaps and has shown the role this study played in filling those gaps. The next chapter deals with the Methodology which will be used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a description and justification of the research methodology carried out in this study. According to Kumar, (2021) research methodology is the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyze information about a topic. In a research paper, the methodology section allows the reader to critically evaluate a study's overall validity and reliability. Besides, Jansen and Warren (2020) confer that research methodology simply refers to the practical "how" of any given piece of research. More specifically, it's about how a researcher systematically designs a study to ensure valid and reliable results that address the research aims and objectives. Kumar, (2021) describes research methodology as a collection of methods, operation or conduct within a well-defined knowledge base that guides the research.

Following the above views, this chapter is constituted in the following manner:

- The research design and approach;
- The sampling frame and sample selection; and,
- Data collection procedure including analysis and interpretation, trustworthiness and research ethics.

The above mentioned features are discussed below to explain their suitability for this study. It is important to take notice that the literature study carried out in the preceding chapter stipulated broad theoretical responses to the following objectives emerging from the main aim of the study: ; finding out factors influence parental involvement in the education of their children, to determine the barriers to parental involvement in their children's education and to identify strategies which can be used for an improved parental involvement in the education of their children in most secondary schools in Kitwe district. The succeeding section focuses on the research design that was used in finding answers to the study questions.

3.1 Research design

Research design is defined as a framework of methods and techniques chosen by a researcher to combine various components of research in a reasonably logical manner so that the research problem is efficiently handled (Johnson & Christensen, 2017) it provides insights about “how” to conduct research using a particular methodology. This study used a descriptive research design. Orodho and Kombo (2020) point out that descriptive research design is used to collect information about people’s attitudes, opinion, habits or any of the variety of education and social issues. Jackson (2019) adds that descriptive research design is informative because it gives a rich description of a particular situation. Owing to the fact that the study was confined to only three urban secondary schools, it was the view of the researcher to describe the phenomenon “parental involvement in urban secondary Schools” in a holistic manner. This allowed for the use of aforesaid design which gave an insight and a better understanding of the theme under study (Kombo & Tromp, 2016).

The current study used qualitative approach owing to the fact that it allowed participants to fully express themselves without any restrictions. This view is also noted by Ojala (2016) that qualitative research approach gives a clear documentation of people’s beliefs and interpretation of reality as well as their actions. In qualitative approach both semi structured interviews and focus group discussions were used.

It further used quantitative method in order to get in-depth understanding of the factors hindering parental involvement in Kitwe. Makuba and Mafa (2016) noted that quantitative approach usually involves collecting and converting data into numerical form so that statistical calculations can be made and conclusions drawn. It was achieved by the use of questionnaires.

3.1.1 Rationale for a mixed-methods design

As pointed out in the previous paragraphs, this study used the mixed-methods design, combining both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. Archibald, (2016) asserts that quantitative and qualitative studies each have advantages and disadvantages that make it more or less effective for a specific research problem. Similarly Collins and Evans, (2017) said that mixed methods research is an approach to empirical investigation that involves collecting data both qualitatively and quantitatively whose major assumption is to provide a more complete understanding of the

research problem. Using combined approaches was considered appropriate for this study because the main aim of this thesis was to investigate factors affecting parental involvement in secondary schools in Kitwe. Therefore, Creamer, (2018) concluded that combining methods in one study enables the researcher to find out what is known regardless of whether the data and methodologies are qualitative or quantitative.

3.2 Research population

This study drew its population from 3 secondary schools in Kitwe Urban District on Copper belt Province of Zambia. According to Patton, (2016) a research population is also known as a well-defined collection of individuals or objects known to have similar characteristics. All individuals or objects within a certain population usually have a common, binding characteristic or trait. The targeted populations for this study were the head teachers, teachers, parents and members of PTA from selected public secondary schools in Kitwe District.

The researcher used a sample population of 133. A sample of 3 administrators, 20 teachers, and 80 parents from the community where the research was conducted, 30 PTA members was the representative of the population which was picked at random for the interview, questionnaire and focus group discussion.

3.3 Research Sample Population

Collins and Evans, (2017) asserts that a sample is simply a subset of the population. The concept of sample arises from the inability of the researchers to test all the individuals in a given population. The sample must be representative of the population from which it was drawn and it must have good size to warrant statistical analysis.

Additional, Creamer (2018) points out that the main function of the sample is to allow the researchers to conduct the study to individuals from the population so that the results of their study can be used to derive conclusions that will apply to the entire population. It is much like a give-and-take process. The population “gives” the sample, and then it “takes” conclusions from the results obtained from the sample. Particular to this study, the sample populations were school head teachers, deputy heads, teachers, parents and PTC members.

3.4 Sampling procedure

The study used two types of sampling procedures and these are purposeful random sampling and purposive sampling.

3.4.1. Purposive sampling

Crossman, (2016) explains that purposive sampling is a sampling method in which elements are chosen based on purpose of the study. Further, it is the process of identifying a population of interest and developing a systematic way of selecting cases that is not based on advanced knowledge of how the outcomes would appear. Patton, (2016) states the purpose of purposive sampling is to increase credibility not to foster representativeness. The teachers and parents were selected using the purposive sampling technique. This means that only parents that had children attending school at the targeted schools qualified to take part in the study.

3.4.2. Purposeful random sampling

Purposeful random sampling procedure was used in the selection of schools. Patton (2016) states that “purposeful random sample aims at reducing suspicion about why certain cases were selected for study, but such a sample still does not permit statistical generalizations”. It is important to understand, however, that purposeful random sampling aims at fostering credibility and not representativeness in probability sampling techniques. Therefore, PTA members were purposeful randomly picked by the researcher and interviewed at their convenient time.

3.5 Data collection procedure

Data collection was done in two phases with the initial qualitative data collection followed by the second quantitative data collection. Put differently, the results from one data collection procedure informed the data collection approach of the other procedure, the latter builds on the former. In this research, items for inclusion in the questionnaire were built upon previously collected qualitative data that identified constructs or language used by research participants (Archibald, 2016). Since qualitative data analysis yielded quotes, codes, and themes, Owing to its two-phase structure and the fact that only one set of data was collected at a time, this design was relatively

easy to describe, implement and report. However, this implied that the design requires a considerable amount of time to implement. The next phase discusses data collection instruments used in this study.

3.6 Research instruments

In this study the researcher used the following research instruments to obtain the needed information from the participants. The instruments include semi-structured, questionnaires, focus group and document analysis. According to Creamer, (2018) the use of more than one research instrument in the data collection authenticate the trustworthiness of the study. The use of these corresponding data collection instruments improved reliability and validity as it assisted the researcher to cross-check the information obtained and to gain a deeper insight into the issues under inspection.

3.6.1. Semi-structured Interview guide

According to Patton, (2016) interview is one of the main data collection tools in qualitative research. Semi-structured Interview guide was used to gather information from parents in selected schools within the community. The purpose of the interview guide in this study was to collect data from those with responsibility and experience in schools and at home over the learners. This instrument was used in face to face dialogue between the researcher and the respondents. The interview was meant to generate in-depth information through exploration of the knowledge, experience and views of the respondents about provision of quality education.

3.6.2 Questionnaires

According to Bernard (2000) a questionnaire is a collection of written questions which are usually answered in order to obtain information from the participants. The purpose for using questionnaires is to enable participants to answer freely as they fill the questionnaire forms. These instruments were necessary for this descriptive study as teachers had time to provide well thought out information.

The importance of questionnaires in the study was also to facilitate collection of large amounts of data which was more dependable and reliable as they were able to provide information or answers

to the three research questions. Teachers were allowed to go with the questionnaires and give response in their own time but within a specified period of fortnight.

3.6.3 Focus group discussion

In this research there were two focus groups. Collins and Evans, (2017) points out that using different focus groups as part of one research investigation is not uncommon since it is deemed risky relying only on one focus group. Therefore, the use of more than one focus group interview provides the much-needed credibility in addition to the different views that are expressed about the study under investigation. The first focus group was for parents and the second group was for PTA members. Parents and PTA members outlined in sampling procedure above were given an opportunity to express their views on the issues of the parental involvement conducted by a given leader. Questions were provided and their views were recorded down as well using a tape recorder and note books. Halcomb *et al.*, (2018) confers that the focus group discussion method is a technique of group interview that generates data through the opinions expressed by participants. Focus group discussion guides were used and these were carried out in the respondents' natural setting of the school. The whole aim of using the focus groups discussions was to listen to the experiences of the subjects as primary data in order to make out on how much parents involve themselves in the education of their children.

3.6.4 Document analysis

A variety of documents such as minutes of the meetings, agendas, newsletters, and parents' minute book were analyzed for the view of continual function of schools. De Vos et al (2016) describe document study as analysis of existing documents, either to understand their substantive content or to illuminate deeper meanings which may be revealed by research question. Previous year's parent meeting attendance registers, PTA Minutes books and annual reports were examined in this research to examine the extent to which parents are involved in the education of the learners. Parent Teachers Association minutes were examined from 2015 to date to find out the level of parental involvement in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe District.

Creswell, (2017) states that document analysis is a qualitative data instrument where documents are quoted and interpreted by the researcher to voice meaning to the phenomenon under study. The

importance of document analysis in this study was to determine the historical facts about parental involvement in school related activities.

3.7 Credibility and trustworthiness

Jansen, and Warren, (2020) contend that the findings of any particular study can be trustworthy when they are considered to approximate the truth and Stumpfegger (2020) states that trustworthiness for quantitative studies, it is referred to as validity and reliability. In this light, the researcher, therefore, was expected to provide a report that was credible and dependable in terms of the extent to which it rang true to participants in the field and how congruent the findings reflected reality. Additionally, Patton, (2015) contends that though quantitative and qualitative researchers can never arrive at objective truth or reality, various ways can be used to attain the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Given this paradox, the researcher used the design rigorously to enhance the plausibility and reliability of the research findings. The following measures of validity are discussed in the next sub-headings; triangulation and low inference descriptor.

3.8.1 Triangulation

This study used interviews and questionnaires as sources of data. Employing triangulation, this study cross-checked data from these two sources to ascertain corroboration and convergence from multiple perspectives with the same people. For instance, Patton (2015) explains that triangulation, in whatever form, increases credibility and quality by countering the accusation that a study's findings are simply an artifact of a sole method or a solitary source. To discard familiar threats to trustworthiness, the present study engaged in triangulation which means the process of getting information from different sources, cross-checking, and verifying the collected data.

3.8.2 Low inference descriptor

Rommel-Esham, (2020) contends that low-Inference Descriptors seek to record observations “in terms that are as concrete as possible, including verbatim accounts of what people say, for example, rather than researchers' reconstructions of the general sense of what a person said, which would allow researchers' personal perspectives to influence the reporting.” This study used verbatim or straightforward quotations of the respondents' words and precise citations extracted from the data

to authenticate interpretations of gathered data. The citations were carefully used to display differences in participants' comments, to give typical samples of feedback relative to specific topics, and to display certain understandings or viewpoints.

3.9 Summary

This chapter furnished a detailed explanation of the research methodology. The study followed the qualitative and quantitative line of inquiry in responding to the central question. The reasons for the selection of qualitative and quantitative research were highlighted. The study used questionnaires for administrators and teachers. Focus group discussion for parents and PTA members, and document analysis which were used to draw rich information regarding parental involvement in the education of their children. The chapter which follows will present the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The investigation was undertaken through the review of related literature and empirical research. The preceding chapter focused on the research methodology and design used to obtain data in this study. The qualitative and quantitative research approach was employed to guide the empirical investigation. The data were collected using the interview and questionnaires from the purposively selected secondary schools and the community in Kitwe district.

This chapter presents a discussion of the empirical findings. The analysis of the empirical data has been done against the background of the literature review in chapter two of this study and presented around the objectives of the study as discussion points. The quantitative information from all the subpopulations has been presented using tables and bar graphs and while the qualitative information has been presented using verbatim transcriptions derived from the interviews with the school managers, parents, teachers and PTA members from the schools and community under study. For the qualitative data, direct quotations were used to present the findings as they reflect the deep thoughts and feelings of the participants on their experiences concerning parental involvement in Kitwe. The findings from both the qualitative and quantitative data are discussed jointly to facilitate triangulation of the study findings.

4.1 Factors influencing parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district

The first objective was guided by the research question: what factors influence parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district? The responses came from most parents who gave the following reasons: 66 percent indicated performance of the child and 34 percent indicated behaviour of the child as factors influencing parental involvement in the education of their children in most secondary schools in Kitwe district.

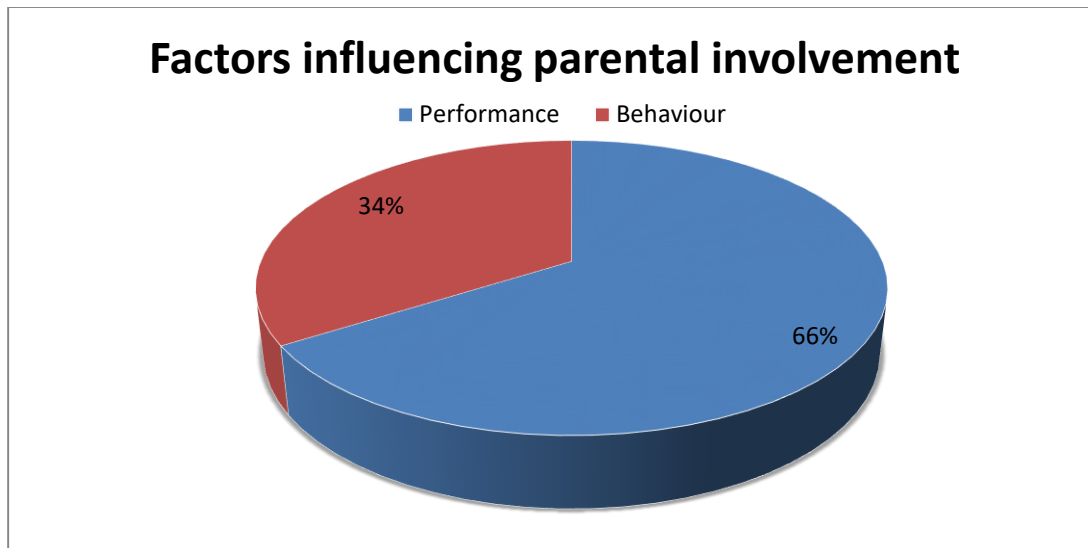


Figure 1: Responses on factors influencing parental involvement

4.1.0 Performance of the children

As can be seen above, performance of the child either positive or negative may influence parents to involve themselves in the education of their children. If pupils are performing well in schools, parents will be motivated to encourage them to continue working hard. Better still, if children are not performing well, responsible parents will be eager to find out why the performance is not pleasing.

To illustrate on performance to be the factor influencing parents' involvement in the education of their children, one parent from focus group discussion held asserted the following:

When my children are performing better, I visit the school and praise the management and teachers, again when the performance is negative or not pleasing, I visit the school to find out reasons behind the poor performance.

Another parent stated that:

I always find time to interact with the school management concerning the performance of my children. When they perform better I reward my children and teachers where possible.

4.1.1 Behavior of the children

The findings also revealed that the behavior of the children is another factor influencing parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe

district. The result shows that 34 percent of responses supported that the behavior of the child while still at school arose the interest of the parents to involve themselves especially when the behavior of school going children is not pleasing.

One parent lamented on this that;

One time at a named school, pupils' behavior was not pleasing in the sense that pupils were dressing badly, both boys and girls. For boys they were sagging their uniform trousers and cutting wrong hair styles, girls on the other hand were wearing miniskirt uniforms.

The parent further stated;

I and other concerned parents went to discuss with the school administrator on the issue, the administrator acted upon it and the behavior was stopped.

It is obvious and no doubt that education should produce responsible citizens who can represent the country both academically and morally. Above all, when the performance is not pleasing and the behavior of school going children is decaying, responsible parents must be concerned.

4.2 Barriers to parental involvement in their children's education in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district

The second objective of the study was to determine the barriers to parental involvement in their children's education in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district. In order to seek responses, the objective was guided by the research question: What are the barriers to parental involvement in their children's education in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district?

The table below shows some reasons of the results of the findings. It can be noted that 68 participants supported that most parents are busy with work, 34 participants felt it is the level of education and 26 said most parents do not know the importance of education for their children.

Barriers to parental involvement	
Busy with work	68
Level of education	34
Importance of education	26

Source: field data

Table 1: Distribution of response on barriers to parental involvement

The information in the table was translated in form of a column chart shown on the next page to make the points clear. The responses came from 128 participants who included school administrators, teachers, parents and Parent Teacher Association/Committee members.

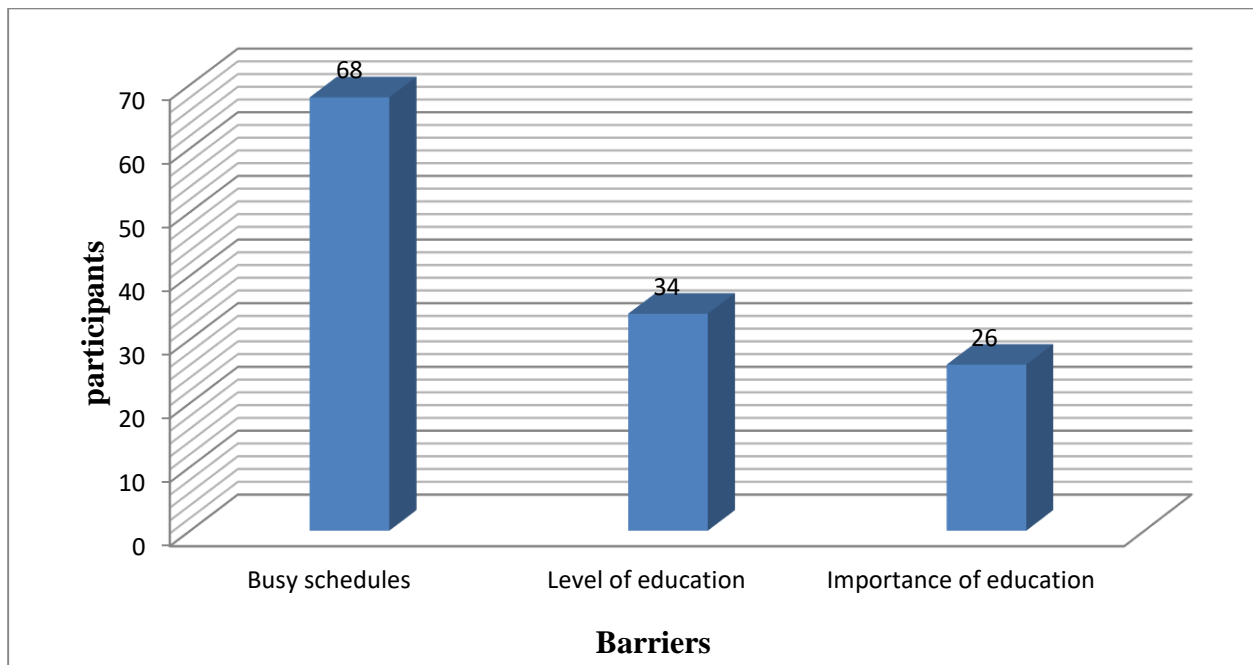


Figure 2: Response on barriers to parental involvement

4.2.0 Busy schedules

As can be seen above most parents in the selected study areas have been held up with tight schedules which attributed to their inconsistency in the education of their children. To cement on this reason to which most parents do not involve themselves in their children’s education, one teacher as a key respondent stated that;

Parents claim to have busy schedules at their places of work as majority work in the private companies such as Mopani Copper Mine (MCM) and Konkola Copper Mine (KCM).

Another respondent said that;

Parents have busy schedules. Majority of them lack understanding of the importance of parents' involvement in the education of their children.

Another teacher noted and stated that;

Kitwe is the hub of the Copperbelt and because of that, most parents either work or are into a business, therefore, they have little or no time for their children especially their academic affairs. Further to some extent, some parents do not prioritize the education of their children.

4.2.1 Level of education

The findings also revealed that the level of education matters also in involving themselves in the education of their children. Parents who have gone far in education are likely to involve themselves much in the education of children than parents who are not educated. 34 participants totally supported that level of education of both parents is the key to parental involvements. One respondent supported and stated that;

There is high level of illiteracy among parents which hinders them from involvement in the education of their children. Further result does not know the importance of education.

Another respondent felt that:

Educational level of the parents hinders most parents from involving themselves in the education of their children because they do not know where to start in order for them to help their children academically.

4.2.2 Importance of education

Further, the findings showed that in most cases parents do not know the importance of educating their children. 26 parents out of 128 shown on the column chart above said that most parents who do not involve themselves in the education of their children do not know the importance of education.

To the researcher's surprise one parent openly said the following;

There is no need for me to encourage my children to concentrate on education because even if they get educated, there are no jobs in Zambia. Further, you will find that someone graduated 10 years ago but till now he / she has no employment.

The parental level of education is attributed to education involvement. One parent said;

Not knowing the importance of education can lead to parents not supporting their children to concentrate on their education. This is because lower educational level of parents can result in them not knowing the importance of education.

Another respondent said;

Most parents in the study area do not know the importance of education; hence failure to support their children academically.

It can be noted that busy schedules, educational levels and parents not knowing the importance of education are barriers to parental involvement in the study area of Kitwe district. This leads to another important question: what are some of the strategies which can be employed in the area so that parents start to involve themselves fully in the education of their children in Kitwe District? The third objective of the study looks into the matter.

4.3 Strategies used for an improved parental involvement in the education of their children in Kitwe district

The third objective of the study was to identify strategies which can be used for an improved parental involvement in the education of their children in most secondary schools in Kitwe district. In order to try to find responses, the objective was guided by the research question: What strategies can be used for an improved parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district?

In addressing this objective, qualitative data was collected from 128 participants and that all the participants were asked the same question. In trying to identify the strategies that could be used the following were the major responses found: sensitization, meetings and open days. The diagram on the next page shows that 70 participants supported that there is need for sensitizing parents on the importance of education, 28 participants thought of regular meetings with parents and 30 participants supported open days.

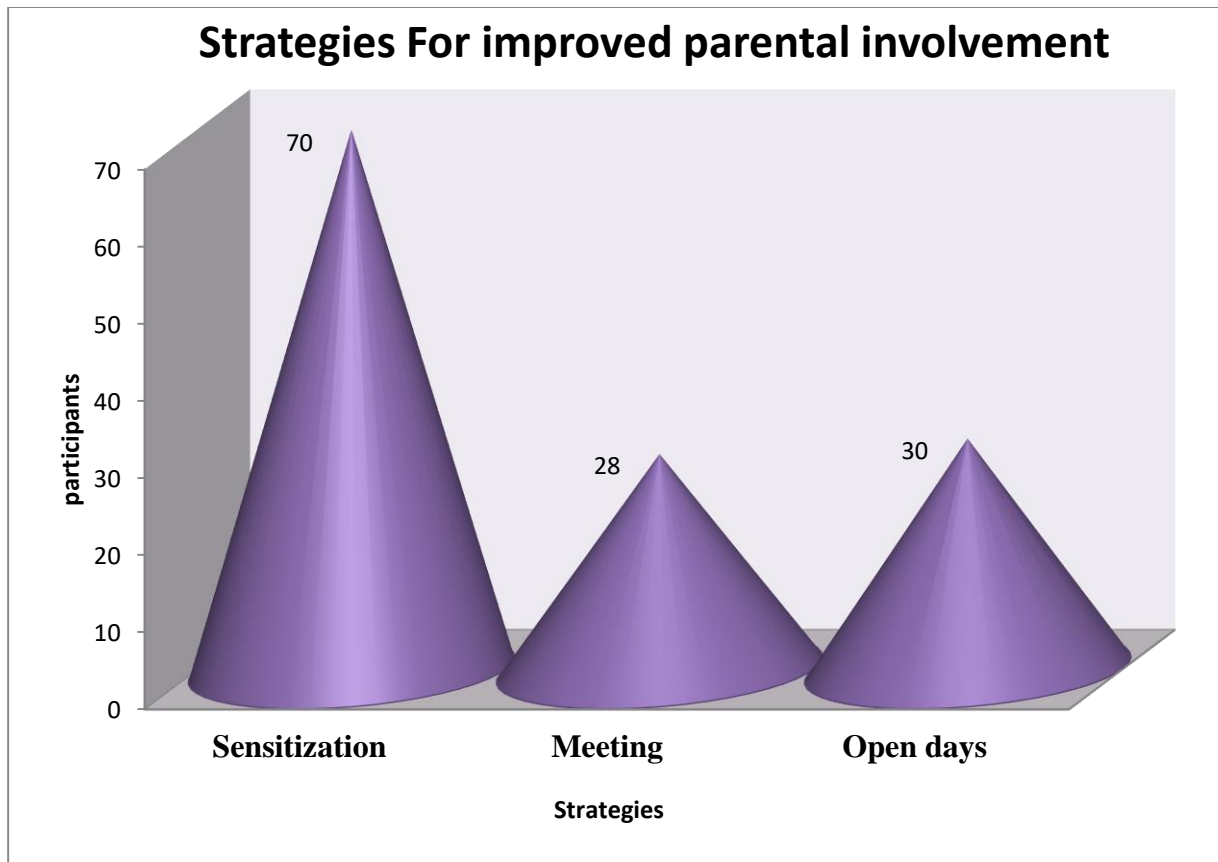


Figure 3: Response on Strategies for improved parental involvement

4.3.0 Sensitizations

To illustrate this, one teacher as the key respondent strongly said;

Parents must strongly be sensitized on the importance of educating their children, the importance of fully involving themselves in their education.

Another participant said;

Parents need to be educated on the importance of educating children. This can be done through P.T.A executives visiting their homes and give explanations on the best of their involvement.

Some parents think that when their children become educated, they will get employed. This has led them to think that the only reason why their kids go to school is to become employed by the government, which is not the case. For this reason, parents need to be educated severely On the importance of education to their children.

4.3.1 Meetings

Research findings revealed how holding meetings regularly with parents can lead to parental involvement in the education of their children fully. To lament the importance of holding meetings regularly, one parent stated that;

Schools can effectively communicate with parents through holding regular P.T.A meetings. It is the only way through which parents and teachers can create a medium of communication which can lead to better parental involvement resulting in better performance of their children for better future leaders.

Another key respondent stated that;

School authority must be transparent, accountable and accommodative through regular meetings. Further, communication between two parties is important, the teacher side and parents through meetings to discuss various issues affecting children. This might encourage parents to better involve themselves in the education of their children.

Better still another respondent said;

During the meetings, school administrators must ensure they create a platform for parents to contribute and their views heard in totality. This may motivate parents to fully involve themselves in the education of their children.

From time immemorial, communication has been the key to the success of any institution like a school. For this reason, it is of importance for school administrators to involve parents through conducting regular meetings of twice or thrice every academic term.

4.3.2 Open days

Research findings revealed how holding open days regularly in secondary schools may improve parental involvement. As per tradition, most parents think that it is the only days which they can meet school management and interact with them for the betterment of their children.

To lament the importance of holding open days in schools, one participant stated the following;

The only time that parents can interact with schools and get involved in the education of their children is through schools holding open days. Further, it is not good for me to just

go to school and start asking the administrators questions which they may think is interference.

Another participant felt that:

Open days give chance to parents to interact with grade teachers who have better knowledge of the behavior and things which might negatively affect the performance of their children. Most parents feel it can disturb the school if they visit the school without being called by the school, which has led to many parents abandoning education of their children.

The findings were that the schools should ensure strong sensitization to the parents in the area on the importance of education to their children. This can be achieved through holding meetings regularly for effective communication. Further findings revealed that it is important for schools to conduct open days which most parents feel is the only way they can find out and involve themselves fully in the education of their children.

4.4 Summary

Chapter four presented the research findings on factors influencing parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe District. Most of the issues have been presented according to their objectives. Chapter five will present the discussion of findings.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

Creswell, (2017) states that the discussion section should bring together the main research findings and the key elements of the literature review. Similarly, this chapter discussed findings of this study under the headings drawn from the objectives and the emerging themes. The discussion related the findings of other studies reviewed in chapter two under literature review, and what the study had brought out which was not mentioned by other authors. The discussion also related the findings to the social discipline and congruent communication theories adopted for this study and also unveiled the researcher's view on the extent to which the objectives had been answered. The researcher also interpreted the findings, and made suggestions for future research. This measure however, was meant to provide sufficient answers to the three objectives, appreciation of the depth of the problem and realization of the purpose of this study.

The preceding chapter presented the findings regarding factors influencing parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district. The purpose of the study was to investigate factors influencing parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe District. This chapter proceeds with discussion of the key findings earlier presented.

The objectives of this study were firstly; Identify factors influencing parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district. Secondly; determine why parental involvement is inconsistent in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district and thirdly; identify strategies which can be used for an improved parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district.

5.1 Factors influencing parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district

The study established the factors influencing parental involvement in the education of their children in Kitwe District. This was Performance of the children and Behavior of the children. These are addressed in the following subheadings 5.1.1 and 5. 1.2.

5.1.1 Performance of the children

The study revealed that there are certain factors which might lead to parents to involve themselves in the education of their children. Among others is the performance of the child either positive or negative. As has been presented in chapter four of this study, if pupils are performing better in schools, parents will be motivated to encourage them to continue working hard. Better still, if children are not performing well, responsible parents will be eager to find out why the performance is not pleasing. Parental involvement has shown to exert a positive influence on the child's educational success. When parents are actively involved in their children's education, children tend to model their parents' attitudes and actions.

This result of the study is in conformity with Mncube, (2019) who realized that Effective parental involvement will benefit the learners which will ultimately develop the entire schooling performance. The researcher feels that Parental involvement has a positive effect on school performance.

One parent from the focus group asserted the following:

When the performance of the child is not impressing, I visit the school and discuss with them on how best I can help to facilitate and improve the performance of the learner.

It can be seen that responsible parents are always checking the progress of their children. They make sure their children are performing better in schools. Should the performance not please, they will find out from the class and grade teachers.

5.1.2 Behavior of the children

The pie chart on page 38 in chapter four shows that 34 percent of parents said when the behavior of children is not acceptable, parents would be eager to find out from school. It is only natural to assume that children whose parents show an interest in their education will be more motivated and have more self confidence in school. These children would know they have the support of the parents and this knowledge will have positive effects in general on their attitude towards school as well as at home. Davids, (2016) revealed important aspect in line with this study by conferring parental involvement in children's education and demonstrated that parental involvement benefits children's learning and improved positive behavior both home and at school. One parent for focus group held said:

When the behavior of my children suddenly changed, I went to school to report to the school head teacher. The school helped my children and improved their behavior.

Adequate parental participation leads to quality education. The Performance of children and the behavior are things discovered in this research to be motives of parental involvement in Kitwe District.

While Porumbu and Necsoi (2017) focus on communication between parents and children to be factors that can influence parental involvement by stating that the extent to which parents and their children communicate about school activities is one variable of parental involvement in the child's education, this study discovered that obviously the performance of the child and the behavior may attempt parents to get involved in education of children in Kitwe.

Nevertheless, See and Gorard (2015) report that little or no evidence was reported that parental involvements in this country enhance learner attainment in schools.

5.2 Barriers to parental involvement in their children's education in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district

The study established why parental involvement is inconsistent in the education of their children in Kitwe District. These were busy schedules, level of education, and importance of education. These are addressed in the next subheadings 5.2.1, 5.2.2, and 5.2.3.

5.2.1 Busy schedules

The study revealed that most parents in the area are occupied with a lot of things like work for husbands and market works for wives to support their husband financially which has led to neglect their roles of parenthood resulting in partial involvement in the education of their children.

What has been revealed in this study is similar to the study conducted by Okeke (2018) who contends that most parents complain about lack of time and work commitments that make them incapable of making any contribution to the school. This is because most of the times they will be at work, sometimes in another province, for example, leaving their children with grandparents. These parents do not have time to collaborate with the school or engage in the child's school work. These parents can only see their children once a month because at most they are busy with their social matters than engaging in their children's school work

Many Zambians are stricken by poverty and unemployment. These have led to most parents who are working on contracts for mining company like Mopani to be working abnormally in fear of losing employment, thereby, neglecting their role in supporting their children academically. On the contrary, Mavhungu (2017) study relates poverty with unemployment, meaning that if there is no employment in the family, the family results in poverty and that poverty will affect the child's performance. Parents from such families find it difficult to support their children in education due to un-affordability and therefore end up with a limited opinion of education and focus on other means of income neglecting their children performance.

Again, parent involvement as alluded to by Motala and Lexumo (2020) depends on the family economic background. When the family's economic status is poor, the parent feels inferior to get involved in educational matters, whereas on the other hand, as indicated by Vellmally (2018), parents from a higher social class show greater achievement. Poorer families, have less ability to furnish home remedies for educational ailments and the richer the family, the more the ability to provide for its children, the more enhancements on the child's progress. As viewed by Ngwaru (2012), Low income grossing parents appeared not to place a high value on the educational and intellectual achievement of their children. In some instances, wealthier parents are given advantage than poorer parents. Such kind of imbalance discourages parents with low or no income to get involved from their point of strength.

Kitwe District is a highly economic city and most parents in the study area are employed on contract basis in the mines, better still these parents do not earn enough money to support their children with school necessities and requirements. The implication is that parents are over occupied with other things to help them meet their day to day needs and this leads to have busy schedules. Figure 2 in chapter four on page 41 revealed that 68 participants supported that parents in the mining area are occupied with a lot of things making their days to be full of busy schedules resulting in neglecting the education of their children.

To confirm the notion that most parents have busy schedules, one teacher as the key respondent stated the following:

This is because Kitwe is the hub of the Copperbelt. Most parents either work or are into business. Therefore, they have little time for their children. Most parents have busy schedules.

Another teacher lamented that:

Parents claim to have busy schedules at their places of work as majority work in the private companies such as Mopani copper mine and Konkola Copper mines.

Parents who are over occupied have little or no time to check on their children's progress academically and most children who are not supported and encouraged by their parents perform poorly as compared to those children supported and encouraged by their parents. The cause of this is none other than busy schedules of the parents in the study area.

5.2.2 Level of education

The study revealed that the level of education is also a contributing factor to the parent involvement. Although many of the parents place much significance on the child's education so that their children do not experience the hardship of life like them, some use the low level of education as a justification not to get involved in education. This study agrees with that of Mbokodi and Singh (2019) who assert that illiterate parents fear that because they are illiterate they cannot contribute anything to the school and cannot help with the work that they do not understand. Besides, Porumbu and Nescoi (2019) added that the educational level of parents predicts more of variability in academic achievement than do other family demographic characteristics.

To illustrate on the above one parent said;

Parents who have not gone far in education have no interest in the education of their children since they have not gained the importance of education. Parents who are educated involve themselves in the education of their children through home parent teaching and coaching which reduces the stress on teachers.

Nevertheless some parents, even if they are not highly educated, they are highly ambitious for their children and would want them to prosper in life (Vellymallay, 2016). They do not want their children to go their way but would engage in activities that suit their level of education.

5.2.3 Importance of education

The level of education is linked to an individual knowing or not knowing the importance of education. This is another factor which has been revealed in the study. The study indicated that most parents in the study area till now do not know the importance of education. They only think that when someone has attended tertiary education, they must be employed by the government and since few people are employed by the state, some parents think that there is no need to educate their children because employment is not readily available.

To highlight on the above assertion the research was disturbed by one parent who said the following;

I cannot see the importance of education. My daughter graduated as a primary school teacher ten years ago, but till now she is not employed by the government. Hence if I educate the sibling to my daughter, it will be the same. No need for me to encourage them to concentrate on their education.

These show that most parents do not know the importance of education. They think that when someone graduates, they must be employed by the state or other sectors.

Reece, Staudt, and Ogle, (2016) and Kang, Horn, and Palmer, (2017), contend that there are other barriers beyond what has been discovered in this study described by parents and these include time conflicts, a lack of resources, scheduling conflicts with older siblings or feeling nervous about going to the school due to their own personal experiences (Baker *et al.*, 2016).

5.3 Strategies used for an improved parental involvement in the education of their children in Kitwe district

The third objective of the study was to identify strategies which can be used for an improved parental involvement in the education of their children in most public secondary schools in Kitwe District. In trying to identify the strategies that could be used the following were the major responses found; sensitizations, meetings and open days. These are discussed in the next paragraphs.

5.3.1 Sensitizations

The study indicated that Sensitizations on the importance of parental involvement is of help to the community. Figure 2 on page 43 shows that 78 participants feel there is need for schools to sensitize parents on the importance of education.

One participant stated that;

Parents must be strongly sensitized on the importance of educating their children. Further, Parents need to be educated on the importance of educating children. This can be done through P.T.A executives visiting their homes and giving explanations on the best of their involvement.

Parental involvement takes many forms, including good parenting in the home, the provision of a secure and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussions, and contact with schools to share information, participation in school events, participation in the work of the school and participation in school governance (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2018). These can be achieved through strong sensitization. Parenting is very important for schools to assist families to develop child-rearing skills and setting home conditions to support learning, for instance instilling the culture of reading to encourage education. Learners can be assisted in their homework by parents and taken to the library during the weekends for doing research and reading.

Sensitization, when done properly, can lead to many benefits. Forms of parental involvement at school include assisting teachers in the classroom, on class trips, or at class parties, assisting teachers in the cafeteria, library, playground, computer lab in places which require adult supervision, assisting the school governing body, fundraising and community relations.

However, Epstein, (2017) recognize that communication assume that schools keep parents informed about school matters by sending those newsletters or progress reports, visiting parents and employing other means of communication. The school principals have the power to influence the form, frequency and the results of information sent from school to the homes of learners. So it can be noted in this study that there is need to sensitize parents on the importance of them get involved in children education rather than talking about communication in isolation.

Baker *et al.*, (2016) asserts that improved communication was identified as an area of need by parents and educators. Increased, positive communication makes parents feel more comfortable and welcomed into the school. Parents want to hear beyond the negative and learn about their child's achievements. Similarly Hornby and Lafaele, (2020) argue that teachers can show that they value parent involvement by communicating what the parent's role in education could look like and invite them to school. When parents feel that the school really values and encourages parent involvement, they are more likely to participate. In the study area, radio stations can be used as a mode of sensitization and communications to parents resulting in an improved parental participation.

Similarly, Larson (2019) points out that the key to productive and positive parent engagement is a good flow of communication between school and home, and that communication should encompass every stakeholder, including parents, teachers, administrators, specialists, club leaders and coaches, and the parent-teacher organization. The strategies here can help schools increase parent engagement in the community at large.

Another important strategy discovered in this study is the schools to be holding regularly PTA meetings during the course of the year and the term. This is discussed in the next theme below.

5.3.2 Meetings

The study revealed that holding meetings regularly with parents may lead to an improved parental involvement. It is also the method in which the factor outlined above can be achieved. Communication is important for the progress of children in school. Communication is a bridge that conveys information to parents at home from school and to educators at school from home. It is one way in which parents are well-versed about the Child's progress and the school is informed about the concerns that affect the child development.

Similarly, Kirkwood, (2016) raised a very crucial proclamation which collaborates with this study that Communication is the foundation of a solid partnership. When parents and educators communicate effectively, positive relationships develop. Problems are more easily elucidated, and students make superior progress. This is true because many of the school activities are well conversed during parents meetings or parent evenings and this becomes the prospect for parents

to engage with the educators about the child. Parent teachers association meetings might be held once every term and discuss issues affecting the school and the pupils at large.

One participant said;

It is important for schools to hold regular meetings. While in the meeting, the meeting chairman must give platform for parents to contribute; this might motivate them to involve themselves fully in the education of their children.

This study result is similar though not direct to that of Epstein, (2017) who recognizes that these kinds of involvement assume that schools keep parents informed about school matters by sending those newsletters or progress reports, visiting parents and employing other means of communication. The school principals have the power to influence the form, frequency and the results of information sent from school to the homes of learners

Improved communication was identified as an area of need by parents and educators. Increased, positive communication makes parents feel more comfortable and welcomed into the school. Parents want to hear beyond the negative and learn about their child's achievements as asserted by Baker et al., (2016). Also, teachers can show that they value parental involvement by communicating what the parent's role in education could look like and invite them to school. When parents feel that the school really values and encourages parental involvement, they are more likely to participate.

5.3.3 Open days

Research findings revealed how holding open days regularly in secondary schools may improve parental involvement as most parents think that it is the only days which they can meet school management and interact with them for the betterment of their children. Figure 2 on page 43 indicated that 30 participants recognize the importance of schools holding open days. Open days involve parents collecting school report forms and interacting most with the class and grade teachers on the performance and behavior of children.

Mncube, (2019) noted that Effective parental involvement will benefit the learners which will ultimately develop the entire schooling performance. When the parents are involved in the schools, they get to know what is happening at their learners' schools.

One parent was curious and expressed that most schools in the study area have not held any open day for some time now. The participant said the following:

I do not even remember whether these schools hold open days. The last time they held open day was in September 2018.

When holding open days, it is advisable for schools to communicate with parents in advance since most parents are occupied with busy schedules at work and their business activities. It can be noted that sensitizations, regular P. T. A meetings and open days could be used in Kitwe to help parents involve themselves fully in the education of their children. Parental involvement in education has been associated with a variety of positive academic outcomes including higher-grade-points averages as outlined in the conceptual frame work of this study.

This study contrasted with Michael, Wolhuter and van Wyk, (2012) who assert that parental involvement is an essential part of school management and its effectiveness and failure lie in the hands of the principal but did not specify how parents can get involved as revealed by this study in Kitwe district study area.

5.4 Summary

This chapter discussed the findings pertaining to factors influencing parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe District. The findings were discussed in line with the research objectives and the major factors that emerged. The discussion brought to the fore crucial findings on the study. The study reported many ways in which parents got involved in children's education. Additionally, it was acknowledged that parental involvement in the education of their children was very beneficial in that it was viewed to have a positive impact on performance and pupil attendance in classes. Nevertheless, certain barriers were identified to limit the effective involvement of parents in children's education such as busy work schedules. The ways of enhancing parental involvement in children's education were also discussed. The suggestions were that parents need to be sensitised through local school programmes and media such as television and radio programmes.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

The previous chapter presented and discussed the data that emerged from the empirical study. The reason of this concluding chapter is to summarise the study. These are followed by recommendations on how parents can get involved fully in the education of children. Areas for further research conclude this chapter. These aspects are discussed in the next sections sequentially.

6.1 Conclusion of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate factors influencing parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district. Research objective one sought to identify factors influencing parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district. Research objective two aimed at determining why parental involvement is inconsistent in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district. Research objective three sought to determine strategies which can be used for an improved parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district.

The first objective found that the factors that influenced parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district are the performance of the children and the behavior of the children. Positive performance and behavior motivate parents to encourage their children to focus on education.

Research objective two aimed at determining why parental involvement is inconsistent in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district and found the following: Busy schedules, Level of education and importance of education.

Research objective three sought to determine strategies which can be used for an improved parental involvement in the education of their children in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district. The study results revealed this; sensitization, meetings and opening days to be held regularly.

6.2 Recommendations

From the findings of the study, discussions and conclusion made, the following recommendations were formulated;

1. The government through Ministry of Education, provincial administration, the church and other NGOs should conduct aggressive campaigns to sensitize the community on the need to educate children. Parents and the entire community should be sensitized on their role as parents in encouraging children to stay in school and the pros of education. Counseling needs to be intensified for both parents and pupils
2. The government should boost and streamline adult education to help improve on the literacy levels among parents. This might make parents appreciate the value of education.
3. There is need for constant inspection of schools to ensure that government policies are implemented.
4. It is recommended that the schools should use various mechanisms and strategies besides meetings in order to promote parental involvement practice.
5. Issues of parental involvement should be included in the teacher training curriculum either as pre or in-service training. This would assist in equipping teachers and school administrators with skills and positive attitude needed in enhancing parental involvement in education.

6.3 Suggestions for further research

- (a) A comparative study can be conducted in other districts to assess how the pupil characteristic factors, social economic and cultural factors are influencing the access and retention of pupils in those districts.
- (b) A study can be conducted on the benefits of re-entry policy and introduction of comprehensive sexuality education especially in primary schools.
- (c) If valuable data has to be obtained on parental involvement, a large-scale study would be more likely to generate more information compared to the present study which only covered a small area of the country.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: HEAD TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES

1. When was the school established?
2. What is your current enrolment for the year 2020 academic year?
3. How many educators and non- teaching staff are employed by Parent Teachers Committee?
4. What improvements have been made to the school since you occupied the seat of School head?
.....
5. Does the school have PTC subcommittees? If yes Mention subcommittees
6. Do you participate in PTC subcommittees?
7. Do the parents know about the regulation of the PTC?
8. Do the parents know the actual functions of the PTC?
9. Do the parents play an important role in school governance?
10. Do you attend meetings regularly? If no, what are the problems experienced?
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11. What is the role of the parents in meetings?
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12. What role does the Head play in meetings?
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13. To what extent are your views heard and your influence in decision making?

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14. What are the causes of the lack of parental participation in school activities?

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15. What are the circumstances which limit parental participation in education of their pupil's?

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16. What are the challenges that you experience at school as a result of parents not fully involving themselves in school activities?

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17. Briefly discuss the weaknesses and strengths of your Parent teacher's Committee

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18. What are your recommendations?

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APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRES FOR TEACHERS

1. Does the school have PTC subcommittees? Mention subcommittees (if yes)

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2. Do you participate in PTC subcommittees?

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3. Do the parents know about the regulations of the PTC?

.....

4. Do the parents know the actual functions of the PTC?

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5. Do the parents play an important role in school governance?

.....

6. What is the role of the parents in meetings?

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7. What role does the Head Teacher play in a meeting?

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8. To what extent are your views heard and your influence in decision making?

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9. To what extent are parents' views heard in decision making?

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What are the causes of the lack of parental participation in school activities?

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10. Briefly discuss the advantages and disadvantages of working with parents.

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11. What are the challenges that you experience at school as a result of parents not fully involving themselves in school activities?

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12. What can the school do to facilitate parental involvement and make it more effective?

.....
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13. What are your recommendations?

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APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION FOR PARENTS

1. Does the school have PTC subcommittees? (if yes) Mention subcommittees.....

.....

2. Do you participate in PTC subcommittees?

.....

PARENTS TEACHER COMMITTEE

1. Do you have a Constitution?

Yes [] No []

2. Does the school have a clear vision and mission?

Yes [] No []

3. If yes, briefly discuss the vision and mission

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4. Do you know about the regulation of the School PTC?

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5. What are the actual functions of the School PTC?

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6. Do you attend meetings regularly? If no, what are the problems experienced?

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7. What is the role of the parents in the meeting?

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8. To what extent are your views heard in decision making processes?

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9. What are the causes of the lack of parental participation in school activities?

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10. Briefly discuss the weaknesses and strengths of this PTC?

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11. What are your recommendations?

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APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION FOR PTA MEMBERS

Kindly answer the questions in detail. Extra information on the topic will greatly be appreciated.

The research is purely for academic purposes and therefore, all information collected from you in this case study paper will be treated as confidential.

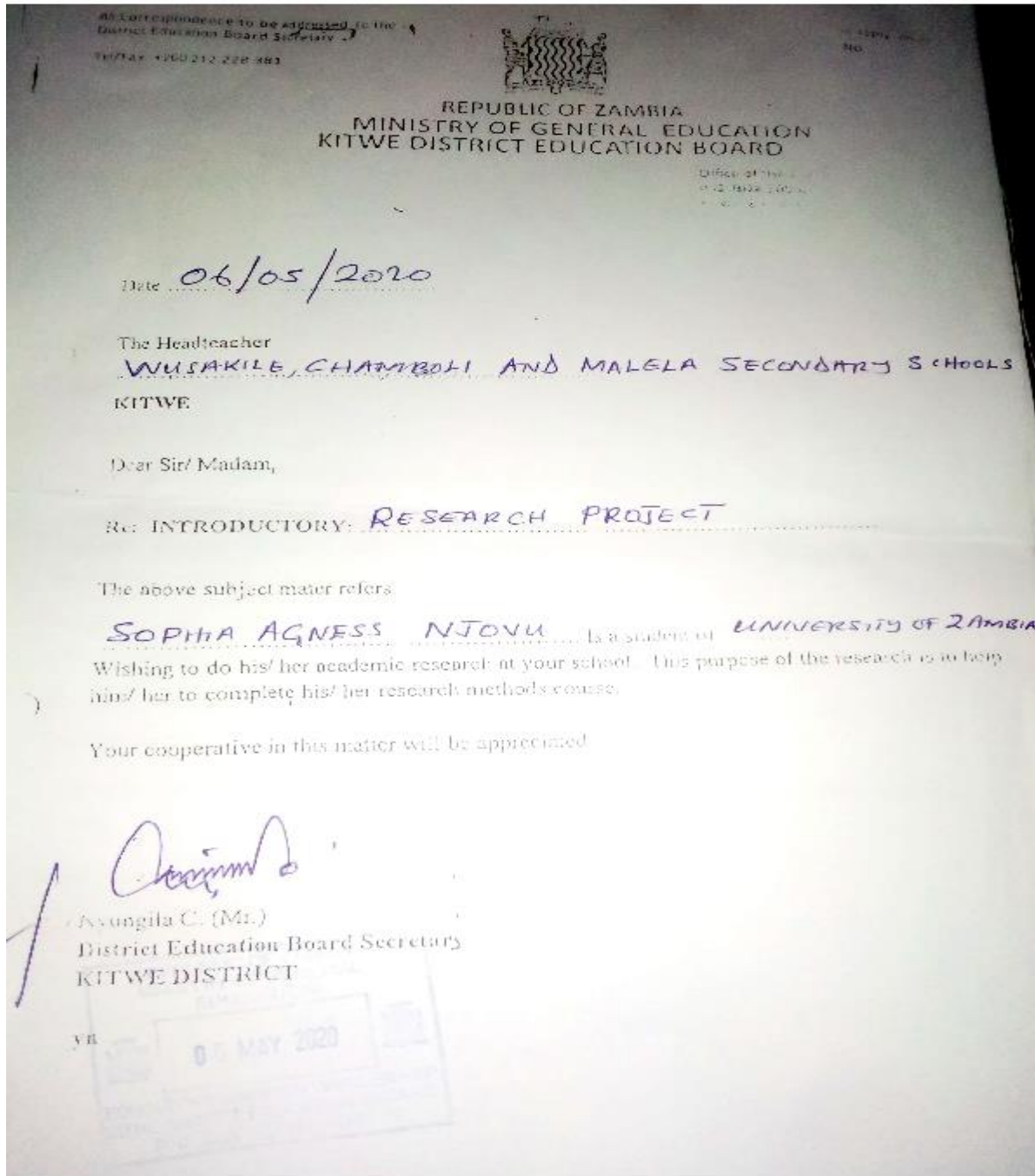
Your help in form of your insight, knowledge guidance and recommendations on your understanding of the subject matter will highly be appreciated.

1. Does the school have an active PTC? Yes [] No []
2. Do you participate in PTC? Yes [] No []
3. Have you been called by the school to observe in class the lessons your children's learn from school? Yes [] No [] if yes, how many times?

PARENTS TEACHER ASSOCIATION

4. Do you have a Constitution in your PTA?
Yes [] No []
5. Does the school have a clear vision and mission?
Yes [] No []
6. If yes, briefly discuss the vision and mission
7. Do you know about the regulation of the School PTA?
8. What are the actual functions of the School PTA?
9. Do you attend meetings regularly? If no, what are the problems experienced?
10. What is the role of the parents in the meeting?
11. To what extent are your views heard in decision making processes?
12. Why is parental involvement inconsistent in the education of their children in secondary schools in Kitwe district?
13. What are the causes of the lack of parental participation in school activities?
14. Briefly discuss the weaknesses and strengths of this PTA
15. What factors influence parental involvement in selected public secondary schools in Kitwe district?
16. What are your recommendations on parental involvement?

APPENDIX E: REQUEST TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH



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