

CHILDREN'S LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT:
A CASE OF TWO SCHOOLS IN THE KAVANGO WEST REGION

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF EDUCATION (INCLUSIVE EDUCATION)

OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

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OCTOBER 2025

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on learners with learning difficulties at two selected schools in Namibia's Ncuncuni circuit of the Kavango West region of Namibia. Epstein's model of parental involvement provided a general framework for understanding the factors that inhibit parental involvement and the interrelationship between schools and home. The study involved 20 senior primary teachers, 20 senior primary learners in the age range of 10 to 17 years old and these learners are found to be in grade 4-7, and 20 parents from the two participating schools, which were chosen using a purposive selection technique. The research employed a qualitative design and data was collected through open ended questionnaires and one-on-one interviews.

The results show that children of less involved parents have reading difficulties, exhibit poor discipline, lack desire, and handle their homework carelessly. Social-economic status, low levels of literacy, inadequate school communication, child-headed households, and teachers' attitudes towards parents of children with learning difficulties were among the problems mentioned by the parents as limiting their involvement. The study also discovered that learners, with learning difficulties had trouble reading, lacked tailored instruction from teachers, and had low self-esteem and confidence. The study recommends partnerships between teachers-learners, and parents/guardian to improve communication and raise academic achievement for learners, who struggle with learning.

The full engagement of parents of learners with learning difficulties in schools around the world, but particularly in developing nations, has unfortunately been severely hampered by a lack of parental education, and among other factors as previously mentioned. For the sake of all learners, but especially those with learning difficulties, this necessitates immediate corrective action.

Keywords: Parental involvement, Epstein's model, learning difficulties, communication, teacher-learner-parent partnership.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CLD:	Children with Learning Difficulties
LD:	Learning Difficulty
MoEAC:	Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
PC:	Parental Council
PI:	Parental Involvement
PTA:	Parent Teachers Association
PTM:	Parent Teacher Meeting
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisations

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the almighty God for allowing me to pursue my master's degree, as well as for His wisdom, love and wonderful protection throughout my studies.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to my Supervisor, Dr. Hengari, U.J. Thank you so much, Dr. I greatly appreciate your constant directives, intelligent feedback, and support.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my family, particularly to my children Grace Christine Makanga, and Reinhard Jeziel Makanga, as well as my mother, Lucia Ndahambelela Shangano. My mother has always been encouraging and supportive of my studies.

DECLARATIONS

I, Laina Shangano, hereby declare that this study is my own work and is a true reflection of my research, and that this work or any part thereof has not been submitted for a degree at any other institution.

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Date: October 2025

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

Zidan (2023) registers that the phenomenon of learning difficulties is one that has captivated educators, experts, and interested parties. This is particularly true given an international statistic that shows 30% of people, including both males and females, having learning difficulties. The fact that learning difficulties are not specific to any one social group and that their existence is unaffected by social or cultural background is what sets them apart. There are numerous different causes for these phenomena, which could be biological, organic, or environmental.

Children with learning difficulties often face challenges in acquiring cognitive skills such as attentive listening, reasoning, and verbal skills. They also struggle in learning areas such as reading, writing, and mathematics. Additionally, these learners find it challenging to regulate their own behaviour in terms of social perception and interaction, frequently exhibiting challenging behaviour. Parental involvement fosters a positive learning atmosphere, boosts learners' self-esteem, drive and academic performance, provide vital support and encouragement (Ybañez et al., 2024). This study investigated the factors that inhibit parents of learners with learning difficulties from becoming involved in their children's education at two selected schools in the Kavango West region. the study focused on senior-primary teachers, senior-primary learners, and their parents.

Oranga et al. (2022) pointed out that parental involvement promises to be an advantage to all learners; nevertheless, learners with learning difficulties often require a greater

degree of parental involvement and support than their peers without learning difficulties. Only a few studies were undertaken in Namibia on parental involvement, specifically on children with learning difficulties. The study of Oranga et al. (2022) further revealed that parents did not participate in their children's school activities, expose them to educational settings, volunteer at the school or provide enough learning materials or sustenance, join school committees and associations, or communicate with the school to find out about their children's academic performance and general well-being.

To add to this body of knowledge, specifically for Namibia, this study investigated the factors that inhibit parents of learners with learning difficulties from participating in their children's education at two selected schools in the Kavango West region.

1.2 Background of the Study

Kalaycı and Ergül (2020) define parental involvement as the activities parents do in collaboration with teachers and other school personnel to improve their children's academic performance. It can be used to describe the parental actions taken in relation to their children's education at home or at school. This could be attending school meetings, buying school supplies and uniforms for their children, or cultivating a good parent-child bond. This could also involve providing emotional assistance. Active parental involvement in their children's education enhances both their cognitive development and academic performance (Kalaycı & Ergül, 2020; Sibanda, 2021).

Ngozwana et al. (2024) contend that to meet the various needs of children, schools require the assistance of families and communities. They are frequently thought of as official family expansions. For example, they are in charge of enhancing children's exposure to and comprehension of democratic involvement. For children to develop

and learn successfully, parents (or the family) and the school must work together because none of them can do it on their own. All of them needs to play their role in their children's education and clear the path for achieving learning goals.

Andrew et al. (2020) state that parents can improve their children's quality of education by spending quality time with them at home and supporting them through home schooling. A study carried out by Schmid and Garrels (2021) discovered that parental involvement results in better academic achievement. Moreover, they continue to maintain that it enables educators to include parents in the teaching process. Parents can help their children at school functions like concerts, assemblies, and sports days. Following that, they will get the chance to watch how their children interact with their teachers and one another, which is crucial for a child's educational growth (Bromley & Yazdanpanah, 2021). Similarly, children's job decisions are influenced by parental support (Parola & Marcietti, 2022; To et al., 2022). It is true that children who have parental support at home are more likely to choose a fulfilling career than those who don't. This is made possible by parents who are proficient in education and who can easily encourage and assist their children with their homework at home.

Generally speaking, parents have an obligation to nurture their children emotionally since it will help them achieve academic success (Bhamani et al., 2020). However, Sanchez (2020) demonstrates that the dearth of resources and instruments for parental involvement poses serious problems for parents to be engaged in their children's education. Furthermore, a lack of parental involvement may negatively affect pupils' performance, which in turn may impair their success and educational growth.

Ngozwana et al. (2024) assert that in the African context, education is commonly regarded as a three-legged pot, a proverb that denotes that three parties are responsible

for it. The parents in the household or community where children belong are represented by the first leg. The government and the stakeholders in the school are represented by the second and third legs. The latter, as stated in each nation's national policy, offers substantial resources and assistance. However, several African nations have very high levels of parental involvement in schooling. Traditionally, the government and schools have been the only ones responsible for children's education (Ngozwana et al., 2024).

Nonetheless, Ngozwana et al. (2024) states that parents must participate in school-related events that are organised by the school (for example, by attending meetings). This essentially reduces parents to being merely observers who do not actively participate in the decisions and activities that take place during such sessions. Parents may not make sure their children's attend school because educational authorities are unable to keep them engaged in their education. This is in line with previous research by Sacher (2020) which found that Swazi teachers know very little about parental participation or how they contribute to it.

Parental involvement is impacted by parents' innate desire to give their children a good education while monitoring the behaviour of their teachers to make sure their kids do not experience abuse, injustice, or discrimination from their teachers (Appiah-Kubi & Amoako, 2020). According to Sibanda (2021), the main forms of parental involvement in South African schools have been paying tuition and attending meetings and other school-related events. This emphasis has changed, though, as parental involvement now reflects the democratisation of education, where parents are granted the power to take part in school decision-making. The government recognises parent-teacher partnerships as a crucial component of the school's tripartite structure, which consists of teachers, parents (community), and learners. In light of this, the researcher aimed to determine

whether parents of learners identified by the school as having learning difficulties were disengaged and did not participate in their education. The purpose of the study was to identify the potential barriers that prevent parents of learners with learning difficulties from being involved in their education.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The National Policy on Disability (1997) emphasises the need for parents of children with learning disabilities to be actively involved in their children's education at all levels of the educational system. Studies point out that "only a few parents are actively involved in their children's education, and that involvement may drop off after the first few year (Schmid & Garrels, 2021). In addition, Andrew et al. (2020) found that parents of children with learning difficulties were less frequently involved in various school events, even if parents were adequately informed about activities that they could participate in to support their children. Furthermore, Bhamani et al. (2020) found that parents' comprehension of parent involvement in schooling processes was limited and needed to be improved. The study findings also revealed that parent involvement in the schooling processes was low in an Indonesian province of Aceh school, and the desire of parents to be involved in schooling processes was related to their motives, such as simply fulfilling their obligation as a parent in rearing the children.

Section 16 of the Education Act, Act 3 of 2020, provides for the democratic participation in schools by parents, learners and other education stakeholders through the establishment of regional Education Forums and School Boards in schools (Ministry of Education, 2020). Furthermore, Parola and Marcietti (2022) revealed that, from the school's perspective, there is insufficient involvement of parents in lesson

demonstrations and fund-raising activity preparation. This is most common among parents of children with learning difficulties.

The results of a study conducted by Ngozwana et al. (2024) show that parent's view collaborating with schools, helping with schoolwork, setting an example of positive behaviour, providing emotional support, and career guidance as examples of parental participation in their children's education. Furthermore, To et al. (2022) stated that there is a need for research that gives information about which measures are likely to promote parents' commitment and involvement in their children's education. This study, therefore, aimed to fill up the lacuna by investigating why parents are not involved and participating in assisting their children with learning difficulties to succeed in school, as well as to suggest ways to improve parents' commitment and involvement in their children's education.

The researcher's experience as a teacher at a school in Kavango West Region was that when parents were invited to come to school to address academic/ educational issues concerning their children with learning difficulties, they did not attend. Also, teachers claimed that parents of children with learning difficulties do not engage in school events when they are asked to. They were mostly the ones who were absent when invited to discuss their children's school performance, as well as from parent meetings and other school-related activities.

As a result, the researcher was curious as to why parents were not involved in their children's education. There must be reasons why these parents are inactive or do not attend school when summoned. The study sought to point out these factors and to provide routes for enhancing parent-teacher partnerships that make a difference in children with learning difficulties.

1.4 Research Questions

The main research question was to examine the factors that prohibit parents of children with learning difficulties not to be involved in their children's education. The sub-questions of the study were:

1.4.1. How do learners with learning difficulties experience school?

1.4.2. What effect does lack of parental involvement have on learners with learning difficulties in the Kavango West region of Namibia?

1.4. 3. What can the school do to encourage parents whose children have various learning difficulties to be involved in their children's education?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study findings are extremely important for both teachers and the education system. It proposes techniques for including parents of children with learning difficulties in their children's education. Furthermore, the findings of this study may enlighten parents on the necessity of being completely involved in their children's education. The study may add to the existing knowledge on parent-teacher partnerships at two schools in the Kavango West region that accommodate learners with learning difficulties.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

Due to limited time, and funding, the study was confined to only two schools. Furthermore, learners in Grades 1- 3 used Rukwangali as a medium of instruction in school, whereas the use of the English language as a medium of instruction to learners was introduced in grade 4 and had its challenges. Moreover, some parents were difficult

to reach because the study was conducted during harvesting season as most were at their field which is far from their houses.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

This study only included parents whose children have learning difficulties, learners with learning difficulties, and teachers teaching the senior primary phase in the Ncuncuni circuit, Kavango West region. The conclusions of this study only apply to two schools in the Ncuncuni circuit of the Kavango-West Region.

1.8 Definitions of Key Terms

The following terms were key technical terms used in the study:

Inclusive education is a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures, and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modification in content, approaches, structures and strategies within a common vision which covers all children of appropriate age range and a conviction that is the responsibility of the regular system (MoE, 2013).

Learning difficulties is defined as difficulties in acquiring knowledge and skills to the normal level expected of those of the same age, especially because of mental disability or cognitive disorder or other environmental conditions that affect the learners' school performance (Poole, 2017).

Learning support this is when teachers apply different teaching strategies and methods to accommodate all the learning needs of all learners (MoE, 2013).

Parental involvement in education underscores the shared responsibility that families and schools work together to promote student success (Tyler, 2017).

The senior primary phase is the upper primary grades starting from grades four to seven (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, 2014).

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter covered the introduction and background of the study, as well as the problem statement. It also presented the research questions, the significance of the study, limitations of the study, and the delimitation of the study. The next chapter presents a review of academic literature as well as the theoretical framework of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the study presented the background of the study, the statement problem and significance of the study, research questions, limitations, and delimitation of the study, as well as definitions of key terms. To comprehend how research connects to other broader contexts in this area of school-parent partnerships, this chapter discusses the theory that served as a roadmap for this current study, as well as key aspects taken from reviewed literature on this topic. The chapter focuses on factors inhibiting parents' from being involved in their children's education, how learners with learning difficulties experience school, and the impact of lack of parental involvement on learners with learning difficulties learning success. Furthermore, strategies on how to involve parents in the education of children with learning difficulties were reviewed and presented.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

2.2.1Epstein Model

Epstein's overlapping spheres of Influence model was adopted for this study, which provides a basic framework for understanding the variables that hinder parental involvement and the link between school and home. The model recognises activities that are undertaken independently by families, schools and communities, as well as those that are conducted jointly to influence the growth and learning of the child (Newman et al., 2019).

Furthermore, Ihmeideh et al., (2020) defines parental involvement as acts taken by parents to assist with learning or other events in the school context, as well as the parental participation in decision-making organizations. In addition, Epstein's model expands on the type of involvement that might occur at home. The approach recognises the significance of parental behaviour, such as providing for children's basic needs, to children's educational needs. This theory suggest that schools, families and community should work together to have the maximum impact on children's learning performance, for which they are all responsible.

Epstein's parental involvement model comprises three key realms of influence: parents, school, and community. When these three spheres collaborate, it can have an impact on the success of the student as well as the parent, school, and community (Epstein, 2013). Each of Epstein's categories of parental involvement has a unique influence on the individual child's growth, development, and learning while also assisting the growth of parents, school, and communities (Epstein, 2013). Interaction can occur in a variety of ways under Epstein's notion of overlapping spheres, either at the institutional or individual level. Interactions at the institutional level can be described as welcoming families into the school for an event such as a curriculum night or parent night, but at the individual level, a parent teacher-conference serves as the involvement between the two participants, or at the individual level (Epstein et al., 2013).

When connections between a student's school, family and community are maximized, students attain their full potential for development and learning. According to Epstein's model, learner motivation to learn and the learning environment are both strengthened when: (1) the school (i.e., teacher, principal, and counsellor) is in positive communication with the family, (2) the community has positive communication with

the school and community, and (3) the community is in positive communication with the school and family. (Epstein, 2013).

Epstein's six types of parental involvement models are depicted in the diagram below.

Every one of the six types of parental involvement was thoroughly discussed.

Epstein six types of models of parental involvement

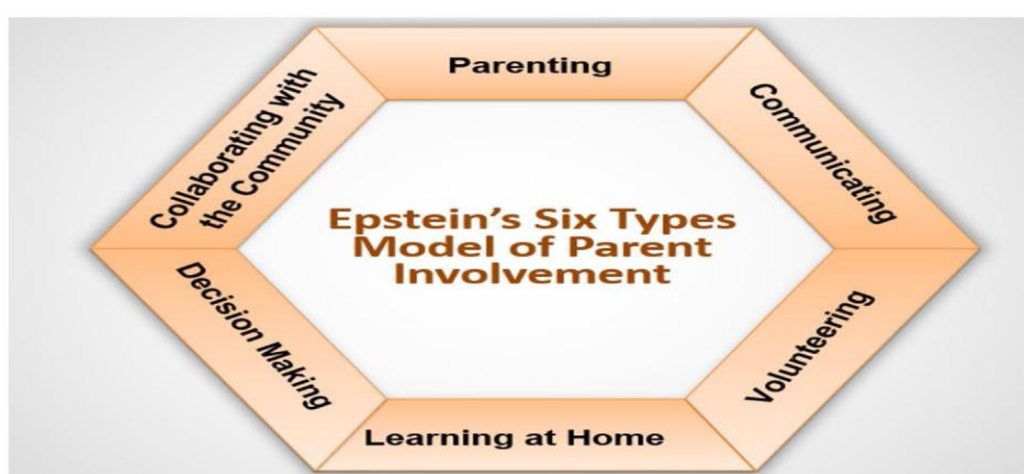


Figure 2.1. Epstein's six types of models of parent involvement adopted from Epstein (2013).

Parenting - families this include parents and extended family members to be aware of and knowledgeable about child development, as well as providing resources to enable them to establish home environments that can enhance student learning (Epstein, 2013).

Communicating- effective, appropriate, relevant, two-way contact about school events (e.g., open houses, conferences, testing workshops), student academic or personal development and progress or insight (e.g., successes or challenges) within the family setting (Epstein, 2013).

Volunteering- organising and participating in activities initiated by school personnel (e.g., parent-teacher association) or generated by community members aimed at supporting students and school programmes, such as service -learning projects, big brothers big sisters programmes, or violence-reduction assemblies (Epstein (2013).

Learning at home- providing information to parents and families about school procedures, examples are homework expectations, and grading scales, to help them augment their children's academic activities (Epstein, 2013).

Decision-making- including parents and family members from all backgrounds as representatives and leaders on school committees (Epstein, 2013).

Collaborating with the community - identifying and integrating resources, services, and other assets from the community to help meet the needs of school personnel, learners, and their difficulties (Epstein et al., 2013).

Parental engagement/ relationship with the school produces diverse effects for learners. Parenting is the most important obligation at home, whereas communicating is the most important obligation at school. As a result, parent involvement in the schooling process includes both home and school involvement. This study employed the Epstein model to analyse the data by considering how schools, families and community collaborated in the present study and how such cooperation affected the performance of learners with learning difficulties performance at the participating schools.

2.3 Defining Learning and Learning Difficulties

There are various definitions of learning. Karunanayake et al. (2020) assert that learning is the process by which we pick up and hold onto attitudes, knowledge, understanding, skills, and abilities that aren't related to physical development or innate

behaviour patterns. Based on psychological characteristics, children have an innate ability to learn (Karunanayake et al., 2020). They further identified three types of learning: cognitive learning, which is accomplished through mental processes like recalling and reasoning or how one thinks; affective learning, which involves feelings and values influencing a person's attitude and personalities; and psychomotor learning, which is the development of skills like efficient coordination between the brain and the muscles as seen by drawing from observation or writing what is seen.

A long-standing source of contention in the international literature has been the inconsistent use of the words learning disabilities and learning difficulties (Todd et al., 2022; Kramer., 2021). More so, Todd et al. (2022) maintain that it is challenging to find universally accepted definitions of learning disabilities and learning difficulties in the global context. However, Todd et al. (2022) define learning difficulties to be typically thought of as a large category of learners, of which learners with diagnosed learning difficulties are a tiny subset. However, learners who struggle with learning but do not have an identified disability are also included. A specific learning disability, for example, is defined as a disorder in one or more of the fundamental psychological processes involved in using spoken or written language. This disorder may show up as an inability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or perform mathematical calculations (Karunanayake et al., 2020).

According to the educational dimension, learning difficulties are an uneven pattern in mental ability; a person with learning difficulties may perform normally in school subjects, but they have a specific weakness in learning language or mathematics that is not caused by a disability or environmental factors, such as mental retardation or emotional disorders. In the educational context, learning difficulties are defined as the lack of systematic development of mental abilities, which results in an academic deficit

represented by the inability to read, write, or perform arithmetic operations, as well as a general weakness in language and spelling.

The definition from Learning Difficulties Australia that will be applied to this study is as follows: The phrase learning difficulties is most frequently used to describe challenges in learning to read and write, although it can also be used to describe learning in other subjects, such as mathematics (Learning Difficulties Australia, 2022). Moreover, the learning difficulties which occur to each learner vary, which makes the role of the teacher difficult, since one is called to deal with each case separately (Malik et al., 2014; Bhebhe et al., 2022).

Despite the different hurdles that learners experience, the Ministry of Education's (2013) sector policy on inclusive education states that all children, regardless of their challenges, learning difficulties or impairments, should receive education together in the least restrictive environment. Because learners have varied learning abilities and gain knowledge and skills in diverse ways, the sector policy requires that all learners get quality education regardless of the problems they face. In addition, learners with "specific learning difficulties can learn and make progress, provided their needs are recognised and supported at school. These learners can perform academically when teaching starts for their level of knowledge, tasks broken into small parts and more time is given to them to practise new skills" (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 60).

2.4. Difficulties Encountered by Learners with Learning Difficulties in School

Karunanayake et al. (2020) contend that the classroom teacher is the first to identify learning difficulties and submit learners for special education assessment, according to the National Association of Special Education Teachers report. Teachers also help with

the management of special services and the collection of assessment data. Although learning difficulties can be diagnosed in learners at any age, the majority are discovered in elementary school. Teachers should keep an eye out for several additional signals in addition to these two primary indicators of learning difficulties.

The following are difficulties that learners may encounter in schools:

2.4.1. Attention Difficulty

Primary difficulties (attention, perception, memory) and secondary difficulties (thinking, and oral language) are disorders in the effectiveness of attention and linguistic thinking. These disorders lead to side manifestations like inability to complete tasks, dissatisfaction, distraction, lack of continuity in activity, lack of concentration, excessive movement, laziness, withdrawal, and impulsivity (Zidan, 2023).

2.4.2. Perception Difficulties

Perception difficulties include impairments in visual-motor coordination, visual, auditory, and tactile discrimination, as well as spatial relationships. Secondary symptoms of perception difficulties include confusion between geometric shapes and writing numbers and letters inverted, a lack of visual closure, difficulty perceiving the overall shape through its components, confusion between letter sounds due to impaired auditory memory, difficulty understanding instructions, difficulty understanding words and their semantics, and an inability to arrange image parts based on auditory memory (Zidan, 2023). Similarly, Guilford and Hoepfner (2020) include the following as notable instances of learning difficulties: Severe challenges in reading, writing, spelling, and maths; Perceptual and linguistic deficiencies; some awkwardness in hand and eye tasks; difficulty identifying left from right, up and down, front and back; and association issues, such as when reading and writing and trying to link speech sounds

to their symbols. Learners may also experience dysgraphia which is an asymmetry between hand and eye movements brought on by a lack of fine neuromuscular coordination and dyspraxia which is a condition in which cognitive and visual-motor issues work together to generate motor impairments, such as gripping a pen.

2.4.3. Memory Difficulties

Reading, writing, and math problems are caused by memory challenges, which are the inability to remember what has been seen, heard, or practiced because of a visual or auditory memory impairment. Another difficulty in this category can be dyslexia which is characterised by difficulties understanding words, differentiating sounds and using them in speaking, storing information in memory, and identifying, switching, and deleting letters during reading (Karunanayake et al., 2020).

2.4.4. Thinking Disorders

Thinking disorders are a group of issues with higher order mental functions like comparison, evaluation, reasoning, critical thinking, problem solving, choice, and computation. Mathematical dyscalculia may also be a difficulty in this category. These includes difficulties with coding and comprehending mathematical language, inability to understand abstract signs and concepts, inability to logically explain mathematical operations, weakness in determining household value, comprehension of verbal problems, and writing numbers in reverse, such as substituting the number 2 for the number 6 and the number 7 for the number 8 (Karunanayake, et al. (2020).

2.5. Factors Prohibiting Parents of Children with Learning Difficulties from Involvement in their Children's Education

Numerous research provides explanations for why parents of learners with learning difficulties do not participate as much in school. According to the studies (Ruskus &

Gerulaitis, 2023; Blacher & Hatton 2022; Bjorgvinsdottir & Halldorsdottir, 2020), parents' attempts to properly participate in their children's education are hampered by a lack of information or expertise. As a result, parents are also prevented from implementing professional and educational recommendations at home due to a lack of awareness regarding the cause and prognosis of a children with learning difficulties, which eventually affects the children's overall development and academic results.

In a similar vein, research (Chevalier et al., 2022; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2021) suggests that a parent's educational attainment may limit their ability to fully comprehend their child's difficulties, and prevent them from providing the necessary support at home. In an ideal world, parents would be responsible for ensuring that the academic, social, and adaptive skills that children with learning difficulties acquire at school are practiced and maintained at home. Therefore, their involvement in their children's education is essential, even if they have learning difficulties.

Similarly, research conducted by Nghipandulwa (2023) indicates that most Namibian schools are faced with uneducated parents. Their lack of education is likely to affect their involvement in the education of their children. Parental involvement is essential for fostering achievement and practical gains at all levels, and schools should be encouraged to engage and maintain this involvement throughout secondary school years. Low parental education levels prevent parents from being involved in their children's schooling. Therefore, the degree and level of involvement would also depend on the educational attainment of the parents. This means that parents with higher education levels are more interested in their children's education than parents with lower education levels (Feliciano, 2021; Englund et al., 2020; Anderson & Minke, 2020).

The studies also reveal that parents with lower levels of education experience more challenges regarding their children's schooling than the educated middle-class ones. Educated parents may handle a child with difficulties better and help them at home than their counterparts without education. Hence there is a need to enlighten, educate and support parents with low educational levels to offer a fair and just education to all as envisaged by Oranga et al. (2020).

In a similar vein, research (Chevalier et al., 2023; Anderson & Minke, 2023; Boulton, 2021) suggests that parental involvement in their children's education, income, and educational attainment, are all positively correlated. According to the report, parents with low levels of education not only lack the skills necessary to raise children, but they also end up in low-paying positions that require them to put in more hours. As a result, these parents typically have a large family, which calls for greater dedication. Due to their greater need for parental support and attention than typically developing youngsters, learners with learning difficulties are adversely affected by this circumstance. Therefore, the study suggested interventions such as providing financial assistance to low-income, low-education parents and high-level policy on how persons with intellectual difficulties should be treated in society.

Furthermore, some notable factors may be that teacher characteristics also operate as a deterrent to complete parental involvement in school. Accordingly, the teacher factors include: Lack of funds, unresolved emotional feelings, conflicts between school directors or board of management members, teachers' negative attitude towards parents (e.g., viewing parents as a threat or challenge and failing to view them as valuable resources), dismissing parental observations as biased or inconsequential, and a lack of training on how to work with parents (Ruskus & Gerulaitis, 2023, Feliciano, 2021).

Like this, Stewart (2022) and Lopez (2021) noted that a lack of parental involvement in-service training for teachers creates a barrier to parental involvement because the teachers may not know how to work and interact with parents in an effective manner based on their pre-service training, so they need specialised in-service training. Furthermore, research (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2022; Chevalier et al., 2022) supports the same ideas and details, stating that even though there is a significant body of theoretical and empirical evidence demonstrating the crucial role parents play in their children's academic success, pre-service teachers typically receive little instruction and preparation for involving and engaging parents. This supports the need for ongoing teacher training on "engaging or working with parents. In addition, many school professionals have limited knowledge or support to partner effectively with families, especially those they consider hard to reach parents (Oranga et al., 2022).

According to other studies (Chevalier et al., 2022; Weiss et al., 2020), parents' lack of knowledge about the school's structure and acceptable channels of communication, as well as their sense of alienation from teachers and other staff, also prevent parents from being involved in their children's education, particularly for those with intellectual disabilities. For these reasons, it is necessary for all school staff to adopt a more positive attitude towards parents. However, studies also show that most parents of children, especially those with learning difficulties, are extremely poor and unable to provide for their children's educational needs, which leads to the parents' lack of care for their education (Pang & Richey, 2020). Research conducted by (Ndwandwe, 2023; Kimaro & Machumu, 2015) concurred by stating that, parents with a lower-level education and with an inadequate income tend to be preoccupied with survival strategies, as a result, many often having little time for becoming involved in school-related activities.

2.6. The Effects of little Parental Involvement on Learners Academic Achievements

Motshusi et al. (2024) attest that lack of parental engagement can hinder academic success and limit the expected achievements of the learners. This lack of parental involvement contributes to decreased attendance and, ultimately, higher dropout rates among learners. In addition to schools, families' and communities' environments are important for learners' learning. As a result, parental participation is thought to be highly important for learners' academic success and learning. Research on the connection between academic success and parental participation has been conducted for a long time worldwide. Substantively, Motshusi et al. (2024) allude that academic literature has extensively established the significance of parental involvement in a learner's upbringing, with research connecting it to favourable outcomes like increased self-esteem, greater attendance at school, improved work performance, and improved social conduct in learners.

Furthermore, more participation from parents leads to motivation levels among children in terms of knowledge. Education in early childhood with solid parent involvement results in a healthy environment and a successful approach to the overall development of children (Ding & Subadrah, 2022). Such findings also concur with those made by Epstein (2011), who argues that children whose parents are significantly involved in their schooling tend to demonstrate higher-level achievement in comparison to those whose parents are minimally involved in their schooling.

It has been demonstrated that families with parents actively participating in their children's education tend to have higher-achieving children. A learner's degree of accomplishment is directly correlated with parental participation (Bahkali, 2023).

2.8. Strategies to Utilize Parental Involvement and Participation in School

Teachers can either help or hinder parents' involvement in their children's education, according to Stanikzai (2020). Smith (2023), parents who lack literacy or are not very educated want constant, clear communication as well as direction on how to help their children with their education. Research indicates that parental involvement has a good impact on learners' academic performance, and the key to this involvement is developing a school culture that engages and welcomes the family (Van Zyl, 2022). Families still bear a major portion of the responsibility for their children's education, according to Hamunyela (2021), regardless of how skilled, capable, and professional the instructors are, how well-designed the curriculum is, or how compassionate the school is.

According to research, the state of Michigan recommends that schools create seminars and specific training to help parents acquire the skills they need to support their children in order to boost parental involvement (Hamunyela, 2021; Khama, 2020; Niitembu, 2020). Establishing programs to find and train volunteers to collaborate with learners and educators to develop initiatives that bring low-income, poorly educated parents into the school once a week to learn how they can assist with schoolwork at home and to develop their homemaking and community-related skills is crucial to increasing parental involvement (Van Wyk, 2023).

Additionally, before something happens that necessitates the teachers contacting the parents, a cordial relationship with the parents should be built early in the school year. Parents can get to know their teachers better by attending parent-teacher conferences. Fostering the interaction between teachers and parents is also thought to be crucial for the growth of collaboration (Victor, 2023). Moreover, Fletke (2023) maintains that to

promote parent involvement in underprivileged communities, special measures must be implemented. It recommends using the media to spread knowledge about parents' rights and responsibilities in languages appropriate for different populations. Parents who may or may not be literate need to understand their responsibilities in their children's education.

Furthermore, by asking parents to volunteer, schools are showing them that they are valued, needed, accepted, and useful at the institution. The school and the community will inspire greater pride in the parents. The parents' comprehension of their children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development will grow (Nghipandulwa, 2023; LeBrun-Martin, 2023). This will foster a connection between the educational curriculum and the events at home. Parents and teachers should schedule meetings as frequently as they think is necessary.

When parents are concerned about their child, they should be able to contact the teachers, and teachers should start these conversations when there is reason for worry. Children's success in school, outside of it, and in society at large depends on it (Menheere and Hooge, no date). In order to hold parents responsible for their children's education, they must be actively involved in their school education.

In summary, parents may create a more pleasant learning environment when they are aware of how their child grows (LaBahn, 2020). Parents' actions at home are the most significant way they can support their children's education, according to Fletke (2023). Nonetheless, parents should receive knowledge in an educational manner so they may utilise it to engage with their children. Parents and students should be promptly informed of the information gathered during assessments.

2.8. Chapter Summary

This chapter covered the theoretical framework, the barriers to parental involvement in their children's education, the school experiences of learners with learning difficulties, and the effects of parental involvement on these learners. Furthermore, suggestions for integrating parents into the education of learners with learning difficulties were examined. This evaluation of the literature provided the basis for the current investigation by highlighting the existing knowledge regarding the relationships between parents, teachers, and schools that improve learners' academic performance. Additionally, this literature helped the study connect its findings to the body of current knowledge. Since the study compared its findings to those of the literature review, the reviewed literature was also useful in the discussion chapters. The research methods used for this study will be covered in the upcoming chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The study's research methodology is presented in this chapter. The research paradigm, research approach, research design, population, sample, and sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis methods are the primary research methodological components that are highlighted in this chapter. It also discusses the ethical standards that this investigation observed.

3.2. Interpretivist Paradigm

Interpretivist paradigm focusses on comprehending the world as it is through people's subjective experiences, it is linked to qualitative research (Crotty, 2019). Bryman (2023) contends that interpretivism depends on a subjective interaction between the researcher and the outside world to comprehend the context of people's experiences. Through participant observations, focus groups, and interviews, interpretivist researchers produce textual data using meaning-oriented approaches. In short, open-ended textual data is the result of data gathering techniques used by interpretivist researchers.

The research paradigm taken by this study is the interpretivism within the qualitative approach. Since the goal of qualitative research is to obtain depth of information, few participants are required due to its in-depth nature. Thus, an interpretive analysis is performed on the textual data that was gathered (Hennink et al., 2021). This suggests that interpretivist researchers look for meanings in the opinions and experiences of

participants. According to Creswell (2019), interpretivist researchers or post-positivists perceive themselves "within the circle" and interpret their surroundings.

The researcher's job is to interact with other social actors to understand the current reality. The sampled population for this study consists of social actors in education who define and interpret parental involvement in the education of learners with learning difficulties at two senior primary schools in Namibia's Kavango West region's Ncuncuni circuit.

3.3. Research Approach

The term "research approach" describes the methodologies used in the planning, gathering, organising, analysing, and interpreting of a study, whether they be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed (Bryman, 2023). In qualitative research events are examined in their natural environments using a naturalistic methodology (Patton, 2022). Inductive analysis of the data is used by qualitative researchers to gain a deeper knowledge of the phenomenon (Cohen et al., 2020). A qualitative method approach was used in this study to gain a deeper understanding of the research problem.

3.4. Research Design

A logical structure or strategic strategy used in research that guides the activity to a sound conclusion is known as a research design (Patton, 2022). According to Iimene (2023), a research design is a comprehensive plan that the researcher uses to logically and cogently combine the various study components to successfully answer the research questions. Data collection tools, and data analysis are all considered components of a research design.

Through the triangulation of data from many sources, the researcher aimed to determine the variables that prevent parents of children with learning difficulties from being active

in their schooling. To generate information and address research questions in a single study, the triangulation design was used to combine qualitative (small sample size, details, and in-depth insights) methods (Muijs, 2023; Mertens, 2022).

3.5. Population

Population refers to the group of cases (people) with similar characteristics (McMillan & Schumacher, 2021). It can also refer to a set of similar events or cases which are of interest for the research problem or question. The population of this study consisted of all the senior primary teachers and learners and parents found in Ncuncuni circuit of the selected schools in Kavango West region. The Directorate of Education: Kavango West Region consists of seven Circuits with 177 primary and secondary schools that accommodate 1631 teachers. Among the 177 schools, 15 of them are in Ncuncuni Circuit with 261 teachers. The study focused on two schools with a higher number of uninvolvement of parents of children with learning difficulties. As a result, the total population for this study; comprising of parents of children with learning difficulties; learners with learning difficulties in the age range of 10 to 17 years and these learners are found to be in grade 4-7; Senior Primary phase teachers in Ncuncuni Circuit in the Kavango West Education Region.

3.6. Sample

A sample is a group of participants intended for the study (Patton, 2022). Purposive sampling was used to select the two participating schools out of 15 schools in Ncuncuni circuit in Kavango West Education Region that are seen as information rich, have experience in working and interacting with uninvolvement of parents of learners with learning difficulties. Cohen et al. (2019) further explain purposive sampling as a sampling process where a researcher hand-picks the cases to be included in the sample based on

their judgement of their possession of characteristics being sought. Purposive sampling is used to access knowledgeable people with in-depth knowledge about issues may be by virtue of their professional roles, power and access to networks, expertise or experience. Creswell (2019) purposive samples in qualitative studies or interviews were intentionally selected specific cases that provided the best information and helped the researcher to understand the phenomenon under exploration.

Therefore, the sample consisted of sixty (60) participants (20 parents, 20 learners and 20 teachers), selected as follows: Twenty (20) are parents of children with learning difficulties and who hardly attended parent meetings or come to school when requested to, as per the records of the schools. Schools have records taken during parents meeting and such was used to select the parents. Furthermore, 10 parents from each school; twenty (20) learners with learning difficulties, ten from each school and ten (10) teachers from each school, twenty (20) teachers all in total, all the 20 teachers were from the two participating schools which are at Senior Primary Phase.

3.7. Research Instruments

The researcher for the present study found the use of open-ended questionnaire and one-on-one interviews as the ideal data collection techniques to provide qualitative data on the matter being investigated. The adoption of the pragmatic approach in this study meant that data were collected from senior primary learners, parents of children with learning difficulties, and senior primary teachers at the two selected schools. Below is the detailed description of the data collection instruments that were used.

3.7.1 Questionnaire

The teachers completed open-ended questionnaires, which were all written in English. Cohen et al. (2019) enlighten questionnaires as an instrument for collecting information

in a survey or a research study. The advantage of using questionnaires is that firstly, the responses from the respondents are normally standardised, secondly, questionnaires can be administered without the presence of the study.

3.7.2 Interview

Interviews were used to obtain data from parents and learners. Cohen et al., (2019) describe an interview as a two-way conversation initiated and facilitated by the researcher for obtaining information relevant to the study. As a result, parents of children with learning difficulties as well as learners were interviewed through one-on-one interview in their mother tongue. Parents and learners' responses were audio recorded with their consent and later data were transcribed to derive themes.

3.8. Research Procedure

The researcher wrote a letter to the Executive Director of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and subsequently to the Directorate of Education-Kavango West region seeking for permission to carry out a study at the two selected schools of which permission was granted. Parents' permission was sought to interview them, and their responses were recorded and later transcribed. Additionally, a written consent for learners who were not 15 years old by the time the data was collected were obtained from parents for them to partake in the study.

After obtaining authorisation from all relevant institutions and offices, the researcher physically went to the two participating schools to gather data. Permission was obtained by the two-school principal, and the researcher then met with the senior primary teacher's during break time, distributed questionnaires to the participating teachers, and explained the sections of the questionnaires to them. In addition, the researcher was

given the names and contact information for learners with learning difficulties by the life skill teachers and participating teachers from the two school.

Permission letters were issued to learners to solicit their parents' participation in the study and get their approval, with the assistance of life skills teachers from the two participating schools. Following the distribution of letters to parents, the researcher accompanied by the life skill teacher to children's houses to make appointments with parent. Because these parents rarely attend school, the researcher physically went to their houses for interviews.

Appointments were arranged and majority of the parents were interviewed in the afternoon at their homes, with a few parents were interviewed at school. After interviewing the parents, permission to interview their children was obtained and given. Learners were interviewed in the afternoon. Parents were interviewed in Rukwangali and grade 4, while grade 5-7 were interviewed in English. Parents and learners' responses were recorded. Learners and parents interview questions are found in Appendix G. Pring (2020) explains that audio recordings allow the researcher to replay the interview and obtain a level of understanding and analysis that is difficult to achieve from written notes taken during an interview. Parents and learner's audio recorded were transcribed. Hennik et al. (2021) advise that responses should be transcribed immediately and should not be trusted to memory. Therefore, data was transcribed immediately to avoid loss of information.

3.9. Data Analysis

Black (2020) defines data analysis as the process of making data more manageable by organising the information obtained from the data that were generated. In addition, data analysis is also explained as a "process of examining, sorting, charting, testing or

otherwise recommending evidence to draw an empirically based conclusion (Muijs, 2023). This study used a thematic analysis procedure that involve the” process of coding, categorising, finding emerging themes and sub-themes (Iimene, 2023). Data was analysed using descriptive statistics which helped to summarise data, describing pattern, relationships and connections.

After collecting data, the researcher listened to parents and learners recorded data from interview and translate them into English. Data was reviewed 4 times to identify themes and data with similar meanings were categorized into one as per the school codes. Each data from the two participating schools and parents were coded and described separately. Also, the study used tables and figures to analyse data from questionnaires and interview.

Demographic data which were obtained from open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interview guide items were analysed using tables, charts and graphs. Qualitative data from open-ended questionnaire items, and interviews were analysed thematically.

3.10. Research Ethics

The researcher closely adhered to the ethical concerns covered here to fulfil the necessary ethical commitments. These factors included gaining access to the study location, gaining participants' informed agreement, guaranteeing their voluntary involvement, shielding them from harm, and maintaining the privacy and anonymity of their personal data.

3.10.1. Permission to Conduct the Study

Prior to the commencement of this study, the researcher complied with the code of ethics proposed by the University of Namibia. The researcher obtained the Ethical

Clearance Certificate from the University of Namibia Decentralise Ethics Committee and written permission from the Ministry of Education (Namibia) to conduct the research in the Kavango West Region of Namibia.

3.10.2. Informed Consent

The researcher ensured that participants were well informed about the nature and purpose of the study, and everything that would happen during the research process. The participants were expected to agree to participate in this study through voluntary informed consent. The participants were then given consent forms that they had to sign to formally agree to take part in the study.

3.10.3. Voluntary Participation

The researcher informed the participants about their rights to or not to participate in the study. The researcher did not compel or influence participants to participate in the study, if they were not interested. If they wished to withdraw from the study at any stage of the research process, they were at liberty to do so.

3.10.4. Non-harm to Participants

The researcher ensured that participants were free from any form of harm. Cohen et al. (2019) stress that greater considerations must be given to the risks of physical and psychological values of individuals than to the potential contribution of research to knowledge. The present researcher ensured that participants were not harmed in any way- physically or psychologically.

3.10.5 Confidentiality, Privacy and Anonymity

The researcher assured the participants of their rights to confidentiality, privacy and anonymity. Anonymity is in the fact that information provided by participants should in no ways reveal their identities (Cohen et al., 2019). To ensure confidentiality, privacy

and anonymity, participants were not required to write their names or any personal particulars that would lead to their identification on the questionnaire. Data obtained from the participants would be kept in strict confidence for a maximum of five years before destroying them, and the reporting of the data was done anonymously. Participants were not required to give their names during interviews or on questionnaire. Finally, the participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identities.

3.11. Chapter Summary

In this chapter a discussion on the methodology as well as the methods employed in this study was discussed. The study employed a qualitative method approach, with questionnaires and interview. Population of this study comprised of teachers, parents and learners. The sample consisted of 60 participants, selected by using a purposive sampling method. A total of 20 participants from each category of participants constituted the study group. The research procedures, data collection, data analysis and ethics were discussed in the current chapter. The next chapter presents the findings of the study and analyses the data collected.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, a presentation of the methodology as well as methods employed to collect, analyse and present data was discussed. The current chapter presents the research results obtained from the study which investigated primarily the factors hindering parents of children with learning difficulties from being involved in their children's education. The study was guided by the following sub-questions:

- a) How do learners with learning difficulties experience school in the Kavango West region of Namibia?
- b) What effect does lack of parental involvement have on learners' performance at school in the Kavango West region of Namibia?
- c) What can the school do to encourage parents whose children have various learning difficulties to be involved in their children's education in the Kavango West region of Namibia?

The chapter consists of seven sections. The first part was the introduction. Part two will present the learners' school experiences as per the two participating schools (School A and School B). Each school's data was presented separately to capture each school context separately. The third part covered parental participation as experienced by each of the two schools. This was followed by suggesting ways to improve parental participation in the education of their children. The teachers' perspectives on parental involvement for both schools were presented per school, followed by a conclusion.

4.2. Learners with Learning Difficulties and their School Experiences

Learners who are experiencing learning difficulties (LD), like all other learners, have a right to an education and the right to attend school. However, due to a variety of challenges, their pace and style of learning differ from that of the other learners, leading to their poor academic achievements. Learners with learning difficulties who attend mainstream schools in the Kavango West region are taught together with their peers who are considered as not having learning difficulties using a variety of teaching methods, including the learner-centred approach in which learners are allowed to tell stories, read individually and in groups, complete tasks in groups, and complete tasks at home or in class individually.

Some learners, however, confront challenges such as difficulties reading, writing and arithmetic, as well as inability to focus and concentrate in class, struggling to keep up with classmates' pace of learning, and failing to complete tasks assigned by teachers in class on time and correctly. Furthermore, classrooms are overcrowded, and some learners attend school on an empty stomach, while others lack parental guidance and help from home.

As a result of the difficulties encountered, some learners with learning difficulties resort to sitting quietly in class and not participating in tasks assigned by the teacher, watching others write while in a state of confusion, not knowing what to write, while some end up distracting other learners.

4.2.1 Profile and Challenges Experienced by Learners with Learning Difficulties at the two Schools.

Learners with learning difficulties experience a variety of challenges that prevent them from learning and achieving good grades. The data and comments below were obtained

from learners at schools A and B about the difficulties they face when learning at school.

4.2.1.1 Profile and Difficulties Experienced by Learners with Learning Difficulties at School A

The discussion and graph below will look at the difficulties encountered by learners with learning difficulties, as well as the number of participants based on their grade, gender, and preference for school attendance for School A.

a) Learner's Profile

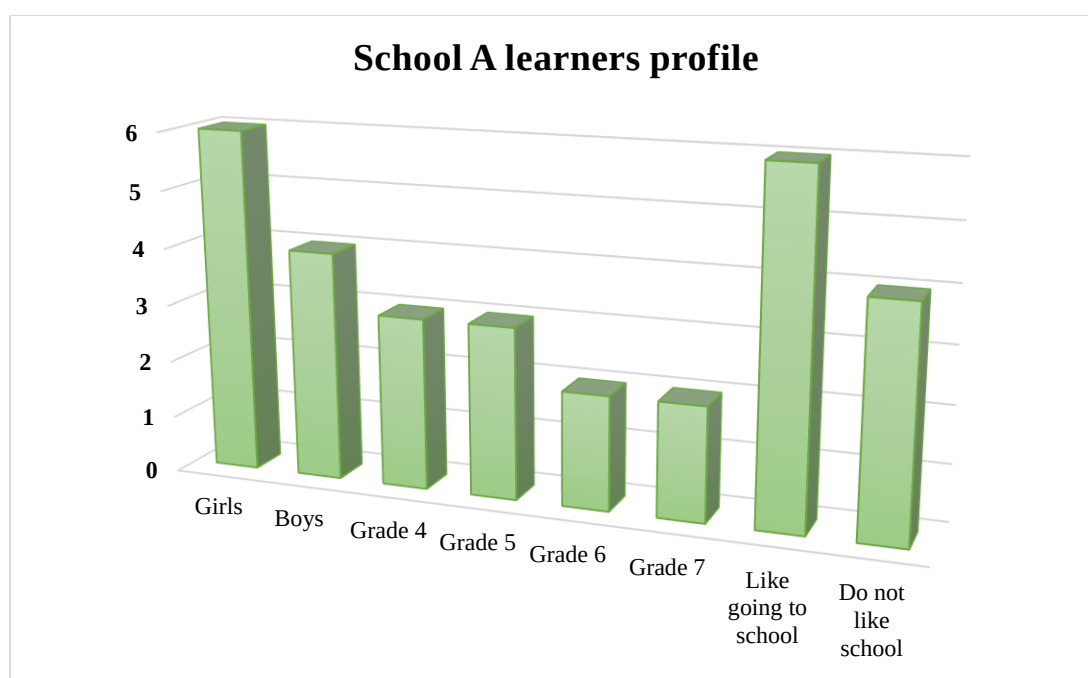


Figure 4.1. Profile of learners at School A

Figure 4.1. Depicts the profile of learners with learning difficulties who attend school at School A. The graph also illustrates that this study included 3 learners in grade 4, 3 learners in grade 5, 2 learners in grade 6, and 2 learners in grade 7. Furthermore, six learners indicated their enjoy going to school, while four don't like going to school.

b) Causes of Learning Difficulties at School A

Learners with learning difficulties confront a variety of challenges at school, which ultimately affects their academic achievement. The learners themselves were used as resource persons, and they had a clear understanding of the difficulties that they had. The difficulties which were pointed out by the learners are listed below.

i) Reading Difficulties

Learner with learning difficulties narrated their school experiences as characterized by poor academic performance. This point was illustrated by two learners. One learner, Learner 4, at this school, mentioned that the difficulty he faces daily are one of being a poor reader which affects his performance in several subjects, receiving low grades on tasks assigned to them and poor test scores. He narrated his ordeal as follows:

“I perform poor in subject such as English, Natural Science and Mathematics as I unable to read and write properly. I try so hard, but I always fail”.

The second learner, Learner 2 at this school expressed similar sentiments, indicating that struggling to read can impair academic performance in practically all subjects. She declared that *I’m unable to read and write well, which affects my academic achievement”.*

The study findings revealed that learners with learning difficulties face challenges in reading daily, causing them to fail most of the subjects.

ii) Lack of Individualized Teaching

Learners who are experiencing various learning issues require greater attention and assistance from both teachers and parents. At school, the classrooms are overcrowded and that leaves the teacher with limited time to pay particular attention to the learners

with learning difficulties. To illustrate this point, Learner 1, noted that teachers pay less attention to students during the morning session causing students with various subject-specific learning difficulties not to cope with the content being presented. Their only hope to catch up with missed classwork seems to be during remedial teaching after school. She pointed out that,

“Teachers do not pay much attention to us, especially in the morning sessions, but at least in the afternoon sessions, some teachers help us with schoolwork”.

The response given above revealed that teachers are attending to many learners in a single lesson and are unable to give proper attention and care to the learners with various learning difficulties. In the afternoon sessions learners with learning difficulties are given learning support in the subjects they are lacking, and teachers can give individual attention as learners are taught in a smaller group

iii) Poverty

Learners who participated in this study, attending at this particular school, pointed out that because of poverty they experienced hunger. At times they come to school hungry. One of the learners, Learner 5 stated that attending school while hungry causes poor concentration and performance in schoolwork. She noted that, *“I come to school on an empty stomach, so I can't concentrate in class”.*

Similarly, Learner 6 shared the same sentiments of attending lessons on an empty stomach, which he/she considered as causing him/her to doze off in class or otherwise bunk classes and return home. He noted that,

"I don't concentrate well in class when I'm hungry; sometimes we sleep with hunger, so I'll be dozing at school. I sometimes skip school to go home just to sleep or at times hoping I will find food".

Learner 8 at the same school pointed out that she stays alone because both her parents work on distant farms, and she runs short of supplies at times. The learner had this to say, *"I live alone, without the presence of my parents. My parents are working on a distant farm. This is tough at times because we run short of food; neighbours occasionally help us with food as my parents are far from home"*

In the same vein, Learner 7, voiced similar sentiments, stating that the lack of an elder in the house worsens the situation and academic performance at school since parental advice and mentoring is lacking. In the absence of parents, learners prepare their own meals and undertake all adult duties, which consumes most of their time. He said.,

"There is no elder in the house to cook for us or wake us up in the morning to go to school." Our mother works in Aussenkehr, which can be difficult at times because we don't have a parent to help us around the house".

The study found that learners attend school on an empty stomach, which means they arrive at school without having eaten anything. As a result, they are less likely to pay attention in class, sleep in class or lose focus while the teacher speaks. The study also found that a lack of parental guidance and supervision at home can make it difficult for such learners to focus on schoolwork, such as doing homework or simply attending to schoolwork.

4.2.1.2: Profile and Difficulties Experienced by Learners with Learning Difficulties at School B

Findings below will look at the difficulties encountered by learners with learning difficulties, as well as the number of participants based on their grade, gender, and preference for school attendance for School B.

a) Learners Profiles

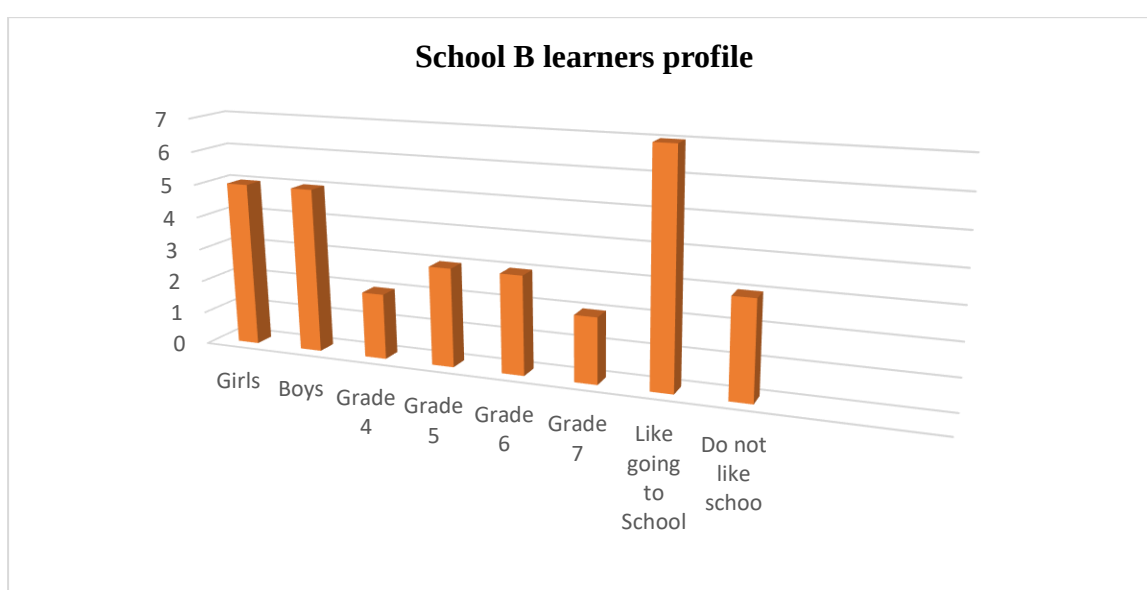


Figure 4.2. Profile of Learners at School B

Figure 4.2 displays the profile of learners with learning difficulties at School B. The graph depicts the 5 girls and 5 boys who participated in this study. The study included two learners in grade 4 with learning challenges, three in grade 5, three in grade 6, and two in grade 7. The graph also reveals that 7 learners enjoyed attending school, whereas 3 did not.

b) Causes of Learning Difficulties at School B

Learners with learning difficulties face several hurdles at school, which ultimately impacts their academic achievement. The learners themselves were used as resource persons, and they had a clear understanding of the difficulties that they had. The difficulties which were pointed out by the learners are outlined below.

i) Reading Difficulties

Learners with learning difficulties perform poorly in all subjects. Despite the difficulties, learner 5 indicated that their elder brother or sister at home frequently assists them with schoolwork and other tasks, but they still perform poorly. He stated that:

"I struggle so much in some of my subjects; my older brother helps me with homework at home, but I still fail some activities".

In the same vein, Learner 4 stated that being unable to read is a challenge, which results in low scores in practically all subjects, therefore reading appears to be the number one challenge while reading for a test or exam. She pointed out that: *"I struggle with reading and writing, particularly in English. I find it difficult to read and express myself in English. When my teachers asks me to read in class, I want to cry because I can't read properly".*

The responses given above reveal that struggling to read is one of the obstacles they confront, particularly in English; yet their elder siblings occasionally try to aid them with reading.

ii) Lack of Individualized Attention from Teachers

Learners with various learning difficulties require special care and attention from teachers and caregivers. One of the difficulties mentioned by Learner 4 of the same school is a lack of sufficient attention. He indicated that:

"Some of my teachers are doing their best to help me as much as they can, but it can be difficult at times because we are so many students in one class that giving me attention for the entire lesson is never possible".

The study findings revealed that learners with learning difficulties receive adequate attention. One contributing issue is the large number of learners in one class, which makes it difficult for teachers to support all of them. The findings further revealed that for learners to better comprehend and do what is expected of them, teachers must explain and spend more time with each learner individually, providing all needed help while in class.

iii) Lack of Self-Confidence and Self Esteem

Because of the problems they confront, learners with learning difficulties often have low self-esteem and confidence. Learner 2 responded that:

"I'm constantly nervous and terrified of being teased whenever I want to try anything new or express my opinions. As a result, I always keep my opinions to myself".

In addition, Learner 8 of the same school expressed a similar opinion by narrating her ordeal as follows:

"My classmates know I'm slow in class, and they make fun of me at times, so I don't always try or participate in some activities, I sometimes become isolated and just

observe or listen to what others are doing and saying, until a teacher mentions my name"

The result of the study indicated that it is difficult for learners to express themselves or participate in school activities since they lack confidence and are too bashful to freely contribute. Also, being hesitant and afraid to offer ideas or ask questions in class is a daily difficulty.

4.3. Factors Prohibiting Parents of Children with Learning Difficulties not to be Involved in their Children's Education

Parents of children with learning difficulties have good reasons for refraining from their children's education. The comments below were gathered from parents about the factors prevent them from being involved in their children's education. The results are presented for each of the sampled schools below.

4.3.1 Experiences from School A

Findings below are based on parents' formal education levels, communication from school, support rendered to learners, and the number of parents meeting attended by parents, as well as obstacles limiting these parents from being involved in their children's education are outlined below:

4.3.1.1 Parents Formal Education Levels

The findings revealed that parents who did not attend school were less involved in the education of their children.

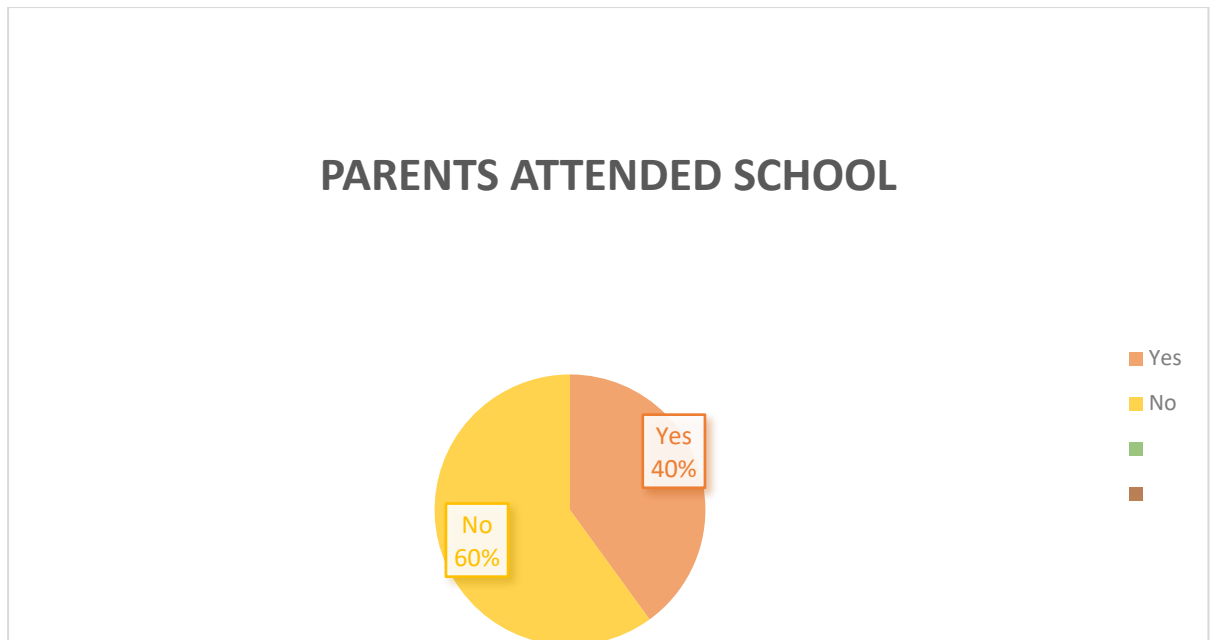


Figure 4.3. Total number of parents that attended school for School A

Figure 4.3 Shows that most parents 6 (60%) whose learners had learning difficulties did not attend school themselves at a young age, whereas 4, (40%) attended school at a young age.

4.3.1.2 Low Levels of Literacy

The study was carried out a rural school, and not all of the parents could read, write, or express themselves in English. Parent 8 stated that:

“I went to the school once and was told that my granddaughter was struggling in three subjects. But then I can’t read what’s in her books or even the papers she brings home from school. I rely on her to inform me”.

Similarly, Parent 5, concurred with this viewpoint, pointing out that: *“I expect teachers to do their jobs because I am unable to read or write. I can’t even help my child with schoolwork since I can’t read. My child occasionally writes for me at times”.*

In the same vein, Parent 3 of the same school also concurred with the viewpoints expressed by Parent 5 and stated that not being able to read makes it difficult to support their children despite having attempted to enrol in adult literacy programmes.

He alluded that: *“I won’t be able to help a child if I can’t read and write. In 2018, I joined Literacy Programme with the hopes of learning to read and write, but it didn’t help. As a result, it will be tough for me to support my child with his schoolwork; teachers must do their best”*.

The results of the study indicated that not being able to read and write has prevented parents from assisting their children because they never attended school. As such, teachers are expected to do their work as assigned and not all parents can read or write, making it difficult for them to assist their children. The Figure 4.4 below depicts the assistance parents render to their children with their schoolwork. Most of the parents did not help their children with schoolwork because that involved reading, an ability they did not have. According to the Epstein’s theory of parental involvement, parenting plays a role in this aspect because families are required to establish a home environment to support their children and enhance learning (Epstein, 2013).

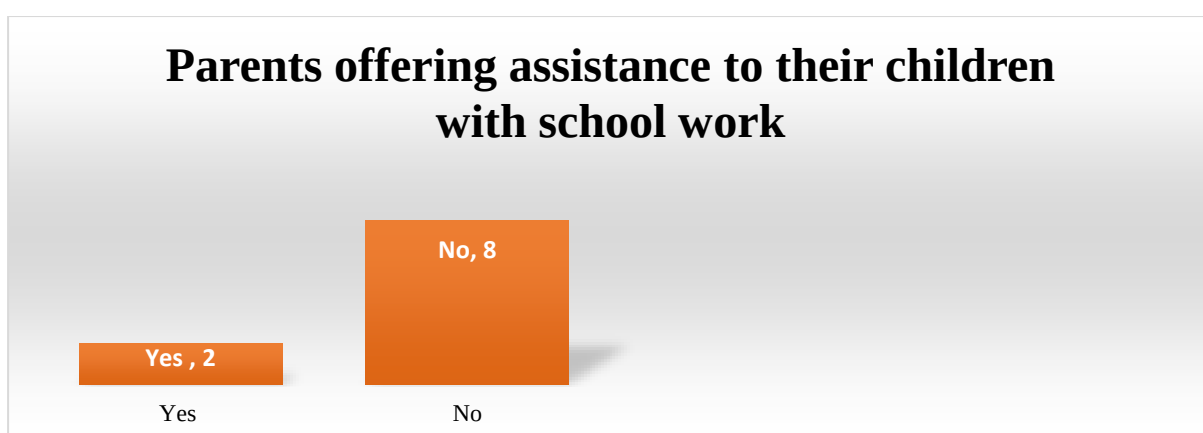


Figure 4.4. School A Parents' assistance with children's schoolwork

Figure 4.4 shows the assistance offered to children by parents whose children have learning difficulties at School A. 8 (80%) of parents indicated that they do not assist their children's schoolwork, while 2 (20%) indicated that they had attempted to assist their children's with school related work.

4.3.1.3 Social- Economic Conditions

The income of parents influences their involvement in their children's schooling. Parent 1 alluded that:

“The only way to get money to put food on the table and provide for our children is to travel into town by foot early in the morning and sell, returning only at night. Making it tough to find time to attend parents' meetings or go to school when requested by teachers or check through children's books”

Equally, Parent 3 of the same school concurred with Parent 1 and stated that: *“It can be difficult for me to go to school when requested since I always have to travel long distance to my Mahangu field in the morning, and by the time I go home, I'm exhausted”*.

The study findings revealed that for parents to feed their children necessitates selling items from their Mahangu field in town. Hence, finding time to check on their children's schoolwork can be difficult because they spend much of their time looking for ways to make money to feed their families rather than checking their children's homework.

4.3.1.4. School Communication with Parents

Parents are communicated with by the school in a variety of ways. Parent 10 of school B stated that letters are often written in English and translated into Rukwangali. She acknowledged that:

“My child gives me a school letter; in most cases, the parent letter is given to me today, and the meeting is scheduled for tomorrow. I also have other responsibilities; therefore the school tells me on short notice, resulting in my failure to attend the meeting or go to school as required”.

Similarly, Parent 5 of school B shared the same sentiments by stating that:

“Schools notify me late, which makes things harder and difficult. What if I was intending to go somewhere else, so because I’m notified on a short notice, I always end up not attending the meeting or going to school”.

Another method of communication used by school to invite parents to school is via learner’s verbal communication. Parent 7 from the same school indicated that children do not express the information adequately, and as result, parents do not attend the parents meeting or visit the school because their children’s message is unclear.

He stated that: *“Teachers utilise verbal communication through learners to inform us to go to school; our children don’t express things correctly, but if it’s written on paper, he can read it for me, or I ask the elder brother to translate. Unclear information results in not attending school events.*

The results of the above response indicated that parents are occasionally invited to school regarding their children’s performance which happened on short notice via a

letter provided to learners to give to their parents. According to Figure 4.5 below 5 (50%) of parents indicated that no report is given to them on their child's academic performance, 4 (40%) indicated feedback is given to them when the child was not performing well. While 1 (10%) indicated that parents are only informed when their child misbehaves at school. The Epstein theory posits that parental involvement in communication and learning at home is critical to establish effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress. Schools are also required to provide information and ideas to families about how to help learners at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions and planning (Epstein, 2013).

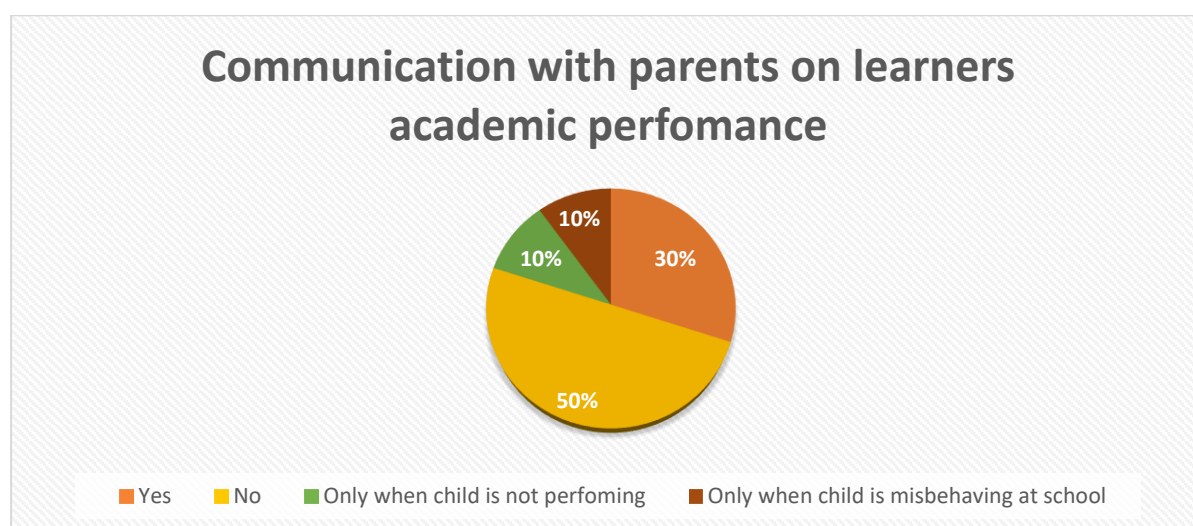
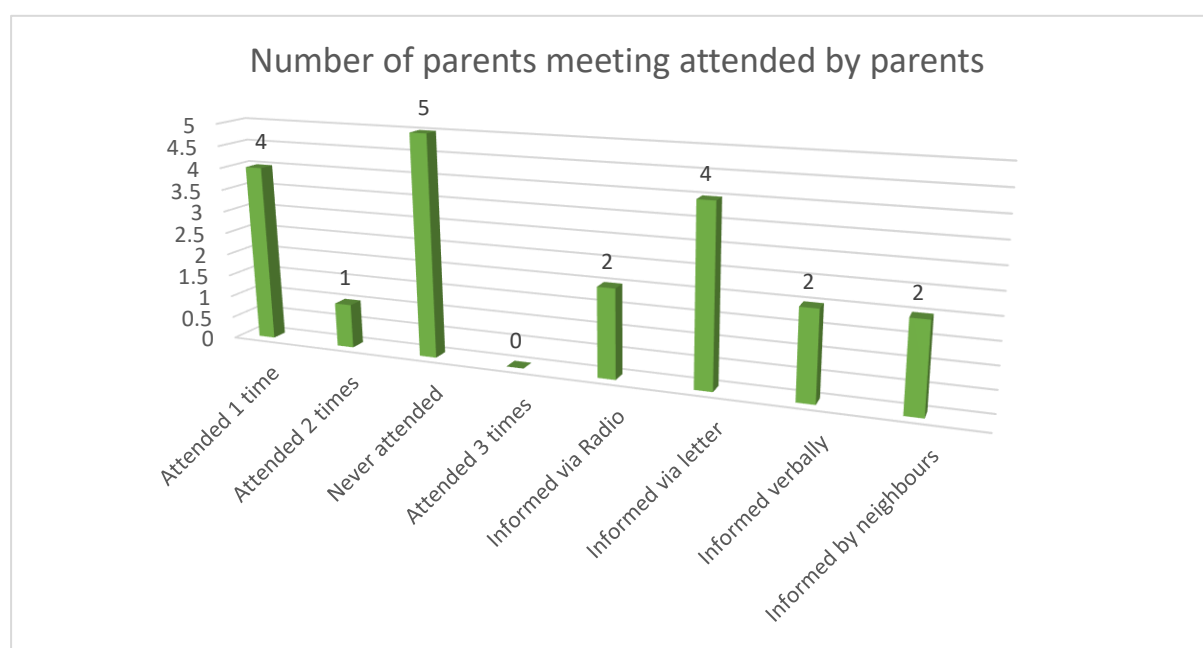


Figure 4.5. School A: Communication with parents on learners' academic performance.

It was evident that due to the poor communication from the school, the parents participated poorly in school activities. Figure 4.5 revealed the number of times that parents of school A attended meetings. The attendance was poor, with 4 (40%) of parents indicating to have attended just one parent meeting, while 1 (10%) reported to

have attended two parent meetings. Five parents, or 50% claimed they had never attended a parent meeting held by the school. Additionally, 2 (20%) claimed to have learned the notice of the parent meeting through the local radio station, 2 (20%) through neighbours, and 4 (40%) through the learners and a letter from the school.

Figure 4.6 below present data on the total number of parent meeting attended by parents.



4.6 School A: Total number of parent meetings attended by parents.

The findings suggest that parents meeting notice period given to parents by the school is always short, resulting in them not honouring the invitation.

4.3.1.5. Child- Headed Households

The study revealed the prevalence of various child-headed households in the region, making it difficult to involve their parents in their children's education when called on by schools. Parent 1 indicated that:

“One of the challenges of not being involved in our children’s education is that I work in a different village 80 kilometres from our house, which is way too far away, so children stay alone and only see them after two months or when school close. I also delegate my neighbours to represent me when there is a parent meeting”.

Similarly, Parent 6 concurred with Parent 1 by stating that:

“I work on a farm in Gobabis and only come home once in a year. I leave the kids alone in the house with the eldest who is in Grade 7. I typically ask neighbours to check on the kids or a relative who lives in a different hamlet to come and check on them and occasionally give them money if I sent money. I don’t have time to attend to school or read my children’s books now that I spend more time in Gobabis”.

In the same vein, Parent 9 at School A had the same sentiments about children heading households due to parents being in separate regions for work. She explained, *“I work in Aussenkehr, which is a long way from where we live, so my children are left alone, and only see them when we finish harvesting grapes. I do all this so that I can make money and feed my family”.*

The study findings indicated that parents are looking for different ways to make money and earn a living, which has resulted in some parents leaving their homestead to stay on farms while their children are left alone in the house. This means working far from their house resulted in minimal involvement in their children’s education because children are left alone in the house or in the care of neighbours who are tasked to check up on them, and to represent them during parents meeting. The Epstein theory necessitates that parents establish a home environment and support their children and learning at home by providing information and ideas on how to help learners at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions and planning. When

houses are headed by children, it becomes difficult to assist learners with learning difficulties (Epstein, 2013).

4.3.2 Experiences from School B

Below are findings from School B based on the responses by parents in terms of their formal education, assistance rendered to their children when it comes to their school work, communication from school, and the findings informed us on the number of parent meetings attended by parents as well as factors that hinder them from been involved into their children's education.

4.3.2.1 Parents Formal Education Level

The figure below depicts School B parents' formal educational level and reveals that 7 (70%) of the parents did attend school at a young age, while 3 (30%) had indicated that they never attended school at an early age.

Figure 4.7 below present data on the number of parents that attended school.

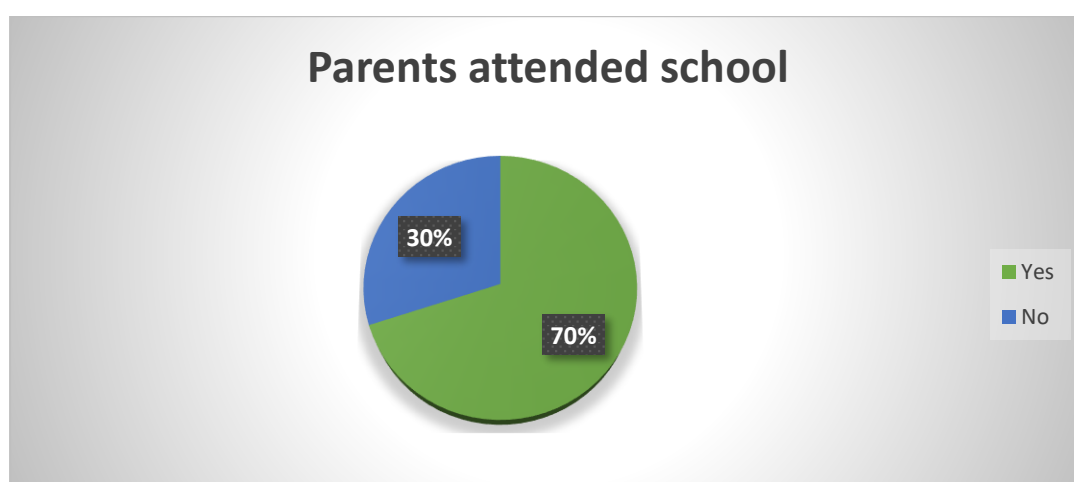


Fig.4.7. Total number of parents that attended school at a young age.

As most of the parents at School B who participated in the study attended school at a young age, one would expect that they will be involved in the education of their children

and assist them with school activities. The results astonishingly seemed to indicate otherwise.

Figure 4.8 below present data on aid offered by parents to children's.

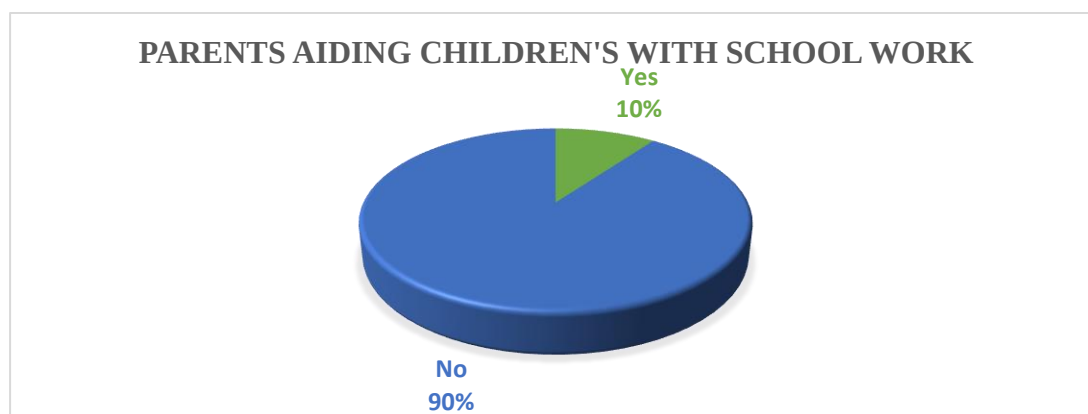


Figure 4.8 School B Parents aiding children with schoolwork

Figure 4.8 above depict that 90% of the parents at school B who participated in this study did not help their children with homework at home while 10% helped.

Figure 4.9 Presents data on communication with parents on learners' academic performance.

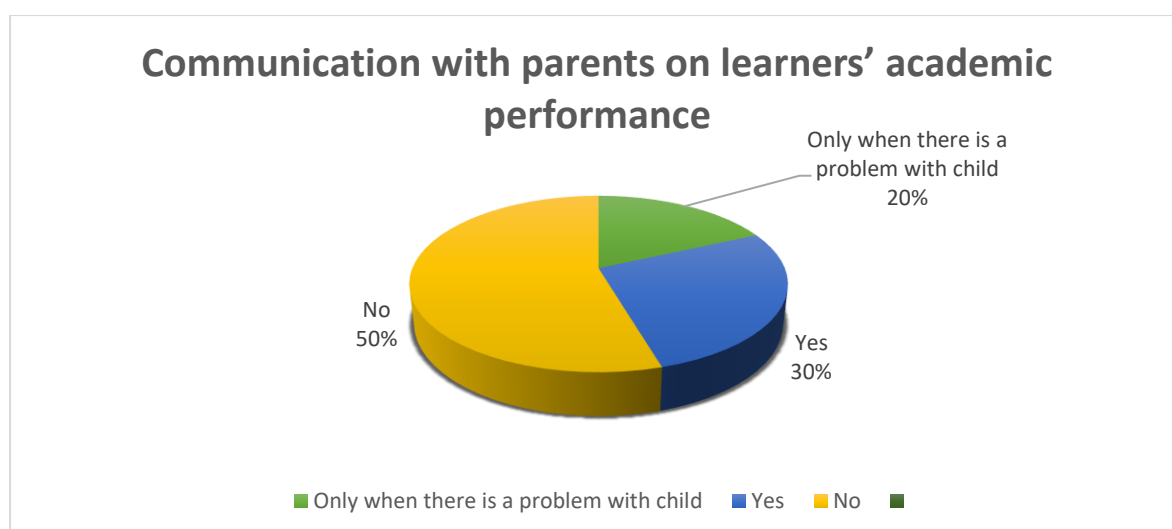


Fig. 4.9 Communication with parents on learners' academic performance

The results above show responses from parents with regard to communication from school based on their children's academic performance. Figure 4.9 shows that 5 (50%) of the parents indicated that no report is given regarding their children's academic performance, 3 (30 %) indicated that a report is given to them, and 2 (20%) indicated that the only feedback they are receiving is when their child misbehaves at school.

4.3.2.2 Social-Economic Conditions

Parents who are subsistence farmers tend to go and sell their products obtained from Mahangu field to make a living which then results in them not attending to their children's books, attending parents' meetings or visiting the school when necessary. Parent 7 of school B is more concerned with the Mahangu field than with children's schoolwork or attending a parent meeting. He pointed out that: *"Surviving these days is difficult, I rely on my Mahangu field. Who will go to the field and work while I go to school, the kids are also at school"*.

According to Figure 4.10 below, depicts the number of parents that attended parents' meetings organised by the school.

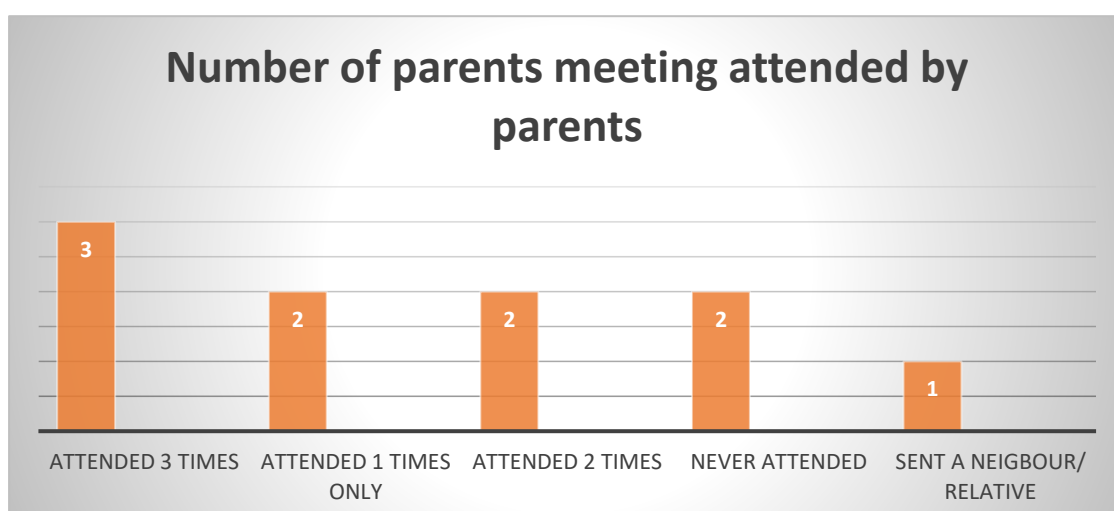


Fig.4.10 Total number of parents meeting attended.

The graph shows, 3 (30%) of the parents attended three parents' meetings, while 2 (20%) stated that they only attended two parent's meetings, and 2 (20%) only attended 1 meeting, whereas 1 (10%) sent a neighbour or family member to represent them.

The above responses indicate that low socio-economic circumstances hinder parents from being fully involved as more time is spent on trying to earn a living. It can be seen in Figure 4.10 which depicts that parents do not make time to attend parents' meetings.

4.3.2.3 Teachers' Attitudes Towards Parents

Teachers' attitudes toward parents at school B also contributed to parents' modest involvement in their children's education, including all school activities. Parent 8 illustrated that:

“Teachers don't talk to us in a friendly way, especially when the child has a behavioural problem or doesn't come to school, which causes some of us to lose interest in issues concerning our children's behaviour and academic performance”.

Also, Parent 9 concurred with the viewpoints shared by Parent 8, declaring that: *“It's better to stay at home than allowing teachers to tell you whatever they feel like because your child isn't performing well”.*

The study findings revealed that teachers do not approach parents in a culturally appropriate and polite manner, which leads to some parents not being engaged in school activities or putting forth as much effort to assist their children as possible. As a result, the parents opted to rather stay away from attending school activities than have teachers blame them for their children's issues.

4.3.2.4 Children's Reluctance to Include Parents in their Education

Some children believe they are old enough and do not require their parents' assistance or attendance at school. Parent 6 stated that,

“My son doesn't give me letters or notify me of an urgent parent meeting. At times, I will only learn about a school meeting from my neighbours. When the teacher asks me to come to school, it's hard for me to know when the young sister inform me, or the life skill teacher come to our house to find out if my children stayed alone or stay with their parents”.

In the same vein, Parent 4 shared a similar opinion about children not alerting parents about school events on time or when the teacher wants parents to visit the school. She pointed out that,

“My daughter doesn't notify me, or she will notify me when she goes to school early in the morning that I must go to school”.

The results of the study indicated that information intended for parents regarding parents' meetings is not always delivered to them by their children. Information such as parent-teacher meetings at school is only obtained from the neighbours or the life skills teacher. This has made it difficult for some parents who have not received information from their children on time or attend to school activities.

4.3.3. Summary of all findings for Schools A and B

The results of school A reveals that some parents' lack of parental participation has been discovered to be attributable to child-headed households, and children living alone in the house while parents are at the farm or elsewhere for work. Parents are unable to

attend school events or monitor their children's academic development because their offspring rule the family. Furthermore, parents working far from their house delegate neighbours to represent their children's during parents' meetings. Also, poor communication, limited literacy, and parents who are uninformed of what is expected of them all act against parents' participation in their children's education.

According to the findings of the school B, for parents to be economically self-sufficient parents spend much of their time attempting to sell their Mahangu field products to make a living. This results in them not reviewing their children's books, attending school- parents' meetings, or visiting school as required. As a result, their socio-economic circumstances restrict them from being fully engaged because they spend more time trying to earn a living. Furthermore, study findings revealed that inadequate literacy on the part of parents, teacher's attitudes towards parents, and children's own attitudes toward parental involvement all influence parents' involvement in their children's education.

4.4.1 Addressing Barriers to Learning: School A

Learners with learning difficulties, like other learners, need to learn in an easy and free school environment regardless of the various challenges they face. The findings from School A are detailed below to alleviate some of the barriers and make learning easier for them

4.4.1.1 School Feeding Programme

Learner 5 of School A suggested that lack of concentration among learners with learning difficulties at school could be solved by the government's School Feeding Programme. He pointed out that:

“School feeding programme should be implemented throughout the year, not just in the middle of the year, because not paying attention in class is primarily caused by hunger”.

However, Learner 2 of School A alluded that: *“Parents must try to give food to their children before they come to school”*

The participants suggested that the school feeding programme begin at the beginning of the academic year rather than in the middle. By providing learners with this basic need, attending school every day, concentrating well in class, not dozing or sleeping in class due to hunger, all will improve. Furthermore, participants suggested parents to make effort to ensure that their children have had a meal before going to school.

4.4.1.2 Improved Supervision and Parental Care at Home

A need was expressed for improved parental supervision and care. Absent parents needed to arrange for replacement parents or caregivers to supervise their children at home while they are away with work commitments. Some houses are headed by school children who finds it challenging to be schooling and at the same time attending to all home chores. Accordingly, Learner 8 suggested that:

“Parents to get a trusted family member to stay with the kids rather than them heading the household”.

The study findings revealed that there are children heading household all by themselves with no elder in the house. The participant suggested parents to try to get a reliable family member to stay with their children, and if there are no trusted family members, parents should consider relocating with their children to their place of work for them to attend school there under their care.

4.4.1.3 Construction of More Classrooms

Classes are overcrowded, making it difficult to effectively support learners with learning difficulties. Learner 2 suggested that:

“Build more classes to reduce overcrowding and teachers will be able to care for and support all the learners while also moving easily in the classroom”.

The results of the study indicated that there is a need to build extra classes and employ more teachers for teachers to pay more attention to learners faced with various learning difficulties. Once overcrowding is alleviated, teachers will be able to assist learners with various learning difficulties.

4.4.1.4 Parental Involvement and Support

Engaging parents of children with learning difficulties in their children’s education, schools could make use of numerous activities to attract parents and involve them. Learner 8 suggested that:

"Organize a school bazaar and a goat/pig's competition to attract parents and get them involved in the planning".

The above response suggests that schools could consider organizing fund raising events to attract parent support and should motivate parents to participate in school activities. In addition, participants suggested that schools could also consider hosting competitions in which parents can win various prizes and in this way more parents be present at school events.

4.4.1.5 Parental Recognition

School could consider awarding and praising parents who are doing their best to be engaged into their children education specifically those with learning difficulties. Learner 6 indicated that; *"awarding parents who are involved in their children's education could encourage other parents to try their hardest and get involved as well"*.

The study findings suggest that parents whose children have learning difficulties should be recognized in a variety of ways; in the end, this will serve as motivation for other parents to attempt to be involved in their children's education.

4.4.2. Addressing Barriers to Learning: School B

Learners with learning difficulties, like other learners, need to learn in an easy and free school environment despite of the obstacles they confront. The findings from School B are outlined below:

4.4.2.1 Learning Support and Remedial Teaching

To render assistance to learners with learning difficulties, more support is needed, including remedial teaching. Learner 7 alluded that: *"Teachers must make effort to assist learners with learning difficulties in the afternoon session, as currently less attention is received from teachers"*.

Sharing the same sentiment was, Learner 4 at the same school who indicated that: *"supporting learners with learning difficulties in the afternoon will help them in enhance their academic performance and get better test scores and grades."*

The results from the above response indicated that more learning support programmes be offered in the afternoon to provide sufficient attention to those learners with learning difficulties as it is not possible to fully assist them in the morning session.

4.4.2.2 Encourage Learners to Accomplish their Ultimate Best

Teachers and parents must continue to encourage learners to build their confidence and self-esteem. Learner 10 indicated that: *“Encourage learners not to be shy and always praise them when they perform well”*.

The findings show that there is a need to motivate learners who are experiencing various learning difficulties to do their best despite the difficulties they are experiencing. The findings further suggest that teachers might employ a variety of strategies to assist learners who lack confidence and urge them to continue doing their best and participating in school-related activities.

4.4.3. Summary for Learner-School A and Learner – School B

The findings from learners at School A revealed that learners get poor test scores and grades because of their inability to read and write, a lack of individualized teaching, poor engagement in school-related activities, and a lack of concentration in class due to hunger and child- headed households.

While findings from learners School B revealed that challenges faced by learners are poor test scores and grades, lack of individualized teaching as well as lack of self-confidence and self-esteem. One unique finding from learners at School A is child-headed households while from School B is the lack of self-confidence and low self-esteem among learners.

4.5. Teacher Profiles

Teachers play a critical role in shaping the minds of learners with learning difficulties. The teachers' gender, age range, years of teaching experience, the impacts of minimal parental involvement, and strategies that school could implement to engage parents of children with learning difficulties into their children's education are outlined below:

4.5.1 Teachers' Gender

Figure 4.11 below depicts School A teacher's gender

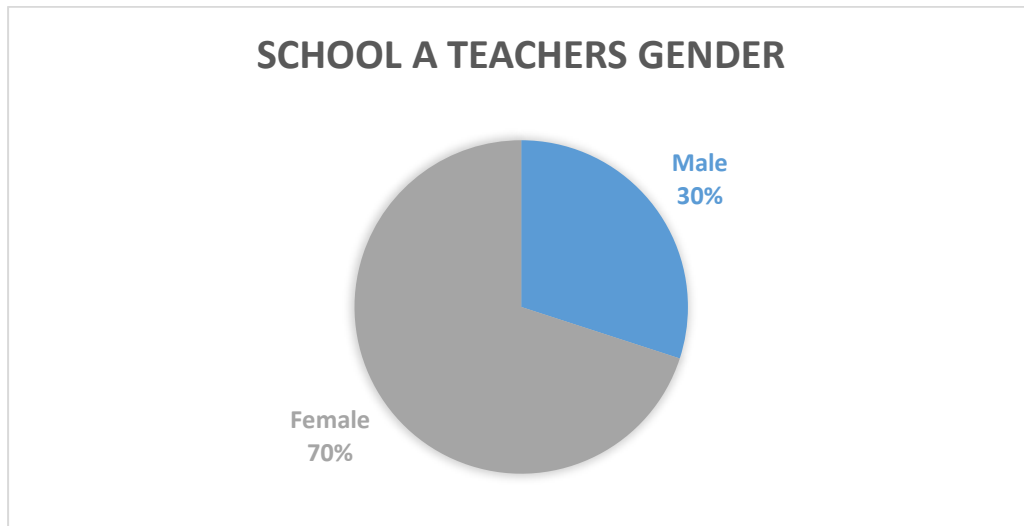


Fig.4.11 Teacher's gender

Figure 4.11 illustrates the gender of the teachers who participated in the study at School A. Seven (70%) teachers were female, whereas three (30%) were male.

4.5.1.2 Teachers' Age Range

Fig. 4.12 below display School A teachers age range.

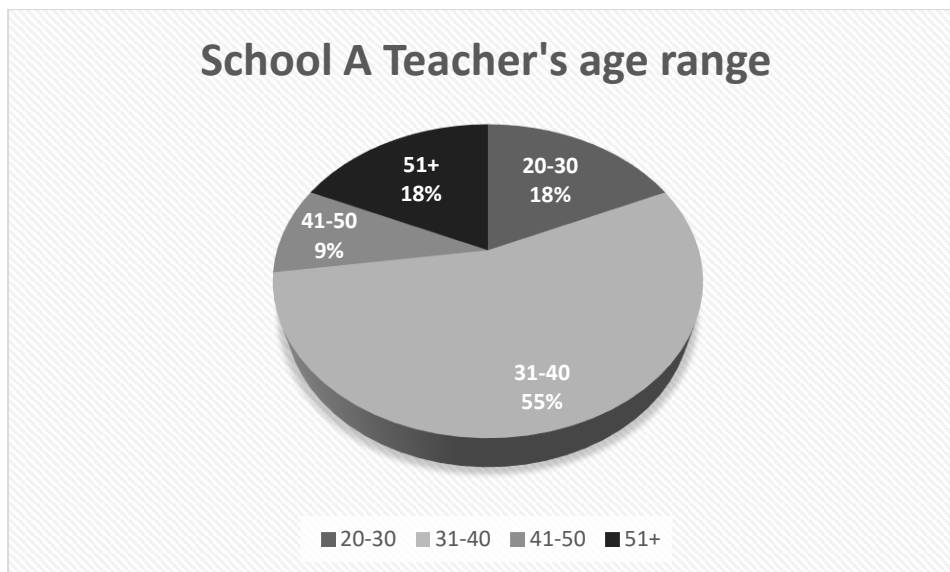


Fig. 4.12 School A teacher’s participant’s age range.

Fig.4.12 depicts the age range of teacher-participants from school A. This study included participants aged 31-40 (55%), 20-30 (18%), as well as those aged 51+ (18%) and (9%) in the age range group of 41-50. Most of the teacher-participants’ were between the ages of 31 and 40.

4.5.1.3 Teaching Experience

Figure 4.13 depicts School A years of teachers teaching experience

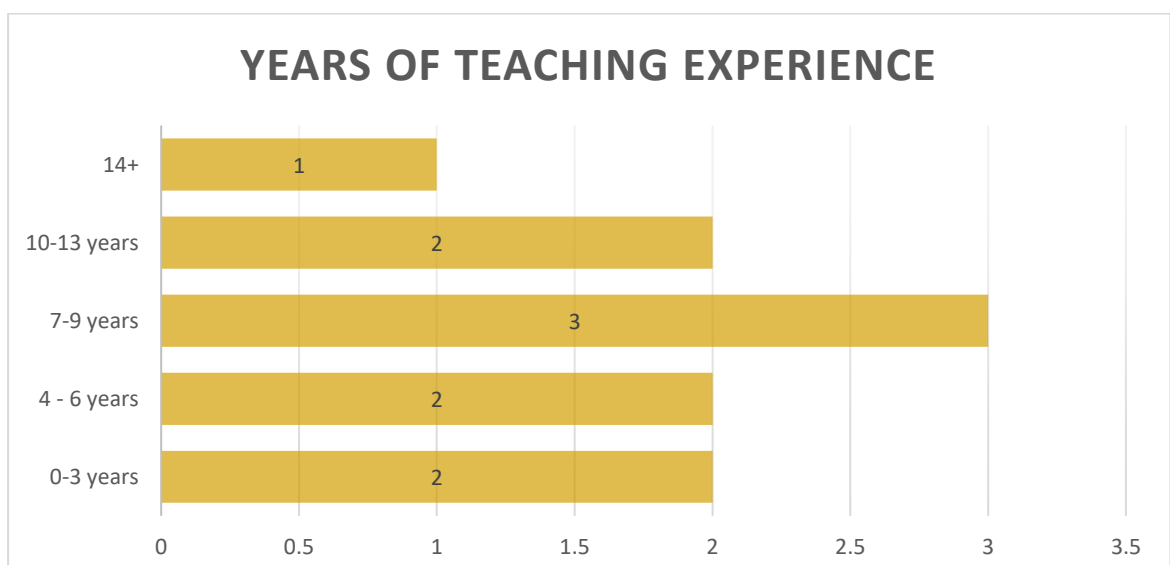


Fig. 4.13 School A: Years of teachers' teaching experience

Teachers with years of expertise are essential to recognize at an early age, and assist learners with learning difficulties in areas they are lacking. Figure 4.13 above depicts the teaching experience of the teachers at School A. 3 (30%) have taught for 7-9 years, whereas 2 (20%) have taught for 4-6 years. While two (20%) have 0–3-year teaching experience, one (10%) has 14+ years of teaching experience. Teachers with 0-3 years of teaching experience appear to be less informed about inclusive education, but those with 7-9 years as well as 14+ years of teaching appear to be far more knowledgeable and experienced with inclusive education.

4.5.1.4 The Effects of Poor Parental Involvement on Learner's Academic Achievements: School A

Parental involvement is essential for a learner to flourish academically and in other extramural activities at school. When parents are not engaged in their children's education and all of the activities that take place at school, it can have an impact on a learner's performance. The effects of minimal parental involvement on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties are addressed in this study's findings, which are outlined below:

i) Learners' Lack of Motivation

Learners with learning difficulties must be motivated to improve their performance. When parents show little interest in their children's education, their academic performance suffers. Teacher 3 at the same school stated that a lack of parental involvement has an impact on learner's academic performance, which can only be remedied with the help of parents and teachers. She explained that:

“Lack of parental involvement has a negative impact on learner’s academic success. Teachers alone cannot properly advise or attend to learners’ difficulties without the support of their parents, which can impair their performance”.

Similarly, another teacher 4 at this school stated that when parents are not involved in their children’s schoolwork, learners become disheartened and discouraged and put in less effort. She declared that:

“Learners will be unmotivated to learn, and absenteeism will rise, resulting in poor performance which lead to learners getting low grades”.

The results of the response suggest that learners with learning difficulties lack motivation. The participants further argued that motivation from teachers can only go so far if parents’ motivation and involvement are insufficient. The findings further revealed that parents’ lack of involvement hurts learners’ academic progress as such learners who lack motivation tend to do poorly and put in less effort in their academic work, and some end up not attending or being away from school. Concurring with these findings, Smith (2023) found that children perform better academically when their parents participate actively in their learning process. Additionally, Stanikzai (2020) stated that parent involvement in their children’s education is the most accurate predictor of student achievement by integrating parents in their children’s learning, parents can boost their children’s accomplishment and performance.

ii) Indiscipline

It is simpler to handle ill-disciplined learners when parents are involved; yet, when parental participation is lacking, learners tend to be ill-disciplined since their parents are not involved in their education. Once a learner is ill-disciplined and has various

learning difficulties' it becomes difficult to fully assist them. Teacher 8 at the same school asserted that learners who are indisciplined at school end up affecting their academic performance. Since there is no proper guidance from parents and teachers, they alone cannot fully change the learner's attitude. He emphasized that:

"They become ill-disciplined since they know their parents are unaware or will not bother to inquire about what they should do at school".

In the same vein, Teacher 1 concurred with Teacher 8, stating that *"Learners become ill-disciplined knowing that parents do not follow up on their children's schoolwork and this leads to poor performance"*.

The study findings revealed that learners with learning difficulties becoming ill-disciplined when their parents are not active in their schoolwork or attempt to participate in school activities. The findings also found that a lack of effective parental guidance leads to poor academic performance since there is no dedication or guidance from parents.

4.5.1.5. Strategies to Optimize Parental Involvement and Participation in Schools: School A

To engage parents in their children's education and all school activities, appropriate measures could be put in place to encourage parents to participate in school events and be actively involved in their children's education. The teacher participants responded to the study's research questions on the effects of minimal parental involvement on learners' academic performance and outlined the following as some of the strategies which could be put in place to make parents fully engaged in their children's education

as well as helping them at home with their schoolwork and fully engage in extramural activities organized by the school.

i) School Teacher Parent Meeting

The most usual and customary approach for parents, is through schoolteacher-parent meetings. Teacher 7 stated that schoolteacher-parents' meetings must be used as long as they are well-organised, and parents are informed in advance on a regular basis. She illustrated that:

“Parents must be informed in advance so that they may prepare, and those who live a considerable distance away from school can make arrangements to attend the parent meeting”.

Equally, Teacher 4 echoed similar sentiments, indicating that parents can be notified of the meeting via local radio. She had this to say: *“Schools may notify parents via local radio or through community headmen/ headwoman”.*

The study found that schools send letters with learners to pass on to their parents reminding them of the upcoming parent meeting. However, not all parents can read, and learners occasionally misplace the paper or fail to present the parent meeting letter to parents. The study findings suggest that schools might make use of the radio to tell parents about future parent meetings because parents listen to the radio. Currently, the school mostly communicates with parents via letters and verbal communication with learners.

ii) Parent-teacher Sessions

Parent 5 at School B suggested that schools implement one-on-one parent-teacher sessions to educate parents about their children's learning difficulties and how best to support their children with schoolwork at home. He illustrated that:

“There is a need for schools to establish one-on one parent-teacher meetings. Teachers should educate parents and provide advice on how to play their role as parents in aiding their children with learning difficulties, currently this session is not happening at most schools”.

The study findings suggest that schools use one- on -one parent teacher sessions. During these sessions, parents should be taught on the type of difficulties their children's experience, as well as techniques to support these learners. The findings revealed that there is no parent -teacher sessions happening at the school.

4.5.2. Teachers' Profile: School B

Teachers play a vital role in supporting learners with learning difficulties. Findings below outline the teachers' gender, age range, years of teaching experience, the effect of minimal parental involvement, as well as strategies that school could implement to engage parents of children with learning difficulties into their children's education.

4.5.2.1 Teachers' Gender

Figure 4.14 School B: Teachers' Gender

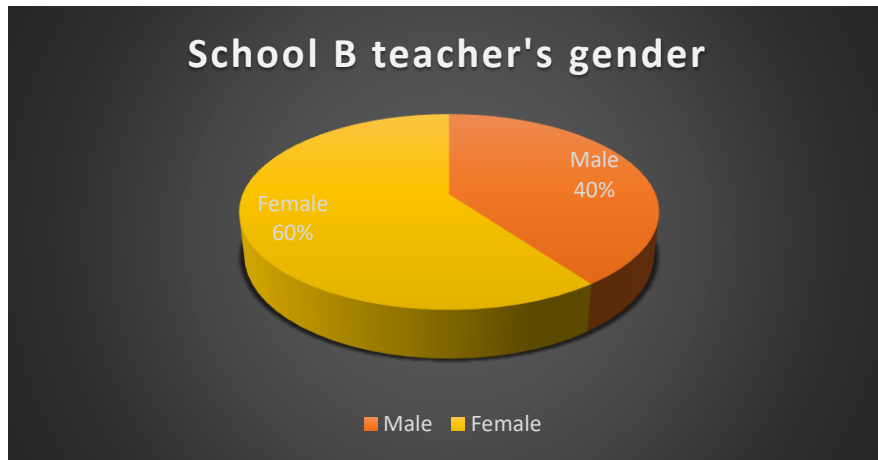


Fig. 4.14 Teachers' gender

Figure 4.14 depicts School B teacher's gender. Six (60%) of the school B teachers that participated in this study were female, whereas four (40%) were male.

4.5.2.2 Teachers' Age Range

Figure 4.15 shows School B: Teachers age range

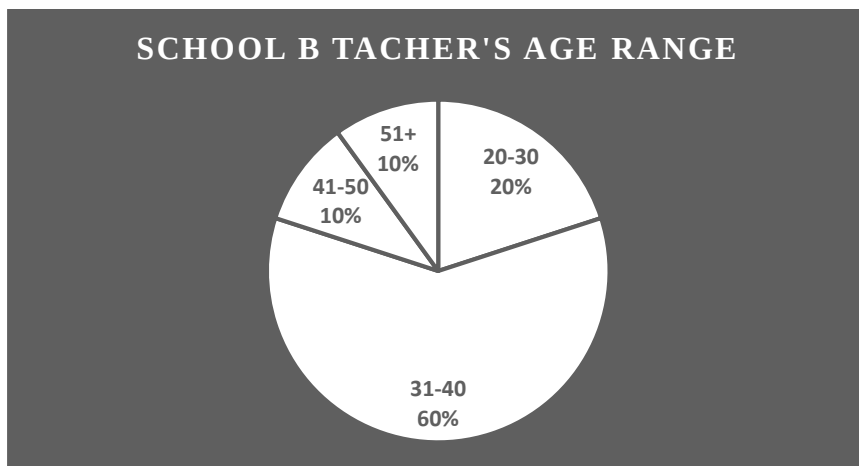


Fig. 4.15 Teachers' age range

Figure 4.15 shows School B teachers' age range were as follows: 6 (60%) were between the ages of 31 and 40, 2 (20%) were between the ages of 20-30 and 41-50, and 10% were over the age of 51. These figures show that most teachers who participated are between the ages of 31 and 40.

4.5.2.3 Teaching Experience

Figure 4.16 depicts School B years of teachers teaching experience

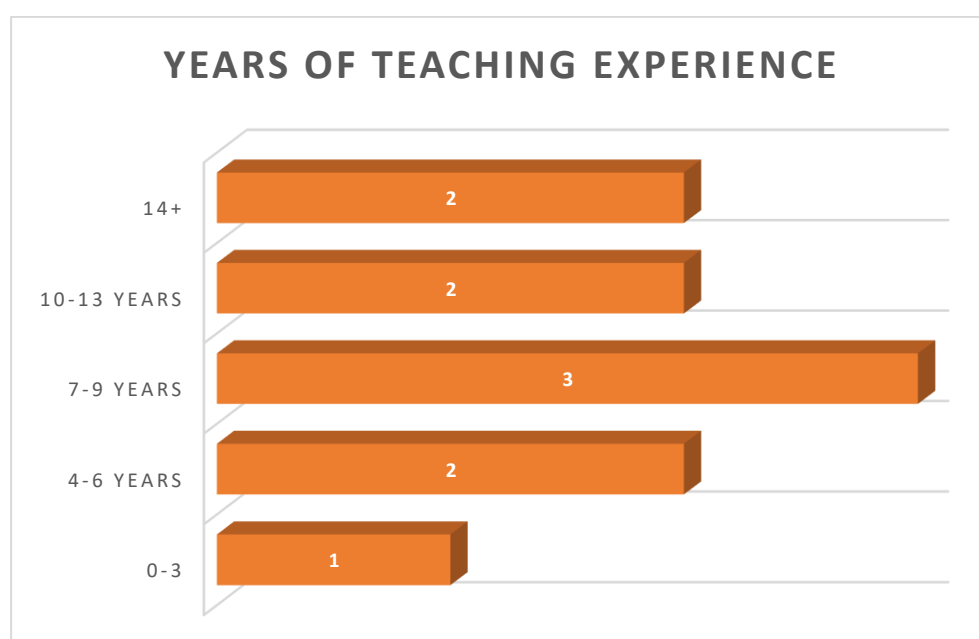


Fig. 4.16: Years of teachers teaching experience

Assisting learners with learning difficulties requires experience from teachers. Figure 4.16 above depicts the years of teaching experience at School B. Three (30%) teachers have taught for 7-9 years, while two (20%) have taught for 4-6 years. Two (20%) have teaching experience ranging from 10 to 13 years. 2 (20%) indicated to have taught for 14+ years of teaching experience, while 1(10%) taught for 0-3 years. Teachers with 7-9 years of experience appear to be more experienced and knowledgeable about inclusive education than teachers with 0-3 years of teaching experience.

4.5.2.4. Effects of Poor Parental Involvement on Learner's Academic Achievements: School B.

Parental involvement is essential for a learner to flourish academically and in other extramural activities at school. When parents are not engaged in their children's education and all of the activities that take place at school, it can have an impact on a learner's performance. The effects of minimal parental involvement on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties are addressed in this study's findings, which are outlined below:

i) Learners Become Reckless with their Schoolwork

Learners with learning difficulties require proper guidance, attention, care and mentoring from their parents, and when parents are not involved in checking their children's schoolwork or attending school activities, learners become far more irresponsible. Teacher 2 emphasized that:

“Because they are not aided with schoolwork, learners become careless with their books and academic work, some will not even stay committed to their schoolwork and do their best in schoolwork”.

The response given above revealed that when parents are not involved in their children's schoolwork, learners tend to be reckless in all aspects of their schoolwork since direction, monitoring, and mentorship from parents are lacking. The study's findings further revealed that if parents actively participated in their children's education, reckless behaviour among learners may be avoided.

ii) Learner's Lack of Motivation

Parental involvement has an impact on learners' participation in extra-mural activities as well as their academic performance. To illustrate this point, Teacher 6 at this school forewarned that learner participation in school activities will decrease, affecting both academic performance and social life. She pointed out that:

“Parents would need to provide affection and attention to their children as a form of support. If this is lacking, the learner will struggle, and the teachers can only help by explaining; nonetheless, parents are more important for moral support”.

The response given above revealed that learners require moral support from their parents, and if one component is missing, it is difficult to assist those learners who have a variety of learning difficulties. Moral assistance will not only help learners with their academic work, but it will also enhance their confidence to participate in extracurricular moral activities established by the school.

4.5.2.5. Strategies to Optimize Parental Involvement and Participation in Schools: School B.

To engage parents in their children's education and all school activities, appropriate measures could be put in place to encourage parents to participate in school events and be actively involved in their children's education. The teacher participants responded to the study's research questions on the effects of minimal parental involvement on learners' academic performance and outlined the following as some of the strategies which could be put in place to make parents fully engaged in their children's education as well as helping them at home with their schoolwork and fully engage in extramural activities organized by the school.

i) Increase Awareness of the Significance of Parental Involvement

There is a need for schools to raise awareness of the necessity of parental involvement because there are still parents who are unaware of their role in their children's education. One of the teachers at this school, Teacher 4 stated that parents expect teachers to do everything, which makes it difficult to aid learners with learning difficulties.

He had this to say:

“Schools could raise parental participation awareness by hosting a performance award ceremony for the outstanding top performer, as well as planning more activities that fully include parent’ involvement”.

The response given above revealed that some parents are unaware of the roles they are supposed to play when it comes to their involvement in their children's education, so there is a need for schools to raise awareness about the critical role parents play in their children's education. The study findings suggest various activities requiring parental participation be used to raise awareness.

ii) Educate Parents on their Children's Learning Challenges

The key is to educating parents on the necessity of parental participation is education. Teacher 6 at the same school noted that parents should be made aware that learners must not just be sent to school for teachers to perform miracles, but parents' input and presence is also essential.

She stated that: *“Educate the parents about their child’s learning difficulties and how both parties will help the child with education at school and at home”*.

Similarly, Teacher 3 echoed the same sentiment stating that it is imperative to *“inform parents about the importance of their involvement in their children’s education and how it will change their children’s performance”*.

In the same vein, Teacher 4 concurred by stating that *“parents should be educated on the importance of education and learning difficulties faced by learners, as well as how to help with each learning difficulty both at home and at school”*.

The results of the study indicated that parents should be educated on the difficulties their children are experiencing at an early stage, as well as how best they may be assisted. Parents must understand that they play a critical part in their children’s education, and that their involvement will result in better academic outcomes for their children.

iii) Parent’s Classroom Visit

One strategy for attracting parents to school could be to plan classroom visits for them. Teacher 8 had this to say: *“Schools organize classroom observations for parents to observe their children during lesson presentations, and parents should be encouraged to do this exercise at least twice a month.”* Similarly, Teacher 1 shared the same sentiment by stating that *“parents should attend class visits once a month. Parents are also encouraged to prepare their children at home”*.

In the same way, Teacher 10 illustrated that: *“parents should be encouraged to always make time to come to school and check their child’s schoolwork and discuss their*

children's progress at school". As with, Teacher 5 she urged parents to "encourage their children to support their children all the time and check their children's work".

The results of the study indicated that schools should schedule a classroom visit day for parents to view over their children's schoolwork and observe how teaching and learning occur. Parents of children with learning difficulties should be urged to make time and attend to their children's schoolwork when requested by the school, as well as to go through their children's work. The findings revealed that teachers/schools had never attempted the parents' classroom visit technique.

4.6. Chapter Summary

The results revealed that when parents are not actively involved in their children's education, the children become disobedient and have poor test scores and grades.

The parents revealed that their social status prevents them from participating in their children's education, low levels of formal education, and lack of proper communication from the school, and teacher's attitude towards parents. Furthermore, there are homes run entirely by children due to parent absenteeism and children's reluctance to include their parents in their education are among issues impending parental involvement. Additionally, findings revealed that learners with learning difficulties face difficulties at school such as reading difficulties, lack of self-confidence and self-esteem, lack of concentration at school, and lack of individualized teaching.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings presented in Chapter 4 in response to the study questions. The findings are discussed according to the themes and sub-themes outlined in the preceding chapters.

5.2. Challenges Experienced by Learners with Learning Difficulties.

When learners with learning difficulties attend school, they face barriers that prevent them from learning, some of which are school- related and some of which are home-related. Challenges experienced by learners with learning difficulties at school are addressed in this study's findings, which are outlined below:

i) Reading Difficulties

The findings demonstrated that learners with learning difficulties perform poorly in certain areas of learning, namely reading, writing, and calculating. This finding agrees with Zidan (2023) who stated that learners with learning difficulties experienced poor performance, low self -esteem, low self-confidence, unable to express themselves, difficulty in adapting to the environment, difficulty in focusing on a specific task, and poor spelling and slow writing speed. The data revealed that the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties is low, and teachers alone cannot enhance their performance, thus parents must be included and engaged.

Motshusi et al. (2024) found that parental participation is always an essential component in assisting children in academic success. Similarly, Epstein (2013) model recognizes activities that are undertaken independently by families, schools and communities, as well as those that are conducted jointly to influence the growth and learning of the child. The model stresses the critical role parent's play in the academic accomplishment of a learner.

ii) Lack of individualized Attention from Teachers

Lack of proper attention and care from teachers was mentioned in the research findings as being a challenge faced by learners with learning difficulties due to the large number of learners in the class. As a result, teachers are unable to provide personalized attention during the whole lesson. Study done by (Bhebhe et al., 2022; Kuyini & Ishwar, 2013) showed that the overcrowding of learners in the classrooms make teachers to be disadvantaged especially when helping learners with learning difficulties. Creating a good learning environment help learners with learning difficulties to concentrate on their tasks and improve their academic performance.

Sharing the same sentiment is, Bhebhe et al., (2022) who stated that overcrowding of learners in the classroom negatively affects the process of teaching and learning. The classes are very large and congested and this makes teachers not to successfully help learners with learning difficulties in the classes. Additionally, the difficulties experienced by teachers and learners in regular classrooms are a potential stumbling block to the successful implementation of Namibia's Sector Policy on Inclusive Education (Ministry of Education, 2013).

The study conducted by Fuchs (2021) in Britain on teacher challenges in inclusive schools highlighted lack of administrative support, and lack of teachers' support to learners with learning difficulties. The above literature makes it clear that many learners with learning difficulties, not only those in Namibia but also in other countries, lack individualized attention and are taught in overcrowded classrooms. This study suggests that sufficient attention and care from teachers can only be provided to learners if overcrowding in classrooms is resolved. Learners with learning difficulties will then receive proper attention, support and individualized assistance that will allow them to learn at their own pace alongside their peers.

iii) Poverty

According to the study's findings, some residences are solely inhabited by children because their parents have gone elsewhere to support their families. As a result, these children are without parental care and support at home and frequently go to school on an empty stomach, resulting in poor concentration in class due to hunger. This makes it difficult for a learner who has a learning difficulty to fully focus on class. Lepheana and Alexander (2024) expressed similar sentiment, stating that families are poverty-stricken, in which households still fail to meet basic needs such as healthcare, food security and appropriate shelter.

Karunanayake et al. (2020) expressed similar sentiment, stating that hungry learners are unable to take physical work and sporting activities seriously, are less able to attend school, and, if they do attend, are less able to concentrate and learn.

iv) Lack of Self-esteem and Self-confidence

Findings revealed that learners with learning difficulties exhibit low self-esteem and self-confidence. According to the studies (Akbari & Sahibzada ,2020; Benabou & Tirole, 2002), support these findings by stating that one big challenge that learners with learning difficulties are having as their vulnerability in learning is the lack of self-confidence and self-esteem which adversely affect the learning of any learners. Furthermore, participation in class and all school related activities is closely related to self-confidence, this is the major concern that learners' poor performance may be due to the lack of self-confidence which can consequently affect their vulnerability in learning process (Akbari & Sahibzada, 2020). The various difficulties learners' face makes it difficult for them to openly express themselves in or voice their opinion in class. Not only is the low confidence and self-esteem a struggle in school; they also have difficulties when playing with their friends at home or on school grounds.

Additionally, Akbari and Sahibzada (2020) suggests that self-confidence should be considered as the quality of a student in which the student feels him/herself assured of successfully performing of different activities in the class and out of the class for the purpose of learning.

The study assumes that if parents were involved in their children's education, they might increase their self-confidence and self-esteem because assistance is provided to them at home. Through this assistance, children are driven and able to develop their self-confidence. In line with, Epstein (2013) model, parents train the children at home by building self-confidence, self-concept, and self-reliance to improve school accomplishment. Not only do parents have a responsibility to foster these qualities, but so does the school when the children are in school. Study findings, however, reveals

that learners with learning difficulties lack self-confidence, are not motivated specifically by their parents and perform poorly. The six Epstein theory on parental involvement are as follows: parenting, communicating, learning from home, volunteering, decision making, and collaboration with community. Based on the study's findings, two (2) of Epstein theories stood out: namely parenting and learning from home.

With the involvement of parents in their children's education, Ding and Subadrah (2022) emphasized that learners' performance, and learners' self-esteem get boosted, and their attitude toward peers and schools are enhanced. Children's ability also increases to build and sustain healthy associations with teachers and peers.

5.3. Factors Prohibiting Parents' Involvement in the Education of Children with Learning Difficulties.

Parents of children with learning difficulties have valid grounds for reframing from their children's education. The factors prohibiting parents from becoming involved in the education of children with learning difficulties are discussed below:

i) Low Levels of Literacy

When Namibia gained independence on 21 March 1990, education was a human right and to be accessible to all Namibian citizens through formal and informal education. The Ministry of Education was mandated by the Namibian government to provide "Education for all" under the guiding principles of improving access, quality, equity, and democracy (MBESC, 1993). Education plays a crucial role in everyone's life including adults who are considered to be the first educator to their children at home. Article 20 of the Namibian constitution states that "all persons shall have the right to

education” (Namibia, 1990, p12-13). In addition, the Education Act 3 of 2020 (Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture, 2020) states that all persons shall have the right to education, which addresses the past imbalances and practices in the education system and improves educational quality. Despite the provision made in terms of the “education for all” the study findings revealed that there is a low level of literacy among parents which hinder them from participating in the education of their children specifically those with learning difficulties.

These findings are consistent with those of (Nghipandulwa, 2023; Ministry of Education, Sport and culture, 1993) stating that most Namibian schools face the problem of under-educated and uneducated parents. As a result, parents with low education may experience problems coping with changes and challenges of participating in decision-making processes in schools and their children’s education.

The results pointed out that, 11 (55%) parents out of 20 attended school at a young age but did not complete higher grades or finish school. While 9 (45%) of the parents did not attend school at all. Even though 55% of parents attended school, they appear to be unaware of the crucial role in their children’s education and did not attend parents’ meetings organised by the school.

In line with the findings of Oranga et al. (2022) stated that parents with lower levels of education experience more challenges regarding their children’s schooling than the educated middle-class ones. Literate parents have a better knowledge of the significance of their children’s education and their involvement in it. Parents who are unable to read or write find it difficult to accompany their children to school or aid them with schoolwork. Parents with low literacy levels were said to lack the information and abilities needed to assist their children with schoolwork.

Regardless of the challenges faced by parents (Nghipandulwa, 2023; LeBrun-Martin, 2013) states that parents must become more involved in solving the educational problems facing their children with learning difficulties at school as numerous advantages arise from the involvement of parents. The study findings further revealed that not all parents are able to read and write which makes it impossible for them to render assistance to their children and to understand the type of difficulties faced by their children. Ybañez et al. (2024) assert that many parents struggle with understanding the specific nature of their child's problems, leading to frustration and helplessness. These challenges require targeted support, and a collaborative partnership between parents and the educational system.

According to the study's findings, schools are doing little to properly involve parents of children with learning difficulties in their children's education. Epstein theory argues that when schools regularly engage parents, they have more successful results because they benefit from education (Nghipandulwa, 2023; Smith, 2011). The National Standard Indicators and the National Curriculum for Basic Education, key area no 6 indicate that schools should create a link with the parents and the community (Ministry of Education, 2005). Also, the constitution and the Education Act (Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture, 2020) empower and encourage community members, some of whom are also parents of children in Namibia, to fully participate in their children's education.

ii) Socio-economic Background

The current study established that some parent's lack of parental involvement is attributable to their economic background. Parents choose to focus on other responsibilities while neglecting their children's education. Furthermore, parents travel to other locations to sell their wares or go to field to work, leaving their children at home alone to earn a living. As a results, they do not have time to go to school or even participate in their children school activities because they are absent from home most of the time.

Various factors account for poor or total lack of parental involvement and participation in school activities such as attending parents meeting called by the schools. Some parents do not see the need of attending parents meeting, or that the school has done little to enlighten parents on the essential role they play in their children's education or that there are geographically far away from home and school to play any supporting role.

The findings are consistent with Ybañez et al. (2024) who found that parents of learners with learning difficulties face significant challenges in their engagement with teachers. Time restraints brought on by a job or other obligations may also prevent parents from actively supporting their child's academic endeavours. These challenges require targeted support, accessible information, and a collaborative partnership between parents and the educational system. Oranga et al. (2022) who conducted a similar study concurred that, parents with a limited educational background level, or who are illiterate, tend to experience more hindrances when it come to their involvement in their children's schooling than those who are educated. Additionally, unemployment is an important barrier affecting parents' ability to participate in their children's education.

Many parents work on farms, facing heavy workloads, long hours, and exposure to harsh conditions like intense sun, further limiting the energy and time they have to engage in their children's education (Motshusi et al., 2024).

The study's perspective and conclusion are that parents are more committed to satisfy basic needs such as earning a living than to their children's education. As a result, involvement in their children's education become low due to limited time to go to school or to help their children to complete their schoolwork. Because of their low socio-economic level, some residences are only run by children because their parents work on farms or work far away.

iii) Poor Communication from Schools

Several factors contribute to parents' lack of involvement in their children's education, one of which being the school's inadequate communication strategy and teachers' engagement with parents. The present study findings revealed that inadequate communication between schools and parents contributed to parents' little involvement in their children's education. Parents are not informed about the difficulties their children are experiencing until the situation escalates that is when parents are involved. Findings further indicated that parents are not informed in advance of school activities. As a results, parents decide not to participate in school events when they are invited to do so by the school.

The findings are consistent with those of Ybañez et al. (2024) who established that poor communication barriers with teachers and a need for more awareness about available assistance exacerbate the difficulties. These challenges require targeted support,

accessible information, and a collaborative partnership between parents and the educational system.

Furthermore, communication is one of the six parental involvement strategies outlined in Epstein's framework. Epstein describes communication as the need to design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress (Gisewhite et al., 2021; Epstein et al., 2019). The study findings revealed that there is little communication between parents and the school, making it extremely difficult to assist learners with learning difficulties. It is critical for schools to maintain a healthy communication channel with parents for learners with learning difficulties to be aided and excel in their schoolwork. In terms of Epstein theory, which focuses on effective communication between schools and parents to enhance learners' academic performance. Communication is essential, and when it is lacking, learners with learning difficulties suffer the most.

In line with the Epstein's model, learner's motivation to learn and the learning environment are both strengthened when: the school (i.e., teacher, principal, and guidance counsellor) is in positive communication with the family, the community has positive communication with the school, and the community is in positive communication with the school and family (Motshusi et al., 2024; Epstein, 2011). Clear and useful communication with parents will increase interaction between teachers and parents, promote better awareness and monitoring of learners' progress and behaviour, foster better understanding of school policies and programs (for parents and learners), and enable teachers to elicit and better understand parental views regarding their child's learning progress (Gisewhite et al., 2021; Epstein et al., 2019). The current study

revealed that parents are invited to school through parents meeting which is done verbally or through a letter given to learners to give to parents. The findings also found that not all parents receive information from their children on time, and other parents do not receive information at all, resulting in parents not attending school activities or going to school when teachers request them to do so.

Parents of both schools indicated that there was poor communication between parents and schools or that they did not receive communication from the school regarding their child's academic performance. Parents indicated to be involved by the school mostly when their children misbehaved and once their academic performance was poor. As a result of this, inadequate communication from school to parents has a significant impact on parental involvement in their children's education.

iv) Child-headed Households

As children head households, not much mentoring and sufficient attention is received from parents which leads to unacceptable behaviour, including absenteeism, missed homework, incomplete and improper dress, with some learners pushing and causing commotion. Teachers cited these as accounting for the poor academic performance, repeatedly indicating how most learners did not have parents or caregivers who could represent them during teacher-parent meetings (Lepheana & Alexander, 2024). In some Namibian societies, it has become increasingly usual for children to head their own households and care for their relatives because of death, illness, or simply because their parents live far away from their families. The study findings revealed that there are households with only school-age children because their parents work far away or in a different place. Children are compelled to manage the household.

A notable finding from this study is that parents who work far from their families consistently delegate their neighbours to represent them during parent meetings or when required to participate in school activities. Due to a lack of parental involvement, instances of this nature harden learners with various learning difficulties in academic performance.

Furthermore, Lepheana and Alexander (2024) stated that children heading households these learners were of school-going age and were heading their families without adult support, facing various psychosocial learning challenges. It is critical for parents whose children have learning difficulties to play their role at home and at school. Involved parents are often effective in decreasing disciplinary problems, creating safe and orderly schools, improving child happiness and wellbeing, and fostering a positive learning environment that leads to high achievement not only for their own children but also for the student body as a whole (Epstein, 2013).

v) Parents' Awareness on their Roles Toward Children's Education

Data acquired from parents revealed that most parents are unaware of their roles as parents in their children's education and the aid they may provide at home. As a result, some parents are hesitant and expect teachers to undertake all the work for the learners. In accord, Jekonia and Mowes (2014) affirms that parents of children with learning difficulties were less frequently involved in various school activities and again not well informed about activities that they can be involved in to assist their children. The study findings revealed that it was difficult for parents to assist their children and to be involved in their education as there was a lack of knowledge of the assistance they can render to their children and as such teachers are expected to do the work.

Sharing the same sentiment is (Alshahrani, 2023; Rock, 2000) study revealed that a number of parents believed that they lacked the knowledge about the educational requirements of their child compared to the teachers, and this made them less confident and made them hesitate at the prospect of participating in their child's education so the school has the responsibility to provide all knowledge to their children. They suggest this misunderstanding makes it challenging for the parents to actively participate in their children's education. The study further, indicated that if parents wanted their children to achieve, their role was in satisfying the essentials of their children's needs. The current study's finding indicated that parents of children having learning difficulties believed it was the teacher's responsibility to make magic with their children because parents can only provide food and shelter. Drawing on the work of Lemessa et al. (2023), their findings demonstrated that parents' left the responsibility solely to the teachers, therefore parents were less engaged in helping their children's education both at home and at school. It was lack of those collaborative activities between school and home that the growth and learning of some children was crippled (Epstein, 2011).

Furthermore, one teacher pointed out that the need for an improved-parent-teacher relationship building to ensure that parent's aspirations and expectations for their children are shared with teachers and that teachers in turn also alert parents about school expectations from the parents. There was a need to create space for conversations with parents, sharing information about children progress, and providing opportunity for parents to ask questions about the school and what it is expected from them. It was through this partnership that the concern raised by one of the teachers can be addressed:

“Some teachers strongly believe that there are parents who neglect doing their share of the work, but they (teachers also) rarely communicate what they want the parents to do. No wonder why some parents only visit the school if they are called in or if there is a problem with their children”.

Epstein theory that informed the present study suggest that schools, families and community should collaborate to have the greatest impact on the children performance for which they share responsibility (Harris, 2014). Also, Kartika et al. (2022) emphasized that Epstein’s framework makes it clear that parental involvement is a multifaceted concept, including activities of parents at home, at school, and in interaction with the teacher and the community. Based on the current study findings, not all parents are fully involved, and most parents are unaware of their responsibility as parents in their children’s education. Parents expect teachers to perform all the school’s magic without parental assistance.

Dwi and Herlisa (2018) findings complement the aforementioned by revealing that just a few parents were voluntarily involved in school events, both routine and non-routine programmes. The school encouraged parent involvement as volunteer in the education processes. Parents didn’t participate more in schooling processes because they did not understand the importance of their involvement in enhancing their children’s performances.

To support parenting, schools must support or guide parents in making friendly learning settings at home for their children (Ding & Subadrah, 2022). Schools must educate parents on the necessity of parental involvement in their children’s education, as many parents do not see the value of school participation owing to a lack of education. The dimension of parental involvement is well conceptualized by Epstein to foster the six

types of parental involvement including parenting, communicating, learning at home, volunteering, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. By parenting, Epstein suggests that to support children as learners, educators can help all families establish home environments through parent education courses or training for parents, family support programs to assist families with health, nutrition, and home visits. For learning at home, educators can provide information and ideas to families about how to help children at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities (Liu & Gao, 2022 ; Epstein 2001).

Parents should be taught about the roles that they play in their children's education. It is evident that there is a need to raise awareness among parents, particularly those who did not go to school. Some parents may lack the knowledge and resources required to help their child with academic success, but they may contribute in other capacities, only if their abilities are unleashed.

vi) Teacher's Attitudes Towards Parents

The findings of the present study reported that teacher's attitudes toward parents prevent parents from being involved in their children's education. The findings revealed that not all teachers welcome and engage parents in an open and welcoming manner, especially when learners have a learning difficulty; as a result, some parents are not completely engaged in their children's education.

Study done by (Alshahrani, 2023; Mittler, 2012) argued that teacher attitudes towards parental involvement play a key role in promoting or hindering effective partnership. Furthermore, it is consequently critical for parents and teachers to foster a good and welcoming atmosphere for their children's academic achievement. School-based involvement of parents comprises interactions between parents and teachers regarding

the academic performance of children and related activities (Ding & Subadrah, 2022). The findings of this study further revealed that how teachers engage with parents is important, and how parents are treated once they arrive at school might impact whether they will return when invited. Teachers should consider how they interact with the parents of their learners and address the attitudes that hinder parental involvement in schools.

Teachers expect parents of children with learning difficulties to assist their children, even though some parents are unable to read or write, and that with this approach, parents are less likely to attend school activities when invited by teachers. In line with the Epstein theory which suggest that schools, families and community should work together to have the maximum impact on children's learning performance, for which they are all responsible (Epstein, 2011). Several authors such as Alshahrani (2023) and Friend and Cook (2017) shared similar sentiments by arguing that teachers and other members of the school should acknowledge the importance of the family-school relationship. They should establish collaborative and interactive relationships with parents in individualised ways. Epstein (2011) further indicated that direct and explicit encouragement by teaching staff will significantly raise the level of parents' contribution, as teachers who have a positive and an encouraging attitude regarding parental input tend to receive more frequent and useful offers of support and involvement from parents.

The study suggests that school and parents should collaborate to help children who are experiencing various learning difficulties. And for the benefit of the Namibian children's education, schools should develop adequate techniques for parents whose children have learning difficulties and are not active in their children's education. Teachers are the primary implementers of inclusive education; thus it is essential for

teachers to approach parents in a positive manner in order to persuade parents whose children have learning difficulties be engaged into their children's education.

vii) Children's Reluctance to Include Parents in their Education

Children's attitudes contribute to parents' low involvement in their children education. Children's have a substantial influence on how involved their parents will be in their education (Chindanya, 2011; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). They can nurture or to inhibit parental involvement since they can lubricate or sever the bond between teachers and parents. Griffin and Galassi (2010) also expressed similar sentiments, indicating that some students believe their parents lack the knowledge and abilities utilised by school staff.

Magwa and Muguri (2017) maintained that it is widely accepted that parental participation declines as children grow older. Parental involvement is higher in younger children, possibly because younger children are more optimistic about their parents attending school. Similarly, Griffin and Galassi, (2010) agreed, stating that some students believe their parents lack the knowledge and skills utilised by school staff. Furthermore, learners have doubts about their parents' competence and are less supportive of their parents' involvement in their children's education. In agreement, Chen's (2008) research found that parental involvement is greatest with young children and diminishes as children grow older; nonetheless, parental involvement of middle and high school student is equally crucial.

Other scholars Hornby and Lafaele (2010) assert that age of children determines the involvement of parents in the education process. As children approach middle and high school, they feel that some of the responsibility such as homework should shift from parents to themselves.

Parental involvement tends to decline as children become older or as they enter high/secondary, yet it is impossible to dispute the role of parent involvement throughout a child's schooling in assuring excellent development and good academic success (Sandeep, 2017). The study's findings revealed that children play a part in their parents' lack of involvement in their schooling. Children believe they are mature enough to do their own schoolwork or that their parents can no longer be involved in their education; this attitude is a problem for learners who already have various learning difficulties because they face challenges, and parental involvement in their education is critical to fully assist them.

5.4. Effects of Poor Parental Involvement on Learners' Academic Achievements.

Parental involvement is vital for a learner to excel academically and in extracurricular activities at school. When parents are not engaged in their children's education and school activities, it can have an impact on a learner's performance. The findings of this study, which are detailed below, explore the effects of minimal parental involvement on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties.

i) Learners' Lack of Motivation

Learners with learning difficulties require extrinsic incentive to perform academically; this motivation must come from two sources: parents and teachers; however, if one source is missing, it becomes difficult. When learners are not driven by their parents, they are less likely to put forth more effort into their schoolwork. Concurring with these findings, Haimbodi (2022) alluded that as much as education is inclusive to all, parents need to actively act by keeping their children engaged at home. Encouragement can serve in many ways such as ensuring that a learner has enough time to study and time

set aside for homework on a daily basis. This will aid the learners in catching up and being ahead in school but also to ensure learner achievement.

Additionally, Diss and Buckley (2005) stated that parent involvement in their children's education is the most accurate predictor of student achievement by integrating parents in their children's learning, parents can boost their children's accomplishment and performance (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012). Furthermore, more participation from parents leads to motivation levels among children in terms of knowledge. Education in early childhood with solid parent involvement results in a healthy environment and a successful approach to the overall development of children (Ding & Subadrah, 2022). Such findings also concur with those made by Epstein (2011), who argues that children whose parents are significantly involved in their schooling tend to demonstrate higher-level achievement in comparison to those whose parents are minimally involved in their schooling.

The study findings revealed that learners with learning difficulties lack motivation from their parents. Learners lack incentives to perform their best in school when parents are not fully involved in their education, as motivation from teachers alone is insufficient. Children need their parents as a robust support system in the classroom and life to guide various life events associated with academics. Parents' focus is always on encouraging good behaviour among children. With their involvement in learning performance, students' self-esteem gets boosted, and their attitude toward peers and schools enhances. Children's ability also increases to build and sustain healthy associations with teachers and peers. Their awareness also grows and decreases inappropriate behaviour among them, like fighting, bullying (Ding & Subadrah, 2022). Furthermore, this finding is in keeping with the findings of Odchique et al. (2023), who affirm that children with

engaged and active parents tend to remain in school for longer, and produce higher academic results, than children whose parents are not engaged.

ii) Indiscipline

Teachers revealed that lack of parental involvement leads to indiscipline among learners since teachers are unable to involve parents and help them to influence their children's behaviour. The engagement of parents in their children's education is thus critical. The findings of this study concur with Erlendsdottir (2010) that parental involvement affects not only academic outcomes but also non-academic outcomes. Minimal parental involvement are poorly involved in the education of their children may not regularly attend school, may behave poorly at school and may have negative attitudes toward schooling and academic achievement , as well as may have poor social skills with their peers in school.

Weiss et al. (2006) found that by involving parents in their children's educational growth, they not only gain cognitive and social development but also develop favourable attitudes and behaviours, good personalities, and potential skills.

Considering the foregoing, the study revealed that inadequate parental involvement influenced learner's conduct at school and home, resulting in learners with learning difficulties performing far too poorly. With the involvement of parent children's ability in school increases, building and sustaining a healthy association with teachers and peers. Children's knowing their parents are involved in their education result in decreases of inappropriate behaviour among them, like fighting, bullying (Ding & Subadrah, 2022). Furthermore, parental involvement clearly significantly impacts on learners' behaviour, academic achievement and homework-related performance (Ndwandwe, 2023).

Sapungan and Sapungan (2014) found that parents' involvement in learning among children provides many opportunities for improvement of attitude, morale, and academic achievement in all subjects, behaviour, and social adjustment.

Without doubt, involving parents is often effective in decreasing disciplinary problems, creating safe and orderly schools, improving child happiness and wellbeing, and fostering a positive learning environment that leads to high achievement not only for their own children but also for the student body as a whole (Feng & Yongmei, 2023; Epstein, 2001).

iii) Learners Become Reckless with Schoolwork

The study's findings revealed that when parents are not involved, children are more likely to be missing from school, since they may not go to school or may leave the house to go to school but never arrive. It eventually leads to dropout since parents do not check whether their children attend all of their lessons and go to school.

As poorly designed parental involvement activities could have a negative result, schools must carefully choose practices that meet the needs of the students, families, and community. The outcome of the research reflects that lack of parental involvement has a negative impact on learners with learning difficulties', one of it is the high absenteeism which result into drop out since there is no monitoring of the learner's attendance and progress from the parents' side.

iv) Poor Interest in School Activities and Inattentiveness in Class

Due to parents' lack of commitment in their children's education, learners showed little interest in school-related activities as well as not paying attention or behaving well in class and on school grounds. Haimbodi (2022) indicated that parental involvement will

bluntly reduce or better yet half absenteeism. If parents give a constant check and give bonus time to learners here and there, learners will surely be attached to school and begin to love school activities and not doge school again. A parent doesn't need to be entirely literate to be active in the schooling of their children.

Parent participation in school activities and decision-making tends to positively influence student attitudes and behaviour, and promote children's motivation and persistence in education, which indirectly increases student achievement (Wilder, 2014).

Parental involvement in their children's education benefits learners in a variety of ways, such as a reduction in disciplinary problems, creating safe and orderly schools, improving child happiness and wellbeing, and fostering a positive learning environment that leads to high achievement for their children (Park et al., 2017). The outcome of the study revealed that when parents are not involved, children develop a lack of interest in school-related activities, as well as behavioural problems, which eventually lead to a decline in academic achievement.

5.5. Strategies to Improve Parental Involvement and Participation in Schools.

There is a need to adopt a variety of appealing tactics to engage parents of children with learning difficulties in their children's education. The study's findings, outlined below, investigated strategies to improve parental involvements at school.

5.5.1. Parent Meeting

Parents meetings are the most common prevalent forum utilized by schools to involve parents. Parents are informed about their children's academic achievement and overall

behaviour at school through parent meetings. The study findings revealed that schools use letters given to learners to be given to their parents informing them about the parents meeting. Also, the findings showed that parents were not alerted about parents meeting in good time or two days before to the meeting.

Mahnoor et al., (2021) emphasised that through parent-teacher-meeting (PTM), parents have first-hand knowledge of a child's behaviour at home, whereas teachers would reflect on his/her class dealings. If parent and teacher work in unison, parents' concerns and teacher's feedback could benefit a child's overall development. Sharing the same sentiments, (Alshahrani, 2023; Hornby, 2011) stated that collaborating with the school provides parents with knowledge and education through parent meetings and workshops, where parents are not only enlightened with information about their children but can also share their concerns. Through the links with school, parents meet with other parents and can share the feelings, showing them that they are not alone.

The bottom line for schools is to communicate using strategies that convey what is important in a way that can be heard by parents and families and invites them to respond. Schools must consider utilising strategies that work for them as well as those that are applied to parents, and endeavour to engage parents in their children's education. Because school environments vary, if a phone message in English or home language, e-mail, or radio announcement, is an effective approach to engage parents, schools should implement those strategy.

5.5.2. Parents-teacher Partnerships

The study findings revealed that, parents should be encouraged to form a habit of routinely visiting the school and connecting with their children's teachers, as well as going over their children's schoolwork once a week or once a month. In support of this

arrangements, Erlendsdottir (2010) who noted that school personnel must establish a trusting relationship with parents and view them as partners in their children education. Such relationship has an impact on how parents become interested in their children education and reinforce their willingness to participate actively.

The findings are also consistent with Donna and Sue (2008) research findings, which state that schools play a significant impact in determining the level and nature of parental involvement. Teacher's ideas about parents' role in the classroom, as well as their responsibilities to provide opportunities for parent involvement, are critical elements. They also noted that schools may assist parents in being involved by providing a variety of engagement alternatives. Supporting parental involvement necessitates teacher knowledge on how to involve parents, as well as the support to be given to parents. Teachers must understand how to involve parents whose children have varied learning difficulties' nevertheless; some teachers lack expertise of how to engage parents whose children have various learning difficulties.

Furthermore, parents should be educated on the importance of going over their children's schoolwork at home rather than only checking children's work when invited to school by teachers, and that in case where parents are unable to read and write, parents should always ask mature children or family members to check their children schoolwork for them. A study conducted by Sandeep (2017); Henderson and Kerewsky (1989) supports the findings by stating that some strategies used by schools to involve parents could be: encouraging parents to communicate, developing a policy on parent involvement, maintaining a friendly school environment, having a parent's room in schools and providing translation services for parents when needed.

5.5.3. Parent-Teacher Sessions

The findings revealed that there is a need for schools to establish a good working relationship with parents whose children have learning difficulties. Once teachers have established a positive and strong bond with parents and learners, learners will be fully assisted on both sides: teachers and parents. The findings are line with the National Standard Indicators and the National Curriculum for Basic Education, key area no 6, which recommends that schools create a link with the parents and the community (Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture, 2005).

The findings are consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Dwi and Herlisa (2018) who found that teachers should establish a relationship with parents and provide information about their children's difficulties, as well as explain to parents any issues concerning their children's in a language that parents understand, as well as explain all the intended school programmes and advise parents on their children's schoolwork progress. The study's findings indicate that academic progress and learning difficulties of learners must be communicated effectively to parents that they completely grasp the nature of the learning difficulties their children are experiencing and how support can be provided. This will only be effective if there is a strong connection between parents, school, teachers and learners.

Apart from parents meeting and inviting parents to come to school to inform them about their children's learning issues, the study findings revealed that there are few initiatives in place such as parents invited to school to go through their children's written school work, taking part in games through fun day at school all this is done with an aim to involve parents in school activities. Other studies that support this finding is that of Lara and Saracosti (2019); Jeynes (2012) indicating that programmes aimed at

promoting parental involvement in education to benefit children, families and school communities are minimal. Furthermore, Erlendsdottir (2010) revealed that having an attractive school climate where parents are frequently invited to be part in school and where parents consider themselves to be accepted is a crucial component in getting parents interested.

Schools play an important role in educating parents, and initiatives to involve parents in their children's education should be presented to them. If schools' present techniques for involving parents aren't working, they should try something new. The study findings revealed that not all parents realize the need of being active in their children's education; therefore, it is the responsibility of the schools to make them aware and educate them. Epstein et al., (2011) suggested that active role that schools can play in enhancing school-based PI include creating an atmosphere of caring and trust, sharing and communicating their visions about the importance of parent-school regardless of family characteristic, numerous policies and programmes can be implemented to advance parent-teacher communications, family participation in school decision-making, and collaborations between schools, families, and community. Schools could use home visits which enable teachers to better understand children and families so that it can help teachers in building rapport with parents and to better be able to develop a more multicultural learning environment and lesson plans for their learners (Hornby & Lafaele, 2010; Johnson, 2014; Lin & Bates, 2010).

The study found that when there is a strong interaction between parents, schools, and teachers, learners gain more in terms of social development, academic development, and cognitive development. Learners have a favourable attitude toward schoolwork

and all school-related activities since they know their parents are working closely with their teachers. The study findings are compatible with Weiss et al. (2006) who stated that through parental involvement, children not only gain cognitive and social development, but also favourable attitudes and behaviours, a positive personality, and prospective competence.

5.5.4. Increase Awareness of the Significance of Parental Involvement

The study revealed that schools should educate parents on the value of parental involvement in their children's education. Schools should not only involve parents when there is an issue with their children, but awareness and engagement must begin early. Parents can actively participate in school events and aid their children where they can if they are informed and engaged at an early age.

The MoE (2013) recommends that “sensitisation workshops, meetings, and other gatherings be held on a regular basis in order to provide support for all learners and stimulate collaboration and involvement of parents and caregivers” (p20). Authors such as Epstein, (2011); Ihmeideh and Oliemat (2015) indicated that despite the importance of the family-school interaction in children's development, not all families are involved in their children's learning and development, whether it is home-based or school-based. Furthermore, parents or family members may rarely communicate with their children's teacher, and they may simply be unsure of how to create a home environment that is encourages school-related activities.

Based on the study findings, schools expect parents to be involved in their children's education despite their lack of knowledge about their duties and expectations as parents. As a result, schools want parents to be knowledgeable about their children's education. The study recommends that teachers communicate and educate parents about the type

of difficulties their children face early on, rather than waiting until the situation worsens before attempting to engage parents. Furthermore, the conclusions of this study are consistent with the findings of Ihmeideh et al. (2020) which found that it is the responsibility of the school to draw families' attention to the importance of their participation in this regard. Comprehensive planning for collaboration with families are lacking in schools. Most schools still put the onus on individual parents to figure out how to get involved in their children's education.

5.5.5. Parent's Classroom Visit

The study findings revealed that School A had a programme in place to invite parents to check their children's schoolwork, but School B did not have a similar programme. The findings further revealed that some parents were not informed about their children's learning difficulties early on, but rather at a later point when there is not much improvement in the learner's performance.

Strategies for improving parents' involvement in school activities include: building programme on parental involvement at school, creating more opportunities for input from parents, providing specific guidance to parents about how to oversee homework and suggestions throughout the year for supporting their children learning, inform parents about behavioural and academic problems of students and providing parents with positive feedback about their children (Sandeep, 2017; Baker, 1997).

5.6. Recommendations

5.6.1. Recommendations for Parents

- Enrol in the adult literacy programme at nearest school to learn how to read and write.

- Get an adult trusted family member to stay with children in case working far away from home.
- Establish positive school relationships by working closely together to strengthen interpersonal relationship for the benefit of learners.
- Parents should have a positive attitude towards their children's education, regardless of their learning difficulties.
- Busy parents with other commitments should consistently inform teachers and reschedule meeting based on flexible times to fit their needs.
- Encourage children to work hard and urge older brothers/sisters to help with schoolwork at home, especially children with learning difficulties.

5.6.2. Recommendations for Teachers / School

In line with the findings of the study, the research recommends teachers to adopt the following recommendations to involve parents in the education of their education.

- The school must create a safe, pleasant, and welcoming atmosphere for parents.
- Have a gardening project at school to help feed learners who come to school hungry or those who are heading households.
- Organise activities that truly engage parents whose children have learning difficulties, such as parent's competition or a goat/chicken competition.
- Create a variety of techniques to engage parents whose children have learning difficulties and to establish a solid communication channel with parents.
- Be thoroughly aware of all learners' home backgrounds and aid learners living alone in any way possible.

- Increase parental involvement in school through raising awareness and educating parents and use community gatherings with the assistance of headmen / headwomen.
- Educate and enlighten parents on the type of learning difficulties their child is experiencing as early as feasible.
- Educate and urge parents to join in an adult literacy programme where they can learn to read and write.

5.6.3. Recommendations to the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture

It is suggested that the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture consider this:

- The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture to share available identification, assessment, and intervention strategies with stakeholders to ensure that learners with special educational needs receive early assistance before they lack behind their peers.
- Training novice teachers on how to support learners with learning difficulties, followed by in-service training workshops with all teachers every 3/5 years to be fully prepared with research skill-based practises on learners with learning difficulties and parental involvement.
- Build more classrooms in the Kavango West regions so that teachers may better support and care for learners with learning difficulties and avoid overcrowded classrooms.
- Ensure that all adult education literacy programmes are implemented in all schools so that parents who are unable to read or write can learn some basic skills and utilize them to help their children.

- Conduct further research on the hurdles that impede parents from participating in their children's education and raise awareness; this should not be just the duty of schools /teachers.
- Establish Ministry-Parents-Based Initiatives, particularly in schools where parents are less involved.
- Educational institutions that train teachers should focus on training teachers how to assist learners with diverse learning difficulties and how to engage parents in their children's education.
- School feeding/meal programme to be available throughout the academic year for learners not to bunk classes or afternoon sessions due to hunger as some come to school on an empty stomach.
- Ensure that all schools have gardening projects running throughout the academic year.

5.6.4. Recommendations for Future Research

The present study suggests that similar research be undertaken in the other regions to determine the extent to which parents are active in their children's education in general and specifically the parents of learners with learning difficulties and other special educational needs.

5.7. Conclusion

The research study focused on learners with learning difficulties and parental involvement at two schools in the Kavango West region. The emphasis was on the factors prohibiting parents from supporting children with learning difficulties, as well as how learners with learners with learning difficulties experience school.

The study revealed that children of less involved parents perform poorly in school, are poor academic achievers, indiscipline and lack motivation, shows high absenteeism and are more likely to drop out of school. Moreover, factors inhibiting parents in their children education are, low socio-economic background, low level of literacy, lack of proper communication from school, child-headed household and teachers' attitude towards parents of children who have learning difficulties.

In addition, learners with learning difficulties experienced poor grades and test scores, have poor self-confidence and self-esteem as well as dearth proper attention and care from teachers. One distinctive finding from this study is parents delegating others to stand in for them at school meetings and general care of their children, child-headed households as well as dearth individualized proper attention and care from teachers. With all these challenges faced by learners with learning difficulties it limit the effective implementation of inclusive education in Namibia which aim to enhance access to education to all learners.

In the final analysis the study recommends a strong teacher-learner-parent partnership that can result in improved communication with parents and enhanced academic achievement by learners with learning difficulties at school.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Research Ethical Clearance Certificate


UNAM
UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: SoE-DEC-W 09/12/21/01

Date: 12 December 2021

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Decentralized Ethics Committee (DEC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the School of Education (Windhoek & Khomasdal Campuses) Decentralized Ethics Committee.

Title of Project: Children's learning difficulties and parental involvement: A case of two schools in the Kavango West region.

Researcher: Laina Tuwilika Shangano

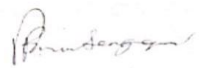
Student number: 201101232

Take note of the following:

1. Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the ethics committee. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
2. Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the ethics committee
3. The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the ethics committee (through the Chairperson) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by the ethics committee
4. The ethics committee retains the right to:
 - i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
 - ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

The ethics committee wishes you the best in your research.


Dr. Job U. Hengari (Chairperson, Windhoek & Khomasdal Campuses Decentralized Ethics Committee)


Prof. Davis Mumbengegwi (Head, Multidisciplinary Research)

Appendix 2: UNAM Research Permission letter

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH SERVICES

Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor: Research, Innovation & Development

University of Namibia, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia

340 Mandume Ndemufayo Avenue, Pioneers Park, Office F223 - Fblock, Second Floor

☎ +264 61 206 4673; E-mail: kmbulu@unam.na; URL: http://www.unam.edu.na



RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

Date: 08/02/2022

Student Name: Laina Tuwilika Shangano

Student Number: 201101232

Programme: Master of Education in Inclusive Education

Approved Research Title: Children's learning difficulties and parental involvement: A case of two schools in the Kavango West region.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I hereby confirm that the above mentioned student is registered at the University of Namibia for the programme indicated. The proposed study met all the requirements as stipulated in the University guidelines and has been approved by the relevant committees.

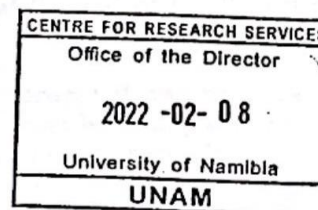
The proposal adheres to ethical principles as per attached Ethical Clearance Certificate.

Permission is hereby granted to carry out the research as described in the approved proposal.

Best Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AEE', is written over a horizontal line.

Dr. AEE Shikongo
Head: Postgraduate Support Services
Tel: +264 61 206 3129
E-mail: aeshikongo@unam.na



Appendix 3: MoEAC Request Permission letter

P. O Box 9

Rundu

Namibia

0818104987

lainashangano@gmail.com

16 February 2022

The Executive director of Education

Ministry Of Education, Arts and Culture

Private Bag 13186

Windhoek

Namibia

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN KAVANGO WEST REGION

I am **Laina Shangano (Mrs)**, a student at the University of Namibia (UNAM), pursuing a Master's degree in Inclusive Education, student number 201101232. My approved thesis topic is: **Children's learning difficulties and parental involvement: A case of two schools in the Kavango West region.** It is against this background that I am writing to your office, seeking permission to be able to collect data at two (2) schools within the Ncuncuni Circuit.

Attached are my ethical clearance certificate, permission letter from the University of Namibia and a summary of the research methodology to be used.

Looking forward to a positive response in this regard.

Kindest Regards

L. Shangano

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Shangano', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Appendix 4: Permission Letter from the Executive Director of MoEA



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Enquiries: Mr. G. Munene
Tel: +264 61-293 3202
Fax: +264 61-293 3922
Email: Gibson.Munene@moe.gov.na
File no: 13 2 9/1

Luther Street, Govt. Office Park
Private Bag 13186
Windhoek
Namibia

Ms Laina T. Shangano
P. O. Box 9 Rundu
Email: lainashangano@gmail.com

Dear Ms Shangano,

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN KAVANGO WEST REGION

The Ministry wishes to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 16 February 2022 seeking for permission to conduct academic research in Kavango West region for Masters of Education studies which is focusing on: *"Children's Learning Difficulties and Involvement: A Case of Two Schools in the Kavango West Region."*

Permission to visit schools has been granted to you. However, you have to seek for further clearance from the Kavango West Regional Director of Education, Arts and Culture where the research will be carried out to ensure that:

- teaching and learning during the normal working hours is not disrupted during your interviews;
- participation is voluntary; and,
- parental consent should be granted by the parents / guardians of all participants who are under the age of 16 years.

Furthermore, you are kindly requested to share your research findings with the Ministry after completion of the research project. You may contact Mr. G. Munene on the above provided contacts at the Directorate: Programmes and Quality Assurance (PQA) for submission of your research findings at the above indicated details.

We wish you the best in conducting your research and the Ministry looks forward to hearing from you upon completion of your studies.

Yours sincerely,


Sanet L. Steenkamp
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



All official correspondence must be addressed to the Executive Director

Page 1 of 1

Appendix 5: Request Letter for Permission to Education Director for Kavango West Region.

P. O Box 9

Rundu

Namibia

0818104987

lainashangano@gmail.com

16 February 2022

Education Director for Kavango West

Ministry Of Education, Arts and Culture

Private Bag 6193

Nkurenkuru

Namibia

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN KAVANGO WEST REGION

I am **Laina Shangano (Mrs)**, a student at the University Of Namibia (UNAM), pursuing a Master's degree in Inclusive Education, student number 201101232. My approved thesis topic is: **Children's learning difficulties and parental involvement: A case of two schools in the Kavango West region.** It is against this background that I am writing to your office, seeking permission to be able to collect data at two (2) schools within the Ncuncuni Circuit.

Attached are my executive director permission letter, ethical clearance certificate and permission letter from the University of Namibia.

Looking forward to a positive response in this regard.

Kindest Regards

L. Shangano

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Shangano', with a stylized flourish at the end.

(Masters' Student, University of Namibia)

Appendix 6: Permission Letter from the Kavango West Education Director



**KAVANGO WEST REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE**

Tel No: (066) 264976
Email: kavangowesteac@yahoo.com
Enquiries: Leena Muhoka
Ref: 26 / 1 / 16

Private Bag 6193, Nkurenkuru
Namibia

03 March 2022

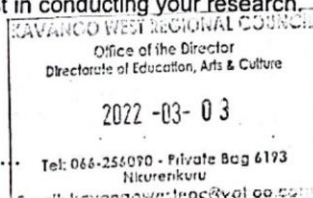
Mrs. L.T. Shangano
P O Box 9
Rundu

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY AT THE IDENTIFIED TWO SCHOOLS IN NCUNCUNI CIRCUIT, KAVANGO WEST REGION.

1. The Ministry of Education Kavango West wishes to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 16 February 2022, seeking permission to conduct an academic research for your Master's Degree in Inclusive Education on the topic: **Children's learning difficulties and parental involvement: A case of two schools in Ncuncuni circuit, Kavango West Region.**
2. Permission is hereby granted to you provided you seek for further clearance from the Circuit Inspector of Education where you wish to conduct your research to ensure that:
 - Permission is sought from the school Principals;
 - Teaching and Learning is not interrupted and
 - All participation is voluntary.
3. Furthermore, you are kindly requested to share your research findings with the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture after completion of your study. You may contact the Deputy Director for Programmes and Quality Assurance (PQA) for submission of a summary of your research findings.
4. We wish you all the best in conducting your research.

Sincerely,


HERBERT KARAPO
ACTING DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE
KAVANGO WEST



03/03/2022
DATE

Appendix 7: Research instruments

Parents Interview Questions



I'm Laina Shangano, 201101232 a student at the University of Namibia, doing my Master Degree in Education, specializing in Inclusive Education. I am carrying out a research on Children's learning difficulties and parental involvement. The aim of this research is to find out factors that inhibits parents of learners with learning difficulties from involving in their children's education. The research is merely for academic purpose and all the information provided will remain confidential and analysed data will solely be reported in my mini thesis. Please feel free to ask questions related to the study.

Interview questions for Parents

1. Did you go to school at your young age and up to what standard/grade did you attend school?
2. How many school going children do you have and do these children go to the same school?
3. Are you receiving regular report about performance of your child in school?
4. Do they ask you to come to school and how often do you go to school?
5. What is it that teachers talk to you about when they invite you to school?

6. Do you like to go to school when you are asked by the teachers to come to school?
7. Do teachers ask you as parents to talk to them about how best they can assist your child to learn at school?
8. Do you assist your child with school work or any related school work at home and do you sign your child written activities?
9. How do you do that, do teachers discuss with you how you should help your child to learn at home?
10. Are you aware that your child have learning difficulties and who informed you about your child having learning difficulties?
11. How many parents meeting have you attended this year and how did you receive the notice to go to such a meeting?
12. Is it easy for you to go to parents meetings and is the meeting time suitable to you as parents?
13. Is it safe for you as a parent to go to parents meeting when you are called on to do so?
14. Do you have any fears that you want to share with me?
15. What do you think is hindering parents not to be involved in their children education?
16. Do you think the school is doing enough to involve parents in all the school work or in their children's education?
17. What do you suggest schools have to do differently in order to improve parental participation in their children education?

Parents Interview questions in Rukwangali

1. Mwa dimba sure pounona ntani kwadimba dogoro harade musinke?
2. Vanona vangapi ava dimbi sure mwakara nawo, navenye kudimbira poSure zimwe?
3. Kugwanako mapukururo kuhamena omu ana kutompota muneni moSure
4. Varongi wopoopo ponoSure kumutanterako yokuhamena kerongo lyoVanona veni?
5. Sure kumuhundira muze koSure ntani rungapi nampo omuzi koSure?
6. Yinke ava kamsansekerako apa varongi ava mutantere muze koSure?
7. Kuyi hafera apa ava mutantere muze koSure?
8. Varongi kumupurako magano omu nomumvhura kuvatera vanona veni kuhamena erongo lyawo?
9. Kuvaterako vanona veni noyirugana yawo yokoSure?
10. Ngapi omu omuyirugana, kugwana ko mapukururo kovarongi omu nomuvatera vanona veni?
11. Yigongi yingapi mwagendi yopoSure ntani ngapi omu mwagwene mbudi kuhamena yigongi oyo?
12. Uruu kweni ngomukurona kuza koyigongi yoSure ntani eyi yigongi kuyitura povili ezi mwamanguruka?
13. Kumurerupira ngomu mukurona kuza koyigongi?
14. Kouli woma mwakara nawo nampo mwahara kusansensekera ngeko
15. Yinke mwakugazara yakuninkisa vakurona yipo vadike kulihamesera merongo lyovana vawo?
16. Omu mwakugazara sure zarugana yoyinzi mokuhamesera vakondi merongo lyoVanona vawo?

17. Yinke mwakugazara zadira kurugana sure nazivhura kurugana ko yipo zihameseremo vakurona merongo lyoVanona vawo?

Interview questions to learners

1. How old are you?
2. In what grade are you?
3. What is your favourite subject?
4. What do you want to become one day when you finish school?
5. Do you like to come to school every day and what is good about coming to school?
6. Do you ask your teachers things you don't understand?
7. Do teachers keep you behind after school to help you were you don't understand?
8. What challenges do you face at school when it comes to learning?
9. How would you want this challenges to be addressed?
10. Do your parents or guardian help you with schoolwork at home and do other children's help you with school work?
11. Do your guardian or parents check in your books? If they do. How many times in a week?
12. Do you have friends at school? If you do, do you study with them and do they help you with schoolwork
13. Do you need extra help in order to do better at school and what kind of help do you need?
14. When there is a parent meeting at school or when the school request parents to come to school. Do you inform them and do they go to school for the meetings?
15. What do you think can school do to fully engage parents in their children education?
16. What will you want your parents or guardian do for you when it comes to your education?

Teacher's questionnaires



I'm Laina Shangano, 201101232 a student at the University of Namibia, doing my Master Degree in Education, specializing in Inclusive Education. I am carrying out a research on Children's learning difficulties and parental involvement. The aim of this research is to find out factors that inhibits parents of learners with learning difficulties from involving in their children's education. The research is merely for academic purpose and all the information provided will remain confidential and analysed data will solely be reported in my mini thesis. Please feel free to ask questions related to the study.

Instructions for responding to the Questionnaires

- Do not write your name on the questionnaires
- Use a black or blue pen.
- Put a cross (X) next to the answer which reflect your opinions
- Answer all the questions as possible as you can

The information's you are providing will only be used for academic purposes

Biographic information:

1. Gender

Male	
Female	

2. Age

20-30	
31-40	
41-50	
51+	

3. Years of teaching experience

0-3	
4-6	
7-9	
10-13	
14+	

4. Why is parental involvement crucial to learners and to the school?

.....

.....

.....

5. What effect does lack of parental involvement have on learner's academic performance?

.....

.....

.....

.....

6. Do you teach learners with learning difficulties at school or in your class?

.....

.....

7. Were you taught as part of teacher training how to identify learners with learning difficulties at school and did your training cover aspects on how to help learners with learning difficulties?

.....

.....

.....

.....

8. Do you offer support classes/remedial education for learners with learning difficulties?

.....

.....

9. Do parents allow their children to partake in those classes and how many days a week do you have such support classes?

.....

.....

.....

10. Are parents involved in supporting their children to learn at school?

.....

.....

.....

11. Do you think parents are there for the learners?

.....

.....

.....1

12.Do parents show interest and involvement when they are called to school for consultations?

.....
.....
.....
.....

13.What has the school done to involve parents whose children have learning difficulties in their children’s education?

.....
.....
.....
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.....

14.What do you think can be done in order to motivate parents whose children’s have learning difficulties to be involved in their children’s education?

.....
.....
.....

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Appendix 8: Informed consent for participants

Interview Consent Form

I have agreed that my child.....
participate in this interview. The purpose and nature of the interview has been explained
to me and I have understood the purpose of the study. I agree that the interview may be
electronically recorded and I understand that all the information's collected will be kept
confidential.

By signing this form, I give my informed consent for my child to participate in this
study.

Parent/Guardian..... Date:.....