A STUDY TO EXAMINE PARENTS' PARTICIPATION IN THE LEARNING PROCESS OF THEIR CHILDREN: A CASE STUDY OF EEMBAXU COMBINED SCHOOL IN OHANGWENA REGION

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to establish the extent to which parents in the Ohangwena Region are involved in the learning processes of their children. The target population was parents, grade ten teachers and learners in the Ohangwena Region. ECS was randomly selected. Seven grade ten teachers and ten parents whose children were doing grade ten at ECS in 2011 were selected as respondents for this study. Learners were randomly selected. This study used both qualitative and quantitative methods of collecting data. Two questionnaires were administered to 50 grade 10 learners and seven teachers who taught grade ten at ECS; and ten parents whose children did grade 10 were interviewed. The focus was on learners and teachers' expectations of parents: i.e. issues that prevented parents from being involved in education and methods to be used to actively involve parents in education. The findings revealed that all respondents were willing to enhance parents' participation, as they suggested what they expected parents to do to help children to learn. Findings also revealed that parents were not attending meetings / reminding children to study after school. Successful participation in education depends on the effective communication between home and school. Respondents also agreed parents to be motivated and provided with skills to support children to learn. Some of the issues that prevent parents' active involvement in education included: low self-esteem and alcohol abuse. The study recommended ECS organizes at least one parental meeting per term to build communication between home and school and provides parents with skills to help children with homework. The MoE should extend social workers to all schools to help teachers on how parents could supplement what children learn at school. It recommended also future research to be carried out to establish the extent to which parents are aware of their parental responsibilities in education.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

MoE   Ministry of Education

HOD   Head of Department

MGECW   Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare

SPSS   Statistical Package for Social Sciences

ECS   Eembaxu Combined School

BETD   Basic Education Teacher Diploma

HED   Higher Diploma in Education

ACE   Advance Certificate in Education

B.ED   Bachelor of Education Degree

MBEC   Ministry of Education and Culture

SDF   School Development Fund

GRN   Government of the Republic of Namibia

MET   Ministry of Environment and Tourism

HIV/AIDS   Human Immune-Deficiency Virus/Acquired Deficiency Syndrome

OCS   Okauva Combined School

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, late beloved father Pinias Hamutenya and my beloved mother Maria Josef. It is also dedicated to my beloved three daughters: Mboshono, Tulonga and Maria as well as to the Namibian mothers as they are mostly seen to be the immediate caretakers of children during their early stages.

DECLARATIONS

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

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Petrina Nangula Hamutenya

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

This chapter discussed about background to the study, included statement of the problem, significance of the study, research questions, and definition of terms and limitations of the study. These above stated aspects defined the introduction of this study.

1.2. Background to the study

Parental participation in the learning process of their children could benefit children to perform better at school and home (Bailey, 2008; Pattal, Cooper & Robinson; 2008). On the other hand, children from homes that lack parental participation in the learning process were more likely to misbehave, failed their grades and eventually dropped out of school (Bailey, 2008; Ministry of Education, 1999).

Studies by McBridge, Dyer, Ying, Brown and Hong (2009) and Davies (1991) showed that parents could be actively involved in the education of their children in several ways. They could be engaged in activities that are directly related to school programs both at school and home. At home, parents could verbally be encouraged their children to do homework, rewarded them for any academic achievement and discussed with their children future plans for academic careers. At school and elsewhere, they could attend school functions and other school programs on invitation (Kaperu, 2004).

Parents could also be advocates for children as well as decision makers at public schools (Davies, 1991). For example, they could be elected to serve on school boards as chairpersons and voting members (MoE, 2001). Again, Epstein (2002) developed a framework for defining parental involvement in education with the following concepts: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home and collaborating with the community. First,

parenting has to do with helping parents to establish a suitable environment at home that seemed to support learning as well as encourage children to study at home.

Parenting also involved parents' education with relevant courses for them to be trained in many parental tasks. For example, train them on how to take care of children to become healthy. Second, communicating aimed at designing effective strategies of school-to home link.

Third, the concept volunteering had ideas of training parents on how to volunteer themselves in classrooms in order to help both teachers and children at school. Further, Wright (2009) added that parents could help in lessons of culture and reinforce the importance of maintaining cultural heritage. In this way, both parents and teachers could teach children necessary skills that might help them to perform well at school.

Fourth, when children study at home, parents seemed to monitor them. This could easily be done if teachers provide parents with information on how to help children in doing homework for instance. In this way, both parents and children seemed to discuss school work at home that might encourage children to attend school seriously.

Finally, collaborating with the community had to do with identifying necessary resources and services from the community. For example, the community could provide information for cultural recreation at school. In this way, the community tends to strengthen the school program as well as support children to develop good behavioral skills.

Moreover, the Ministry of Gender Equality Women and Child Welfare (MGEWC) (2007) indicated that the achievement of formal education in Namibia is ineffective. As such, poor-quality education has translated into low learning outcomes. Generally, this low learning

trend manifested of high learning of failure, drop-out and repetition, due not only to ineffective or poor-quality education, but also to poverty and hunger.

 In addition, children from poor families might come to school with empty stomachs and as such are unable to concentrate in lessons. It is therefore necessary for the government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN) to provide feeding schemes to all schools so as to feed children when they attend schools. Furthermore, the researcher experienced working with many parents the time served as a teacher at both Oshana and Ohangwena regions as from 1980-2009. The researcher at that time has noticed that children whose parents never cared about what happened at schools appeared to do poor in school. Those children always came late, slept during classes and dropped out of schools.

However, the researcher also noticed that children whose parents are responsible were always punctual and performed well at school. Also, as the researcher served as a head of department (HOD) at Hilja Nelulu Combined School and as a Principal at Kornelius Combined School as from 1998-2009 in Ohangwena region, the researcher dealt with controlling children's absenteeism as well as organizing parents' meetings.

The researcher has then realized high absenteeism of some parent school board members and such a habit delayed school work. Against this background, the researcher sought to understand parents' participation in education. Thus, it would be interesting to establish what parents in the Ohangwena Region were doing to reflect their active involvement in the education of their children. Put differently, findings of this study showed how parents were working with their own children, community and schools to ensure that children in the Ohangwena Region learned effectively and benefited from school.

1.3. Statement of the problem

As a school teacher, the researcher worked with many parents that seemed not to be actively involved in the learning process of their children both at school and at home. It was observed that these children always came late for school, often slept in classes during lessons, were usually hungry, performed poorly academically and dropped out of school before reaching the twelfth grade of secondary school. Similar experiences were noted in the study that was done by Bailey (2008).

In addition, the findings of the study conducted by Kaperu (2004) on factors that hinder parental involvement in education in the Khomas region, showed the need for conducting further studies on the same topic in other education regions because of important roles played by parents in their children's education.

Also, the findings of the study conducted by Hamunyela (2008) on critical analysis of parental involvement in the education of learners in rural Namibia recommended further studies. This study focused on how interactive network, collaborations and links between educational stakeholders served effectively in order to improve parents' participation in education. Hamunyela (2008) aimed also to identify ways of helping parents assisting children with reading at home. This study would therefore fill these gaps by investigating the extent to which parents participate in the learning process of their children at ECS in Ohangwena Education Region.

1.4. Significance of the study

The findings of this study were significant and useful in several ways including empowering parents to be involved in the education of the children; enhancing relationships between parents and children as well as relationships between parents and teachers; guiding principals, teachers and school boards on how to involve parents in education; guiding policy makers to formulate relevant education policies regarding parental involvement in education; improving children's self-esteem and academic performances; and improving the performance of schools in the Ohangwena Region.

1.5. Research questions

The main question of this study was: "To what extent were the parents in the Ohangwena Region involved in the learning process of their children"? Sub-questions were: "What did teachers and learners expect from parents?; what issues prevented parents from being involved in the learning process of their children?; and what could be done to actively involve parents in the learning process of their children"?

1.6. Definitions of terms

The terms listed below were defined to ensure appropriate usage thereof, in this study.

Parent-teacher relationship refers to the effective communication between home and school that is characterized by trust, mutuality, affiliation, support, shared values, shared expectations and beliefs (Hughes & Kwok; 2007). In this study, parent-teacher relationship referred to an effective communication between parents and teachers in order to work together in supporting children to perform well at school.

Self-esteem refers to the collection of beliefs or feelings about oneself or the self-perceptions that might influence his/her attitudes, behavior and motivations (Katz, 1995). In this study, parents tended to develop self-esteem in children for them to differentiate between correct and wrong things.

Empower means to give someone power or authority or allowed someone a frontline support that provided the ability to make correct decisions (Chamberlin, 2010). In this study, it referred to helping parents in supporting children's education such as providing them with necessary skills for studying at home.

Parent-child relationship refers to the effective communication between parents and children that was characterized by trust, mutuality, affiliation, support, shared values, shared expectations and beliefs (Hughes, & Kwok; 2007). In this study, it referred to the controlling measures used by parents in order to control children's behavior and enable them to behave acceptably.

Motivation refers to the force that might cause people to act in a particular way, it can be external or internal (Farrant, 1991). In this study, it referred to the ways that can be used by teachers to encourage parents to participate in the learning process (external motivation).

1.7. Limitations of the study

Parents who were main participants of this study could not speak, read or write English. By this implication, all data that collected from parents had to be translated from the native language into English. Inherently, translation has its own weaknesses that might be compromised the quality of collected data. The researcher therefore personally translated it from the native language into English; but requested someone else to edit the translated work. That way, the quality of the translated data would not be compromised.

1.8. Delimitations of the study

Some learners were absent on the day that was arranged to complete their study questionnaires and they completed it next days the time they were present at school.

Some learners wrote grammar mistakes when completing study questionnaire that was

written in English language and it was difficult to understand what they mean. The tape record stopped functioning in the process of interviewing parents, and the cell phone was used to record tape record parents' interview.

This chapter gave an introduction to the background of the study as well as a short general overview of parents' participation in education both in Namibia and in some other countries. The next chapter provided a review of literature and theoretical framework in which this study based.

2. CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, pertinent literature was reviewed to inform the study of the current issues on parents' participation in the education of their children. The review focused on the theoretical framework and concepts including parents' empowerment; relationships between parents and children; relationships between parents and teachers; children's self-esteem; hindering factors and parents' motivation, among others. Thus, theoretical frameworks together with the explanatory concepts stated above appeared to define the research problem in terms of the topic parents' participation in education.

2.2. Theoretical framework

Theory is defined as a set of human ideas that can be organized in order to understand human experience. Therefore, theory is essential as it provides conceptual framework and the capacity to connect new knowledge obtained through data collection to the vast body knowledge to which was relevant. Without theory in the conducting of research study, there tends to be an absence of conceptual direction (DePoy, & Gitlin; 1998). Therefore it might be valuable for researchers to base studies on theoretical framework in order to collect an adequate data.

The theoretical framework of this study was based on Piaget's constructivist theory of cognitive-development. The underlying assumption of the theory was that parents influenced the learning process of their children to acquire valuable knowledge and skills at a very early stage. For example, Greece (2004) argued that children appeared to construct their own understanding and knowledge via experiences and created new knowledge from adults. Thus, parents could support and encourage children by teaching them how to learn. Piaget believed that parents were the first people who could provide children with the right encouragement from birth so as to think independently (Greece, 2004). So, teaching children skills of

controlling their bad behaviour and focusing on learning at school becomes critical (Berkowitz and Grych 1998; Lynn and Mckay, 2001). The theory maintained that the intelligence of a child was developed through consecutive stages and the best way of teaching a child how to think independently should start at home. Lastly, a child learns fast and well by imitating parents (Waller, 2005).

2.3. Parents' empowerment

Chamberlin (2010) stated that parent empowerment had meaningful elements that might help parents to develop their children, for example decision-making. Decision-making is an element that dealt with making correct choices about life. Some parents might therefore need skills in developing their children's decision-making, for them to make correct decisions about their lives. Furthermore, Coleman (2009) considered that teachers might allow parents an adequate amount of time via parent-teacher meetings, so as to share the necessary information regarding education.

Berkowitz and Grych (1998) stated that parental influence on children's moral development comprised types of processes that are related to moral thoughts, feelings and actions. Hence, it appeared to be important if parents were empowered with parenting processes like induction were explaining to them. Berkowitz and Crych (1998) then, explained the concept induction that it had ideas of disciplining children as well as teaching them the difference between correct and incorrect behavior. The method of induction therefore prepares parents with appropriate developmental skills in order to develop children to understand moral principles and that consequently reduces their unacceptable behavior.

In addition, disciplined children seemed to be serious with their school work. Nghifikwa (2001) also collected riddles in Oshikwanyama that carried messages that seemed to warn

people against misbehavior. Nghifikwa (2001) then stated a riddle in Oshikwanyama as follows: *"Kashi pile hanga kasha li naikuni, kashi na eendunge hanga kasha li naina."* Literary, such a riddle means: "it was not well cooked like it had no fire woods; it lacked wisdom like it had no mother."

Thus, forefathers in this riddle indicated the importance and expectations of parents to teach their children knowledge and behavior well so as to become intelligent. Misbehaving of children seemed also to be a fault of their parents, mothers in particular. Further, children who behaved well seemed to be well equipped by parents with necessary life skills to their parents. Hence, it seems to be imperative for parents to discipline children as well as to equip them with necessary life skills from birth in order not to be blamed for their misbehaving.

2.4. Parent-child relationship

Many parents are concerned about how to provide their children with successful adulthood, because some parents experienced children's behavioral problems caused by financial problems for instance (Birditt, 2009). Then, Watts and Broaddus (2002) suggested filial therapy approach that might train parents to become therapeutic agents of their children. In other words, parents might learn basic child-centered play therapy skills, like developing children's self-esteem. These skills could guide children in good ways and hence become disciplined to be able to study.

Moreover, McClure (2010) agreed that parents might express love to children. Furthermore, Oosthuizen (1998) stated that parents provided physical welfare to their children and they could take care of them. For example, take care of their health that might lead to the enhancement of their school readiness (Myers, 1995; McBridge, Dyer, Ying, Brown and Strong; 2009).

Moreover, Epstein, 2002; Bailey, 2008; and Cohen, 2008 suggested helpful ways that parents could use in order to make homes good places to study. For instance, parents could set children's rules and routines at homes; share educational information with children; check children's homework every night in order to ensure that children complete their homework; talk to children about school on a daily basis; and work as tutors at school and they could read with children at home. In other words, responsible parents are involved by helping children to learn at home and by discussing school events when attending parents' meetings (Brook, Ning, Balka, Lubliner &Rosenberg, 2007). It can be concluded that the relationship between parents and children involves the full extent of children's development and can be affected by parents' experiences as well as their self-confidence. Parents could become responsive to children and listen to their educational demands while they were at school (Kohn, 2003; Doris, 2005).

Further, parents appeared to direct children to do things correctly and to control areas where children were staying so as to be suitable for human developmental purposes. This arrangement could be done if parents limit children's behavior with their customs and set up necessary rules. Consequently, children seemed to behave well (Dewey, 1944). Set up rules that might control children's behavior seemed to be essential to limit children in walking around in unsafe areas. For example, parents may set up rules that could limit children to come home on time after playing.

Again, Chen (2008) found that parents might gain satisfaction of contributing to education if they were actively involved in it and as such they might understand the school curriculum. Also, Prins and Toso (2008) affirmed that parental care reduced academic failures and dropping out of school before graduation. Hence, parents appeared to take care of children's behavior seriously in order to create acceptable attitude that promote learning.

Bailey (2008) found that absenteeism of learners from school decreased if parents developed positive attitudes towards school. Parents could let children know that they were available to help them in their studies. Parents could also encourage children to participate in productive activities such as participating in English clubs after school, rather than sitting in front of the television watching nonproductive movies.

2.5. Parent-teacher relationship

Parent-teacher relationship is strengthened by effective communication between them. Normally, teachers were likely to advise parents to send children to pre-primary as early as possible and provided parents with transports to attend their meetings (Dixon, Widdowson, Arnia and McMurchy-Pilkington, 2007). Musaazi (2009) suggested teachers to help in teaching adults how to read and write. Whereas, parents might accommodate teachers who came from far places to stay close to school. Parents could also offer lands to school for sport fields. In this way, parent-teacher relationship could be strong and benefited children in their academic performance.

Communication with teachers when problems arise could help children to behave well (Lynn and Mckay, 2001and Smith, 2001) revealed that parents' participation in education added to their knowledge on children's educational settings. It also improved communication between parents and teachers. Chen (2008) stated that teachers could also benefit if parents participated in education, as parents could give teachers correct information related to children. This could also help teachers to approach challenges they face in classrooms. Thus, teachers' morale is likely to be improved through proper communication. Parents might also become advocates for their children in order to see if children's needs were met (Chen, 2008; Hopkins, 2008; Lynn and Mckay, 2001).

Furthermore, home visits by teachers might help parents to understand the importance of education better and thus enhance the learning process. Home visits could also help teachers to get information about children's needs as well as existing knowledge that children already have. Thus, effective communication between home and school tended to be essential as it guided teachers to teach more effectively and benefited children to pass well. Such a link could be important to stop mistrust that seemed to exist between parents and teachers (Chen, 2008). It could be helpful if teachers visited parents at homes to maintain the strong link with parents. Such a link might benefit children to pass at school.

It seemed to be imperative if parents and teachers be in a good link in order to share problems that might prevent children to fully attend school. The period of time in which children travel from home to school or from school to home was also important and it should be controlled by both parents and teachers. It could happen that children might keep playing and therefore reach home/school late (Patall, Cooper and Robinson, 2008). Parents are the first teachers of children and as such they might have correct information about their problems and their needs, of which teachers might not be aware, an effective link between parents and teachers seemed to be necessary in sharing ideas on how to solve children's problems that might delay their studies (Epstein, 2002).

Generally, the link between parents and teachers is more likely to have large influences over many activities that might put children at risks of under achievements. If teachers did not remind parents to take care of children after school, children might be engaged in bad influential activities (Randolph, Teasley and Arrington; 2006). In this regard, parents and teachers need to establish a strong link and enable to control children at the same time. This could help children not to engage in bad influential activities like abusing alcohol when they passed by cuca shops after school.

2.6. Self-esteem

Self-esteem was essential to influence people's attitudes and behavior, so as to analyze their strengths and weaknesses (Katz, 1995). Furthermore, Dalgas-Pelish (2006) acknowledged that the development of self-esteem during childhood might reduce social pressures and temptations. Hence, lack of self-esteem might result in misbehaviors such as: smoking, alcohol abuse, poor academic achievement, suicide and teenage pregnancies. It was therefore necessary for parents to develop self-esteem in children that might result in acceptable behavior and the ability to perform well at school.

Furthermore, self-esteem in childhood was related to mental health of life and as such parents tend to promote children's self-esteem in many ways like to accept them as they were. (Berkowitz & Grych, 1998; Katz, 1995) also added that children need parents' support in many ways in order to develop self-esteem. Areas that might need support include: building good relationships with peers; showing their interest in children's education and asking of children's opinions in their discussions. First, parents could develop good relationship between children and their friends by advising them not to be influenced by incorrect behavior like insulting people, but they could be influenced with correct and acceptable behaviour.

Consequently, children could differentiate between wrong and right things. As such, they are likely to evaluate themselves as independent children and feel self-confident. Second, parents also should provide additional information when children study. In this way, parents seemed to show their interest as well as positive responses to their children's study.

Finally, esteeming children by asking their opinions in discussions caused them to feel proud and being respected. If parents developed children as it was explained above, children might become independent and be able to think for themselves. In contrast, lack of self-esteem might result in depression and anxiety (Berkowitz & Grych, 1998). Also, lack of parental

care might cause children to get involved in bad behavior and in criminal activities in order to seek their parents' attention. In consequence, lack of self-esteem might cause children to become frustrated and be unable to learn at school (Patall, Cooper, and Robinson, 2008). Therefore, it is necessary for parents to take care of children in order to develop their self-esteem and avoid them developing low self-esteem and hence unable to learn.

2.7.Hindering factors

Factors like poverty; inadequate learning chances; parental drug abuse; violence at home; lack of after school care; poor nutrition and teenage pregnancies might put children at risks of under achievements in schools (Nord and West, 2006).

Randolph, Teasley, and Arrington (2006) stated that if parents could not control children after school, they might engage in bad activities like drinking. Therefore, it might be helpful if parents take care of children after school, in order to prevent children from joining bad activities. Lynn and Mckay (2001) stated also that parents were more likely to attend in large number, if school events were scheduled during evenings. On the contrary, this might become impossible for rural parents due to the lack of electricity, though teachers might arrange relevant time at which rural parents could attend school events.

Furthermore, Hamunyela (2008) revealed the following factors in Namibia as barriers to the practice of parental involvement in primary schools. These were: increased distance between teachers and parents; illiteracy; unemployment; lack of understanding and knowledge about each other's tasks; parents' negative experiences and lack of confidence. Kaperu (2004) uncovered again that some parents were not involved in their children's education due to the lack of time spent with their children and their socio-economic status.

The research done by the Ministry of Gender Equality Women and Child Welfare (MGEWC) (2007) in Namibia indicated that over 40% of parents in rural area were at risks of HIV/AIDS. Consequently, some Namibian parents had already become unhealthy and unable

to participate in education. In fact, parental illnesses appeared to be a risk factor that might cause children to be vulnerable and develop emotional and mental health problems. Thus, the government of the Republic of Namibia might also consider this problem through supporting those children whose parents are affected by HIV/AIDS so that they can attend school.

Epstein (2002) stated also that some parents encountered a problem with their children who disliked going to school. Epstein (2002) further then, advised parents to discuss with such children in order to get reasons that caused hatred in them of attending school. Consequently, parents could take necessary steps of solving such problems with teachers.

Finally, Chikoko (2008) uncovered that parents who served as decision makers appeared not to have capacities to function effectively. Hence, in this area of decision making, they remained disempowered due to their inability to make decisions. Because of that they need special support on schools' decision making and enable to function effectively.

2.8. Parent motivation

The quality of parental involvement in education was more likely to be increased if factors that hinder it were overcome. Parents were also more likely to be motivated in order for them to be involved in education. Bailey (2008) explained that parental involvement in education does not necessarily mean parents should be present every day at schools. It however meant parents should do specific school activities that could help children to succeed. Bailey (2008) suggested that parents might take a short time for at least 15-20 minutes reading together with children each evening and discussing with children what they had read. In this way, children's reading skills were likely to be improved and reading with children also showed that learning was endless.

In addition, teachers might ask children to write essays about stories they heard from their parents because, in this way they provided parents with chances of teaching children moral and ethical values, via telling them stories. Again, this way seemed also to benefit teachers to know and understand the culture of children as well as parents' concerns (Nord and West, 2006). Children could also learn mother languages through listening and writing stories from their parents. Because of that, children might perform well, as a result of motivation from both parents and teachers. To this point, Hurd and Edwards (1995) argued that parents' participation in education influenced children's academic achievements.

Cucchiara and Horvat (2009) further confirmed that recognizing spectrum motivations for parents' participation in education tended to create more authentic and useful models. Also, parental motivation appeared to produce learning outcomes with good consequences of children's future. Teachers could motivate parents in various ways such as: informing them about their rights of being involved in education; notifying them about school programs; reporting to them on their children's success; explaining to them the curriculum; the tests used to measure children's progress and expected children's proficiency levels (Smith, 2001) Chen (2008) also suggested ways of helping teachers who were unable to involve parents in education like schools could offer training materials on how to involve parents in education and how to monitor children's time.

Chen (2008) suggested further that parents who were unable to participate in education could inform teachers any issues at home that might affect children's school performance. Martin and Trong (2004) suggested that schools should have a written parental participation in education policy that might be distributed to all parents who had children at such schools. Such policy could provide parents with necessary assistance on how to monitor children's progress and also training programs that could help parents to work with children at home.

It has been noted that school social workers tended to have significant influence on children's academic achievement. School social workers could explain requirements' of the school systems to parents and to remind teachers about the unique situation of parents that might to be dealt with differently. Consequently, the trust on parents and the ability to concentrate on their children's education, tended to be facilitated (Hurd and Edwards 1995; Lynn and Mckay, 2001). Therefore, it might be useful for schools to have school social workers that might act as a link between parents and teachers as well as between parents and children.

Amy, Baker and Laura (1998), postulated that parents could take children to the places such as museums libraries etc. Although rural Namibian parents might get difficult to take children at museums as they are only in urban areas. Parents were also expected to provide reading materials at home. Thus, parents tended to be role models of children if they read with them at home, as children could imitate what they saw their parents were doing. In other words, if parents read, would want to read. Chen (2008) stated also that reading with children at home, might improve children's reading skills and reading in turn might contribute to children's reading abilities.

The MoE (2005) suggested schools to conduct at least one well-planned parental meeting per term. Hence, less annual conducting parental meetings have been shown at ECS. Concerning feedback on parents' meetings, two of the teachers revealed that parents always gave feedback to children on what has been discussed in parents' meetings to some extent. Whereas, twenty-one of the learners revealed that parents always gave feedback to children on parents' meetings, according to this study.

Epstein (2002) stated that children appeared to perform well at school if parents reduce their after school work at home in order to give them enough time to study after school. Greece (2004) revealed that the importance of constructivist theory on which this study is based

appeared to be the fact that parents provided children with the necessary skills, e.g. problem solving skills. With problem solving skills the children could handle problems that they might encounter accordingly. That is, if children do not handle their problems accordingly, they might get depressed and this could result in them making wrong decisions like committing suicide.

Berkwitz and Grych (1998) also found that parents could teach children skills of self-control that could help children to stay away from discussions that could result in bad consequences like fighting. Clark (2010) encouraged parents to become advocators of their children who could protect them if they encountered problems. Hence, parents tend to be the main sources of teaching children alternatives that could be used in solving their problems.

Wade (2004) maintained that parental influences determine intellectual support and educational outcomes of children. It is therefore likely to be helpful if parents are provided with information of how to participate in education for them to support children for them to pass at schools. Thus, parents could hear feelings of other parents regarding parental participation in education. Kakavoulis (1994) found that family had the most important influential tasks in developing children psychologically, socially, morally and physically during consecutive stages.

This chapter presented a review of literature, theoretical framework and concepts including parents' empowerment; relationship between parents and children; relationship between parents and teachers; children self-esteem; hindering factors and parents' motivation. The next chapter dealt with the research methods employed in this study to collect and analyze data.

3. CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the methods used and procedures followed in this study when collecting information of parents' participation in the learning process of education at ECS in Ohangwena Region. It also indicates the target population, the sample and the sampling procedures of the study. Furthermore, this chapter describes the instruments that were used in collecting the data from the sample. It also shows how the collected data was analyzed.

3.2. Research design

The research design that was used in the study was a mixed method that combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches for triangulation purposes. The main purpose of selecting this design was to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic (Morse, 1991) in order to better understand the research problem. Quantitative method allows teachers and learners to complete questionnaires so as to gather more information in a shortest time frame. Qualitative method allowed for parents to be interviewed as it might happen that they do not know how to read and write English, the language used.

3.3. Target population

The target population of this study included parents (i.e. adults that have children who were going to school), teachers that taught in the tenth grade and learners who were in the tenth grade in the Ohangwena Region.

3.4. Sample and sampling

Purposive sampling was used to select all participants of this study. These were: seven (7) teachers teaching in grade ten, fifty (50) learners from grade ten and any ten (10) parents that had children doing grade ten at ECS. Teachers were selected because they teach subjects in grade ten, and thus have access to learners in that grade. Parents were selected because they

have children who were doing grade ten at ECS. Learners were randomly selected. The research work took place between 10- 25 August 2011 at the selected school; ECS. The researcher had full access to participants at ECS on a daily basis. The sample of the research study was selected from a total of seventy-seven (77) grade 10 learners, all seven (7) grade 10 teachers and seventy-seven (77) parents who had children doing grade 10 at ECS. Further, the researcher proposed a sample of fifty (50) grade 10 learners, all grade 10 teachers and ten (10) parents who had children doing grade 10 at ECS.

To select the sample, the researcher wrote all names of grade 10 learners on pieces of paper, and asked one grade one learner to pick fifty (50) pieces of papers, and then fifty (50) respondents were identified. The same procedure was used to select parents. Thus, the researcher wrote all names of seventy-seven (77) grade 10 learners on pieces of paper. Then a grade one learner was asked to pick ten (10) pieces of papers. The learners' names were then used to identify ten (10) parents who were respondents of this study. ECS has seven (7) grade 10 teachers, seventy-seven (77) learners of which fifty (50) learners were respondents of the study and seventy-seven (77) parents who had children doing grade 10 at ECS of which ten (10) parents were respondents of this study. Hence, fifty (50) grade 10 learners, (30 males and 20 females); ten (10) parents who had children doing grade 10 at ECS (1 male and 9 females) and seven (7) teachers taught grade 10 at ECS (4 males and 3 females) were respondents of this study.

3.5. Research instruments

To gather data for this study, interviews and questionnaires were used as research instruments. Face-to-face informal interviews with individuals were conducted. Parents were interviewed in the language that they understood well which was Oshikwanyama and the interviews were recorded with a cell phone. Questionnaires contained both open-ended and structured questions in order to gain a deep understanding of information. Teachers and

learners completed questionnaires. The researcher translated from the local language which was Oshikwanyama and asked help from someone who knew the language well to check the correctness of translation.

Teachers' and learners' questionnaires consisted of three sections. The first section contained biographical information such as gender, teaching experiences of teachers at ECS, their highest qualifications and the capacity they serve as school management members at ECS. Whereas, biographical information for learners including age, distance from home to school and chance of studying grade 10. The second section of both teachers' and learners' questionnaires dealt with parents' participation in which both teachers and learners were asked to rate statements in order to show the extent to which parents were involved in education.

Finally, section three as the last part of questionnaires for both teachers and learners dealt with improving parental participation. This part of the questionnaires consisted of open-ended questions in which opinions on improving parental participation were requested. Further, data from interviewing parents was collected as follows: The researcher visited parents at their homes between the 17th of August and the 01st of September 2011. Face-to-face individual informal interviews were conducted. Parents were interviewed in the Oshikwanyama language while cell phone recording even though in the proposal, the researcher proposed to interview parents via tape recording. Unfortunately, the researcher's tape record stopped functioning during interview period. Hence, the researcher interviewed parents via cell phone recording and parents' voices are very clear. Parents were interviewed separately in their homes. Appointments were arranged with individual parent via cell phones communications. Interview questions are found in Appendix C.

3.6. Data collection procedures

The permission to conduct the study was sought from the Ministry of Education through the Permanent Secretary. Once the permission was granted, the researcher visited the selected school to arrange for dates of completing questionnaires and interviews with the school principal. Because interviews with parents were conducted at their homes, appointments were made before hand to this effect. In order to have access to the teachers, learners and parents at ECS permission was obtained from the school principal.

Also, the purpose of the study was explained to ECS grade 10 teachers, learners and parents via conducting mini-meetings with grade 10 teachers. Teachers' questionnaires were administered during school hours after the appointments were made via the school principal. Teachers completed their questionnaires in the staff room, while learners completed theirs in their classrooms after they wrote their mid-year examination between 22- 25 August. In addition, fourteen (14) learners out of fifty (50) were under the age of 18 years. Hence, they completed questionnaires after their parents granted them with permissions to participate in this study. Permission letters were wrote with the help of the principal and sent them to parents whose children were under the age of 18 years to sign for their children's permission to participate in this study. The school principal assigned one of grade 10 teachers to assist the researcher with administering questionnaires to learners.

3.7. Data analysis

After collecting data, the researcher listened to the recorded data from the interviews and translated them into English. The researcher asked someone to edit the correctness of the translation. Data was reviewed five times to identify themes, patterns and relationships. Data with similar meanings were categorized by using the coding method. Each theme was described separately to identify relevant supported inferences before all the collected data

were transcribed. The researcher used frequency tables and percentages Categories were used in analyzing data from questionnaires (Gay, Mills and Arasian 2009; Mouton, 2008). The data from seven (7) teachers' questionnaires was analyzed qualitatively by establishing common themes and patterns as related to the main research questions. This was done because the number of teachers was not large enough to be analyzed quantitatively as it was expected to be.

3.8. Ethical considerations

For ethical reasons, the following procedures were followed: the consent of all participants were obtained before they participated and the purpose of the study was clearly explained in the letters that were given to participants. There was no person who was forced to take part in the study against his/her own will. Names of participants were not revealed. Permissions for participants under the age of 18 were obtained from their parents/ guardians.

3.9. Pilot study

The issue of validity and reliability was a concern to this study, as the research instruments involved the use of teachers' and learners' questionnaires as well as interviewees on parent.

Validity referred to as the degree to which a test measures what it is intended to measure and to find out if a test is valid for a study (Gay, Mills and Airasian, 2009).

Reliability is explained as the degree to which a test consistently measures whatever it measures (Gay, Mills and Airasian). In adhering to these two concepts, questionnaires and interview questions were piloted with twenty-five (25) grade 10 learners, five (5) grade 10 teachers and five (5) parents who had learners doing grade 10 at Okauva Combined School (OCS) in Ohangwena Education Region between the 20th and the 28th June 2011.The pilot study was carried out on respondents with similar characteristics to the large population of this study. The researcher had a full access to respondents at OCS on a daily basis. The sample for the pilot study was selected from a total of twenty-eight (28) grade 10 learners, six (6) grade 10 teachers and twenty-eight (28) parents who had children doing grade 10 at OCS.

The researcher wanted a pilot sample of twenty-five (25) grade 10 learners, five (5) grade 10 teachers and five (5) parents who met the criteria as indicated in the research population. The researcher wrote all the names of grade 10 learners on pieces of papers; asked one learner to pick twenty-five pieces of papers and twenty-five (25) respondents were identified. For parents, the same procedure was used; the researcher wrote all the names of twenty-eight (28) grade 10 learners and one learner was asked to pick five (5) pieces of papers.

Hence, learners' names were used to identify five (5) parents. Okauva Combined School (OCS) had six (6) grade 10 teachers of five (5) teachers were respondents of the pilot study. Therefore, twenty-five (25) grade 10 learners, five (5) parents who had children doing grade

10 at OCS and six (6) grade 10 teachers were respondents of the pilot study. The piloting of research instruments gave the researcher a chance to identify ambiguities in the questions and to evaluate responses given if they were appropriate to the study. After piloting, no amendment was made to the research instruments as no ambiguities were found in the questions.

This chapter described the methodology used in this study. The sample of this study consisted of seven (7) teachers who taught grade 10 at ECS in 2011, ten (10) parents whose children attended grade 10 at ECS in 2011 and fifty (50) grade 10 learners who attended grade 10 at ECS in Ohangwena Education region in 2011. Purposive sampling was used to select all participants of this study. The research instruments included questionnaires and interviews. A pilot study was carried out at OCS with similar participants to establish the reliability and validity of the instruments. Results obtained by using these instruments are presented in the next chapter.

4. CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF STUDY RESUTS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study as analyzed. Included in the analyzed data was the biographical information of the teachers and learners as well as their perceptions of parental involvement in the learning process of children. Additionally, the information that was obtained from parents through interviews is also analyzed and presented in this chapter.

4.2. Biographical data of teachers

4.2.1. Gender

By ticking male or female in the questionnaires that were distributed to them to complete, teachers were requested to state their gender. Teachers' responses are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1:   Gender of teachers

Gender	Frequency	
	n	%
Male	4	57.1
Female	3	42.9
Total	**7**	**100**

The results showed that 4(57.1%) were male and 3(42.9%) were female teachers that volunteered to participate in this study.

4.2.2. Teaching experience

To establish their level of experience in teaching, teachers were asked to mention the number of years they were involved in teaching school children, their level of experience is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Teaching experience

Number of years teaching at ECS	Frequency	
	n	**%**
1 to 5 years	5	71.4
6 to 10 years	2	28.6
Total:	**7**	**100**

Based on Table 2, five (71.4%) of the seven participants had teaching experiences that ranged between one and five years; and two (28.6%) of them had teaching experiences ranging from six to ten years. Dempsy and Sandler (1997) defined experienced teachers as those teachers who have worked with parents for a long time and as result such teachers should have full knowledge of the benefits of parents' participation in education, when comparing them with inexperienced teachers. Thus, the results of this study revealed that the majority i.e. 70%) of the teachers at ECS were not experienced and they might not know how to involve parents in education of their children.

4.2.3. Teaching qualifications

 To determine their level of education, teachers were asked to state the nature of the teaching qualifications that qualified them to teach at ECS.

Table 3: Teaching qualifications

Qualification	Frequency	
	n	**%**
Basic Education Teacher Diploma	3	42.9
Higher Education Diploma	2	28.6
Advanced Certificate in Education	1	14.3
Bachelor of Education Degree	1	14.3
Total	7	100

In response to the question of teacher qualification, this study found that three (42.9%) of seven respondents had a teaching qualification of Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD), two (28.6%) of them had a teaching qualification of Higher Education Diploma (HED), one

(14.3%) had a teaching qualification of an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE), and another one (14.3%) had a teaching qualification of a Bachelor of Education Degree (B.ED). These findings imply that all participants in this study were qualified enough to influence parents to participate in the education of their children at school. Qualified teachers were assumed to be equipped with necessary skills to enhance the desired working relationship between the school and the community at large (Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), 1993).

4.2.4. School management membership

To know whether or not they were members of school management, participants were requested to agree or disagree to a given statement by saying *Yes or No*.

Table 4: School management membership

Member of school management	Frequency	
	n	%
Yes	2	28.6
No	5	71.4
Total	7	100

The study results show that two (28.57%) of the seven respondents were members of school management; while the remaining five (71.43%) were regular teachers who did not serve in school management. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) (1999), members of school management are responsible for the daily effective functioning of the school including parents' participation in education. In the context of this study, because most teachers were not part of school management, it was very possible that they were not aware of various methods on how to involve parents in school activities.

4.2.5. Teachers' views on parents' participation

Teachers were asked to express their personal opinions with regard to the extent to which parents were involved in the learning process of their children at ECS. To get their views, teachers were asked to rate the parents' attendance of meetings; provision of feedback on

parents' meetings; encouragement to learners to study after school; provision of time to children to study at home; encouragement of learners to go to school on time; teaching of acceptable behaviors in and outside school as well as responses to teachers' request for learners' educational needs.

4.2.6. Parents' meetings

Teachers were asked to rate the frequency (i.e. by choosing *always, sometimes, or never*) at which parents showed up or attended meetings that were arranged at ECS.

Table 5: Attending parents' meetings

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
Parents attend parents' meetings at school	5 (71.4%)	2 (28.5%)	0 (0%)

Table 5 shows that five (71.4%) respondents indicated that parents always attended parents' meetings at school; two (28.5%) others reported that parents sometimes attended parents' meetings at school; and no (0%) participant said that parents never attend parents' meetings at school.

4.2.7. Feedback on parents' meetings

Teachers were asked to rate the frequency (i.e. by choosing *always, sometimes, or never*) at which parents talked to or gave feedback to their children about issues discussed in parents' meetings.

Table 6: Feedback on parents' meetings

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
Parents talk to their children about issues discussed in parents' meetings	2 (28.5%)	5 (71.4%)	0 (0%)

Two (28.5%) respondents said that parents always talked to children about issues discussed in parents' meetings; five (71.4%) indicated that parents sometimes talked to their children about issues discussed in parents' meetings; and none (0%) indicated that parents never talked to their children about issues discussed in parents' meetings;

4.2.8. Study after school

Teachers were asked to rate the frequency (i.e. by choosing *always, sometimes, or never*) at which parents reminded their own children to study after school hours at home.

Table 7: Studying after school

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
Parents remind their children to study after school	0 (0%)	6 (85.7%)	1 (14.2%)

According to Table 7, no (0%) respondent showed that parents always reminded their children to study after school; six (85.7%) respondents reported that parents sometimes reminded children to study after school; one (14.2%) participant stated that parents never reminded their children to study after school;

4.2.9. Time to study at home

Again, teachers were asked to rate the frequency (i.e. by choosing *always, sometimes, or never*) at which parents gave their children enough time to study after school at home.

Table 8: Time to study at home

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
Parents give their children enough time to study after school at home	0 (0%)	6 (85.7%)	1(14.4%)

Table 8 depicts that no one (0%) indicated that parents always gave their children enough time to study after school at home; six (85.7%) participants said that parents sometimes gave their children enough time to study after school at home; one (14.2%) participant reported that parents never gave their children enough time to study after school at home.

4.2.10. Going to school on time

Once more, teachers were asked to rate the frequency (i.e. by choosing *always, sometimes, or never*) at which parents reminded their children to go to school on time.

Table 9: Going to school on time

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
Parents remind their children to go to school on time	0 (0%)	6 (85.7%)	1(14.4%)

On the basis of Table 9, no one (0%) reported that parents always reminded their children to go to school on time; six (85.7%) respondents showed that parents sometimes reminded their

children to go to school on time; one (14.2%) participant indicated that parents never reminded their children about the importance of punctuality.

4.2.11. Acceptable behaviors in and outside school

This time, teachers were asked to rate the frequency (i.e. by choosing *always, sometimes, or never*) at which parents talk to their children about acceptable behaviors in and outside school.

Table 10: Acceptable behaviors in and outside school

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
Parents talk to their children about acceptable behaviors in and outside school	3 (42.8%)	3 (42.8%)	1(14.2%)

Table 10 shows that three (42. 8%) respondents reported that parents always talked to their children about acceptable behaviors in and outside the school; three (42.8%) respondents reported that parents sometimes talked to children about acceptable behaviors in and outside school; one (14.2%) participant reported that parents never talked to children about acceptable behaviors in and outside school.

4.2.12. Response to teachers' request for educational needs

Teachers were asked to rate the frequency (i.e. by choosing *always, sometimes, or never*) at which parents responded to the teachers' request for their children educational needs.

Table 11: Response to the teachers' requests

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
Parents respond to the teachers' request for their children educational needs	1(14.2%)	6 (85.7%)	0 (0%)

Results show that one (14.2%) participant reported that parents always responded to teachers' request for children's educational needs; six (85.7%) respondents showed that parents sometimes responded to teachers' request for children's educational needs; and no one (0%) reported that parents never respond to teachers' request for children's educational needs.

4.3.The role of the school

Teachers were asked to mention things their school does to help parents acquire skills of effective parent-child communication to help their children behave well. Teachers responded by mentioning the following: The school tries to involve parents in the learning process of their children by (a) explaining to parents the importance of education; (b) inviting parents to school meetings as many times as required in a year; (c) arranging parent's days to check children's school work; (d) encouraging parents to buy children's school needs; and (e) encouraging parents to visit the school in order to check children's performance.

4.4.Hindering factors

When asked on what they thought to be the main issues that prevented parents from being involved in the learning process of their children, teachers listed the following factors: *(a)* poverty *(b)* long distance from home to school; *(c)* parents were not informed what to do by the school management; *(d)* some parents placed parental tasks on teachers' hands; *(e)* some parents had low self-esteem and as such, are unable to participate fully in education (some parents 3(6%) did not respond to teachers' request). [Refer to Table 21]   According to the teachers' questionnaires analysis, (f) school management did not provide parents with financial report and this habit hampered their participation in school activities; *(g)* parents lacked on the knowledge of the school vision and mission; *(h)* lack of communication between parents and teachers; *(i)* poor performance of learners at ECS discouraged parents to participate in education; *(j)* some parents abused alcohol so much that they had no time to participate in education; *(k)* some learners lived with grandparents who were unable to participate fully in education; *(l)* some parents are uneducated and as such are unable to participate fully in school activities; and *(m)* some parents lack education interest and hence ignore participating in school activities and some learners headed homes while their parents worked far from homes.

4.5. Learners' biographical data

The biographical data referred to the personal information of each learner that participated in this study including their ages, the distance they walked from home to school and their chances of passing grade 10.

4.5.1. Age of learners

To correctly determine their ages, learners were requested to indicate how old they were in terms of years.

Table 12: Ages of learners

Age	Frequency (%)
15- 16	7 (14.0%)
17 and above	43 (86.0%)
Total	50 (100.0%)

Table 12 shows that seven (14.0%) of the learners were between the ages of 15 and 16 years, while 43 (86.0%) at the age of 17 years or older. In other words, the majority of grade 10 learners at ECS were too old to be in grade 10. Myers (1995) argues that active parental participation in education can influence parents to take their children to school at very early age, i.e. by considering school readiness programmers of their children and letting them start primary education at the age of six or seven years.

4.5.2. Distance from home to school

To establish the distance that each learner covered daily to and from school, each learner was asked to indicate in kilometers how far their home was situated from school.

Table 13: Distance from school

Kilometers	Frequency (%)
1-3 km	13 (26.0%)
4 km and above	37 (74.0%)
Total	50 (100.0%)

Table 13 shows that the majority (74.0%) of participants walked a distance of 4 or more kilometers; and only 13 (26.0%) of them walked a distance of three or less kilometers to and from school. It could be assumed that such long distances could hamper learners' attendance at school; and the same could be said for their parents.

4.5.3. Chances of studying grade 10

To find out which of the participants were doing Grade 10 for the very first time or repeating it, learners were asked indicate whether or not they were reaping the grade by choosing *Yes or No* to the question.

Table 14: Chances of studying grade 10

Chance	Frequency (%)
First in-takers	23 (46.0%)
Repeaters	27 (54.0%)
Total	50 (100.0%)

Table 14 shows that 23 (46.0%) of the participants were doing grade 10 for the very first time; and 27 (54.0%) of them were repeating the grade.

4.5.4. Learners' rating

Like their teachers, learners were asked to rate their parents' engagement in school activities including attendance of meetings; provision of feedback on parents' meetings; encouragement to learners to study after school; provision of time to children to study at home; encouragement of learners to go to school on time; teaching of acceptable behaviors in and outside school as well as responses to teachers' request for learners' educational needs. To determine the degree to which parents were involved in the learning process of their children, respondents were requested to rate each statement on parental involvement as either *always, sometimes or never.*

4.5.5 Parents' meetings

Like their teachers, learners were asked to rate the frequency (i.e. by choosing *always, sometimes, or never*) at which their parents attend parents' meetings at school.

Table 15: Attending parents' meetings at school

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
My parents attend parents' meetings at school	18 (36.0%)	27 (54.0%)	5 (10.0%)

Based on Table 15 above, eight (36.0%) learners indicated that parents always attended parents' meetings; 27(54.0%) learners indicated that parents sometimes attended parents' meetings; five (10.0%) learners reported that parents never attend parents' meetings.

4.5.6. Feedback on parents' meetings

Participants were asked to rate the frequency (i.e. by choosing *always, sometimes, or never*) at which their parents talked to them about issues discussed in parents' meetings.

Table 16: Feedback on parents' meetings

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
My parents talk to me about issues discussed in parents' meetings	21 (42.0%)	22 (44.0%)	7 (14.0%)

According to Table 16 above, 21(42.0%) learners said that parents always gave them feedback about issues discussed in parents' meetings; 22(44.0%) learners mentioned that parents sometimes gave them feedback on issues that were discussed in parents' meetings; seven (14.0%) stated that parents never gave them feedback on issues discussed in parents' meetings.

4.5.7. Study after school

Respondents were asked to rate the frequency (i.e. by choosing *always, sometimes, or never*) at which their parents reminded them to study after school.

Table 17: Study after school

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
My parents remind me to study after school	12 (24.0%)	22 (44.0%)	16(32.0%)

The table depicts that 12(24.0%) learners indicated that their parents always reminded them to study after school; 22(44.0%) learners indicated that parents sometimes reminded them to study after school; 16(32.0%) learners reported that parents never reminded them to study after school.

4.5.8. Time to study at home

Learners were asked to rate the frequency (i.e. by choosing *always, sometimes, or never*) at which their parents gave them enough time to study after school at home.

Table 18: Time to study at home

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
My parents give me enough time to study after school at home	11 (22.0%)	30 (60.0%)	9 (18.0%)

According to Table 18 above, 11(22.0%) learners mentioned that parents always gave them

enough time to study after school; 30(60.0%) learners said that parents sometimes gave them

enough time to study after school; 9(18.0%) learners reported that parents never gave them

enough time to study after school;

4.5.9. Going to school on time

Participants were asked to rate the frequency (i.e. by choosing *always, sometimes, or never*)

at which their parents reminded them to go to school on time.

Table 19: Going to school on time

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
My parents remind me to go to school on time	35 (70.0%)	8 (16.0%)	7 (14.0%)

Table 19 shows that 35(75.0%) learners indicated that parents always reminded them to go to

school on time; 8(16.0%) learners said parents always reminded them to go to school on time;

7(14.0%) learners reported that parents never reminded them to go to school on time.

4.5.10. Acceptable behaviors in and outside school

Learners were asked to rate the frequency (i.e. by choosing *always, sometimes, or never*) at

which their parents talked to them about acceptable behaviors in and outside school.

Table 20: Behaviors in and outside school

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
My parents talk to me about acceptable behaviors in and outside school	33 (66.0%)	13 (26.0%)	4 (8.0%)

Based on Table 20 above, 33(66.0%) learners mentioned that parents always talked to them

about acceptable behaviors in an outside school; 13(26.0%) learners reported that parents

sometimes talked to them about acceptable behaviors in and outside the school; 4(8.0%)

learners said that parents never talked to them about acceptable behavior in and outside

school.

4.5.11. Response to teachers' request for educational needs

Participants were asked to rate the frequency (i.e. by choosing *always, sometimes, or never*) at which their parents responded to the teachers' request for children educational needs.

Table 21: Response to teachers' requests

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
My parents respond to the teachers' request for my educational needs	20 (40.0%)	27 (54.0%)	3 (6.0%)

On the basis of Table 21 above, 20(40.0%) learners indicated that parents always responded to teachers' request for children's educational needs; 27(54.0%) learners said that parents sometimes responded to teachers' request for children's educational needs; and 3(6.0%) learners reported that parents never responded to teachers' request for children's educational needs.

4.5.12. Learners' expectations from parents

To solicit for more personal views on what exactly they expected from their parents, learners were asked this question: *"What do you want your parents to do for you while you are still going to school?"* In response, learners mentioned the following: "parents should give children enough time to study after school; provide children with all required educational/school needs; provide children with food before and after school; pay School Development Fund; buy children school uniform; pay School Development Fund on time; provide children with light to study at night; buy children educational materials, e. g. dictionaries; respond to teachers' request at school; treat children in a good way; help children in school work; give children enough time to rest; control children not to be absent for invalid reasons; pray for children to pass at school; and respect children so as to be respected by children".

4.5.13. Learners' suggestions for improvement

On the question of what the school could do to encourage parents to actively participate in educational activities at school; learners cited the following suggestions as feasible

alternatives. The school could *(a)* make effective communication with parents; *(b)* encourage parents to give children enough food before and after school; *(c)* encourage parents to visit the school in order to check children's performance; *(d)* encourage parents to pay the school development fund; *(e)* encourage parents to provide children with light to study at night; *(f)* encourage parents to attend literacy classes in order to understand education; *(g)* tell parents the importance of being a school board member; *(h)* show parents how to participate in education; *(i)* give parents outstanding achievement awards for good performance of their children; *(j)* set up good school rules to encourage parents to participate in education; *(k)* score high passing rates each year to encourage parents to participate in education; *(l)* call parents to school for their children's misbehaviors; *(m)* advise parents to attend school activities themselves and not to be represented by other parents; *(n)* advise parents not to buy their children cell phones; and *(o)* advise parents to provide children with washing powder to wash school uniform.

4.6. Parents' views

This section provides the qualitative data collected from parents and are presented following the following themes: the extent to which parents in the Ohangwena Region were involved in the learning process of their children; expectations of teachers and learners from parents; issues that prevented parents from being involved in the learning process of their children and issues to be done to actively involved parents in the learning process of their children.

4.6.1. Parents' meetings

When they asked this question: "*How often did you attend parents' meetings at your school*; all parents who participated in this study said that they attended parents' meetings once or twice in a year. On this question: "*how were you informed about parents' meetings at home*"; parents who participated in this study stated that they sometimes received invitation letters for parents' meetings from school and sometimes parents' meetings were announced verbally

by teachers in the morning assembly. However, parents also argued that the method of verbally inviting parents to meetings at assembly caused some children to forget to inform their parents of such meetings. To the contrary, when served with invitation letters, parents usually attended meetings. When parents were asked the main discussions at the parents' meetings, they listed the following: attendance, punctuality, behavior, school uniform, SDF, study and late coming. Parents and teachers at parents' meetings reminded one another the methods of controlling children's school attendance.

4.6.2. Parents' activities

When parents were asked to name activities they have participated in at ECS, they mentioned the entrepreneurship trading day that was organized at school. In this event, parents provided types of food such as: peanuts, dried cabbage, beans, and fishes for their children to sell them. Some parents made traditional breads with millet meal *(omingome)* for children to sell. They also volunteered to participate in the construction of teachers' house constructed at school, participated in cooking children's food at school and in fencing school yard. However, some parents could not remember if they were called to participate in school activities at school, whereas others could no longer walk a long distance from home to school in order to participate in school activities due to over age. Lastly, some of the parents volunteered themselves to visit the school many times in order to check the attendance of all learners, although they were not serving as school board members.

4.6.3. Parents' expectations

Parents expected teachers to *(a)* teach and treat children equally, without favoritism. This parent expectation is in accordance with the Ministry of Information and Broad casting (1990) stated that no person may be discriminated against on their ground of sex, race, ethnic group origin, religion, creed or social economic status and color. The Ministry of Information and Broad casting (1990) added also that children have the right to education. Parents expected teachers to (b) teach well in order to fulfill their teaching professional duty; and *(c)*

teach all periods in a day, as parents heard from children that some teachers instructed children to sing, while they were doing their personal things, e.g. own study; *(d)* change when they were told that they did some of the things incorrectly, e.g. doing their personal study during class periods; *(e)* help them to control their grandchildren's behaviours in order for them to learn, as they were unable to control them. This point was in accordance with the point made by The Ministry of Gender Equality Women and Child Welfare (MGEWC) (2007) that the impact of HIV/AIDS led to the rise of a generation of orphaned and vulnerable children, with an increasing number of households being headed by children or by grandmothers who care for their orphaned grandchildren. Hence, it tended to be helpful if teachers help grandparents in controlling their grandchildren's behaviours' so as to apply themselves serious at school.

Parents expected teachers to *(f)* be well qualified, this expectation is in accordance with The Ministry of Education and Culture in Namibia (1993), as it was stated that qualified teachers could have sufficient knowledge and skills to be able to interpret syllabi as well as subject contents in terms of educational aims and objectives for Namibia. Thus, parents expected their children to be taught by trained teachers who have sufficient knowledge of teaching career.

Parents expected teachers to *(g)* make lesson preparations every day in order to know what they teach; *(h)* report to them their children's performance on time and not at the end of the year; *(i)* report misbehaving of children to parents, because sometimes children behaved well home, but misbehaved at school; *(j)* be open to parents, as some parents might become afraid to talk to teachers; *(k)* explain to parents the value of education in order for them to participate in school activities; and be role models of children in terms arriving home early after school.

On the part of the principal, parents expected the principal to *(a)* ensure that all teachers were present during their teaching periods and were on time every day; *(b)* ensure that all teachers teach (because it is reported by children that some teachers were present at school and failed to go to class), this parents' expectation had the same connotation with The Ministry of Education (MoE) (2005) in Namibia as it was stated that principals could take more responsibilities for teachers' supervision. The MoE (2005) added also that teachers' absenteeism's were more likely be reduced when principals were involved in the joint management of schools. Hence, it could be imperative if school principals monitored teachers in teaching periods so as to ensure whether learners were taught. *(c)* ensure that teachers go early home after school (because it was reported by children that they stay with some of their teachers at shebeens after school).

4.6.4. Parents' suggestions

When asked what they thought should be done to get them more involved into the learning process of their children and in activities at school, parents suggested the following: *(a)* parents could be trained in tasks that they could assist them to participate in their children's education; *(b)* the school could contact individual parents in order to discuss specific needs/problems of their specific children; *(c)* the school could arrange a parental day for parents to check children's school work so as parents to realize that their supports were needed at school; *(d)* the school could also provide parents with necessary tasks that might guide parents to help children in doing their homework; *(e)*teachers should encourage parents to visit the school and to attend parents' meetings in a large number to acquaint with teachers of their children; *(f)* teachers should inform parents the weaknesses and strengths of their children in terms of their performance; *(g)* the Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN) should enact a law enforcing all parents to take part in their children's education; *(h)* there was a need of setting up control measures that could compel parents that spend long hours at *shebeens* till late to make enough time to help children in doing homework; *(i)*

teachers could help parents to understand the aims and the importance of being involved in school activities for them to participate more in it; and *(j)* the school could encourage parents to buy children's needs in a school tuck-shop in order to raise school fees.

4.6.5. Parents' methods of ensuring their children attended school

When asked to mention the methods they used to ensure that their children went to school on time, parents reported that they *(a)* woke their children up early every morning for them to go to school on time; *(b)* visited the school twice in a week in order to see if children go to school on time; *(c)* followed children twice per week used the way to school which is on bush side, while children used the way to school near the tarred road in order to find out if children are playing when they went to school; *(d)* asked teachers of their children also to tell them if children attended school on time; *(e)* gave to teachers cell phone numbers to be contacted in case children misbehaved; and *(f)* asked other parents who stay near children's way to school if children were playing when they went to school.

4.6.6. Parents' challenges

Parents reported that they could not help their children as they should because they were not educated enough. Children could not even ask parents to help them with homework as they knew that their parents could not read or write. Though parents could help children with Oshikwanyama homework, they were unable to help children with homework of some subjects as they were not taught those subjects. Alternatively, parents referred their children to their siblings and/or to other children that dropped from school to help them in doing homework for those subjects they did not know.

In addition, this challenge of parents who were unable to help children with homework could be facilitated by Sander (2008) as suggested an establishment of community learning centers with district specialists that could help children with homework as well as with language

activities. Hence, theses centers tended to be relevant in Namibia in order to help children whose parents could not help them in doing homework.

4.6.7. Benefits of attending parents' meeting

When asked to state the benefits of attending parents meetings, parents were quickly mention the below listed facts as what they benefitted from parents' meetings: *(a)* gave the platform where parents encouraged each other on how to take care of their children; *(b)* allowed both parents and teachers to communicate to each other and share educational tasks /ideas on how to be involved in education because what one parent knows tended to be different to what another parent knows; *(c)* provided them with information on parents who were unable to pay SDF could discuss the problem with the school principal; *(d)* gave teachers the opportunity to advise parents on how to prepare children to learn, *e.g. parents could reduce work at home in order to give children enough time to study*; and *(e)*provided information to parents regarding their children's behaviors (Epstein, 2002; Bailey, 2008 and Chen 2008).

4.6.8. Parents' support of children at home

Parents reported that they supported their children in school work at home by *(a)* granting children time to study after school when the work in home was finished. For example, girls were granted chances to study after pounding millet in order to get *'omahangu'* meal, fetching water, collecting firewood and cooking super. Parents gave their children rooms to study; *(b)* ensuring that their children study at night by buying lamps, candles bulbs and batteries for them; *(c)* reducing work at home by providing water taps in homes; *(d)* ensuring that children had enough time to study after school; *(e)* teaching primary children how to read; *(f)* advising their children to listen to the radio in order to get   additional information; *(g)* checking their children's books every day in order to see if homework was done; *(h)* contacting teachers to seek for help if they did not understand how to do homework; and *(i)* advising children not to get involved in quarreling and arguments that might result in fighting.

This chapter provided the data on parents' participation in the learning process of their children a case study of ECS in Ohangwena region. The data was collected via completing questionnaires and interviews. The next chapter discusses the findings of the study.

5. CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses in summary the main findings of this study. In particular, it focuses on parents' involvement in the learning process of their children as perceived by teachers, learners and parents. The discussions of this study are presented with regard to the four themes. These themes were: (a) The extent to which parents in the Ohangwena region were involved in the learning process of their children. (b) The expectations of teachers and learners from parents. (c) Issues that prevent parents from being involved in the learning process of their children and (d) Issues to be done to actively involve parents in the learning process of their children.

5.2.Parents' meetings

It was intriguing to note that teachers, learners and parents were all in agreement regarding the parents' attendance of and participation in meetings at school. Although there was disagreement on the frequency of attendance, all three groups affirmed that indeed parents at ECS do attend and participate in meetings that were arranged and held at that school. This study also found out that parents were not happy with the manner in which the parents' meetings were being communicated to them. For instance, invitation to parents' meetings through verbal announcements by teachers at morning assembly posed challenges for parents in that some children could easily forget to inform their parents of such meetings. They preferred invitation letters, instead. Furthermore, this found that parents gave feedback on the parents' meetings to children, which is a good thing 5(71.4%) [Refer to the data Table 5].

5.3. Parents' participation in their children's education

It was encouraging to find that teachers, learners and parents were all in agreement that parents at ECS were trying everything possible to be actively involved in the learning process of their children. For example, some parents took initiatives of reminding and giving time (by reducing after school work at home) to their children to study after school hours; and reminding and assisting children to go to school on time. Such findings were supported by other researchers like Lynn and Mckay, (2001); Epstein, (2002) who found that children perform better at school if parents reminded them to study after school; created conducive learning home environment, helped children with homework, supervised the study during after school hours, monitored sleeping time, ensured on-time arrival from school and many others.

Clark (2010) and Hasheela (1993) also found that punctuality was imperative if children were to attend lessons on time. Parents affirmed that they personally woke their children up early every morning for them to go to school on time; visited the school twice in a week in order to see if children go to school on time; and literary followed their children twice per week used the way to school which is on bush side.

By talking of and demonstrating acceptable behaviors, parents acted as role models for their own children. In a very similar study by Athens (2010), it was found that children gained understanding of life through talking, observing and listening to parents until they became mature and able to think for themselves. Additionally, parents were likely to provide children with right encouragements through talking to them during their early stages so as to develop independent thinking at the right time (Huit& Hummel, 2003).

5.4.The role of the school

This study found that the school could do more to enhance the parents' participation in the education of their own children. It was found it was actually the task of the school to actively involve parents in the learning process of their children by, *inter alia*, explaining to parents the importance of education; inviting parents to school meetings as many times as required in a year; arranging parent's days to check children's school work; encouraging parents to buy children's school needs; and encouraging parents to visit the school in order to check children's performance.

 In studies by Brown (2009), Chen (2008) and Wade (2004) results also showed that active parents' participation enhanced children's self-esteem as well as to develop positive attitudes towards school, improved the relationship between parents and teachers, and had positive influence on children's academic achievement and intellectual skills necessary for academic progress.

To this end, the findings of this study were also supported by that of Wagman (2009) who found essential strategies of motivating parents to become involved in education including the school could asking parents to bring something to parents' meetings in order to share it with other parents, the teachers inviting parents to school to attend when their children address speeches to other learners, third, children inviting their parents to class and introduce them to other learners, finally, teachers encouraging parents to participate in school activities and give parents direct invitations.

5.5. Expectations

The findings of this study reflected that teachers, learners and parents had different but closely related expectations for each other. It was also interesting to note that these results were actually supported by literature elsewhere.

5.5.1. Teachers' expectations

The findings of this research showed teachers expected parents to check their children's written work books; provide children with food to eat at school; give children enough time to study at home after school; talk to children about moral issues in order children behave well; communicate with teachers effectively via parents' meetings in order to contribute to education; respond on time to school requests; help children in doing homework; tell children their educational expectations as parents and give children examples of good and poor performance students in their villages so as to encourage them to study. Such results were congruent with that of Bailey (2008), Chen (2008) and Epstein (2002) who concluded that successful parents' participation in school activities could be seen if parents made their homes good places to study and shared school information with both teachers and learners.

Research findings by Lee and Bowen (2006) advised parents to visit school many times in order to get more information about how to help children with homework and also to identify relevant topics to be discussed with children. Thus, it could be good if parents took time to visit the school to get more information about how to help children with homework in order learners perform well.

5.5.2. Learners' expectations

The results of this study indicated that learners expected their parents to do specific things for them to enhance their learning processes. Among many others, children expect parents to give children enough time and place to study after school, provide them with all required educational/school needs, provide them with food before and after school, to pay for them school development fund; to buy them school uniform; to respond to teachers' requests at school; to treat them in a humanly way, to pray for them to pass at school; and to respect them.

5.5.3. Parents' expectations

As in case of the teachers and learners, this study found that parents too had their own expectations regarding their roles and responsibilities in the education of their children. In particular, parents expected teachers to help them with skills and knowledge to control their children's behaviors in order for them to learn, as they were unable to control them; to report to them their children's performance on time and not at the end of the year; to report misbehaviors of children to parents because sometimes children behaved well home but misbehaved at school, to be open to parents, as some parents might become afraid to talk to teachers; to carefully explain to parents the value of education in order for them to participate in school activities; and to be excellent role models of children they teach.

5.6. Challenges at ECS

Though very similar in nature, teachers, learners and parents were found to have divergent views on what were perceived to be serious challenges or hindering factors that negated the parents' active participation in the education of their children.

5.6.1. Teachers' views

By virtue of their training and experience, teachers identified and listed factors that were seen to negatively influence parents not to be actively involved in school activities. Notably, they reported that the school was not forthcoming in showing parents what to do for them to demonstrate their active participation in school activities. The study results by Hichman (1995) and Musaazi (2009) supported the notion that if parents are uneducated, they feel that teachers are more capable of helping their children and thus tend to surrender and expect teachers to fulfill their parental tasks. In this study, teachers reported that school did not have a program that gives parents the required knowledge and skills of helping children with homework. To the contrary, Baker (2000) and Van Voorish (2003) raised the need for training teachers so as to become competent in encouraging parents to participate actively in education, especially amongst minority families.

Teachers raised the issues of poor attitudes of parents, low self-esteems; abuse of alcohol; and lack of educational interest as contributing factors to their lowered participation in school activities. Berkowitz and Grych (1998) affirmed that parents with low self-esteem might develop low educational expectations for their children that could result in them doing poor at school. Similarly, Brooks, Lubliner and Rosenber, (2007) found that children whose parents abused alcohol were likely to be in high risks of bad behavioral problems like teenage pregnancies, alcohol abuse tobacco use etc. Hence, it seems to be important if parents who abused alcohol consider this problem that could negatively affect their children's learning.

Teachers raised also issues of uneducated and illiterate parents that was similar to those identified by (Kaperu, 2004; Hamunyela, 2008; Prins and Toso, 2008; Trawick, 2006 and Hoghughi, 2004) as barriers to parents' participation in education. This factor was evident when parents reported that they could not help grade 10 children with homework in other subjects apart from Oshikwanyama because they could not read nor write English – the official medium of instruction in the Namibian secondary schools.

Lee and Bowen (2006) also found that parents with low levels of education are likely to be less involved in education as they feel less confident about communicating with teachers due to lack of the school system knowledge and their negative educational background.

Long distance from home to school was also identified as a contributing barrier to parents' participation in education at ECS. Further, teachers revealed similar findings with Kaperu (2004) and Hamunyela (2008) that long distance from home to school prevented parents participating in education. According to the biographical information for learners as it has

shown that the majority of learners thirty- seven lived far from school and hence parents' participation in school activities could also be hampered.

Teachers were of the opinion that parents lacked understanding of the school vision and mission and communication between parents and teachers in education could be ineffective. Likewise, Lynn and Mkay (2001) found that lack of effective communication with parents; lack of information from schools about how parents should participate in education and the lack of social support might also decrease parents' participation in education. Also a study by Oosthuizen (1998) showed that parents' lack of understanding of the school vision and mission tended to affect the smooth running of the school, because the mission statement contained unique aspirations of the school, including strategies on how the school intends to satisfy the needs of the groups that have interest on the school.

Poor communication between home and school resulting in poor attendance of parents at meetings during the year was mentioned as a serious concern. Lynn and Mkay's (2001) study results showed that parents were less involved in education of their children because of the limited chances for parents to contact teachers; lack of information from school about how parents could become involved in education; teachers seemed to have high expectations for parental participation in education; the school did not supporting parents fulfilling their expectations; communication between parents and school tend to decrease, if parents realize that the school does not respect their cultural background or if the school blames parents for learners' failure and teachers might have less time to work with parents.

Furthermore, poverty among most parents caused serious problems such poor housing, food insecurity as well as health problems which bore direct bearings on parent's lack of motivation on their children's education. In support of these findings, the results of the study

by Widdowson, Lundberg and Murchy-Pilkington (2007) showed that poor parents actually experience difficulties in providing for their children. A study by Swan, Dawn, Hunt and Kirschman (2007) concluded that children who came to school with hunger did not want to participate in school work and also refused to behave well. To this effect, Lee and Bowen (2006) stated that education is the best weapon against poverty.

To this end, the abuse of alcohol and drugs by parents had a very negative effect on children's learning because drug abuse is closely associated with domestic violence which in turn disturbed children's studies after school (Prins & Toso, 2008).

5.6.2. Parents' views

This study found that parents at ECS were not able to help their children as they should because they were not educated enough – lacked knowledge and skills. Parents argued that because children knew that their parents could not read or write, they (children) could not even ask parents to help them with homework. Though parents could help children with Oshikwanyama homework, they were unable to help children with homework of some subjects as they were not taught those subjects.

Alternatively, some parents referred their children to their siblings and/or to other children that dropped from school to help them in doing homework for those subjects they did not know. Similarly, the results of the studies by Baker (2000) and Rodney (1997) showed that lack of training about ways of supporting the relationship between parents and teachers might also be prevented from participating in education because school life is very different from that of village life.

Furthermore, lack of financial report of the school was found to be negatively affecting parents' participation in school activities as parents wanted to know if the school fees worked

in the interest of the school. The study by Oosthuizen (1998) and Mussazi (2009) argued that the budget and estimated school fees was supposed to be approved by parents in their meetings, and the school financial reports made available to parents to avoid mistrust as well a financial problems solving at school.

5.7. Suggestions to involve parents' participation

Teachers, learners and parents had very clear proposals or suggestions on what could be done to improve or enhance the parents' participation in the school life of their children at school and home.

5.7.1. Teachers' suggestions

Teachers were of the opinion that parents could be actively involved in the learning process of their children by training parents in basic but necessary educational skills including, but not limited to, assisting parents in how they could teach their children good morals; advising parents on how to check and compare their children's examination results with other children's results; arranging parent's day to check on learners' written work books; assigning parents with topics to address children (e.g. a topic about how to choose a career), involving parents in the preparation of school events (e.g. the preparation of entrepreneurship trading) day; and encouraging parents to explain to their children the importance of education.

As Epstein (2002) suggested, teachers proposed that parents to be members of school committees to govern the school with teachers and share educational tasks that could operate the school accordingly. This idea is supported by Chikoko (2008) who stated that parents are responsible for school finances and as such they should have a final say on matters related to school finances. It is thus suggested that the ECS administration include parents in financial management and report to them how the funds are utilized to encourage them to participate in school activities.

They further suggested that parents could be included in school tasks such as year planning, discussions regarding children's performances and measures of improving results, assigning specific educational activities to parents, and award ceremonies for responsible parents who support children in their study. As found in the studies by Brown (2009); as well as Patall, Cooper, and Robinson (2008), teachers suggested that the school should give children homework and request parents to review and sign the work before it is returned to school. Research has shown that children who were assisted in doing homework were more likely to have better school outcomes than children who did not.

Hichman (1995) suggested schools to establish programs for training parents to teach children at home. Such programs could help in developing parents' fostering skills that could support learning at home. This might make parents to feel confident in contacting teachers to discuss children's learning.

It was also suggested that school administration should open the school doors to parents to encourage them to participate in school activities as well as to discuss ways of helping children to learn. This finding is supported by Farrant (1991) who argued that via discussions, parents and teachers were more likely to develop a mutual trust and share educational values that could support children to learn. So, discussion of parents and teachers are essential in order to empower the relationship between them so as to support children to learn.

For parents who showed signs of abusing alcohol should be empowered with the necessary knowledge and skills to increase their confidence in influencing their children positively to learn and develop self-confident. Research has shown that children with self-confident parents succeeded in school when compared to children with incompetent parents (Kohn, 2005). Parents should be equipped with moral skills for them to know between correct and

incorrect behavior and enable them to identify reasons why certain behaviors are considered unacceptable (Berkowitz & Grych, 1998).

To this end, teachers proposed to the government to set up limiting time of closing informal settlement shebeens so that parents could be able to control and assist their children to study at night. They also suggested to school principals to assign to parents tasks of painting classrooms or welding storerooms, burglar doors for the school as means of making use of the available skilled parents in schools rather than using some other skilled people.

5.7.2. Learners' suggestions

Learners were very articulate on what they thought could be done to get their parents actively involved in their (children) education. They suggested to the school to make effective communication with parents by regularly holding educational meetings and others activities to which all parents are invited. To parents, they proposed to be given enough food before and after school; to be provided time and space for doing homework and studying; and to be supported emotionally, physically and economically. Research has found that schools could provide parents with the necessary parenting skills to help parents to support children to behave well and enable them to learn at school. For example, a study by Hopkins (2008) and Erikson (2010) suggested that schools could organize workshops in order to provide parents with parenting skills that could help children on how to manage their anger and discus topics that prevent children against alcohol abuse that might help them in solving problems that they encountered.

Additionally, Lee and Bowen (2006) found that parents were rich with knowledge and skills that they gain via experiences and these could help children to behave well; thus, it would be useful if parents would make use of their knowledge and skills to advise young people to behave well and become disciplined. Furgerson (2011) suggested that parents could teach

children good behaviors by speaking politely to them, teach children how to listen to teachers, teach them good ways of looking to the speaker and teaching them to wait until the speaker finishes so that they could get chances for questions or additional comments.

Moreover, it was important for the school to empower parents with skills that could support children to learn at school and to build independent lives. There was a proverb translated from Oshikwanyama language that means *"the left hand should learn, before the right hand breaks"* (Hasheela, 1993). In the context of parent-child relationship this proverb means it is always better if children learn to help themselves while their parents are around in order to become independent especially when parents become absent. In that way, children could raise their self-esteem.

Nelson (1996) and Pope (2010) maintained that people with high self-esteem tend to succeed in life. Thus, parents could praise children for jobs well done in order for children to feel good about themselves. That is also how parents influence children's beliefs and develop healthy self-esteem in them. Meaning, it is very important for parents to be responsive to their children so as to develop healthy self-esteems in them.

5.7.3. Parents' suggestions

Parents suggested to the school to be trained in tasks that they could assist them to participate in their children's education. This proposal was in accordance with Dixon, Lundberg and McMurchy-rly childhood Pilkington's (2007) findings who asserted that parents need to be provided with early childhood education skills in order to increase their level of participation in education. To the contrary, parents who lack early childhood education skills might get difficulties in participating in the learning process of their children.

Parents were also of the idea that their participation in school lives of their children could be enhanced if the school could contact individual parents in order to discuss specific needs/problems of their specific children; arrange a parental day for parents to check children's school work so as parents to realize that their supports were needed at school; provide parents with necessary tasks that might guide parents to help children in doing their homework and inform parents the weaknesses and strengths of their children in terms of their performance.

Parents indicated that they could advise one another on how to encourage children to learn in their meetings. Parents gained moral support from attending school meetings. Kakavoulis (1994) added also that parents' participation in school activities increased their will to participate in the learning process. Parents could share ideas on how to support children to learn, because what one parent knows is likely to be different from what other parents know.

Parents were also proposed the Government of the Republic of Namibia to enact a law that would enforce all parents to take part in their children's education, and to set up control measures that could compel parents who spend long hours at *shebeens* till late to make enough time to help children in doing homework [refer to data 4.6.4. (h)]. Moreover, Brook, Ning, Balka and Lubliner, (2007) revealed that parents who abusing alcohol could not sufficiently take care of their children and their children might also suffer from behavioural problems such as: hunger, lack of sleeping at night, alcohol abuse teenage pregnancy etc. In consequence with these problems, children could sleep in class and refuse to learn. It is therefore might help if the GRN limits closing time of unlicensed bars where some of the parents spent long hours till night and enable to care children at home.

In contrast, the owners of unlicensed bars might have the same reasons like some of the businessmen in Namibia who were unhappy about the implementation of 1998 Liquor Act, due to the fact that their shebeens were their sources of income (Niikondo, 2006; Isaacs, 2006). These businessmen tend not to consider that bars and shebeens were more likely to spread the problem of alcoholism that could affect the future of children who were at school.

This chapter discussed the main findings of this study by using the framework research questions and theories that informed the study. The next chapter summarizes, concludes the study and also provides recommendations so as to improve parents' participation in education.

6. CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the most important findings and provides a conclusion as well as made recommendations based on findings of the study. This chapter also identifies possible areas for further research.

6.2. Summary of the study

This study focused on parents' participation in the learning process of their children at ECS in Ohangwena Education Region. The purposes of this study was to establish the extent to which parents in the Ohangwena Region participated in the education of their children; identified issues that hinder parents from being actively involved in the education of their children; determined parents' and learners' participation in the learning process of their children and generated ideas that would motivate parents to be actively involved in the education of their children.

The results of the study showed that parents had the most important influence in the learning process of their children in terms of school attendance; study after school; doing homework; behaviors in and outside school as well as provision of physical and educational needs. However, parents who took care of their children in terms of education were able to see good progress of their children at school. This was established by Epstein (2002) that children whose parents involved in education obtained good symbols, because they have positive attitude towards school. Epstein (2002) added that these children could have appropriate behavior than those children whose parents are inactive in education. Thus, it was necessary for both parents and teachers to realize the importance of parents' active participation in education, so that children obtain good symbols at school.

The importance of parents actively participating in education and in school activities at ECS seems not to be respected by many parents. Some parents have shown lack of interest in active participation in school activities. But Chen (2008) agreed that parents' participation in education did not only help children to achieve more academically, but also raised teachers' morale as well as provided parents with satisfaction. Thus, parental participation could make a difference in children's progress at school.

Abusing of alcohol for some parents seemed to be one of the hampering factors of parents' participation in the learning process of their children. The degree to which parents in the Ohangwena Education Region appeared to be hampered by ineffective communication between home and school is high, because both teachers and learners revealed that a few parents' meetings were held at ECS.

Moreover, the findings of the study pointed the need for proper relationships between the school and home in order for the school to prepare parents with study skills that could support children to learn. The study revealed that both teachers and learners expected parental participation in education to be one of the strategies that could support children to learn. The overall expectations of teachers and learners towards parents' participation in the learning process of their children's education appeared to be positive. Learners viewed parental involvement in education as the best way of guiding parents in supporting children physically, intellectually, socially and emotionally so as to get the necessary life skills. Teachers viewed parental involvement in education as the source of controlling children's behaviors after school. Thus, the more trust and confidence parents had on teachers, the more they could become involved in the learning process.

6.3.Conclusions

This study has found that some parents at ECS were actively involved in the learning process of their children and that some parents' participation in education was hampered by factors such as their lack of interest in education; long distances between home and school; ineffective communication between school and home and the alcohol abuse. Hence, it is imperative that schools create chances of including more parents in school activities in order to support children to learn. Inactive participation of parents in the learning process of their children tends to be taken in order for parents to support their children to learn at home and be able to perform well at schools. Sometimes parents lack study skills that they need to help children to learn at home. It is therefore vital for the schools to organize workshops or conferences so that parents gain knowledge and skills of supporting children with learning at home and enable to learn.

On the other hand, that lack of interest in their children's education of some parents needs to be considered by high educational authorities so that more parents realize the value of education. Illiterate parents who are unable to understand the value of education might need help. For example, learners at ECS expected parents to attend literacy classes so as to realize the importance of education. Some parents have a problem of abusing alcohol and hence spend a lot of time at shebeens [Refer to 4.6.4 parents' suggestions]. Their children might suffer from behavioural problems, such as hunger, lack of sleeping at night, misbehavior, alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, etc.

With these problems, children might sleep in lessons or dodge classes and refuse to learn. Thus, government could limit the closing time of unlicensed bars so that parents who spent long hours in bars till late can take care of children at night and be able to learn. Namibians

who are unhappy about the implementation of 1998 liquor act due to the fact that their sheebens are their source of income (Niikondo, 2006; Isaacs, 2006) tend not to consider that shebeens spread the problem of alcoholism that might affect the future of children who are at school.

Summarily, it is essential to realize that parents' participation in the learning process should be enhanced if parents actively participate in education. Without the support of parents in education, children are likely to lack life skills that might help them to learn at school. Parents were the main advisers and feeders of children.

6.4. Recommendations

The recommendations that were suggested from this study were grouped into three categories: such as, for the school, for the ministry of education and for future research.

6.4.1   Recommendations for ECS

This study recommends the school to hold regular and well-planned parental meetings - at least once per term to build a strong communication between children's homes and the school; to provide parents with study skills in order to help children with homework at home through organizing workshop or conferences; to provide parents with a financial report annually in order to encourage parents to participate in school activities; to explain to parents the vision and mission of the school for the parents to know what they were expected to do, and to develop a homework policy that could guide parents in helping children with homework.

6.4.2   Recommendations to the Ministry of Education

It is recommended to the Ministry of Education to consider and attend to educational issues that could improve active participation of parents in the learning process of their children; to deploy social workers to schools to help teachers in developing information materials about what parents could do at home so as to supplement what children were learning at school and to keep up with school events; to develop parental participation in education policy to ensure effective communication between parents and teachers that would support children to learn; to identify barriers to parental participation in education in order to support parents who are affected by such barriers; to establish school–based educational programs in each school that might provide children with appropriate behavioral skills, health skills etc. in order to expand parental moral support and thus to improve children's behavior.

6.4.3   Recommendations for future research

To this end, similar research is recommended to be carried out in future to establish the extent to which parents are aware of their responsibilities in education; to find the degree to which schools encourage parents to actively participate in education; to identify issues that could actively involve parents in participating in homework.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LEARNERS

Questionnaire for learners

Instructions:

- Please answer **all** the questions with honesty

- Do **not** write your name or any form of identity on this questionnaire

- Please be informed that all information you will give will be confidential and only be used for research purposes.

Section A: Biographical data

1. How old are you? _____years

2. How far is your home from the school? _____kilometers

3. Are you repeating grade 10? ____Yes; ____No

Section B: Learners' views of their parents' participation

Rate each statement that is given below by showing the extent to which agree or disagree with by crossing in the appropriate box:

4. Parents' meetings

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
My parents attend parents' meetings at school			

5. Feedback on parents' meetings

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
My parents talk to me about issues discussed in parents' meetings			

6. Study after school

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
My parents remind me to study after school			

7. Time to study at home

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
My parents give me enough time to study after school at home			

8. Going to school on time

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
My parents remind me to go to school on time			

9. Acceptable behaviours in and outside school

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
My parents talk to me about acceptable behaviours in and outside school			

10. Response to teachers' request for educational needs

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
My parents respond to the teachers' request for my educational needs			

Section C: Improving parental participation

11. What do you want your parents/guardians to do for you while you are still going to school?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

12. What do you think the school can do to encourage parents/guardians to actively take part in educational activities at your school?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

Thank you for your cooperation!!!!!!!

@@@

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Teachers' questionnaire

Instructions:

- Please answer **all** the questions with honesty.

- Do **not** write your name or any form of identity on this questionnaire

- Please be informed that all information you will give will be **confidential** and only be used for research purposes.

Section A: Biographical data

1. What is your gender? _____male; _____female

2. For how long have you been teaching at Eembaxu Combined School? _____years

3. What is you highest qualification? _____

4. Have you served in the management of Eembaxu Combined School? ____yes; _____no

Section B: Parents' participation

Rate each statement that is given below by showing the extent to which agree or disagree with by crossing in an appropriate box.

5. Parents' meetings

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
Parents attend parents' meetings at school			

6. Feedback on parents' meetings

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
Parents talk to their children about issues discussed in parents' meetings			

7. Study after school

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
Parents remind their children to study after school			

8. Time to study at home

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
Parents give their children enough time to study after school at home			

9. Going to school on time

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
Parents remind their children to go to school on time			

10. Acceptable behaviors in and outside school

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
Parents talk to their children about acceptable behaviors in and outside school			

11. Response to teachers' request for educational needs

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never

Parents respond to the teachers' request for their children educational needs			

12. What does the school do to help parents acquire skills of parent-child effective communication that might help children to behave well?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

13. In your view, how does the involvement of parents help learners perform well at school?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

14. How does the school provide parents with study skills on how to help children with homework?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

15. In your opinion, what prevent parents from participating in the activities at Eembaxu Combined School?

    a. _____

    b. _____

    c. _____

    d. _____

    e. _____

Section C: Improving parental participation

16. As a teacher, what can you do to increase the level of parental participation in education and activities at Eembaxu Combined School?

    a. _____

    b. _____

    c. _____

    d. _____

    e. _____

17. What do you expect from parents to do for learners to perform well?

    a. _____

    b. _____

    c. _____

    d. _____

    e. _____

18. What do you think the school should do to motivate parents to participate in education and activities at Eembaxu Combined School?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

Thank you for your cooperation!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

APPENDIX C: PARENTS' INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Parents' interview questions

1. How often do you attend parents' meetings at your school?

2. How are you informed about parents' meetings at home?

3. What are the main discussions at parents' meetings of your school?

4. What do you benefit by attending parents' meeting?

5. What kind of activities do you participate in at your school?

6. What do you benefit by participating in school activities?

7. How do you remind your child/children to study after school?

8. How do you make sure that your children attend or go to school every day?

9. What do you do to help your children with their homework?

10. How do you assist your children with problems that they encounter at school?

11. What do you talk to your children on issues discussed in parents' meetings?

12. What do you expect teachers to do regarding the learning process of your children?

13. What do you think should be done to get parents more involved into the learning process of their children?

14. What do you think should be done to get parents more involved in activities at their school?