

**INVESTIGATING HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP IN SCHOOL
ACTIVITIES AT TWO SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN
OTJOZONDJUPA REGION, NAMIBIA**

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ABSTRACT

This study emerged as a result of the researcher's interest in the home-school partnership concept when she began with her teaching career. The researcher realised that learners sometimes were given projects, homework and tasks that required assistance from guardians, which was not always forthcoming. This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How much are guardians involved in their children's school activities?
2. What are guardians' perceptions of schools' expectations of their involvement in their children's schooling?
3. What are the perceptions of teachers and school management on the involvement of guardians?

Data analysis in qualitative research has a two-fold purpose to understand guardians' and teachers' perceptions of home-school partnership in the children's school activities, the participants' perspective and to answer the research questions. This process was demanded by the nature of the research questions which requires an in-depth discussion and understanding of the principals and school board committees' perspective. This study used the qualitative research approach outlined by Gray (2009) to give meaning to the data and for organizational purposes. It was also conducted through intense contact within a field or real life setting whereby the researcher visited guardians to get first-hand knowledge about their perceptions on the home-school partnership and interviewed the principals, teachers and chairpersons of the school board in order to get a holistic view on the issue.

Thirty-six participants voluntarily participated in in-depth interviews. Interview data were transcribed and subsequently analysed to facilitate the development of themes. In-depth interviews were utilized to construct participant profiles and to generate themes. Themes that

emerged were as follow: (1) Participants' understanding of the concept home-school partnership. (2) Issues guardians discuss with their children and benefits of teachers having partnerships with the guardians. (3) Mode of communication between school and home, ways schools can utilize to support guardians to promote home-school partnership. (4) Practices to involve guardians in homework activities. (5) Barriers to home-school partnership and (6) Workshops for guardians to learn more about home-school partnership. The themes were analyzed and the results discussed.

Thereafter, the discussion of the findings, recommendations for practice and research concluded the study. Suggestions were made to implement changes in home-school partnership as a form of academic support. The researcher offered recommendations about ways guardians, teachers, principals and SBCs can collaborate with each other to benefit learners. As each group reaches out effectively to the other, new themes for partnership are likely to be forged, and the challenge to find new and lasting pathways for home-school partnership is likely to be met.

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List of abbreviations and acronyms used

BED	Bachelor of Education
BETD	Basic Education Training Diploma
CRC	Convention on Right of the Child
HSP	Home-School Partnership
LES	Low Economic Status
MoE	Ministry of Education
QA	Question-Answering
SBC	School Board Committee
SES	Socio-economic Status
SMS	Short Message Service
SSI	Semi-structured Interview
UNAM	University of Namibia

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Not to forget

“MeeKahewa”

Declarations

I OTTILIE TAUKENI declare hereby that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

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Date.....

Otilie Taukeni

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

The concept of home-school partnership is central to social and democratic education in schools. Since home and school are the two key contexts in which children's development and learning occurs, it is important to understand how each of these contexts potentially influences learners' behaviour and academic achievement (Levin-Goldberg, 2008). Similarly, Henderson & Mapp (2002) stated that engaging families in their children education at home and at school is increasingly viewed as an important means to support better learning outcomes for their children. They further added that when schools and families work together, children have higher achievements and stay longer in schools.

Since education is one of the countries' priorities, education is viewed as an investment in human capital that has both direct payoffs to the educated individuals and external benefits for the society as a whole (Sinalumbu, 2013). It is assumed that improved quality of education will result in important returns in investment in the education system. In addition, Munenge (2012) reported that in order for any education system to succeed there must be parental and learner involvement in school activities.

Apart from this parental and learners' involvement in school activities, Namibian schools have to formulate a simple, clear and realistic policy on guardians' involvements in their children's school activities. Although in 2008 the Ministry of Education stated that the policy on schools communicating with guardians is in need

to be reviewed (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2008). Up to now, nothing has been done regarding reviewing the current school policy. Some of the loop holes in the current school policy is on communication. For instance, the MoE (2008) found that communication in terms of language used and the mode through which communication is made, is not understood by all guardians. Opportunities for guardians to consult with teachers are infrequent. Another draw-back identified by the MoE (2008) is that the meeting arrangements are not always communicated clearly and few guardians consult with teachers. MoE (2008) also identified that, guardians are not actively involved in their children's school work, although schools have written guidelines on how they should involve guardians. Contrary to the problem regarding the reporting policy, the MoE (2006) outlined a comprehensive document sharing information concerning learners' learning behavior and how learners can be supported at home. Guardians are encouraged by the school to be actively involved with the learners' school activities in all aspects of the curriculum. Variations in levels of parental involvement in children's learning at home and at school are strongly influenced by family socio-economic status (SES) (Boethel, 2003). Guardians in families with lower socio-economic status often have fewer years of education, and possibly, have had more negative experiences with their own schooling (Desimone, 1999). They may feel unprepared to be involved in children's school activities. Parental involvement may also vary because of differences in ethnic and cultural backgrounds between guardians and teachers (Desimone, 1999).

This study therefore emerged as a result of the researcher's interest in the concept of guardians' involvement in their children's school activities when she began with her

teaching career. The researcher realised that learners sometimes were given projects, homework and tasks that required assistance from guardians which was not always forthcoming. Another cause of interest to undertake this study emerged from the vast literature that the researcher studied. Several Namibian researchers carried out similar studies on home school partnership in different schools in different education regions. Jekonia (2012) carried out a study in Omusati region; Kaperu (2004) conducted the identical research in Khomas region; Niitembu (2006) Stakeholders, perceptions of parents' involvement in the governance of a Namibian at one of the rural schools in the northern part of Namibia; Hamunyela (2008) A critical analysis of parental involvement in the education of learners in rural schools in the northern part of Namibia; Siririka (2007) An investigation of parental involvement in development of their children's literacy rural Namibian school in Omaheke region and Guolang (2010) in Khomas region. The researcher came to realise that though this topic has been greatly studied upon, no one carried it out in the Otjozondjupa region. Okahandja is one of the biggest town in the Otjozondjupa region and is situated in the centre of the country and the population of Okahandja specifically is heterogeneous, meaning that people from different ethnic groups such as Hereros, Nama/Damara, Coloured and Owambos reside there; hence the decision to carry out this study in the in Okahandja, Otjozondjupa region.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to the Ministry of Education's policy on schools reporting to guardians; it is indicated that most schools in Namibia use a limited range of methods for communicating with guardians (MoE, 2008). Munenge (2012) worked in two

regions, Kavango and Kunene, where he picked up two major problems in those respective regions: firstly, a lack of parental involvement in the education of their children and secondly, a lack of discipline among learners. In addition, Hamunyela (2008, p. 52) stated that “parents who are less able to visit the school for events and activities are viewed as uncaring, an attitude that may have negative ramifications for their children.” The researcher, in her capacity as a teacher, have observed that some learners are no longer respectful towards teachers, their homework is not always done, some guardians do not attend parents meetings and they also do not sign their children’s homework books. It is well known that different culture groups have different views when it comes to home-school partnership (Munenge, 2012) and therefore the researcher felt that there is a necessity to add information on previous studies by looking at a more heterogeneous community. Hence, this study seeks to investigate the involvement of guardians in home-school partnership in school activities at two selected primary schools in Okahandja in the Otjozondjupa region, Namibia.

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How much are guardians involved in their children’s school activities?
2. What are guardians’ perceptions of schools’ expectations of their involvement in their children’s schooling?
3. What are the perceptions of teachers and school management on the involvement of guardians at the two selected schools in Otjozondjupa region?

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

School managers such as school principals might use the research findings to reflect on their strategies regarding home-school partnership in school activities. School management might help guardians to monitor learners' progress in academic work and educators might be helped to improve learners' achievement. Guardians might learn how to create opportunities to attend meetings during which learners' report cards, behavior and assessment are discussed. The Ministry of Education might even offer workshops to train the school principals on how to promote home-school partnerships based on the outcome of this study. Keith (2012) claims that parental involvement is one of the factors in a child's education that leads to high overall performance and leads to more learners graduating from high schools. Moreover, if the teaching staff and Okahandja community at large familiarize themselves with the findings of this study, learners will benefit by being supported by their teachers and their guardians.

1.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher planned to collect data for two months but unfortunately leave was not granted as planned, therefore the researcher collected data for a month. The researcher planned to interview 28 guardians but due to various excuses from guardians, the researcher interviewed only 22 of them. According to Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Walker (2013) criterion sampling is a sampling in which decisions concerning the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based upon a variety of criteria which may include specialised knowledge of the research issue or capacity and willingness to participate in the research. Lastly,

during the data collection the researcher found herself at some point not understanding the language that some guardians were speaking, therefore, efforts were made to find a translator which made the research process easier, though slow.

1.5 DELIMITATIONS

This study was limited to the grade 7 learners' guardians with their register teachers, chairperson of the school board and the school principal for each selected school in Otjozondjupa region; therefore the results cannot be assumed to reflect a national phenomenon.

1.6 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Home-school partnerships are the shared relationships and creativities through which the people who care for learners in the home and community setting and the people who care for them in the school setting together promote the learners' learning and well-being. The learners themselves are part of both these groups, which together make up the wider school community (Cowan, Napolitano & Sheridan, 2004). In this study, the above meaning was adopted.

School activities for this study this refers to the activities that learners do in order to achieve learning objectives and sport culture. Examples include reading and writing assignments and discussion.

Parental involvement for this study, entails a way of involving guardians in a wide range of school and home based activities related to their children's education.

School and home-based activities such as emphasizing reading, writing and discussion within family members, guardians visiting schools regularly, guardians making sure that there is a quiet, friendly study environment at home, attending school functions, maintaining of discipline, guardians being part of decision making, supervising children's homework at home and recognizing their success by praising children to do better in their school work.

Guardians in this context, is defined as someone who takes care of the children within the family; it may be their biological parents, grand-parents, god-parents, neighbours, brothers, sisters and any community members.

1.7 SUMMARY

In this chapter the researcher presented the following: orientation of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, limitation of the study and definitions of the terms. In the next chapter the researcher will investigate different sources in the literature to shed light on the research questions.

CHAPTER 2

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Teacher education programs play a major role on implementing the home-school partnership concept and adhere to provide pre-service teachers with required skills and ways in order to foster, promote and maintain those who deal with the learners' success in school and the guardians at home (Flynn, 2007). The understanding of the background of home-school partnership concept will make one appreciate the progress made by the schools with the guardians to promote and maintain the learners' success in school.

The sources mostly used in the literature review are the following experts: Bronfenbrenner (1979); Epstein (1995; 2009); Flynn (2007); Siririka (2007); Jekonia (2012) and Hamunyela (2008). On the basis of the considerations above, this chapter starts by defining the meaning of home-school partnership. Secondly, theories underpinning the study are explained. Thirdly, foundations for home-school partnership are discussed. Fourthly, challenges to home-school partnership are outlined and lastly the critical analysis of the literature and the gap found in literature are addressed.

2.2 HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

In this study, home-school involvement entails a way of involving guardians in a wide range of school and home based activities related to their children's education. Schools and home-based activities are such as emphasising homework in relation to reading, writing, discussion within family members, guardians visiting schools regularly, guardians making sure that there is a quiet, friendly study environment at home and that they attend school functions. Apart from that, schools and home-based activities also include the maintaining of discipline, guardians being part of decision making, supervising children's homework at home and recognizing their success by motivating them for such children to do academically better in their school work. In support of the above, Haack (2007) described parental involvement as what guardians do to enrich their children's school achievement and strengthen the relationship they have with their children. Again, Lemmer (2002) emphasised that it's very important to involve families with their children's learning activities at home with homework and with other curricula-linked activities and decisions.

Namibia's Research Situation Analysis on Orphans and other Vulnerable Children (NARSAOV, 2009) reported that in Namibia there are a high number of vulnerable children and orphans, whereby most orphans and vulnerable children live with their single parents or in foster homes. Based on this background, this study mostly used these two concepts: home-school partnership and guardians rather than parental involvement and parents because the way people live in the communities have changed. Nowadays, children are not only taken care of by their biological parents but also by their guardians or at foster homes.

In Namibia a study about home-school partnership was carried out by Kaperu (2004) whereby three primary schools in Windhoek were involved. The purpose of the study was to find out if guardians (parents), and especially those guardians who have children at the formerly disadvantaged schools, were involved in the education of their children. The findings showed that guardians have different understandings of what their role in the education of their children should be or how they can be involved in their children's education.

Similarly, Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ, 2004) reported that guardians with good educational background will provide a home atmosphere that is more conducive to learning than guardians with lower levels of education. Guardians with a good educational background will also be able to assist their children with their learning in many ways such as in assisting them with their homework and projects.

According to Epstein (2001), who concluded:

In partnership, educators, families and community members work together to share information, guide students, solve problems and celebrate successes. Partnerships recognise the shared responsibilities of home, school and community for children's learning and development (p.4).

Flynn (2007) stated that teachers who promote partnerships with guardians reported reduced stress levels and experienced empowerment to teach more effectively. Epstein (2009) and Niitembu (2006) further claimed that home-school partnership is

dynamic with advantages of excellent performance by learners and to create a good rapport with the school.

Whalley (2001) emphasized that most guardians are likely to support school values such as respect for others, making sure their children do homework, come to school dressed properly and behave in an acceptable way. The guardians play a role in reinforcing school values and to support the school if problems arise with their children. In addition, the MoE (2006) suggests that guardians should be fully informed in reports and during their meetings on how their children are doing at school.

Holthe (2000) wrote that in Norway, the home-school partnership take account of attendance at guardian meetings and guardian-teacher conferences; guardians are becoming members of co-operative or decision making bodies open to guardians in school. School and home have traditionally been viewed as separate arenas in Norway, and guardians have not been very visible in the educational system (Holthe, 2000). The opposite happened; the educational system changed from being a rather closed system to becoming much more open towards the community because of the awareness that guardians are one of the agents of education (Holthe, 2000).

Khong (2004) also stated that in Singapore, guardians themselves mostly saw no need to interfere into school space except for attending school-initiated activities like school concerts. Guardians hardly met individually with teachers and then only as a 'last-resort' option for problematic children (Khong, 2004).

In the era of rapid global economic and social change, educational institutions like schools and universities are struggling to keep their curricula and programs relevant. Khong (2004) emphasized that Singapore's schools are no exception, especially when education is viewed as the essential element for maintaining the nation's global competitiveness in ways that are totally disproportionate to its size.

Some researchers such as Siririka (2007); Jekonia (2012); Kaperu (2004) and Hamunyela (2008) have researched parental involvement in Namibia. Here are some of their findings:

Firstly, the findings of Sirika's study on parental involvement of their children's literacy in a rural Namibian school indicated that parents in the Ngeama rural community have not been effectively involved in their children's acquisition of literacy, for a number of reasons such as parents not feeling appropriately empowered to influence the development of their children's literacy (Siririka, 2007).

Secondly, Jekonia (2012) researched parental involvement in the education of their children in the Omusati region. He found that parents in the Omusati region were indeed willing to be involved in a variety of parental activities. They expressed the need for effective training on parental involvement activities both at school and at home.

Thirdly, Hamunyela (2008) identified some findings regarding the parental involvement in their children's academic education in rural area in Namibia. The results of her study pointed out that the involvement of parents is difficult in remote schools within the low economic status.

Lastly, Kaperu (2004) found factors such as parents' level of education and the distance from school influenced their involvement in the education of their children. This is an indication that parents are either not aware of their responsibilities or are aware but they don't know the importance of their involvement. One of Kaperu's study questions was "What are guardians' perceptions of schools expectations of their involvements in their children's schooling?" This thesis therefore highlighted guardians' roles in their children's learning activities. Jekonia (2012) also recommended that a study of a similar nature should be carried out at primary school level so that the researchers and educators can build on the parental involvement issue. This was an incentive for this study to be carried out.

2.3 THEORIES UNDERPINNING THE STUDY

This study was guided by two theories namely: Eco-system theory by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and the social theory by Epstein (2000). The researcher identified two theories relevant to this study. These two theories focused on bringing the three bodies together namely: school, home and society (Bronfenbrenner's theory) and home, school and community (Epstein's theory) for the complete development and education of the child. Though the two theorists focus on similar areas, each of them developed a unique framework and a system to bring about their convictions and findings regarding the school, home and society/community participation in the development and education of children. The unique framework and system of each theorist therefore, enriched the understanding of the concept of home-school partnership investigated in this study.

2.3.1 Eco-system theory by Bronfenbrenner

This theory came about as a result of a study that was carried out in Berlin in 1970 by Bronfenbrenner, on the effects of the neighbourhood on the development of children, a concept which consists of an exposition of what we today term Bronfenbrenner's theoretical system. Bronfenbrenner's theory (1979) is one of the theories that existed from the past but the researcher found it relevant to the study because it is about bringing the three bodies together. The theory was used to explain the concentration of the family as an umbrella body and how the children interact with the school, home and society. The eco-system factors that contribute to human learning and development are according to Bronfenbrenner (1979):

- ✓ **Process** - is mechanisms of human development
- ✓ **Person** - person is inseparable to his/her environment
- ✓ **Context** - historical period of learning and development (context that nurtures learners' learning i.e support of parents)
- ✓ **Time** - environment that influences learners learning and development.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) ecosystem theory has also developed five socially organized subsystems that help support and guide human growth and development, namely: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, chronosystem and macrosystem. These subsystems provide an understanding on how the schools and homes are related to the society. The eco-system theory shows how each body influences the other (interconnected) and that each one needs the other one to function and make a

positive contribution to lives and play a big role in fostering the learning of the child. The guardians always need to be part of their children's education so that they can help build a good relationship between home, school and society (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These five types of subsystems are relevant to this study and are categorised in the following ways:

Microsystem refers to the relationship between a developing person (a learner in this case) and immediate environment, such as school, teacher, friends, classmates, neighbours, family and other people who have direct contact with the learner (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The microsystem is the setting in which the learners have direct social interactions with these social agents (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The theory states that learners are not mere recipients of the experiences when socializing with these people in the microsystem environment, but learners are contributing to the construction of such environment for example face to face classroom and the family setting.

Mesosystem involves the relationships between the microsystems in one's life (guardians, family and teachers) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This means that your family experience may be related to your school experience. For example, if a learner is neglected by his guardians, he/she may have a low chance of developing positive attitude towards his/her teachers. Also, this learner may feel awkward in the presence of peers and may resort to withdraw from a group of classmates (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Exosystem is the relationship between family, working place and community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). There is a link between the contexts for example, the person

does not have any active role, and the context when the person is inactively participating (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The latter contains environmental elements that have profound influence on a learner's development even though the learner is not directly involved with them (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Macrosystem is the actual culture of an individual. The cultural context involves the socioeconomic status of the person and his family, his ethnicity or race and living in a still developing or a third world country (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Chronosystem includes the transitions and shifts in one's lifespan (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This system may also involve the socio-historical contexts that may influence a person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For example, the way divorce, as a major life transition, may affect not only the couples' relationship but also their children's behaviour (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The Bronfenbrenner's ecosystem theory could help the school personnel understand why learners behave differently at home and school. Some reasons Bronfenbrenner outlined are as socio-historical events like divorce, socio economic status and social relationship.

2.3.2 Epstein's theory

Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres influences this study and the six types of involvement that are used to examine ways in which school personnel are involved in school-family-community partnership (Epstein, 1995). This theory suggests that to succeed at higher levels the internal and external models of influence should intersect

and work together to promote learner learning and development. The internal model suggests that learners learn and achieve more when the external contexts in which they live (home, school and community) work together to support and enhance academic learning and success.

In this thesis Epstein's theory is used to give detail relevance to the connections between the society, home and school and how these associations can bring out internal motivation in individual learners. This framework is not based on the empirical evidence of what guardians actually do in the name of supporting their children, but rather what is supposed to be done.

Epstein's theory further emphasizes the relevance of the home-school relationship and common duties for learner's education and development. The theory also articulates that learners are well reinforced with their school activities when home and school work together as a team to promote their common goal. Epstein added that the partnership between home and school is for learning to take place and to enhance the development of learners (Epstein et al., 2002).

2.3.2.1 Types of involvement

With regards to the home-school partnership concept, Epstein and his group at John Hopkins University (Epstein, 2009) developed the framework which contains six important types of involvement. The six involvements are parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaboration with the community. These six types of involvements are defined and categorized in the following ways:

Parenting responsibilities includes providing housing, health, nutrition, safety and parenting skills in parent-child interactions and guardians (Epstein, 2009). All the family members must become aware and knowledgeable about child development and providing resources that enable them to establish home environment that help schools understand the learners (Epstein, 2009).

Communication in the context of this study refers to an appropriate, effective two-way communication between school and home. This two way communication discuss issues such as: school events and happenings, teaching staff to be allowed to do home visits, workshops, learners' progress (positive and negative) and personal growth within the community (Epstein, 2009).

Volunteering applies when guardians are willing to help in the classroom or during events. Volunteering happens through ways such as when guardians are willing to partake in activities organised by the school. The school personnel must be able to get involved through the activities initiated by community members aimed at supporting learners progress (Epstein, 2009).

Learning at home happens when guardians assist their children with their school tasks as provided by the school by giving well-articulated guidance to the guardians regarding the school tasks such as project rubrics and homework guidelines in order for it to be part of their children's school activities (Epstein, 2009).

Decision-making occurs when guardians and family members are involved in school decisions from all backgrounds as representatives when they form part of School Board Committees and other school related committees (Epstein, 2009).

Collaboration with the community refers to schools integrating communities' resources to support and meet the needs of schools personnel, learners and their families (Epstein, 2009).

The six types of involvement interactions operate within the theory of overlapping spheres as a framework for the following reasons: organising behaviours, roles and actions performed by school personnel, family and community members working together to increase involvement and learners' achievement. Sanders (2008) acknowledged the six types of involvement that help sharpen the structure and organize activities to gain the guardians' support and involvement in their children's education. He added that the schools that have integrated the theory of overlapping spheres and utilized the six types of involvement have created better interaction among the home, the school and the community and have been shown to have healthy partnerships with families and community.

Based on the background of this study in which this research was carried out, the conceptual frameworks of Bronfenbrenner and Epstein were considered the most appropriate to guide the research. Therefore, the above mentioned were used throughout the study especially to gather information during interviews.

2.4. FOUNDATIONS FOR HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

2.4.1 The doctrine of guardians' rights

In any caring society the importance of child welfare cannot be overemphasized because the future welfare of the entire community, its growth and development depends on the health and well-being of its children. Children need to be regarded as

valuable national assets because the future well-being of the nation depends on its children to grow up and develop their country. Since independence, Namibia has authorised several key international legal instruments aimed at promoting the right of children (Kangandjela & Mapaure, 2009).

The Namibian Constitution (Ministry of Information and Broadcast [MIB], 1990) captures certain rights provided for in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The Constitution also places apart from the right to vote that, all children are permitted to enjoy the rights provided for and fixed in Chapter 3; The Namibian Constitution has an entrenched and justifiable Bill of Rights. Article 15 (2) of the Constitution therein spells out some relevant rights of children which are in line with those provided for in the CRC as follow:

According to MIB (1990):

(2) Children are entitled to be protected from economic exploitation and shall not be employed in or required to perform work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with their education, or to be harmful to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. For the purposes of this Sub-Article⁸ children shall be persons under the age of sixteen (16) years (p.5).

According to the Sub-Article 8, MIB (1990), children's rights consider the vulnerable character of the child. The article imply the necessity to protect them. It means to grant a particular assistance to them, and to give a protection adapted to their age and to their degree of maturity. So, the children have to be helped and

supported and must be protected against labour exploitation and ill-treatment that may affect their health.

2.4.2 The family as the first and most important educator

According to Perino and Allasino (2014), family, school, peers, mass media, public opinion, work volunteer groups and religion each play a major role in the socialization and ultimately the education process. One of the most dramatic influences on a child's education is that of the socialization process. Perino and Allasino (2014), further suggested that there are many external forces that have impact on children and teens:

- ✓ The family from which ascribed status is derived.
- ✓ Attendance at a public school or an exclusive, elite private school.
- ✓ The composition of peer groups.
- ✓ The exposure to mass culture and the media.
- ✓ The impact of work and career.
- ✓ Involvement in voluntary groups.
- ✓ Religious affiliation/spirituality.

As the primary agent of socialisation and the first educator is the family, socialization process plays an essential role in the transmission of the fundamental values that encourage and nurture learning in a young child. There is strong indication that learners from homes in which both parents have earned college

degrees has a significantly higher probability of academic success, as well as personal and professional success (Perino & Allasino, 2014).

2.4.3 Parenting

Parenting can or acts as a mother or father to someone. According to Rinaldi and Howe (2012) there are types of parenting and they have different effects on the development of a child:

1. *Authoritative parenting*: this type of parenting is probably the style that most people think of when they think of parenting. In this style the parents are rulers of the house. They make the rules, they set the punishment and children obey those rules. Such a punishment may seem like a good operating system but because of its ridged set up it lends itself to less affection and communication. Children do not get a say in making rules and they may view their parents as removed from them (Rinaldi & Howe, 2012).
2. *Permissive parenting*: no one is really in charge. Each member of the family is free to do as they wish. With this type of parenting there is usually a great deal of love and affection, however, because of the lack of rules children may not learn how to abide by them as they grow older, and it can lead to problems with authority figures in the work place as they become adults (Rinaldi, & Howe, 2012).
3. *Democratic parenting* is an approach to parenting that is focused on building respect with children by knowing when to be flexible and when to be firm,

when to listen and when to put the foot down. It is the balance between authoritarian and permissive parenting and what this means is that all members of the family are respected and are equally treated (Rinaldi & Howe, 2012).

2.5. CHALLENGES TO HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Different scholars identified reasons why guardians are sometimes reluctant to talk to the teachers. Obeidat and Al-Hassan (2009); Christenson and Sheridan (2001) claimed that many researchers have shown that there are numerous challenges facing the formation of school-home community partnership. For instance, Glasgow and Whitney (2009) mentioned that parents and teachers have a misconception about each other's true desire and support for guardian's involvement. Since guardians do not always respond to communication from schools, teachers may feel that guardians often believe that, in reality, teachers do not really want the guardians to be involved.

For many guardians, however, their own childhood experiences in schools were negative (Graham-Clay, 2005). Some guardians' experienced difficult situations, failure and some dropped out before completing their studies and this may also affect the building of a positive relationship with their child's teacher (Graham-Clay, 2005; Flynn, 2007; Richardson, 2009). Indeed, guardians may also lack the understanding of how to interact with the educational system effectively.

Christenson and Sheridan (2001) mentioned financial and time constraints as other obstacles for effective communication between teachers and guardians. They also said that work schedules may also conflict with school events, and thus making

guardians unable to attend. Nichols and Read (2002) claimed that a compelling barrier to meaningful communication is the traditional parent-teacher meeting that only lasts five to fifteen minutes. This short time does not offer any satisfactory communication with regard to the child's academic and social progress. Guardians prefer more time to express their feelings concerning their children's education. Jekonia (2012) identified barriers like poverty and inability of elderly guardians to assist in school activities in the Omusati region, where he carried out a study on parental involvement.

Powerful social and economic factors still prevent many guardians' outreach to schools (Harris & Goodall, 2008). Guardians often complain that the school personnel (teachers and the management members) do not make enough effort to understand their children and that they lack empathy, love and concern (Harris & Goodall, 2008). Such negative feelings are projected towards children and make their guardians defensive towards school (Flynn, 2007). The shocking news is that some guardians try to divorce themselves from their responsibilities as parents (Flynn, 2007). These are the types of guardians who will tell a teacher "He is your problem from 9 to 3" or "She is fourteen and is old enough to take responsibility for her own actions so don't call me!" (Flynn, 2007, p.25). Siririka (2007) and Flynn (2007) stated that some guardians feel that they are not empowered to get involved in their children's learning.

Research provides us with evidence that some guardians with certain cultural backgrounds, as well as many low income guardians, consider schools as institutionalized authority, hence leaving the responsibility solely to the teachers to

educate their children (Waterman, 2006). Furthermore, many guardians of cultural minority groups such as the San and Himba in Namibia also face language barriers. Therefore, Waterman (2006) stated that English abilities of guardians are not the only factor influencing communications. The information letters that schools send to guardians are always written in English and this can hinder effective communication (Waterman, 2006). In some cases, school translators in schools believe that their documents must be written in very formal language in order to be of sufficient quality (Siririka, 2007). Yet, this often results in word choices and grammatical structures that are unfamiliar or misleading to the guardians (Siririka, 2007). Ultimately, school personal may believe that they are sending guardians good clearly stated documents when this is not the case given the language usage barrier (Flynn, 2007).

Epstein and Sanders (2000) claimed that many teachers still see themselves as individual leaders of their classrooms and schools. Thus, little attention is paid to partnerships and relationships with guardians. In order to enhance learning of learners, teachers need to scrutinise possibilities to develop and form partnership with parents (Richardson, 2009). Such a partnership is, especially, essential in secondary schools, where guardians often lack the confidence in their ability to assist their children with the curriculum (Sheldon, 2009).

Flynn (2007) outlined that some teachers have misjudged the guardians as to have no value for education or do not even prepare or encourage learning. He then added that some teachers believe that contacting guardians is not part of their job descriptions, but rather the work of the principal. Lastly, Flynn (2007) pointed out that some

teachers also lack understanding of the importance of home-school partnership. In some cases new teachers are ill-informed about the benefits of guardians being involved in the school activities (Siririka, 2007).

2.6. CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE LITERATURE AND THE GAP FOUND IN LITERATURE.

Except for Namibian studies like that of Siririka (2007) and Hamunyela (2008), there were no similar studies found for other African countries that are reporting how the guardians can be involved in their children's education. Therefore, it was difficult to get literature concerning the Namibian issues. An emerging body of school, family and community partnership literature has demonstrated numerous ways to involve families and communities to enhance learners' academic, personal and social success.

Hamunyela (2008); Logan and Scarborough (2008); Day-vines and Terriquez (2008) developed a number of ideas that the school may consider implementing to engage involvement of the guardians. Schools should consider building strong relationships and maintain trust with the guardians in working with their children at home and provide guardians with support on how to help their children (Hamunyela, 2008). Hamunyela further reported that schools should use the form of communication that will make sure that all guardians are reached considering the different levels of their education. Tibbits (2004) also noted the importance of communication for partnership between schools and their communities is to foster open communication and continuing strong personal and democratic relationships.

Moreover, Day-vines and Terriquez (2008) stated that the school counsellor and a task force could collaborate with adults from the community, as well as learners within the school, to develop interventions that all parties will agree upon to improve the current discipline policy and procedures at school. Hamunyela (2008) suggested that schools should encourage guardians to volunteer at the school by visiting classrooms and providing technical support for classroom and other helpful learning activities. Her idea was seconded by Epstein (2009) who forced inclusion of volunteering as a part of the school system where guardians can opt to help in order to get involved in their children's education.

Another study by Logan and Scarborough (2008) advised that school counsellors could co-create a program entitled "connections through clubs" that will emphasise collaboration between guardians and the school and consequently increase attendance at school sponsored events and increase communication between the guardians and the school. Lastly, schools should link their work to community resources, and provide guardians with ways on how to be organisers for the school (Hamunyela, 2008). Similarly, Price-Mitchell (2009) suggested creating opportunities for joint activities for all included and thus lead the efforts from the grassroots towards a partnership.

2.7 SUMMARY

This chapter reviewed the literature related to this research. It presented a discussion on what has been researched by other scholars. It started with a short introduction, followed by the meaning of home school partnership. Secondly, theories

underpinned the study was explained. Thirdly, foundations for home-school partnership were discussed and fourthly, challenges to home-school partnership were also identified and lastly the critical analysis of the literature and the gap found in literature. In the following chapter the research methodology will be discussed.

CHAPTER 3

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to: describe the research methodology of this study; explain the population and sample selection; describe the procedures used in designing the instruments; collection of data; providing explanations of the procedures used to analyse the data and ethical considerations.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive case study research design was used. A descriptive research is usually qualitative in nature. The case study can describe the reality of the situation and this was exactly what the researcher hoped to achieve in this research. According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2011) the qualitative approach allows the researcher to explore participants' behaviour, perspectives, feelings and experiences in depth. This process is demanded by the nature of the research questions which requires an in-depth discussion and understanding of the guardians' and teachers' perceptions of home-school partnership in the children's school activities. Boeije (2010) articulated the purpose of qualitative approach as to describe and understand a social phenomenon in terms of the meaning people bring to them.

Gray (2009) outlines some characteristics that are part of qualitative research approach: the researcher's role is to gain a holistic or integrated overview of the study, including the perceptions of participants. The researcher's role is also conducted through intense contact within a field or real life setting. In this thesis, the

researcher intended to do the following: (1) Visit guardians to get first-hand knowledge about their perceptions on the home-school partnership. (2) Interview the principals, teachers and chairpersons of the school board in order to get a holistic view on the issue.

According to Oliver (2010) a case study design does not quite operate at a level of detail, but is still concerned with specificity. Subsequently, Gay *et al.* (2011) define the case study as a design in which researchers focus on a unit of study known as a bounded system (e.g. teachers, a classroom or a school). Grix (2001) specifically identified three types of case study designs such as descriptive, exploratory and explanatory. Grix (2001) further describes the descriptive case study as aiming to give a detailed account of a particular issue, person or process.

Therefore, the researcher was persuaded that a descriptive case study will be suitable for addressing the research questions of this specific study. Thus, in this study the descriptive case study was employed in order to get the perceptions of teachers, principals, school board chairpersons and guardians on the involvement of guardians in school activities which form the units of the case study selected.

3.3 POPULATION

The population of this study is the guardians of Grade 7 school learners, Grade 7 teachers, principals and chairpersons of the school boards for all the primary schools of Circuit A in Otjovondjupa region. Otjovondjupa consists of 46 primary schools. The total number of grade 7 classes at the two schools are 2 classes per school and the total number of grade 7 learners is 130 for the two schools. The population

represented the extreme ends in terms of socio-economic characteristics (i.e very poor to well-off).

3.4 SAMPLE

For this study, the purposive and criterion sampling methods were employed. Two schools in Circuit A of Otjozondjupa region, two grade 7 classes in each of the schools as well as the register teachers for those classes were selected. Furthermore, the two principals and two school board chairpersons were also included. Fourteen guardians per school were selected, thus the total participants were 36. The researcher (thus) found principals, teachers, and school board chairpersons in the population rich with information, hence the use of purposive sampling strategy to allow a researchable number of participants to be selected. This was seconded by Gay et al. (2011) who stated that the purposive sampling is mainly used when there are too many participants and they cannot all take part in the study.

The sampling strategy used to select guardians from each school was criterion. According to Gay et al. (2011) criterion sampling is a technique which specifically identifies participants who meet the defined criterion. In this study the researcher chose criterion sampling based on parent meetings' attendance list as one of the sampling methods. This technique was used to select 14 guardians from each school by using the schools' data base of attendance lists of parents' meetings. The researcher selected 50% or 7 of guardians who attended school activities and 50% or 7 guardians for those who did not attend from each school. Therefore, the researcher got a clear picture from both parties.

3.5 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The researcher decided to use semi-structured interviews as a research instrument for all the participants. A semi-structured interview according to Gray (2009, p. 368) “...is a conversation between people in which one person has the role of researcher”. Gray (2009) refers this concept as non-standardised and is often used in qualitative analysis.

Semi-structured interviews were deemed more appropriate for this study because through this instrument the researcher was able to get information that was relevant when participants were answering the research questions of the study. For instance, during the semi-structured interview, four techniques such as 1) probing for further information, 2) requesting clarification, 3) asking for examples and 4) reflecting the responses of interviewees were used. This was necessary for participants to expand on their answers. The questions for the semi-structured interviews were organised in such a way that they were linked with the research questions of this study. This also formed part of the themes in which analysis of data took place.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Yin (2003, p.78) states, “a final preparation for data collection is the conduct of a pilot case study”. Similarly, Olivier (2010) underlines that when designing a research study, it is often good practice to conduct a short, preliminary study in order to examine different potential ways of carrying out that research and to test the research instruments’ reliability. In this study, a pilot study was conducted with the

guardians and teachers at schools with similar characteristics of the schools where the study was carried out. The pilot study helped the researcher to refine her skills to become a better interviewer. The interview guide was used for the piloting and this helped the researcher to revise the semi-structured interview questions and refine the study's procedure plan.

An interview guide was used to guide the researcher and each interview was scheduled strictly via appointment. The Grade 7 learners' guardians sampled, teachers, school board chairpersons and the principals received letters requesting their permission to participate in the study and the same letter stated the purpose of the study. Green and Thorogood (2004) indicate that if an audiotape is going to be used, the respondent's permission must be sought. The researcher therefore obtained permission from all respondents before the interviews took place. All the interviews were audiotaped and each interview took between 20-35 minutes. The recordings were transcribed before the data was analysed. Interviews were done one on one basis. The participants were asked to explain their answers and this helped the researcher to get their views and opinions.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of data analysis is to provide structure, and elicit meaning from the research data (Gray, 2009). In order to achieve this, firstly, the semi-structured interviews were transcribed to text. Secondly, the researcher studied the data very carefully and organised them into themes in accordance with research questions. Thirdly, the researcher used triangulation method as one of the strategies in order to

ensure the validity of the findings. Triangulation is a method for increasing validity of findings, through deliberately seeking evidence from a wide range of sources and comparing findings from those different sources (participants). Triangulation in research such as this one, is important to differentiate between a number of factors that can be triangulated such as method triangulation and data triangulation. In this study, data triangulation was more relevant thus in the four steps, different responses to the same questions were compared with each other to help check the validity of the data. Finally, data triangulation was also employed by the researcher to compare multiple sources of data (teachers, guardians, school board chairpersons and principals) to help to finalize the themes.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS/ISSUES

Before the commencement of data gathering, ethical clearance was sought from the Director of Post Graduate Study Committee at the University of Namibia (UNAM). Boeije (2010) states that researchers have to consider the moral accuracy of their research activities in relation to the people they meet along the way such as participants, hosts, funders and colleagues. It is in line with this that the researcher wrote a letter to the circuit inspector to obtain permission to carry out research at the two selected schools in circuit A.

The two school principals were also asked permission to carry out the research with the teachers and the guardians of their respective schools. The guardians also received individual letters requesting their participation. The researcher gave an official letter to all the selected guardians that included a description of a purpose of

the study and assure them that the results will be kept confidential and will just be used for this thesis. All research findings were presented in a confidential manner and no identifiable information were disclosed to the public. Research participants were allowed the freedom to decide whether to partake in this research or not. Participants were also given a choice to withdraw from taking part at any time.

3.9 SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the research methodology of the study, explaining the population, sample selection, describe the procedure used in designing the instruments, collecting data, provide and explain the procedures used to analyse the data and lastly the ethical considerations. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the semi-structured interviews conducted with the guardians, principals, teachers and chairpersons of the school board.

CHAPTER 4

4. RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The results of the investigation and data gathered from semi-structured interviews (SSI) obtained during the course of the study are presented in this chapter. The presentation of the results is organised as follows: Firstly, the biological information regarding the guardians will be dealt with. Secondly, the involvement of guardians in their children's school activities in accordance to the research question 1. Then the guardians' perceptions of schools' expectations of their involvement in their children's schooling in accordance to the research question 2, will be discussed. Thereafter, the results of the interviews with the SBC, teachers and principals in accordance to the research question 3 will be dealt with.

The researcher interviewed twenty-two (22) guardians, two (2) school board chairpersons (SBCs), four (4) teachers and two (2) school principals from a purposive sample of two (2) schools in Circuit A of Otjozondjupa region. Epstein's types of involvements namely, parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaboration with the community (Epstein, 2003) were used in most cases for clarity, ease of understanding, and interpretation of results.

4.2 RESULTS RELATED TO THE BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF THE GUARDIANS

The following is the presentation of the guardians' responses obtained during the interviews. Each guardian was assigned with a number instead of using their names.

Questions were divided into two groups: biographical information and question-answering (QA) system to answer contextual questions that were based on the involvement of guardians in their children’s school activities.

4.2.1. Biographical information

In order to obtain biographical information, guardians were presented with the background variables such as gender, age, types of guardians, home language, employment status, distance from school, number of children attending school, and housing. Tables 4.1–4.9 provide the frequencies and percentages of the background variables of the respondents.

(a) Gender

With regard to gender, Table 4.1 below shows that there were more females, 20 (90.9%) than males, 2 (9.1 %) participating guardians.

Table 4.1: Gender of participating guardians

Category	N	%
Male	2	9.1
Female	20	90.9
Total	22	100

(b) Age

The most effective way to distribute participants’ age was to put it in categories of ten years intervals. Table 4.2 shows the age intervals of the participants and their frequencies and percentages. According to Table 4.2, the majority of guardians were

in the age category of 31-40 years (50%). This was followed by 19-30 years (31.9%), 41-50 years (13.6%), and finally 51-60 years (4.5%). There were no teenagers nor pensioner participants.

Table 4.2: Age of participating guardians

Category	N	%
Under 18	0	0
19-30	7	31.9
31-40	11	50
41-50	3	13.6
51-60	1	4.5
Order than 60	0	0
Total	22	100

(c) Type of guardians

Table 4.3: Types of participating guardians

Guardians	N	%
Mother	15	68.3
Father	2	9.1
Brother	0	0
Sister	1	4.5
Cousin	1	4.5
Grand-father	0	0
Grand-mother	1	4.5
Aunty	2	9.1
Others (specific)	0	0
Total	22	100

With regard to the types of guardians, Table 4.3 on the previous page shows that most learners are looked after by their biological mothers, 15 (68.3%), followed by their biological fathers, 2 (9.1%) and aunts, 2 (9.1%). The other types of guardians participated in this research were sisters, cousins and grandmothers and they made up 4.5% each.

(d) Language groups

Table 4.4: Language groups

Table 4.4 shows the frequency and percentages for the language groups of the guardians interviewed in this research.

Category	N	%
Nama/Damara	4	18.2
Herero	4	18.2
Oshiwambo	8	36.4
Kavango	5	22.7
Zambezians	1	4.5
Others (specify)	0	0
Total	22	100

When the home languages of the guardians were analyzed, it was observed that the highest number came from the Oshiwambo-speaking guardians (36.7%), followed by Kavango (22.7%), then by Damara>Nama and Herero (18.2% each) and the smallest number 4.5% were for Zambezians speaking guardians (4.5%). There were neither English nor Afrikaans speaking guardians.

Families are often the source of childrens' most intense caring relationships (Wood, 1999). That being said, the answers to the questions that may influence the involvements of guardians in their children's school activities such as employment status, distance between school and home, how often parents attend the school meetings and number of children in each household were collected by asking the following questions.

(e) Are you employed?

Table 4.5 below shows that most of the participants (95.5%) reported that they were employed. Only one participant (represent 4.5 %) reported that he was unemployed.

Table 4.5: Employment status

Category	N	%
Employed	21	95.5
Unemployed	1	4.5
Total	22	100

(f) How far do you live from the school?

Considering the distance between home and school, Table 4.6 below clearly shows that some of the guardians (81.8%) lived within 0.5km-5km from school where their children attended and only 18.2% resided 0.5km-10km away from school

Table 4.6: Distance from school to home

Category	N	%
0.5km-5km	18	81.8
5km-10km	4	18.2
Total	22	100

(g) How often do you attend school activities such as meetings?

The responses regarding the attendance of school activities of the guardians are presented in Table 4.7 below. It is evident here that only one guardians, does not come to school meetings. The results further revealed that on an annual basis 18.2%, 36.4%, and 40.9% do participate in school activities at least twice, thrice or more than three times, respectively.

Table 4.7: Attendance of school activities such as meetings

Category	N	%
Not at all	1	4.5

Twice a year	4	18.2
Three times a year	8	36.4
More than three times a year	9	40.9
Total	22	100

(h) How long have you lived in your current house?

Table 4.8 below shows the period of that the guardians stayed in their current house.

Table 4.8: Years living at current residence

Category	N	%
1 year	4	18.2
2-3 years	3	13.6
4-7 years	9	40.9
8-12 years	0	0.0
More than 13 years	6	27.3
Total	22	100

The majority of guardians reported that they lived there between 4-7 years. Six out of twenty-two guardians have been living in their houses for more than 13 years, 3 out of 22 guardians have lived there for 2-3 years, and 4 out of 22 guardians have lived there for just a year.

(j) How many children are you taking care of that are attending school?

The number of children that each guardian were taking care off are presented in Table 4.9. This shows that the majority 14 out of 22 guardians (63.6%) indicated that they take care of 2-3 children, 5 out of 22 guardians (22.7 %) reported that they had only one child that was attending school. Two out of twenty-two guardians (9.2%) indicated that they had four to six children attending school, and the remaining participant has more than 11 children attending school.

Table 4.9: Number of school going dependants

Category	N	%
Child	5	22.7
2-3 children	14	63.6
4-6 children	2	9.2
7-10 children	0	0.0
More than 11 children	1	4.5
Total	22	100

4.3. RESULTS ON RESEARCH QUESTION 1 AND 2: HOW ARE GUARDIANS INVOLVED IN THEIR CHILDREN’S SCHOOL ACTIVITIES? AND WHAT ARE GUARDIANS’ PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOLS EXPECTATIONS OF THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN’S SCHOOLING?

In this section the guardians’ perceptions regarding their involvement in the school related-activities both at home and school, and how often they are involved in such activities were investigated. The questions asked during the interviews and the answers obtained from the participating guardians are classified as follow:

4.3.1. Issues guardians discuss with their children

Question 1: *Do you spend time talking to your child? What kind of things do you talk about?*

Table 4.10: Interaction of guardians with their children.

Category	N	%
Often	19	86.5
Never	2	9
Sometimes	1	4.5
Total	22	100

Nineteen out of twenty-two guardians (86.5%) said they often speak to their children and they mentioned the issues they discuss with their children: They discuss life in general such as fearing God; behaviour towards their peers/adults, and encourage them to complete their homework; they also motivate their children to study in order to succeed in life; they discuss future prospects, challenges in life, dedication, commitment and being in the right company and success in school.

Guardian 8 said: *“Sometimes the time is not enough to be with them because I work in Windhoek, I therefore do not discuss with my children often, only sometime, when the time permit”*.

Two of the 22 guardians (9%) said they do not talk to their children and they gave the following reasons: There is no time after work and they are always tired after work as they commute between work and home.

It seems that the majority (86.5%) of the guardians agreed to be involved in the communication with their children, whereas the minority of the guardians do not have time to interact with their children mainly due to other activities such as work which are beyond their control.

4.3.2. Practices to involve guardians in homework activities

Question 2: *Does your child bring homework to do at home?*

All the guardians agreed that their children bring homework, but not every day. Some guardians indicated that their children might be given homework, but they would not be able to see it because of the time constraints when they get home.

Question 3: *Do you experience any problems in helping your child with homework?*

If yes, what do you do? If no, explain.

The results concerning agreement or disagreement on the question above about problems experienced by guardians in helping their children with homework are presented in Table 4.11 below. Guardians were asked to respond in terms of three categories how much they get involved in their children's homework. These categories were: never, seldom, often or very often, and covered several aspects relevant to the realization of guardians' involvement.

Table 4.11: Views regarding problems in helping children with homework.

Category	N	%
Never	1	4.5
Seldom	6	27.3
Often	6	27.3
Very often	9	40.9
Total	22	100

Sixty-eight point two percent (68.2%) of the guardians said they have problems in helping a child with homework (very often and often) mainly because of the language barrier and lack of subject content. One guardian said *"I am willing to help teachers but my little education stands in the way"*. Another guardian explained two strategies that she uses when she is experiencing problems when helping her children to complete their homework; she directs the children to the right sources such as internet and textbooks in order to see whether they will get the answers; sometimes she also refers them to their neighbours who have knowledge on the subject.

Twenty-seven point eight percent (27.8 %) of the guardians indicated that they do not experience problems whenever they are helping their children to complete their

homework. They stated that the subjects are not difficult once you go through their books. Guardian 15 said: *“Being a teacher places me in a good position to guide and refer my children to the right sources”*.

One (4.5%) of the guardians said he never helps his children with their homework, because they also do not understand the subject content.

4.3.3. Guardians’ understanding of the concept home-school partnership

Question 4: *What do you understand by the term home-school partnership?*

Most of the guardians defined home-school partnership as a shared relationship between parents and the school and in addition to that, the following answers were given:

- Guardians do things together with the school;
- Guardians work together with the school on issues with regard to the progress of the child;
- The relationship between home and the school or how often they as guardians interact with school activities;
- Extending the educational support beyond the school walls into the community;
- The involvement of guardians in school activities/education; encouraging children together with the teachers.

4.3.4 Ways how schools can support guardians to promote home-school partnership

The following questions were asked to guardians in order to determine the ways how schools can support guardians to promote home-school partnership.

Question 5: *How do you think the involvement of guardians can improve?*

Most of the guardians stated that schools should develop a culture of informing the guardians of all the happenings at school; schools should plan more meetings with the guardian; the use of incentives such as prizes should be introduced to give to those who are more involved in school activities; schools should educate guardians on the importance of them being part of their children's education instead of them dumping them in the hands of their teachers; the school should use the SMS system to inform the guardians because sometimes letters do not reach them.

Guardian 19 suggested that: *"The schools should introduce the use of a louder speaker to remind the guardians about the meetings"*.

Question 6: *Does the teacher support you in the involvement of your child? If yes, how?*

All the guardians (100%) said yes and their responses were summarized as follow: they are called to the school once per term in order to discuss the progress of their children; teachers call the guardians to see their children's books and talk to them about the importance of them being involved in their children's education; when the

guardians notice problems with their children they always ask teachers to assist; teachers give notices on transgressions and require guardians' signatures.

However, all the guardians also said that schools do not inform the guardians' when their children have improved in something that the child was not good at earlier.

4.4 RESULTS ON RESEARCH QUESTION 3: WHAT ARE THE PERCEPTIONS OF HOW TEACHERS AND SCHOOL MANAGEMENT INVOLVEMENT WITH THE GUARDIANS?

4.4.1 School Board Chairpersons (SBCs)

The following is the presentation of the school board chairpersons' views obtained during the semi-structured interviews conducted. Six questions were answered by the SBCs based on the following objective: The involvement of guardians in their children's school activities, their perception of communication and decision-making between school and the guardians.

4.4.1.1 Perceptions on how guardians can become involved in their children's education.

Question 1: *How can guardians be encouraged to get involved in the management committee/ board of management/ guardians' association?*

The school board chairpersons outlined the following:

- The school principals should make sure that the parents' meetings are not boring.
- Transport issues need to be resolved; they suggested a bus to transport the guardians where necessary when meetings are held at night.

Question 2: *Mention ways to bring the guardians of your learners closer to the school and classroom.*

The SBC's pointed out the following:

- Guardians should be called to see their children's work when necessary;
- The school staff must motivate the guardians to be open with the teachers in case they have concerns about their children that misbehave or worry them;
- Guardians need incentives for being committed to their children's support;
- SBC must reach out to the community to pass the message on about the importance of guardian being involved because they are closer to the community;
- The school must have an open system where guardians are free to volunteer when appropriate;
- The school staff should know guardians well so that they can invite them when needed; and
- Guardians should be informed of the benefits of them being involved.

Question 3: *How can you as a chairperson of the school board encourage the guardians in making important decisions regarding their children's education?*

The two school board chairpersons pointed out that all guardians that have children at their schools must attend all the meetings/conferences arranged for them in order to hear what the schools plan and give their views and opinions on school activities regarding their children's education.

4.4.1.2 Barriers to home-school partnership

Question 4: *What are some of the reasons why guardians might not be involved in school as much as you would like?*

SBC 1 identified the following reasons:

- Guardians are not motivated, they need to be motivated; and
- They are overwhelmed by other responsibilities such as work related issues, sometimes the guardians are commuting to work and they return back home too late from work to their homes.

SBC 2 added *“Some guardians might not be involved due to the language barrier”*.

Question 5: *How can you help guardians who are not involved to become more interested and concerned?*

SBC 1 said *“The guardians who are involved should be praised and recognised at the school so that those who do not attend will be influenced to become more involved. Children will realise we are a team”*. SBC 2 suggested that the school should try to involve education stakeholders such as officials from the regional office to form part of the guardians’ meetings.

Question 6: *How can you plan, organise and execute a guardian conference that will be attended?*

The SBC 2 said: *“The time for the meetings/ conferences should be reasonable and we must be informed on time to be able to include the school meetings in our schedule”*.

SBC 1 added: *“The language to be used during the conference should accommodate all of us in order to get the message loud and clear”.*

4.4.2 Teachers

4.4.2.1. Partnership orientation

A collaborative approach to schooling issues between the teachers and guardians is defined primarily by trust, which opens the door to good and sincere communication and supports decision-making. Only if both of the partners (teachers and guardians) see each other as equals can their efforts jointly contribute to the best outcomes for children. With that in mind, the following questions (Questions 1-14) were asked during the interviews based on perceptions of teachers on the involvement of guardians in school activities.

Question 1: *How long have you been teaching?*

The most effective way to record the respondent’s number of years of teaching experience was to just ask straight the exact number of years each participant have been teaching without putting it in categories or intervals. Table 4.12 shows the number of the years of teaching experience of each participant.

Table 4.12: Number of years of teaching experience

Teachers	Number of years of teaching experience
Teacher 1	2 years
Teacher 2	10 years
Teacher 3	4 years
Teacher 4	1 year

According to Table 4.12, the most experience teacher had been teaching for 10 years. She was followed by the teacher who had been teaching for four years, and then one for two years and the other respondent with one year of teaching experience.

Question 2: *How often do you as a teacher meet with the guardians?*

With regard to the teachers meeting with the guardians, the results tabulated in Table 4.12 below show that two of the four teachers interviewed meets with guardians only once a term, followed by a teacher who meet with guardians twice a term. The other teacher did not meet with the guardians at all and this made up the rest. One teacher added: *“Guardians making such visits were mostly attended to by the principals and hardly found their way to teachers”*.

Table 4.13: Number of times teachers meet guardians per term

# of time teacher meet with guardians	N
Once per Term	2
Twice per Term	1
Not at all	1
Total	4

Question 3: *Do guardians know that they are welcome at any time to talk to teachers?*

It was evident here that two of the interviewed teachers knew that the guardians are familiar with the fact that they are always welcome to see them at school any time. The results further revealed that two of the other teachers did not know or were not sure, if the guardians know that they can always pop in to talk to them.

Question 5: *How do teachers support guardians in the involvement of school activities of their children?*

Teacher 2 said: *“Teachers do not really support guardians due to too many administrative tasks but they are willing to promote collaboration with the guardians”*.

4.4.2.2 Communication

Question 6: *How do you communicate with guardians?*

All the teachers indicated that the school secretary usually use the database of learners’ information to contact guardians when required and send letters to them.

Question 7: *What do you think is the school’s most effective way to communicate with guardians in maintaining the partnership?*

All the teachers said that the best way is to send letters to the guardians whenever there is something happening at the school that need to be communicated to them.

Question 8: *What changes would you like the school to make in the way it communicates with guardians? Why?*

Two teachers reported that they are satisfied with the system of writing letters; they think writing letters is more appropriate. But Teacher 1 suggested that the use of a SMS system would be more effective, but very expensive.

Question 9: *How easy is it to talk with each learner about what s/he is learning at school? What makes it easy or difficult?*

All the teachers indicated that it is a challenge to talk to each learner, as time is limited since the ratio of teacher-learner is too big to handle. Learners are too many to attend to each of them individually. Teachers 3 and 4 added that sometimes learners are not ready to disclose their problems.

Question 10: *How often does the school keep the guardians informed of the progress of their children?*

All the teachers indicated that they communicate with the guardians as regularly as possible by sending letters to the specific guardians. At the end of each term the guardians receive a report card for their children.

4.4.2.3 Barriers to home-school partnership

Question 11: *What are the barriers that hinder your connection with the guardians?*

The teachers related the following barriers to home-school partnership.

Teacher 3 said: *“Sometimes guardians are too busy to connect with the teachers or teachers are too busy with administrative work”*.

Teacher 2 answered: *“Most guardians work in remote areas out of town as they commute from Okahandja and Otjiwarongo or Okahandja to Windhoek for work purposes. They do not have much time to be with or talk to their children. Sometimes guardians are invited to school but they do not want to come (ignorance)”*.

Teacher 1 added: *“As a teacher the language barrier is one of the reasons that makes it difficult to communicate with some of the guardians”*.

Question 12: *Do your learners and their guardians tell you when they know about something that makes it easier or harder for that learner to do their homework or their school work?*

Two teachers indicated that they do communicate with their guardians and some guardians write letters to the teachers.

4.4.2.4 Practices to involve guardians in homework activities

It is important to take notice that guardians need to consider the health and safety of their children, and create a home environment that encourages learning and good behaviour in school. On the other hand, schools should provide training and information to help families understand and promote their children's development (Epstein, 1996). In order to investigate if this takes place, teachers' responses regarding guardians' involvement in the school related-activities, and how often they got involved in such activities are reported below.

Question 13: *How often do you and the learners' guardians discuss the learners' health, happiness, and learning at home and at school? Would you like more opportunities for this? Why? Or why not?*

Three teachers, Teacher 1, 2 and 3 said that they only meet once per term with guardians during the parents evening but the time allocated for them is not enough. Teacher 3 suggested seeing the guardians at least once a month will be helpful.

Teacher 4 said: *“Most guardians do communicate with the life skills teacher (school counsellor)”*.

Question 14: *Does the school counsellor communicate back to you as a teacher?*

All the teachers said that their school counsellor communicate with them.

Question 15: *How do you think guardians can get involved in the school activities of their children?*

The teachers said that guardians can monitor their children's progress by helping them with their homework and support sport activities. Teacher 2 suggested that the school should call on the guardians' skills and use them in various areas. Teacher 3 added that guardians should be invited by the school, for example if there are sport events. The guardians may then be invited because sometimes they (guardians) are scared to assist the school unless they were asked to.

Question 16: *What sort of activities can guardians be involved in?*

The teachers said that: guardians need to help during bazaar/fundraising and assist with sporting activities. Guardians could also assist with supervision of learners during study time.

Teacher 4 added that: *“Guardians should be involved in cultural and religious activities too. Furthermore, educated guardians can look for donations and other financial sources that can help the school to develop further”*.

Question 17: *Do you invite guardians to volunteer for duties?*

Two teachers said no but Teachers 1 and 2 stated that it was discussed in one of their staff meeting at school but so far they are not aware of the teachers inviting the guardians.

Question 18: *What role do you as a teacher play with regard to home-school partnerships in school activities?*

The three teachers said that they are very much involved, they try to contact many of the guardians and communicate with them if there is a problem or the child is struggling with homework. Teachers also help with discipline; encourage learners to ask their guardians or their siblings to help them in their school activities.

Teacher 2 said that *“It improves academic performance and quality work by learners”*. Teacher 3 also added that *“It is a big advantage, because when I work hand in hand with the guardians, I ensure the continuous learning of the learner”*

4.4.2.5 Benefits of teachers having partnerships with the guardians

Question 19: *What are the advantages of teachers having partnerships with the guardians? Give examples.*

All the teachers said that it is very helpful to have partnerships with parents for it strengthens the bond between teachers and guardians. Teacher 1 added that when children see them working collaboratively with guardians they will take schooling seriously and won't attempt to create disharmony between guardians and teachers. Teacher 2 added that partnerships improves academic performance and the quality of work by learners. For the guardians it is good to know about the progress of their children. Teacher 3 also added that partnership is a big advantage, because when they work hand in hand with the guardians, they ensure the continuous learning of the learner. Teacher 3 further added that partnership will also help the learner and the

guardian to understand the level of education of their children. Lastly, the teachers also felt it can also help the learner to recognise herself/himself that she/he is very important because there is support from the school and the guardian.

Question 20: *What do your learners' guardians know about the learner that you do not know? How could this knowledge help you as a teacher?*

All the teachers know their learners' personal history, medical condition, cultural and physical status. If the child is psychologically unstable and has a disruptive behaviour, this information could be helpful so that the child can be assisted in any necessary means. Teacher 2 added that knowing their conditions will help them (teachers) to understand learners better. Furthermore, Teacher 3 said the knowledge, if communicated to the teacher, can prevent insensitive remarks from teachers to learners.

Question 21: *What do you know about your learners that their guardians do not know? How could this knowledge help the guardians?*

All the teachers commented on the learners' behaviour, although Teacher 2 said it is a difficult question indeed. Teacher 3 said that teachers know learners' intellectual levels or the quality of work they produce. This will help the guardian to relate to learners' behaviour at home and what mechanisms they can use at school to help them better (in case they behave badly at school).

Question 22: *How often do you as a teacher do home visits? Why? Or Why not?*

Half of the teachers interviewed do not do home visits because the principal is the one who is responsible for home visits.

Teacher 1 and 2 said that the school principal is the one who does home visits, only if there is a problem, but sometimes they do home visits as teachers although they are not allowed by the principal. They suggested that it is better for them to be responsible as register teachers to do home visits for their learners.

Teacher 3 and 4 added that they have a school counsellor who is responsible for home visits when there is a need.

Question 23: *Do you sometimes set homework for your learners? If yes, how often?*

All said “yes”, Teacher 3 said “*twice a week*”. He explained his response by saying: “*If you give them more homework they do not do them*” (sic).

Question 24: *Are you aware of research evidence about how guardians can best support children with homework? If yes, explain.*

Three teachers said they are not aware of such research but Teacher 3 added that he is aware of it.

Question 25: *How do you confirm that the guardians support the child in doing homework at home?*

All teachers said guardians are supposed to sign in a child’s homework book and tests. But Teacher 1 said when he gives the homework, he tells them to go and do it at home. If he knows that the learners are struggling, he tells them to ask their guardians for assistance. Teacher 3 added that he cannot really tell because some of the homework was supposed to be signed but they come back unsigned. Sometimes learners do not take homework to the guardians to sign.

4.4.3 Principals

4.4.3.1 Communication

The results concerning communication on guardians' involvement in school-activities in schools are presented as questions 1-5 below. Answers to these questions were obtained from the two principals' responses (verbatim) regarding five questions asked during the interview are as follow:

Question 1: *How effective is the involvement of guardians in their children's school activities between school and the community? How do you know?*

Both principals said that guardians' involvements are quite effective but they want the guardians' involvement to improve.

Question 2: *What does your school do to bring the guardians of your learners closer to the school and classroom?*

Principal 1 said that they plan the school development strategies together with the guardians, encourage cultural activities at the school, call in new guardians for induction and explain them the vision and mission statements of the school and set targets for the school together.

Principal 2 said: *"Inviting guardians for parents' evening and the guardians to come to school if they have concerns or complaints"*.

Question 3: *How do you consult with guardians to find out what they want from the school and how they would like to work with the school?*

Principals said that they communicate during meetings, via letters and sending questionnaires through the learners to the guardians. Principal 2 added that the school board members should also communicate with the guardians by hosting parents' meetings.

Question 4: *How does the school communicate with its community about school issues and about issues affecting the school specifically?*

Principals said they communicate during parents' meetings and instruct learners to inform their guardians of all the happenings at the school. Besides that, Principal 1 said: *It is very difficult sometimes to communicate with the guardians*".

4.4.3.2 Barriers to home-school partnership

Question 5: *What are some of the reasons guardians might not be involved in school activities as much as you would like?*

Principals said that most of the guardians report to them that they have busy schedules; some of them indicated work related issues, lack of interest and understanding of the importance of education.

4.4.3.3 Workshops for guardians to learn about home-school partnership

Question 6: *How can you help the guardians to become more involved with their children's homework?*

According to the principals, teachers should give homework with proper instructions and materials in order for guardians to help.

Question 7: *How can you help guardians who are not involved to become more interested and concerned?*

Principals pointed out that it is not an easy task to do, but one needs to carry out a research to find out about their problems. In addition to that Principal 2 said that they need to organise workshops to encourage the guardians to be involved in their children's education.

Question 8: *What can you do to encourage greater involvement among guardians who are linguistically and culturally different from the majority?*

Principals said that they will try to be multi-cultural in all aspects and have translators at meetings for everyone to feel welcomed and valued. Currently School A only has Oshiwambo and Herero language translators while School B has only an Oshiwambo translator. Principal 2 also added that their school celebrates different cultures by hosting cultural events where different learners from different groups participate and demonstrate their culture. He added that although they host cultural events the turn-up is very low. In this case, Principal 2 suggested that the school should think of giving incentives to the active guardians in order to encourage those who are not actively involved.

Question 9: *When you invite guardians to events, how can you make it easier for them to attend in terms of timing and accessible information?*

Principals said that the guardians need to be informed well in advance and the school needs to make provision for their transport where necessary. They both continued to

say that the meetings should not be too long otherwise it will bore the guardians which force them to leave before the time or before all concerns are addressed.

Question 10: *How can you plan, organise and execute a guardian conference that will be attended?*

Principals said that the language barrier amongst most of the guardians from different ethics groups would make the conference a bit difficult.

Schools can give guardians meaningful roles in the school decision-making process, and help them make the most of it; this opportunity should be open to all segments of the community including those with language problems, not just people who have the most time and energy to spend on school affairs.

Question 11: *Does your school have fund-raising activities that guardians help with or come to?*

Both principals agreed and listed some of the fundraising activities such as entrepreneurship (bazaar) day and movie (cinema) evenings which they host at their school.

Question 12: *Do you enjoy fundraising activities? Why, or why not?*

The two principals said: “yes”. The reason is that it contributes financially although not everyone attends and a majority of the guardians volunteer to sell different types of food.

Question 13: *Do you give your personnel professional development opportunities that enable them to form relationships with your school’s guardians and caregivers*

and to promote or monitor the results of the actions they take when working as partners with guardians?

The principals agreed and Principal 1 added that they emphasise this during the induction of the new teachers.

Question 14: *Do you encourage your staff to discuss home-school partnerships that could help them to promote the guardians involvement?*

The principals said “yes” they do encourage them, especially during staff meetings.

Question 15: *As a school leader, how do you ensure that all school personnel know about the diverse cultural backgrounds and incorporate appropriate features into their programmes?*

The principals said that their teaching personnel are aware of cultural diversity based on their educational background as they were taught at institutions of higher learning (BETD or BED).

4.7. SUMMARY

In this chapter the researcher presented a descriptive summary of the results obtained from participants during interviews in relation to the research questions in order to identify the types of guardians’ involvement; examined the perceptions of guardians in the education of their children; identified the key factors that influence guardians’ involvement; and suggested possible strategies for ensuring greater involvement. In Chapter 5 the data will be analysed, interpreted and discussed as well as recommendation made.

CHAPTER 5

5. INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study sought to investigate the involvement of guardians in home-school partnership in school activities at two selected primary schools in Circuit A in the Otjozondjupa region, Namibia. In order to do this, the researcher collected data using semi-structured interviews conducted with the guardians, principals, teachers and chairpersons of the school board (SBCs) and the main findings were presented in the previous chapter.

In this chapter, the interpretation of the data collected in relation with the theoretical framework, the researcher's personal comments and other research findings are discussed. The purpose of the study was to understand the guardians', teachers' and school manager's perception on the involvement of guardians in their children's education. Therefore, the interview questions were designed in such a way as to answer the following research questions:

1. How are guardians involved in their children's school activities?
2. What are guardians' perceptions of schools expectations of their involvement in their children's schooling?
3. What are the perceptions of teachers and school management on the involvement of guardians?

The layout of this chapter is based on the themes identified from the research questions: participants' understanding of the home-school partnership, expectations

of participants to promote home-school partnership, how strategies can be used to promote home-school partnership, challenges facing home-school partnership, and then the benefits for all stakeholders on partnership and how to involve guardians in their children's education.

5.2 PERCEPTIONS OF HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

As directed in the literature review Cowan, Napolitano and Sheridan (2004) define home-school partnerships as the shared relationships through which the people who care for learners in the home and community setting and the people who care for them in the school setting together promote the learners' learning and well-being.

Home-school partnership plays a vital role in determining guardian involvement in school activities. Most of the participants in this research defined home-school partnership as a shared relationship between guardians and the school.

In addition to that, the following answers were given:

- Guardians do things together with the school;
- Guardians work together with the school on issues with regard to the progress of the child;
- The relationship between home and the school or how often they as guardians interact with school activities;
- Extending the educational support beyond the school walls into the community;
- The involvement of guardians in school activities/education.

5.3 EXPECTATIONS REGARDING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The guardians', teachers', principals' and SBCs' expectations regarding parental involvement were similar but the execution and practical implications did not always match. Parental involvement will be discussed under school visits, communication, involvement of guardians in their children's homework and general discussions. Thereafter different strategies and activities mentioned will be discussed with the challenges it brings. Lastly, the benefits perceived by all participants will be dealt with.

5.3.1 Expectations regarding parental involvement

According to Christenson and Sheridan (2001), if schools truly want guardians to be partners in education, they must allow guardians sufficient opportunity to voice their opinions, concerns and views in a coequal relationship with teachers. The guardians may express their concerns to teachers for help. Unless the teachers make an effort to respond to guardians' concerns, their requests will end up not being considered.

Since most of the guardians interviewed in this study were familiar with the concept of home-school partnership, they indicated that they are willing to help teachers but their own little education stands in their way. According to Niitembu (2006), such responses strongly indicated that guardians felt undermined to participate in their children's education either because they did not know how they could be involved or they believed that they were constrained by the limited education they had.

The findings of the study of Sirika (2007) on parental involvement of their children's literacy in a rural Namibian school indicated that parents in the Ngeama rural

community have not been effectively involved in their children's acquisition of literacy, for a number of reasons such as parents not feeling appropriately empowered to influence the development of their children's literacy (Siririka, 2007).

Moreover, Jekonia (2012) researched parental involvement in the education of their children in the Omusati region. He found that parents in the Omusati region were indeed willing to be involved in a variety of parental activities. Herein, the researcher realized that guardians are aware of their needs in terms of participation in their children's education and there is a need to bring them to a level where they have a common appreciation of home-school partnership. If that level is reached it would enable teachers to collaborate with the guardians without too much difficulty.

Refreshingly, some guardians thought that their limited education did not entirely prevent them from helping their children to learn. As one guardian said, "*Subjects are not difficult once you go through their books*". Another guardian said "*Being a teacher places me in a good position to guide and refer my child to the right source*".

Children too would enjoy these exchanges with their guardians and interactive homework helps them to learn something from and about their guardian that they would not otherwise have known. With this in mind, it is practical for school teachers to learn from guardians what they (guardians) could do comfortably by the way of helping children with their learning.

Responses by School Boards Chairpersons (SBCs), and principals regarding how guardians can be involved in their children's education, indicated that these

participants were aware of a few ways in which the guardians of the children were involved in their children's education. SBCs mentioned that guardians should be called to see their children's school work when necessary. One SBC further stated:

The school staff must motivate the guardians to be open with the teachers in case they have concerns about their children that misbehave or worry them.

Another SBC responded that *Guardians need incentives for them being committed to their children's support.*

These comments imply that little effort is made to involve guardians in their children's school work and there are no official channels created for guardians by the teachers to listen to important information guardians have about their children, their wishes for their children, the family's cultural practices and their views on education. All the participants agreed that although there is some involvement it is not good enough and it needs the involvement of all stakeholders to make it successful.

5.3.2 School visits

With regard to the teachers having meetings with the guardians, results showed that half of the teachers interviewed, meet guardians once a term, followed by one-quarter of teachers who meet with guardians twice a term. The other quarter of the teachers, did not meet with the guardians at all. With this information, the researcher asked guardians whether they are aware that they are welcome to meet the teachers. Half of the guardians responded that they know that they are welcome. The other half did not know or were not sure if they are welcome to come and see the teachers.

It is noteworthy that principals mentioned that guardians do visit the school when there is a problem, which the teachers did not mention. This may be because, according to the teachers, guardians making such visits were mostly attended to by the principals and they hardly found their way to the teachers.

Although school visits take place it seems as if the teachers and guardians never meet each other for the guardians only visit the principal. The teachers feel the principals should involve them for they are the more direct link to the learners.

5.3.3 Communication

Communicating in the context of this study refers to an appropriate, effective two way communication between school and home to discuss issues such as: school events and happenings, teaching personnel to be allowed to do home visits, workshops for guardians, informing guardians about learners' progress (positive and negative) and personal growth within the community (Epstein, 2009). Teachers and principals in the study indicated that they communicate with the guardians by means of general parents' meetings, written communication (letters) and messages carried by learners to guardians. One of the teachers stated that most guardians do communicate with the life skills teacher (school counsellor). However, this communication can only be effective if the communication flows in two directions and schools must encourage and create channels whereby parents can easily and with comfort speak to teachers (Lemmer 2002).

On the other hand guardians mentioned the following as reasons why they come to school to communicate:

- Discuss the progress of their children;
- Teachers call the guardians to see their children's books and talk to them about the importance of them being involved in their children's education;
- When the guardians notice problems with their children they always ask teachers to assist;
- Teachers give notices on transgressions and require guardian's signatures.

It seemed that some of the guardians are communicating with the schools, whereas others are not actively involved in school activities due to their busy schedule and lack of interest. Communication is mainly done through instructing the learners to communicate messages to their guardians using letters. With this in mind, it is important to know that schools should be accountable for reaching out to the families and providing them with the information about learner's performance/progress. The means of communication should be appropriate for guardians and their cultural specificities.

For example, with the school principal not knowing what procedures needed to be put in place for communication to flow from school to family and from family to school, an uninviting school climate may prevail (Haack, 2007).

Glasgow and Whitney (2009) mentioned that guardians and teachers have a misconception about each other's true desire and support for home-school partnership. Since, some teachers indicated that guardians do not always respond to communication from schools, teachers may feel that guardians often believe that, in reality, teachers do not really want the guardians to be involved.

5.3.4 Guardians involvement in children's homework

Epstein's theory articulates that learners are well reinforced with their school activities when home and school work together as a team to promote their common goal (Epstein et al., 2002). Epstein adds that the partnerships between home and school is for learning to take place and the development of the well-being of learners. Epstein (2009) emphasises that learning at home happens when guardians assist their children with their school tasks.

Most participants indicated that guardians do not work together with the school and teachers might understand the concept too but they are ignored. This may be because the school is making little effort to involve and make them understand the concept very well.

All the teachers indicated that guardians can monitor their children's progress by helping them with their homework and to support them. Some teachers added that in most cases they try getting the guardians' contacts numbers by using the school's data and to communicate with them if there is a problem or the learner is struggling with the homework. According to the information from the semi-structured interviews, teachers are aware that guardians can play a big role in their children's education and it is very important when they assist them with their homework.

Guardians and teachers agreed that the expected parental involvement does not realise as it should for various reasons. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2007) found that many guardians in South Africa are in extremely traumatic life situations and are struggling to survive. From this study, 95.5% of the guardians are employed,

however mainly in the township and are faced with urgent problems of survival, leaving little time or energy for school involvement. However, some of the guardians were able to assist with their children's' home work. Such guardians were more aware of their perceived limitations than their potential to be meaningfully involved in their children's education.

Kaperu (2004) found that factors such as guardians' level of education and the distance from school influenced their involvement in the education of their children. However, the data most of the guardians stated that they do not communicate with their children regarding homework because they are involved in other activities such as work and commuting every day to another town. In addition, all the guardians revealed that although the children do bring their homework home, they cannot really help for some of them do not speak English, cannot read well or have lack of subject content, given their educational background.

Alexander (2001) recommends that each school should draw up a simple, clear homework policy, if possible with guardians and learners' input, and communicate this to parents regularly. However, most teachers who participated in this study indicated that their schools do not have homework policies. The absence of a homework policy and thus, a lack of understanding of ways in which guardians may be involved, prevent effective guardian involvement in homework. This study furthermore indicated that teachers do not always give proper instructions and sometimes they do not inform the learners' guardians specifically about what they must do to help learners with homework. Both principals emphasised that teachers should provide instructions and materials that are needed for the completion of

homework. The homework activities should be designed to keep learners and their families talking about schoolwork at home (Epstein *et. al*, 1995).

A thorough analysis of the issue raised by the guardians regarding their involvement in their children's education, the researcher is suggesting that the schools should educate guardians on the importance of them being part of their children's education. These findings are corroborated by Keith (2012) who claims that parental involvement is one of the factors in a child's education that leads to more learners graduating from high school.

These findings are an indication that although some guardians are of assistance to their children others feel inadequate to help and they are not guided by the teachers on how to help their children.

5.4.5 General discussion with children

In this study, the results showed that most of the guardians were young. This might have an impact on the communication and also the assistance children get from their guardians. Some of the guardians might have other responsibilities that they favour than talking to their children.

Most of the guardians indicated that they spend time talking to their children about different issues such as fearing God, behaviours towards their peers and adults and encouraging them to do their homework. They also motivate them to study hard in order to succeed in life and discuss future prospects, challenges in life and being in the right company. Guardians indicated that sometimes they are willing to discuss

issues concerning their children at home but there is no time as they commute for work and arrive home late at night

5.4.6 Challenges encountered with home-school partnership.

Notwithstanding the immense benefits of guardians' involvement, there are strong challenges which need to be eliminated. Challenges of guardians' involvement in their children's education will be discussed as mentioned by school principals, SBCs, teachers and guardians.

The SBSs and the teachers thought that the school principal sometimes limited knowledge of the concept of guardian involvement constituted a challenge to guardians' involvement in their children's education. It can be that the principal never give feedback to the teachers on the guardians visit. The school climate in relation to guardians' involvement is obviously influenced by the school principals' and teachers' limited knowledge of guardians and that impacted negatively on their involvement.

Some of the teachers said that the school principal is the one who does home visits. Their argument was it is better for them as teachers to be responsible for home visits as class register teachers. With the principal's limited principal-learner interaction, the principal could be ill-equipped to play an effective role. Another teacher added that they have a school counsellor who is responsible for home visits when there is a need.

Jekonia (2012) identified barriers like poverty and inability of elderly guardians to assist in school activities in the Omusati region, where he carried out a study on parental involvement. This was corroborated by the principals who said that most of the guardians report to them that they have busy schedules; some of them indicated work related issues, lack of interest and understanding of the importance of education. On the other hand, some guardians indicated that they are willing to help their children with homework but there are constraints that prevent them to do so.

Therefore, it is difficult for some of the learners to get assistance from their guardians with their homework. The teachers put it that sometimes guardians are invited to school but they do not want to come. The teachers said there is a need to train guardians so that they meaningfully participate in their children's education.

The researcher noticed that the majority of guardians do not stay home during the day. Both principals reported that most of the guardians informed them that they have too busy schedules; they have work related issues, lack of interest, lack of understanding the importance of education to visit the school. All the teachers stated that sometimes guardians are too busy to make contact with the teachers and then teachers are also too busy with their own administrative work. This means that time is also a problem and makes it difficult for teachers and guardians to meet and discuss the issues concerning learners.

Teachers indicated that it's a challenge for them to talk to each learner, as time is limited and the ratio of teacher to learner is quite huge. Learners are too many to

attend to each of them individually and therefore impossible to have contact with all the guardians.

Another issue raised by the principals is the cultural diversity but that their teaching personnel are aware that this is important because of their educational backgrounds as they were taught at institutions of higher learning where cultural diversity was a norm. It seemed that the principals are not encouraging the teachers to collaborate with guardians to overcome the issue of cultural diversity.

Collaboration between teachers and guardians is important since schools can help families gain access to support services offered by other agencies, such as healthcare, cultural events, tutoring services, and after-school child-care programs. Teachers need to initiate collaboration between schools and parents in order to find out what parents are doing and to let them know that there is help available (Haack, 2007).

Some guardians' experienced difficult situations, failure and some dropped out before completing their own education and this may also affect the building of a positive relationship with their child's teacher (Graham-Clay, 2005; Flynn, 2007; Richardson, 2009). The responses of guardians in this study also reflected this viewpoint. Most guardians (95 %) are employed in the area where the study took place but most of their jobs do not require higher level of literacy. The researcher picked up that most guardians are unable to read and write properly. According to the guardians, illiteracy truly affects their involvement in school activities including projects and their children's homework.

The language barrier (English) makes it difficult for the guardians to help their children with homework on subject content. Many guardians of cultural minority groups such as the San and Himba in Namibia also face language barriers (Graham-Clay, 2005; Flynn, 2007; Richardson, 2009). Teachers put it that most guardians work in remote areas out of town as they commute from Okahandja to Otjiwarongo or Okahandja to Windhoek for work purposes. They do not have much time to be with or talk to their children. Sometimes guardians are invited to school but they do not want to come through either ignorance or a lack of willingness to be involved.

The overall results from the principals, teachers and guardians show that there is a gap somewhere, the principals do not emphasise the issue of home-school partnership enough, and teachers are not putting in enough effort from their side as they indicated that they have too many learners to attend to and the administration work take up most of their time. Guardians, indicated that their busy schedules prevent them from attending to their children work and for them to be actively involved. The language barrier is also a hindering factor for them.

Hamunyela (2008) identified some findings regarding the parental involvement in their children's academic education. Her research results pointed out that the involvement of parents is difficult in remote schools within the low economic status (LES). Guardians' individual differences/needs could be attended to after establishing the said common understanding. Nevertheless, although the above-mentioned challenges are valid, guardians should be encouraged so that they can meet the challenge of providing the support needed by their children to succeed in life (MoE, 2006). Guardians need guidance from the teachers.

From the teachers, guardians, SBCs and principals the researcher found that although challenges there are many possible strategies that the schools can implement to improve home-school partnership.

5.4.7 Strategies and activities to improve parental involvement

According to the researcher's findings, guardians can do many things that they had never thought of doing, for there are different kinds of involvements. For example, guardians can teach their children myths that hold good morals. This could help children to develop their listening and speaking skills. Guardians can also teach the children traditional proverbs on wisdom, and which also sharpen their thinking skills. Moreover, some guardians could teach children crafts, traditional music and dance as well as poetry. Thus, well-designed homework that enables learners to interact with their families should help more learners maintain and advance their learning abilities and interests (Epstein, 2009).

Holthe (2000) reports that the home-school partnerships take account of attendance at guardian meetings and guardian-teacher conferences and by becoming a member of co-operative or decision making bodies guardians can become involved in the operations of the school. In the planned idea of fostering "partnership" between the school and home is to let those who are interested in the educational success of their children such as guardians, teachers, school alumni and the business industry to give their full support and commitments.

Hence, the teachers and SBCs suggested the same thing for they thought it is important for the guardians to be called to the school to see their children's school work.

Another study by Logan and Scatborough (2008) advised that school counsellors could co-create a program entitled "connections through clubs" that emphasize collaboration between guardians and the school and consequently increase attendance at school sponsored events and increase communication between the guardians and the school.

This strategy was mentioned most frequently by both SBCs and teachers. They apparently believed that guardians' ignorance of how to be involved, constituted the biggest problem why they do not attend school events. This kind of thinking was consistent with responses like all guardians that have children at their schools must attend all the meetings/conferences arranged for them in order to hear and give their views and opinions on school activities regarding their children's education. Such responses give confidence to the belief that some teachers, SBCs and principals tended to blame guardians for lack of meaningful involvement at school. The blame is supported by the literature. Haack (2007) acknowledges that guardians may not have the skills (and knowledge) that they need to help with their children's school work or may believe that they will not be effective at helping their children.

In terms of communication, the guardians suggested that an SMS system to remind them the day before the meeting, should be introduced and be implemented because sometimes the letters do not reach them. For example, it was also suggested by one

guardian that schools should introduce the use of loudspeakers to remind the guardians about the meetings the day before the meeting.

The results indicated that teachers support the guardian only sometimes by inviting them to the school once per term in order to discuss the progress of their children. However, the guardians felt that the school should inform them if their children improve in something the child was not good at. Based on the information collected, it shows that guardians feel that they do not get enough support from the teachers. The teachers on the other hand indicated that administrative work take up most of their time and they sometimes find it difficult to contact the guardians. Flynn (2007) states that teachers who promote partnerships with guardians report reduced stress levels and experienced empowerment to teach effectively.

SBCs expressed that guardians should be called to see their children's work when necessary. The school staff must motivate the guardians to be open with them in case they have concerns about their children that misbehave or worry them.

The SBCs also suggested that for those guardians who are involved in school activities need to be encouraged, motivated and recognised more by giving awards. The school should also have an open system where guardians are free to volunteer for non-teaching activities when appropriate. The school must have an open system where guardians are free to volunteer when appropriate. The school teachers should know guardians well so that they can invite them when needed. Guardians should be informed of the benefits of them being involved. This was corroborated by the principals who said guardians need incentives for them to be committed to their

children's support and they should encourage guardians to see their children's school work when necessary. Principals stressed that the SBCs should reach out to the community more and pass the message on about the importance of them being involved because they are more linked to the community.

Tibbits (2004) also noted the importance of communication for partnership between schools and their communities in order to foster open communication and also to continue strong personal and democratic relationships.

Christenson and Sheridan (2001) mentioned financial and time constraints as other obstacles for effective communication between teachers and guardians. When it comes to fundraising as one of the benefits of guardians' involvement, all the principals said that guardians contribute financially although not everyone attends fundraising and a majority of the guardians volunteer to sell different types of food. These findings are corroborated by Haack (2007) who observes that guardians' involvement in school-related activity results in them becoming aware of what teachers do, what their children are learning, and how the school is operating. As one SBC put it, the guardians who are involved should be praised and recognised by the school so that those who do not attend will be influenced to become more involved. Children will realise they] teachers and guardians are a team.

Hamunyela (2008); Logan & Scarborough (2008) and Day-vines and Terriquez (2008) developed a number of strategies that schools could consider to engage involvement of the guardians. Schools should consider building strong relationships and maintain trust with the guardians in working with their children at home and

provide them with support (Hamunyela, 2008). Hamunyela further reported that schools should use the form of communication that will make sure that all guardians are reached considering the different levels of their education. Moreover, Day-vines and Terriquez (2008) stated that the school counsellor and task force could collaborate with adults from the community, as well as learners within the school, to develop an intervention and that all parties could agree upon to improve the current discipline policy and procedures. Hamunyela (2008) suggested that schools should encourage guardians to volunteer at the school by visiting classrooms and providing technical support for classroom and other helpful learning activities. This was seconded by Epstein (2009) who enforced inclusion of volunteering as a part of the school system where guardians can opt to help in order to get involved in their children's education.

Moreover, Villas-Baas (1998) states that teachers should note that guardians are a more heterogeneous group than teachers. Some guardians would relate more closely to the school than others; others require more effort to overcome their difficulties and get involved. For this to realise, teachers need to be knowledgeable on how to develop programmes and arrange the activities. Thus, teachers must be trained how to promote guardian involvement.

Lastly, schools should link their work to community resources, and provide guardians with ways on how to develop as organisers for the school (Hamunyela, 2008). Similarly, Price-Mitchell (2009) suggested creating opportunities for joint activities for all to be included and thus lead the efforts of the grassroots towards a partnership.

There was agreement that the parental involvement in schools do not happen as it should. All the participants mentioned the issues that is lacking and also sometimes acknowledged that they themselves are the culprits.

5.4.7 Benefits

A literature review of home-school partnership indicates that the benefits of guardians' and families' involvement would help to include a more positive attitude toward their children's education and for them to be provided with more instructions to complete the homework, will result in better attendance and grades (Niitembu, (2006); Haack ,(2007); Lemmer, (2002); Epstein, (2009).

Thus, the understanding of the home-school partnership among stakeholders is vital. Partnership can also help the learner to recognise herself/himself that she/he is very important because there is support from the school and the guardian.

It is important to note that volunteering and collaboration of guardians can make significant contributions to the environment and functions of a school; schools can get the most out of this process by creating flexible schedules, so more guardians can participate, and by working to match the talents and interests of guardians to the needs of students, teachers, and administrators.

All the teachers agreed that it is very helpful when they are connected with their learners' guardians. They stated that it strengthens the bond between teachers and guardians. Partnership will also help the teachers and the guardians to understand the level of education of the learner. As reflected in Chapter 2, research across the

continents confirms that guardian involvement in their children's school activities has immense benefit for school children.

It seemed that the schools are doing well regarding the fund-raising activities, since some of the guardians are volunteering in this school-related activity of fund-raising.

The study showed that there are some things that teachers know about the learner and things that guardians know about their children. The teachers stated that the information they know could benefit guardians such as learners' behaviour at school so they can help the learners at home to overcome the different behaviour patterns (in case they behave badly at school). On the other hand, if guardians share their children's personal history, medical condition, culturally and physical status, such information could help so that those children can be assisted with the necessary means. The participants (guardians and teachers) seemed to agree on the point that the partnership carries more benefits that are not for the child only, but for them and the community too.

5.4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter dealt with discussions with the School Board Chairpersons, principals, teachers and guardians during the semi-structured interviews (SSI) concerning home-school partnerships. The most significant findings included the following:

Most guardians understand the term home-school partnership and what it entails in practice. Although some of them feel they are involved the other participants like the principals and teachers feel that the guardians' involvement is not sufficient to

improve the learning of the learners. The guardians indicated that they really want to assist their children with homework but because they are illiterate they feel helpless. Guardians work away from home and only come home late night and that can also have a negative impact on the child's learning process, especially if a child needs assistance from guardians to do his/her homework. Some of the guardians encounter the language as a challenge and a lack of guidance from teachers for them to help their children with their homework.

The teachers felt that a definite homework policy that spells out how homework issues must be addressed between the guardians and themselves will be a big improvement for the clear guidelines will aid everybody in this regard. It will also help the teachers and guardians to work closer together and it will improve parental involvement.

The teachers seemed convinced that home-school partnerships in school activities is important for learners' achievements but the teachers do not always inform the guardians about all the issues concerning their children. The teachers feel strongly that the home visits or visits from guardians to the school should not be handled by the principal in isolation for they as class register teachers have more knowledge of the learners in their class. Principals on the other hand believe that it is their sole responsibility as specially trained professionals to handle matters relating to children's school education. The teachers felt they should attend the meetings between the principal and guardian so that they could all decide on the way forward and be involved. A positive is that SBS realized that it is their responsibility to link and bring the school and entire community together for the benefit of the children.

Communication between school and home also came out as a challenge. The idea of sending a SMS to guardians to inform them of activities at the school could be deemed costly but much more efficient than sending letters via the learners. Principals and teachers felt that the SBCs should play a much larger role to get guardians and the community to become more involved in their children's education. This might also help to increase the attendance of guardians during school board meetings and parents-teacher evenings. If loyal guardians are given some incentive after they have offered their services during fundraising and other events it could encourage other guardians to become more involved and not shy away from being involved in school activities.

All in all the school personnel as well as the guardians are guilty that there are not more parental involvement. There are of course difficult challenges that hinder more involvement from guardians in their children's homework and school activities but if all work together for the betterment of the learners' learning in school many of the strategies mentioned can be applied.

The Ministry of Education can assist schools staff and guardians in giving training on how this can be accomplished. In the end there has to be a combined effort from all stakeholders to make this a successful venture.

Since this study was only conducted in Otjondjupa region specifically in one circuit and those findings cannot easily be generalized to other regions or circuits. It is therefore recommended that further research should be done to build on this study. There is a need to conduct a comparative study in order to evaluate guardian's

involvement in urban and rural schools as well as other regions in Namibia. It is also recommended that a study of a similar nature should be carried out at secondary school level.

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APPENDIX A: A UNAM research conduct letter

UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

Private Bag 13301, 340 Mandume Ndemufayo Avenue, Pionerspark, Windhoek, Namibia



The School of Postgraduate
Studies
P.Bag13301
Windhoek, Namibia
Tel: 2063523

E-mail: cshaimemanya@unam.na

Date: 15 October 2013

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

1. This letter serves to inform that student: Oillie Taukeni (Student number:--200337637) is a registered student in the Department of Curriculum Instruction and Assessment Studies at the University of Namibia. His/her research proposal was reviewed and successfully met the University of Namibia requirements.
2. The purpose of this letter is to kindly notify you that the student has been granted permission to carry out postgraduate studies research. The School of Post Graduate Studies has approved the research to be carried out by the student for purposes of fulfilling the requirements of the degree being pursued.
3. The proposal adheres to ethical principles.

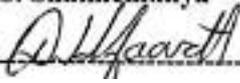
Thank you so much in advance and many regards.

Yours truly,

Name of Main Supervisor: Dr D Wolfaardt

Signed: -----

Dr. C. N.S. Shaimemanya

Signed: -----

APPENDIX B : Inspector of Education research conduct letter

05-03-2014

The Circuit Inspector
Otjozondjupa Education Region
P.O. Box 40
Okahandja

Re: Requesting for permission to conduct research in schools

Dear Mr. September

My name is Otilie and I am a Master students (Curriculum and Assessment Studies) at the University of Namibia in Windhoek. The research I wish to conduct for my master's thesis bet between March and May 2014 involves investigating home-school partnership in school activities at two selected school in Otjozondjupa region, Namibia. This project will be conducted under the supervisor of Dr. Wolfaardt and Dr. Hamunyela as a co-supervisor.

I am hereby seeking your consent to approach two schools in the Okahandja circuit to provide participants for this project

I have provided you with a copy of the approval letter which I received from the University.

Upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide the region with a bound copy of the full research report. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on my cell: 0812918123 or email me at ottytt@gmail.com.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours Sincerely

OttielieTaukeni-Daniel

University of Namibia

R. D. SEPTEMBER (full-time and Surname) give permission for Mrs. O. Taukeni-Daniel to conduct her research at two selected school in Okahandja Circuit.

ROJ IE
05.03.2014

APPENDIX C: Guardians letter for interview

P.O Box 40

Okahandja

To the guardians

Dear sir /madam

I am Otilie Taukeni a teacher at JG van der Wath. I am currently enrolled as a student at University of Namibia for the degree of Master of Education (in curriculum and instructional assessment in the faculty of education.

I am doing research in home-school partnership in school activities.

Therefore I hereby apply for a permission is grated arrangements will be made with the selected parents/guardians for visits from March to April 2014. This letter also serves to inform you that all the information gathered from you, will be solely for research purposes and that the anonymity of all is guaranteed.

Thank you very much for kindly considering my request.

Yours sincerely

Otilie Taukeni.

Otilie Taukeni

Signature

06.03.2014

Date

I, Elizabeth Nehale (Name and Surname) I agree to be part of the study.

Nehale

Signature

APPENDIX D : Sample of interview questions

1.1 QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF THE GUARDIANS

1.1.1. Biographical information

(a) Gender

Table 1.1: Gender of participating guardians

Category	N	%
Male		
Female		
Total		

(b) Age

Table 1.2: Age of participating guardians

Category	N	%
Under 18		
19-30		
31-40		
41-50		
51-60		
Order than 60		
Total		

(c) Type of guardians

Table 1.3: Types of participating guardians

Guardians	N	%
Mother		
Father		
Brother		
Sister		
Cousin		
Grand-father		
Grand-mother		
Aunty		
Others (specific)		
Total		

(d) Language groups

Table 1.4: Language groups

Category	N	%
Nama/Damara		
Herero		
Oshiwambo		
Kavango		
Caprivians		
Others (specify)		
Total		

(e) Are you employed?

Table 1.5: Employment status

Category	N	%
Employed		
Unemployed		
Total		

(f) How far do you live from the school?

Table 1.6: Distance from home to school

Category	N	%
0.5km-5km		
5km-10km		
Total		

(g) How often do you attend school activities such as meetings?

Table 1.7: Attendance of school activities such as meetings

Category	N	%
Not at all	1	4.5
Twice a year	4	18.2
Three times a year	8	36.4
More than three times a year	9	40.9
Total	22	100

(h) How long have you lived in your current house?

Table 1.8: Years living at current residence

Category	N	%
1 year		
2-3 years		
4-7 years		
8-12 years		
More than 13 years		
Total		

(j) How many children are you taking care of that are attending school?

Table 1.9: Number of dependants school going children.

Category	N	%
Child		
2-3 children		
4-6 children		
7-10 children		

More than 11 children		
Total		

1.2. RESULTS ON RESEARCH QUESTION 1 AND 2: HOW ARE GUARDIANS INVOLVED IN THEIR CHILDREN’S SCHOOL ACTIVITIES? AND WHAT ARE GUARDIANS’ PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOLS EXPECTATIONS OF THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN’S SCHOOLING?

1.2.1. Issues guardians discuss with their children

Question 1: *Do you spend time talking to your child? What kind of things do you talk about?*

1.2.2. Practices to involve guardians in homework activities.

Question 2: *Does your child bring homework to do at home?*

Table 1.10: Do children bring homework home?

Do children bring school work at home?	N	%
Yes		
No		
Total		

Question 3: *Do you experience any problems in helping your child with homework? If yes, what do you do? If no, explain.*

Table 1.11: Views regarding problems in helping children with homework.

Category	N	%
Never		

Seldom		
Often		
Very often		
Total		

1.2.3. Guardians’ understanding of the concept home-school partnership

Question 4: *What do you understand by the term home-school partnership?*

1.2.4 Ways school can use to support guardians to promote home-school partnership

Question 5: *How do you think the involvement of guardians can improve?*

Question 6: *Does the teacher support you in the involvement of your child? If yes, how?*

1.3 RESULTS ON RESEARCH QUESTION 3: WHAT ARE THE PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOL MANAGEMENT ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF GUARDIANS?

1.3.1 School Board Chairpersons (SBCs)

1.3.1.1 Strategies to overcome barriers to guardians’ involvement in their children’s education.

Question 1: *What can be done to encourage guardians to get involved in the management committee/ board of management/ guardians’ association?*

Question 2: *Mention ways to bring the guardians of your learners closer to the school and classroom.*

Question 3: *How can you as a chairperson of the school board encourage the guardians in making important decisions regarding their children's education?*

1.3.1.2 Barriers to home-school partnership

Question 4: *What are some of the reasons why guardians might not be involved in school as much as you would like?*

Question 5: *How can you help guardians who are not involved to become more interested and concerned?*

Question 6: *How can you plan, organise and execute a guardian conference that will be attended?*

1.3.2 Teachers

1.3.2.1. Partnership orientation

Question 1: *How long have you been teaching?*

Table 1.12: Number of years of teaching experience

Teachers	Number of years of teaching experience
Teacher 1	
Teacher 2	
Teacher 3	
Teacher 4	

Question 2: *How often do you as a teacher meet with the guardians?*

Table 1.13: Number of times teachers meet guardians per term

# of time teacher meet with guardians	N	%
Once per Term		
Twice per Term		
Not at all		

Total		
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Question 3: *Do guardians know that they are welcome at any time to talk to teachers?*

Table 1.14: Guardians know that they are welcome to meet the teacher.

Guardians know that they are welcome to meet the teacher	N	%
Yes		
No		
Not sure		
Total		

Question 5: *How do teachers support guardians in the involvement of school activities of their children?*

Teachers do not really support guardians due to too many administrative tasks but they are willing to promote collaboration with the guardians.

1.3.2.2 Communication

Question 6: *How do you communicate with guardians?*

Question 7: *What do you think is the school's most effective way to communicate with guardians in maintaining the partnership?*

Question 8: *What changes would you like the school to make in the way it communicates with guardians? Why?*

Question 9: *How easy is it to talk with each learner about what s/he is learning at school? What makes it easy or difficult?*

Question 10: *How often does the school keep the guardians informed of the progress of their children?*

1.3.2.3 Barriers to home-school partnership

Question 11: *What are the barriers that hinder your connection with the guardians?*

Question 12: *Do your learners and their guardians tell you when they know about something that makes it easier or harder for that learner to do their homework or their school work?*

1.3.2.4 Practices to involve guardians in homework activities

Question 13: *How often do you and the learners' guardians discuss the learners' health, happiness, and learning at home and at school? Would you like more opportunities for this? Why? Or why not?*

Question 14: *Does the school counsellor communicate back to you as a teacher?*

Question 15: *How do you think guardians can get involved in the school activities of their children?*

Question 16: *What sort of activities can guardians be involved in?*

Question 17: *Do you invite guardians to volunteer for duties?*

Question 18: *What role do you as a teacher play with regard to home-school partnerships in school activities?*

1.3.2.5 Strategies to overcome barriers to guardians' involvement in their children's education

Question 19: *What strategies, if any, can teachers use to empower guardians to be involved in their children's school activities?*

1.3.2.6 Benefits of teachers having partnerships with the guardians

Question 20: *What are the advantages of teachers having partnerships with the guardians? Give examples*

Question 21: *What do your learners' guardians know about the learner that you do not know? How could this knowledge help you as a teacher?*

Question 22: *What do you know about your learners that their guardians do not know? How could this knowledge help the guardians?*

Question 23: *How often do you as a teacher do home visits? Why? Or Why not?*

Question 24: *Do you sometimes set homework for your learners? If yes, how often?*

Question 25: *Are you aware of research evidence about how guardians can best support children with homework? If yes, explain.*

Question 26: *How do you confirm that the guardians support the child in doing homework at home?*

1.3.3 Principals

1.3.3.1 Communication

Question 1: *How effective is the involvement of guardians in their children's school activities between school and the community? How do you know?*

Question 2: *What does your school do to bring the guardians of your learners closer to the school and classroom?*

Question 3: *How do you consult with guardians to find out what they want from the school and how they would like to work with the school?*

Question 4: *How does the school communicate with its community about school issues and about issues affecting the school specifically?*

1.3.3.2 Barriers to home-school partnership

Question 5: *What are some of the reasons guardians might not be involved in school activities as much as you would like?*

1.3.3.3 Workshops for guardian to learn about home-school partnership

Question 6: *How can you help the guardians become more involved with their children's homework?*

Question 7: *How can you help guardians who are not involved to become more interested and concerned?*

Question 8: *What can you do to encourage greater involvement among guardians who are linguistically and culturally different from the majority?*

Question 9: *When you invite guardians to events, how can you make it easier for them to attend in terms of timing and accessible information?*

Question 10: *How can you plan, organise and execute a guardian conference that will be attended?*

Question 11: *Does your school have fund-raising activities that guardians help with or come to?*

Question 12: *Do you enjoy fundraising activities? Why, or why not?*

Question 13: *Do you give your personnel professional development opportunities that enable them to form relationships with your school's guardians and caregivers and to promote or monitor the results of the actions they take when working as partners with guardians?*

Question 14: *Do you encourage your staff to discuss home-school partnerships that could help them to promote the guardians involvement?*

Question 15: *As a school leader, how do you ensure that all school personnel know about the diverse cultural backgrounds and incorporate appropriate features into their programmes?*