PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN LEARNERS' EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE ERONGO REGION OF NAMIBIA

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BY

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate parental involvement in learners' education in secondary schools in the Erongo region of Namibia. The Namibian Education Act, 16 of 2001, was promulgated to ensure, among others, democracy in education through the active involvement of all stakeholders in the decision-making processes in schools. However, the involvement of parents as key stakeholders has been limited. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate parental involvement in learners' education at secondary schools in the Erongo region of Namibia. A qualitative case study design was used for this study. The population is comprised of parents, principals and teachers of six secondary schools in the Erongo region. Stratified purposive and purposive random sampling methods were used to select the sample. Interview guides were used as data collection instruments. The overall finding was that the extent of parental involvement in their children's education at secondary school was very minimal due to many factors, such as the poor educational background of parents. Other challenges were inadequate capacity building for parents, language barrier, and lack of understanding of educational matters on the part of the parents. These made it difficult for parents to make valuable contributions to their children's education in secondary schools. There is a need to equip parents with the necessary skills to partake actively in their children's education at the secondary school level. The study further recommends: that the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture should devise a training policy for school board members to ensure parents are kept abreast of the dynamics of education, and are actively involved in the education of their children and can be held accountable to some extent for the learning outcomes of their children.

Keywords: Parental involvement, School Board

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS USED IN THIS THESIS

MBEC	Ministry of Basic Education and Culture
MEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
MoE	Ministry of Education
MEAC	Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
MBESC	Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and culture
MESC	Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture
NDP4	National Development Plan 4
SBs	School Boards
SBEI	School-Based Evaluation Instrument
SBMs	School Board Members
UPE	Universal Public Education
USE	Universal Secondary Education

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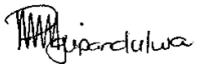
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to a remarkable woman who is very dear to my heart and has been there for me from afar but still fulfilled her motherly role. Without her motivation and faith to reach for the skies and make myself an independent woman, I would not have done this. Being her only daughter, she placed so much confidence in me and believed that I could be different and change my life story. This work is also decicated to my dear son. I promise I will not disappoint you, and I will reach for the skies.

DECLARATIONS

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

Penehafo N. Nghipandulwa		April 2023
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

After independence in 1990, the Namibian government made education one of its priority areas; consequently, many changes were made. According to Jekonia and Mowes (2015), before independence, parents were not considered essential partners in education and were not involved in crucial decisions regarding their children's education. That led parents to think that it was the responsibility of the education officials and teachers to make decisions on their children's education, and they appear to believe the same even after independence. Further, many parents do not realise the importance of parental involvement in their children's education, and they do not know their roles as partners in education (Victor, 2011). It is also observed that parental involvement declines as learners grow older (LaBahn, 1995).

Moreover, as children grow older, the connection between family and school declines from both parties involved. Research shows that parental involvement decreases after primary school and is minimal when the child reaches secondary school (Thornton, 2015). As parents believe, when a child reaches adolescence, they should have their own space for freedom.

Namibia's education is based on partnership, and the Education Act 16 0f 2001 stipulates that parents should constitute the majority of members of the school board (Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, 2001). Parents are expected to,

inter alia, study their children's school reports, attend parents' meetings at schools, advise their children on career choices and contribute financially or in-kind to schools' development (Jekonia and Mowes, 2015).

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (2016) aims to fully empower and encourage parents to participate in educational activities at all school levels. The Education Act (2001) advocates that every state school shall have the school board function as a body through which the community (parents, teachers and learners) can participate in the governance of the school (MBESC, 2004). Studies showed that children whose parents or guardians share in their formal education tend to do better in school. According to Tomas and Ileni (2018), children tend to copy their parents' behaviour; when parents are actively involved in their schooling endeavours, they will learn the importance of education and emulate it. Furthermore, Ramadikela (2012) states that a parent is one of the most important pillars upon which the child's education should be placed. Without parental support in education, the child may experience great difficulty in academic achievement and later in life. Some benefits that have been identified that are ascribed to parental involvement in education include scoring higher grades in tests and examinations, long term academic achievement, positive attitudes and behaviours and more successful programmes (Epstein, 2001). According to Martinez (2015), several reasons for the decline of parental involvement in the education of older children have been recorded. Parents of secondary school children often report feelings that children should do homework alone and that the parents shouldn't try to help if they're not experts in the subjects (Mwirichia, 2013).

Significantly, involving parents entails improved instruction and learning (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1993). That can be done by developing better ways to assess understanding to help schools and learners maximise the benefits of spending on education and reduce inefficiency. According to the Ministry of Basic Education Sport and Culture (2004), the first 14 years of independence were guided by the need to redress the past inequalities and injustices through access to education for all, equity of resource distribution to all, building and consolidating a democratic culture, and encouraging the population to become a learning nation. The focus of education now is on the provision of relevant quality education, which embraces the ever-changing world of work and prepares learners who are critical thinkers and scientifically as well as technologically literate (MBESC, 2004).

Having parents involved in education helps to improve the quality of teaching, and thus it is considered of high importance. Quan-Baffour (2006) observes that some schools underestimate parents' involvement as stakeholders in their children's education. Thus, teachers and school principals tend to defend the status quo and argue that they understand education issues better than the parents. That is due to the perception that parental involvement is unproductive since the majority of the parents do not understand the subjects taught in schools.

Hence, parents have been less involved in education and school governance and have no relevant experience regarding their roles and responsibilities in school governance (Mendelsohn, 1997). Mendelsohn (1997) further points out that at

independence, Namibia inherited a segregated education system, and parents' involvement in the affairs of the schools was very minimal. The change process to a more democratic education system that Namibia has undergone culminated in reform legislation and policy initiatives (Khama, 2014). According to Khama (2014), one of the current developments in the Namibian education dispensation is the Education Act 16 of 2001. The Act provides for the active participation of stakeholders in education (Ministry of Basic Education Sport and Culture, 2001). That was done to improve the educational quality and to promote democracy in education. The Act also obliges stakeholders such as parents, teachers, learners and the principals to participate actively in the activities of the schools (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1993). Menheere and Hooge (n. d.) state that a crucial factor in establishing and maintaining forms of partnership in children's education is mutual trust between parents and teachers.

Moreover, before independence, the lack of parental involvement was also supported by the Department of Education (Ministry of Education, and Culture, 1993), arguing that parents of learners in schools for the blacks were ignorant. Therefore they could not be involved in the education of their children like their white counterparts. The education system then was not open to key stakeholders, the parents.

The Education Act 16 of 2001 (Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, 2001) states that "all persons shall have the right to education, " which addresses the past imbalances and practices in the education system and improves educational quality. The new political dispensation mandates that schools allow the Namibian

people, particularly parents, to participate in issues that affect their children's education fully.

What is more, most Namibian schools face the problem of under-educated and uneducated black parents because of the legacy of colonial education (Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, 1993). As a result, parents with low education may experience problems coping with the changes and challenges of participating in decision-making processes in schools and their children's education, particularly at the secondary school level.

For education to be responsive to the needs of communities and parents, it is of paramount importance that parents are regarded as partners. Schools are organised to enable parents to be active participants in the learners' education, active contributors to discussions of school governance, and active evaluators of the quality of instructions and learning (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1993). Our education system should be democratic, organised around broad participation in decision-making, and hold school leaders accountable.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Many schools in the Erongo Region are faced with the challenges of lack of parental involvement (Niilenge, 2017). Many Namibian parents show minimal interest in school programmes as they (parents) have different views about the nature and purpose of involvement (Khan, 1996). It is observed that only a few secondary schools in the Erongo Region involve parents in education. In many secondary

schools, parent-teacher meetings are dominated by teachers, and parents have very littl say. Therefore, there is a need to investigate parental involvement in learners' education at secondary schools in the Erongo Region. As outlined above, parents become less involved as their children grow older for many reasons: schools are more prominent, and further from home, the curriculum is more sophisticated, each learner has several teachers, parents of older children that is secondary school learners are more likely to be employed, and learners are beginning to establish some sense of separation and independence from their parents (Cotton and Wikelund, 1989). National Development Plan (2004) states that, despite significant and numerous efforts to strengthen education and skills, our education system is still perceived as performing below its potential and remains a strategic area under the NDP 4. Education is acknowledged as a crucial aspect of human development and a critical success factor for economic growth and increased equality (National Development Plan, 2004). Clearly, parental involvement is essential for fostering achievement and practical gains at all levels, and schools should be encouraged to engage and maintain this involvement throughout secondary school years.

Research reveals that when parents are involved in their children's education, they perform better, and the relationships between home and school improve (Van Zyl, 2013). Martinez (2015) states that inadequate or no parental involvement contributes to low student achievement. Another concern is that most Namibian schools are faced with uneducated parents. Their lack of education is likely to affect their involvement in the education of their children. Nakale (2018) asserts that currently, Namibia has no educational requirements for parents to serve on school

boards. Many are appointed because they are known in those communities but cannot even read and write. Nakale (2018) describes that if the government does not set requirements, the schools will be negatively affected if parents serving on the school board cannot read or write or fully understand their role as board members.

There are very few opportunities for parents and teachers to come together for meaningful, substantive discussions. Schools organise formalised meetings that do not allow for actual contact, negotiation between parents and teachers. Thus, this establishes boundaries between teachers and parents under the pretext of polite conversation (Mwirichia, 2013). It is against this background this study aimed to investigate parental involvement in learners' education at secondary schools in the Erongo region.

1.3 Research questions

(a) How are parents involved in the education of their children in secondary schools in the Erongo Region?

(b) What role do parents play in the education of secondary school learners in the Erongo Region?

(c) What factors affect parental involvement in the education of learners in secondary schools in the Erongo Region?

(d) What do secondary schools do to address factors affecting parental involvement in the education of the learners in the Erongo Region?

1.4 Significance of the study

The intended study will add to existing relevant knowledge and guide educational policymakers about the importance of parental involvement in education. That will further aid in improving the learners' academic results. This study hopes that the understanding obtained will enlighten teachers, parents and policymakers in the Erongo region and other stakeholders in education about the challenges schools face regarding parental involvement. Secondly, it will help policymakers plan interventions to address factors that affect parent regarding their involvement in learners' education, thereby improving the quality of education. Thirdly, this study is also of vital importance to parents, teachers, and principals. It hopes to point out roles and highlights the potential factors that need to be addressed to help parents carry out their functions effectively. Lastly, although it is a case study of six secondary schools only, it hopes to provide potentially useful information to schools and principals in other regions facing similar challenges.

1.5 Delimitations of the study

This study is limited to six secondary schools in the Erongo Region of Namibia; thus, the findings may not be generalised to the whole population of secondary schools in Namibia.

1.6 Limitations of the study

Firstly, the lack of detailed research on parent involvement in Namibia in general and in the Erongo region, particularly, limited local literature review. Secondly, the researcher did not have time to collect data from all secondary schools in the Erongo region. She is a full-time employee; however, a manageable sample has been selected. Moreover, the participants were also occupied with their work, and at times, it was challenging to commit to set appointments. The participants provided unreliable information since they did not want to implicate themselves by associating with a lack of knowledge on parental involvement. Therefore, the researcher triangulated information obtained through different data collection instruments, namely interviews and document reviews

1.7 Definition of terms

In this study, the following terms should be understood as follows:

(a) Parental involvement

Parents' active and willing participation in a wide range of school-based and home-based activities extends from supporting and upholding the school ethos where parents play an essential role in assisting their children's learning (Van Zyl, 2013).

(b) Secondary school

Refers to junior secondary schools with grades 8-10 and secondary schools with grades 8-12.

(c) Democratic school governance

Refers to the sharing of power by the school principal and all the relevant stakeholders to ensure that school policies are developed democratically, through rational discourse and deliberations by the principal and all the democratically elected representatives of the school boards (Botha, 2012).

(d) School board

Refers to the advisory and governing body at the school level, representing the parents, teachers, and learners and communicating with parents/ guardians and the community (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, 2016).

1.8 Chapter summary

This chapter is an introduction to this study. It started by looking at the background of the study. Under background, an introduction to parental involvement challenges is made. There could be several challenges that parents of learners at secondary schools face. Therefore, it is imperative to investigate parental involvement in learners' education at secondary schools. The statement of the problem and research questions that guided the study have been stated. This chapter also discussed the reasons for conducting the research and why the study is significant to parents, principals, Namibian policymakers, and other stakeholders. The delimitations and limitations of the study were also discussed. The next chapter deals with the review of literature that underpins the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This study aimed to investigate parental involvement in learners' education at secondary schools in the Erongo region. It was necessary to conduct a review of relevant literature to make the problem clear. The literature reviewed for this study yielded two sections. The first section was the theoretical framework that informed the theoretical assumptions and perspectives of this study. The second section dealt with a scholarly review of literature on parental involvement in their children's education at secondary schools to put this study in the proper context. Lastly, the researcher discussed strategies to enhance parental involvement in education to produce desired results.

2.2 Theoretical framework

The participative management theory, also known as the democratic management theory of Kurt Lewin developed in 1920 (Iilonga, 2016), informed this study. Lewin theorises that involvement promotes the sharing of knowledge among stakeholders. The participative management theory advocates for the participation of all stakeholders in the management of organisations, including schools (Khama, 2014). Lewin believes that the traditional authoritarian control of organisations does not bring about desired results. The participative management theory is relevant to this study. It emphasises the establishment of participative governance in schools whereby stakeholders, including parents, actively participate in decision-making

instead of traditional authoritarian management theory in which school managers are the only ones deciding (Iilonga, 2016). According to MEC (1993), education should be structured to give all stakeholders opportunities to contribute to teaching and learning.

Nadeem (2012) states that participative management allows stakeholders to participate in decision-making and involves treating the ideas and suggestions of all stakeholders with consideration and respect. Therefore, taking on participative management theory allows parents to contribute to the improvement of schools through their skills, knowledge, and talent.

As suggested by Lewin, shared governance and collaboration need to be introduced in secondary schools to transform education. According to Masschelein and Quaghebeur (2005), there has been a call to promote participation in educational practices for learners, parents and teachers. For increased and active involvement of these target groups (parents), they can contribute to making decisions and policies that can bring about a more effective education system.

This theory also sees each parent's role in education as they are the community's voice, especially parents serving on the school board. This, in most cases, predisposes children toward some ways of life and away from others (Fisher, 2004). As stakeholders in education, it shows how they can efficiently and successfully contribute to education as a system. Branch (2009) affirms that involving stakeholders in decision-making increases their morale and commitment to the

school, resulting in good performance and benefits for everyone. A participatory work environment promotes sharing opinions and more interaction among stakeholders (Iilonga, 2016).

In the context of parental involvement, the Ministry of Education and Culture (1993, p.168) emphasises the purpose, namely

> *To improve our education system and to upgrade the quality of our schools, which requires a good deal of work in our schools and communities. To achieve that and maximise the local contributions to our education system, we shall need to decentralise both responsibility and authority.*

Nadeem (2012) argues that stakeholder involvement in decision-making instils a sense of pride and motivates parents to increase their involvement to achieve their desired goals and improve the understanding of the issues involved by those who must carry out the decision.

Parents who participate in the organisation's decisions feel that they are a part of a team with a common objective and find their sense of self-confidence and creative fulfilment heightened (Zafar, 2015). Participation keeps parents informed of upcoming events to be aware of potential changes (Khama, 2014). Through training, development opportunities, and information sharing, parents can acquire the conceptual skills needed to become influential stakeholders in the education of their learners at secondary schools. It also increases the commitment of parents to the organisation and the decisions they make (Niitembu, 2006; Hamunyela, 2008). Creativity and innovation are two essential benefits of participative management.

By allowing a diverse group of parents to have input into decisions, the organisation benefits from the cooperation that comes from a wider choice of options (Branch, 2009). When parents are allowed to participate instead of just teachers or school management, the chances are increased that useful and unique ideas will be suggested. For participation to be effective, school managers must be genuine and honest in implementing the partnership

MoE (1993) emphasises that participative management allows more creative and innovative administration as decision making is decentralised. It also allows more effective monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of development projects. When policies are set and programmes are implemented locally, our communities can better monitor the resulting activities, thereby reducing waste. Moreover, local people may be quite willing to contribute additional funds to support their schools.

Many parents need to consistently see that their ideas are accepted or at least seriously considered. MoE (1993, p.171) further affirms that

> *We cannot expect our citizens to contribute funding to our schools without having a voice in their management and functioning, nor can we ask our learners and their parents to behave responsibly towards community schools unless they also have some responsibility for those schools. Our schools towards community schools unless they also have some responsibility for those must also be their schools.*

Thus, it is important to provide them with information or training so they can make informed choices. Therefore, encouragement should be offered to accustom parents to the participative management approach.

One way to help parents engage in the decision-making process is by knowing their strengths and capitalising on them. Lemmer and Van Wyk (2009) reveal that parental participation depends entirely on their educational level, which plays a major role in their contributions and abilities. Smith (2011) affirms that for parents to participate and advocate for their children in the school, they must possess cultural resources that are recognised and acknowledged. By guiding parents towards areas in which they are knowledgeable, a manager can help ensure their success.

In a nutshell, the participative management theory was appropriate for this study since its primary assumption is participation by staff, parents and the community in the school organisation. Thus, this study was based on participative management theory because it attempted to investigate challenges faced by parents in being actively involved and taking decisions, maintaining a supportive relationship with teachers and learners, and taking ownership of their children's education.

2.3 Legal rights and obligations of parents

The Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, (2001) gives parents the legal right by transferring powers and responsibilities from the central authorities to individual schools to help promote the development of the school and its learners. Iilonga (2016) affirms that the notion of parents' involvement was necessitated by the need for public accountability, arguing that school boards are accountable to all who are interested in the school and its activities. Offering parents a choice in the final decision is crucial because it increases their commitment, motivation, and satisfaction. Parents need to know that they have contributed.

Coetzee (2012) asserts that parents are regarded as equal partners in education, and it is widely acknowledged that successful education depends on parents' cooperation and involvement. Parents have a role to play in the education of their children and have certain rights regarding their children's education. Parents have to support their children.

Niitembu (2006) states that parental involvement in school governance is only visible through roles, responsibilities and powers they have in the school board. Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (2001); Niitembu (2006); Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (2004); Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (2016) and Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (2018) stipulate the roles of the school boards. Where parents are involved in their children's education at the higher level as stakeholders and, as such, supporting teachers, school principals and other staff of the schools in the performance of their professional functions at the school, dealing with disciplinary hearings of learners, teachers and other staff at the school. Monitoring and supporting teaching and learning outcomes to ensure quality education and suspending learners from attending school as a corrective measure. Developing and maintaining school infrastructure; recommending the appointment, promotion of teaching and other staff at the school, as well as encouraging parents, learners, teachers and other staff members at the school to render voluntary services to the school, and ensure the meaningful parental, community and learner participation in school governance and social accountability.

Moreover, the brief policy of education, “Towards Education For All,” which Namibia adopted, is based on four goals of education, access, equity, quality and democracy (MoE, 1993). One of these goals: democracy regulate participation in the decision-making process and promotes clear accountability in the governance of schools in Namibia. The constitution and the Education Act (Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, 2001) empower and encourage community members, some of whom are also parents of children in Namibia, to fully participate in their children's education. The Education Act introduces what Chindanya (2011) defines as giving parents new rights over their children’s education by giving them the responsibility of governing schools their children attend and legitimasing parental participation in various school functions. Hamunyela (2008) concurs that parental presence and active involvement in school activities enriches the curriculum and sends a strong communication to the learners about the importance of schooling. It improves parents’ self-confidence and home support for education, increases parent-child interactions, and strengthens the relationships between school personnel and families.

The Ministry of Education (2005) encourages collaboration between parents and the school by introducing parental involvement in education through school boards. The Ministry of Education and Culture (1993) clarifies that schools should exercise democracy by involving parents in their children's education to address inequalities, conflicting issues, and the interest that occur in the education system. The Ministry of Education (2005) demands that school principals support and assist the parents serving on the school board in executing their roles in managing schools to improve

educational quality, ensure effective teaching and learning, and provide democratic school-based decision-making. Iilonga (2016, p.35) states that "schools' management should include parents at all times because education is a shared responsibility. The improvement of education is not for teachers only." Hamunyela (2008) affirms that education is a joint endeavour between home and school. Hamunyela (2008, p. 28) adds that parental involvement strengthens the bond of partnership and should not be seen as a system to release teachers from "mundane" work. It should convey parental rights and responsibility within the school to parents and establish a set of parents' expectations as partners.

2.3.1 Roles of parents in education

Parental involvement is seen as a prolific relationship between home and educational settings. The principals and teachers are responsible for involving parents in their work for educational reasons (Hamunyela, 2008). Smith (2011) describes parental involvement as exchanging information, sharing decision-making, volunteering at the school, and collaborating with learners in the educational process. Hamunyela (2008) further states that parental involvement can be attributed to the realisation of participative management and democracy in the education system. Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (2018) asserts that the parent of a learner must ensure that the learner attends school regularly, in particular, all mandatory classes and school-related events; and the parents must ensure that all learning material issued to a learner is returned to the school in good condition at the end of each academic year; and that the parent is accountable for all losses and damages caused by the learner to the school. Ministry of Education, Arts and

Culture (2018) adds that a learner's parent must instil in the learner discipline and a sense of responsibility. The parent must assist the school's governing body to promote a culture of accountability and respect for school property, tolerance and respect for human rights, and learning and teaching at school. That shows that the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (2018) and the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, Act 16 (2001) aim to actively empower and encourage parents outside the school to be involved in their children's education. It also seeks parents input in making decisions for the school.

Furthermore, the home and school form the micro-systems of a child's educational development. The correlation between home and school is essential to a cohesive and effective learning environment (Jekonia & Mowes, 2015). Therefore, parents and the communities need to support the education of children (Lemmer, 1999). Parents should participate in the affairs of schools regarding their children's education and not only come to schools when they want to register their children at the beginning of each year (Abraham, 2017). Schools and the community should engage and build an affirmative partnership by making schools the centre of the community (Samuel-Okoyel, 2021) and involving the teachers, administrators, parents and business and community members to support the school (Smith, 2011; National Development Plan 2004). Families should always be engaged in decision making and policy formulation concerning their children's care and education. Coetzee (2012) states that parents are at liberty to discuss curriculum matters with the teachers and principal and make representation to the governing body on issues

that concern them. Parents have the right to be informed of the performance, progress and behaviour of their children.

The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (2016) ministerial directive states that schools belong to the community, underscores the importance of communities taking responsibility for the functioning and performance of their schools. According to Mpiluka (2014), most parents are not well aware of their role in their children's education. Thus, their attitude toward helping their children is that they do not take an interest in their children's education. Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (2019, p.40) acknowledges that "unfortunately in some Namibian schools parents are disconnected from the education of their children and feel resentment towards the school for one reason or another." The Ministry of Education further adds that if hostility between the school and the community has already formed, schools will need to reach out to parents, families, and the community to improve this soured relationship.

The Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (2005) and the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (2016) points out that parents should support the education of their children in the two ways:

By providing a quiet place for homework or study and ensuring that the children have time to do their school work, ensure that children are punctual and attend school every day, ensure that children are well-fed with nutritious meals, address the welfare of the children, protect them from exposure to violence, drugs and alcohol and by addressing issues of mental health, communicate openly with their children about their daily lives as well as on complicated matters the children may

be dealing with such as peer pressure and sexuality, show interest in the children's lives while practising positive discipline, and participate in the running of the school. Parents should also show support by attending parents' meetings at school, liaising with teachers, checking how the children are assessed by the teachers, becoming a school board member, maintaining contacts with teachers, and rendering material and financial support to school where necessary. Lastly, parents should volunteer to help the school when requested; keep themselves up to date with current affairs by sharing information, reading books and newspapers, sharing them with children, and attending sports and cultural events, cheering and applauding the participants.

As community members, the parents should:

Demand best service from the School Boards, establish SBs and attend school meetings to air their views and suggestions, support the establishment of platforms such as radio programmes, discussion forums, social media to address critical issues like discipline and the value of education, create awareness a campaign to get parents involved in education, and support the school interventions aiming at improving learner's attendance and focus on schoolwork.

According to Naanda (2013), excluding parents maintains that schools alone can provide all education. Fletke (1997) affirms that a child's success depends on a cooperative partnership between parents and the school. Similar ideas are expressed by the Ministry of Education and Culture (1993), that education is far too broad and far too significant a task to be entirely the responsibility of a single institution. We

should therefore encourage others to join with the Ministry of Education in addressing the challenges of education and development.

Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (2004) states that Namibia advocates for the process of consultation and participation, believing that education is a participatory and partnership venture. The education system in Namibia has recognised that secondary school education provision has to be improved and expanded to adequately prepare school leavers for the world of work and further studies. Aipinge (2007) emphasises that decentralisation of power allows and encourages subordinates to participate in the decisions that affect them.

Moreover, Martinez (2015) argues that parental involvement has many positive effects on learners, including increased motivation, self-esteem and self-reliance, leading to academic success regardless of economic background. Parental involvement in children's education presents enormous possibilities to enhance the existing educational partnership between teachers and parents. It presents teachers with opportunities to authoritatively communicate with and demonstrate their professional expertise (Van Zyl, 2013). MEAC (2016) asserts that stakeholders, particularly the parents, need to support the teaching and learning process and ensure a benign and secure school environment. They should have confidence in their abilities as critical stakeholders to improve the quality of education. Therefore, parents should regard themselves as agents of change in education and should be encouraged to act accordingly.

Parents have the responsibility to ensure the high academic achievement of learners in our education system. The government’s goals to ensure inclusively quality and

equitable education as stipulated in the National Development Plan 4 and Vision 2030 are best achieved by decentralising education and promoting social accountability at all levels (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture, 2016). Naanda (2013) affirms that there is no doubt that parental involvement in the education of children can foster improved academic achievement. The involvement of parents demands the provision of information to parents on the competency and progress of children, which will entail the establishment of a systematic approach to the assessment of learners in school and regular evaluation of the school work as a whole.

The importance of parental involvement in children's educational life at secondary school cannot be over-emphasised. It is one of the most leading and essential factors in an adolescent's life. According to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (2016), parents send their children to school to learn, develop and succeed in life. Therefore, they should support the schools to create an environment that can enable their children to develop to their maximum potential and thrive. Parents are also expected to continue supporting their children by ensuring that their home is conducive to learning and development. LeBrun-Martin (2013) emphasises that involving parents encourages learners' natural talents, improves their behaviour, increases classroom attendance, promotes classroom compliance, and increases adolescents' achievement. LeBrun-Martin (2013) adds that one approach to helping children academically is to increase parental involvement in their education, influencing children's academic achievement. According to (Flekte, 1997) at private schools, parents' most significant commitment is financial. Most private schools

expect a high level of parental involvement, and some offer tuition reductions if parents work at the school. Flekte (1997) also adds that parents of private schools tend to have a stronger voice in curriculum matters, have more responsibilities in the school's daily operations, and keep in closer contact with the school organisation and staff. On the other hand, government school is where parental involvement can run the range from extremely high to practically non-existent, and that could be within the same school district (Fletke, 1997). Smith (2011) states that parents from higher socioeconomic backgrounds were increasingly more directly involved in their children's schooling than parents of lower socioeconomic status.

It is essential to investigate parental involvement in learners' education in secondary school to provide children with the higher quality education they deserve to succeed in life. Epstein (2001, p.316) believes that the home and the school create "overlapping spheres of influence" on children's development and academic achievement and collaboration, and these two spheres (school and home) can significantly influence the educational attainment of children. Epstein designed a model that encompassed of six major types of parental involvement in children's education: communication, parenting, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and advocacy, as well as collaboration with the community that support learners' academic achievement. Secondary schools are responsible for equally educating the parents, learners, and the school (Smith, 2011).

Regardless of how challenging it may be for parents, parents must become more involved in solving the educational problems facing their children at secondary school (LeBrun-Martin, 2013) as numerous advantages arise from the involvement

of parents in education. Parental teaching is rooted in daily life and occurs in many (Bempechat, 1990) delicate and indirect ways. Thus, parents who encourage an active approach towards learning (Fletke, 1997). It was found in some studies that parents' attitudes, expectations and beliefs about schooling and learning guide their behaviour about their children and have a causal influence on the children's development of achievement, attitudes and behaviours (Naanda, 2013). Menheere and Hooge (no. date) assert that parental involvement in children's education affects learning outcomes and influences learning, motivation, attention, task persistence, receptive vocabulary skills, and conduct problems in the classroom. Parental involvement is instrumental as parents socialise children to promote their children's social and educational goals.

2.3.2 Democratic governance

Pomerantz, Moorman and Litwack (2007), as cited in LeBrun-Martin (2013), Ministry of Education Sport and Culture (2001) and Fletke (1997), state that parents can also become involved with schools at an advanced level which can include becoming a member of the school board and attending school board meetings. That is considered to be of a higher level nature as parents place themselves within the positions of governance that can allow them to have more influence (LeBrun-Martin, 2013) in the school's decision-making process and fulfil their role as partners in education.

According to MEAC (2016), each school board is responsible to its community to govern the school efficiently and effectively, provide strategic guidance to the principal, and oversee its management. According to the Ministry of Education Arts

and Culture (2016), the composition of the school board should be parents with children at the school, and who are not employed there. The school parents must be in the majority, and the others are school teachers, the school principal and two learners from the Learners' Representative Council (LRC). That applies to secondary schools only. The parent and teacher school board members are elected for three years, while learners are elected by their peers annually. School board members have the right to express their views freely and without prejudice at school board meetings, visit the school regularly and at any time, take legal action against any wrongdoing by members of the school community as per the Education Act and regulations made under the Education Act, (Act 16 of 2001) and take consensual decisions based on the specific context of the school within the parameters of the statutory laws and regulations.

2.3.3 The primary responsibilities of the School Board

The school board has the responsibility to develop the vision and policies of their school, recommend staff appointments, develop and maintain the school infrastructure, promote school welfare, communicate with parents/guardians and the community, establish committees for managing and supporting specific functions, such as hostel management, school finance, administer the school finances including the Hostel Development Fund, ensure the establishment and management of funds are aligned with the Universal Secondary Education (USE) requirements. Monitor and support teaching and learning outcomes to provide quality education (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture, 2016).

The partnership between schools and families can improve school programmes and settings, provide families much needed support, advance parent's skills and connect families with others in the community (Epstein, 2001 and Hamunyela, 2008). Research shows that parental involvement is more imperative to children's academic success than their family's socio-economic status, race, ethnicity or educational background (Durisic and Bunijevac, 2017).

Most forms of parental involvement such as parental competence, parents' educational aspirations for their children, parental care, and parent-child communication about school have been found to be positively related to educational outcomes, including academic achievement, academic self-concept, homework self-efficacy and increased performance (LeBrun-Martin, 2013). Parental involvement has also been said to enhance children's mental health, emotional and social functioning. Parental interest in and attitudes towards education is positively correlated with the academic achievement of children and increased effectiveness of a school as an organisation (Erlendsdottir, 2010). Thus research also revealed that parents had increased difficulty in being involved in their children's secondary education as determining which educator (teacher) is responsible for which part of the child's academic programme can be overwhelming for parents (Durisic and Bunijevac, 2017). However, parents also feel excluded and struggle to obtain information about the school day from their children; therefore, they need more effective ways to be kept informed by the schools about their children's education progress (Jekonia and Mowes, 2015).

Parental involvement exemplifies practices of parents that embrace participation and contact with the school. These practices include attending school meetings, talking with the teachers, attending school events, and volunteering. The most common school-based involvements are parents attending meetings such as Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and parent-teacher conferences, which are poorly attended by parents (Fletke, 1997; LeBrun-Martin, 2013).

Moreover, parents should maintain a good interpersonal relationship with the school, as a close relationship between parents and teachers is essential for learners' success because it can result in a higher level of learners' attendance, lower levels of chronic absenteeism and lower levels of children's behavioural problems, Galindo and Sheldon (2012) as cited in (LeBrun-Martin, 2013). Collaboration between the parents and the school imparts valuable messages of the importance of education consistently viewed in the participative management theory, emphasising the importance of participation in an organisation (secondary schools).

Studies show that parents' involvement in learners' education at the secondary school level can positively influence children's development and academic achievement. Parents who are more involved at their children's school had children with higher literacy performance and better overall grades. These children tend to outperform their peers who do not have the same involvement from their parents (LeBrun-Martin, 2013). Durisic and Bunijevac (2017) state that parental participation provides an opportunity for schools to enhance existing school programmes by bringing parents into the educational process. Schools need to

attempt to involve many parents and community members in children's education through effective partnership programmes to express the importance of education.

According to Fletke (1997), parents should set high expectations for their children and positively emphasise schooling. Additionally, parents should ensure that children are being taught by talking to their children and assessing them. If resources within the school have been exhausted, a parent may address their concern to the Inspector of Education (MEAC, 2016).

Furthermore, the regular undertaking of homework provides a pronounced and practical way to demonstrate their interest in and commitment to their children's education. That provides an opportunity for parents to make a valued contribution (providing learning activities at home: helping with homework, discussing grades, assisting the child study, and deliberating on academic endeavours and subjects such as the significance of school, daily activities and student) to influence the child's education (Epstein, 2001; LeBrun-Martin, 2013; Flekte, 1997 and MEAC, 2016). Homework can build an opportunity for parents and children to discuss information, facts and attitudes toward school and communicate thoughtfully about learning. Parental involvement with homework can also support the parent in noticing the child's learning capabilities and progress through witnessing how the child completes projects (Epstein, 1987) as cited in (LeBrun-Martin, 2013). According to Menheere and Hooge (no. date), parents engaging in educational activities with their children at home with homework, reading and so forth parents communicate their expectations for achievement. That brings the school curriculum goals within the situation at home.

Homework is the most regular link between home and school as it strengthens in-class teaching and is important for cementing and clarifying knowledge and skills learned during school time. Therefore, it should be seen as an opportunity to develop a meaningful and workable partnership between the home and the school, as parents should supervise and support learners' work (MEAC, 2016). Even if parents do not understand subjects, merely asking their children how they are doing in school and ensuring they have completed their assignments in time will go a long way towards motivating them to perform well in school. Parents should take the responsibility to strictly supervise their children's studies at home, even if it is not always fun (Van Zyl, 2013).

It (homework) also allows parents to gain an insight into the children's progress. LeBrun-Martin (2013) states that parental involvement in children's education has become an important factor for building parent-child relationships and improving the children's path to educational success. LeBrun-Martin (2013) asserts that parental involvement and encouragement is vital for children's learning, attitude toward school, educational objectives, personal development, and academic progress and achievement.

Communicating with teachers and supporting them is important because parents need to monitor the progress of their children and guide them in their studies, addressing any challenges the children may face with the teachers and the principal so that the child can receive support from school (MEAC, 2016, and Mpiluka, 2014). Moreover, Fletke (1997) and MBESC (2004) emphasise that parents need to be part of the discipline process as their partnership can establish discipline

guidelines that both home and school can reinforce. That shows that their (parents) involvement influences learners' achievement across all academic areas.

Although literature presents convincing evidence of a positive relationship between parental involvement in education and increased learners' learning and achievement, it indicates a strong relationship between insufficient involvement and parents' socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds. Some sources have not given enough attention to parents as sources for maximising children's academic learning. Smith (2011) and Hamunyela (2008) argue that when the school environment is not sensitive to the home language and culture, a two-way communication is often challenging, and many parents are discouraged from initiating any type of dialogue with the teachers, thus creating disparities between the cultures of the parents and teachers.

Hamunyela (2008) and Smith (2011) state that learners who lack cultural capital have restricted parental involvement and are likely to have lower academic accomplishment than their peers. Moreover, the cultural capital differences may reduce parents' ability to obtain information and parental skills, which can better equip their children regarding school-related activities, regardless of whether parents are active or not active in school (Smith, 2011 and Hamunyela, 2008). Martinez (2015); LeBrun-Martin (2013); MEAC (2016); Van Zyl (2013); Department of Basic Education (2012) and Lemmer and Van Wyk (2010) dispel that and state that parents can be a source of motivation to their children irrespective of the parents' financial standing and literacy levels.

Wright and Stegelin (2003) concur that parental involvement in education is important in all communities, being low self-esteem and or hopeless due to educators' attitudes. Cotton and Wikelund (1989) assert that parents often start their participation uncertain whether their involvement can make much difference. They are generally very pleased to learn what a significant impact they can make. Therefore, school personnel and parents need to be aware that parental involvement supports learning, behaviour, and attitudes regardless of parents' income, educational level, or parents' employment and family background (Cotton and Wikelund, 1989). Cotton and Wikeland (1989) also add that involvement of parents who are well educated or have more significant amounts of time to be involved has not shown to be more advantageous than the involvement of less privileged parents (Cotton and Wikelund, 1989).

Department of Basic Education (2012) affirms that poor parent oversight reduces the sense of community among school's staff members, hence a sense of purpose and discipline within the school. Edsource (2014) and Cotton and Wikelund (1989) argue that parents of disadvantaged and minority children can do and make a positive contribution to their children's achievement in school if they receive adequate training and encouragement in types of parental involvement that can make a difference. Parents can make a difference irrespective of their levels of education.

Studies have not adequately specified the kinds and activities of parental involvement compatible with poor socio-economic conditions. Research reveals that information on how to ensure the practice of parental involvement that improves

and promotes learners learning in education is frequently lacking (Hamunyela, 2008), which is the same insufficient focus on enhancing parents' assistance in the education dimension (Heneveld and Craig, 1996) as cited in Hamunyela (2008). Little explicit consideration is given to involving parents as learning resource people in education. Hamunyela (2008) further states that parental involvement best works when it responds to particulars of the contexts it serves. MEC (1993) asserts that parents' involvement is rooted in the belief that schools should be fully involved in educating all youth effectively. It is an indispensable factor in building effective schools. Uaandja (2018) believes that if parents fail to take responsibility for their children's education, then the government policy of Universal Public Education (UPE) is geared towards ensuring that all Namibians have equal access to education to achieve its desired purpose.

Uaandja (2018) urges parents to take advantage of free primary and secondary education in Namibia to eradicate poverty. According to the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture (2018), education is the greatest equalizer. Parents should make sure their children attend school, and they should also support their children in the education process. Uaandja (2018) emphasised that section 69 of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture Education Bill does not emphasise this point, and lack of parental responsibility will run the risk of causing further damage to the quality of the already existing defective public education.

According to Uaandja (2018), if parents do not step up and give financial support, the quality of education will deteriorate. She added that the schools would have to shave off some activities to fit into the current Universal Public Education (UPE)

budget allocation. Semba (2019) concurs that teachers and parents should work together to help in making schools better for learners. Louw (2019) affirms that "there is no way schools can provide education without the moral and financial support from the parents."

However, Namibia tend to borrow more instructive experience from societies in transition such as South Africa with similar socio-political and democratic aspirations. According to Guilty (2016), it is the responsibility of the school governing of South Africa to administer and manage the educational affairs of the school division, and exercise general supervision and control over schools through the laws and resolutions. The responsibilities of the school governing body of South Africa are similar to that of Namibia. The main problem of borrowing is an advocacy way without offering a critical assessment of these foreign policy models, even from their own context.

2.4. Challenges to parental involvement in education of their children

Ministry of Basic Education Sport and Culture (2001, p. 11) states that,

> *But education for all does not mean more schools or more children. Nor does it mean that we simply start literacy or increase the number of places in programmes for out of school youth. Education for all requires that we develop a new way to think about our education and training and how we organise it*.

Therefore, it is equally important to consider the barriers that exist in the area of parental involvement in secondary schools and address them. Lack of time and insufficient pre-service and in-service education in the area severely compromises teachers' abilities regarding parental involvement issues, constraints on parents'

availability, feeling of inadequacies (Mwirichia, 2013; Mpiluka, 2014). Many families have several conditions that limit their ability to participate in activities during regular school hours, including volunteer opportunities and teacher conferences; this directly impacts parental involvement (Smith, 2011). Mpiluka (2014) and Niitembu (2006) assert that parents' level of education and occupation is another factor contributing to parents not helping their children achieve better in school. However, parents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds face barriers that impede them from being "involved ranging from feelings of inadequacy due to their level of education to basic scheduling needs and lack of resources" (Smith, 2011, pp.16-17). Research reveals that minority or low-income parents are often underrepresented among the ranks of parents involved with the schools. This is due to lack of time, embarrassment or shyness about one's educational level or linguistic abilities, lack of understanding of information about the organisation of the school and accepted communication channels, perceived lack of welcome by teachers and administrators, as well as teachers and administrator's assumptions of parents disinterest or inability to help with children's schooling. The lack of the know-how and resources to help their children, frustration with school bureaucracies and policies they find difficult to understand or change also hinder their involvement. Some parents protest that they rarely hear from the school unless there is a problem with their child's behaviour or performance. Information provided by the school is not understandable either because of educational jargon or because the parent or family member does not read or understand English (Van Roekel, n.d; Cotton & Wikelund, 1989 and Edsource, 2014).

Hamunyela (2008), Mwirichia (2013), and Iilonga (2016) state that a vast majority of our schools do not have suitable accommodation for meaningful conferences to engage parents. There are professional difficulties among teachers, many of whom feel threatened by what is seen as parental involvement in education. Epstein argues that when schools regularly engage parents, they have more successful results because they benefit from education (Smith, 2011). Ministry of Education Arts and Culture (2016) states that effective principals ensure that their schools enjoy a climate hospitable to education and allowing both adults and children to learn is at the centre of their daily activities.

Schools are facing increasing demands for initiatives in response to societal and economic problems and other challenges. Schools cannot operate, nor should they be expected to assume total responsibility for the learners' success. Therefore, schools should take the initiative in organising collaboration with the parents (Mwirichia, 2013). Well planned parental involvement programmes will enhance teacher professionalism through the achievement of improvement in the life of the school and the quality of education offered to learners. Smith (2011) affirms that to increase learners' attainment through parental involvement, schools have to advance operational ways to communicate and reach out to parents who are unable, unwilling or even reluctant due to cultural and social capital barriers. Cotton and Wikelund (1989) state that lack of planning and mutual understanding are identified as the two most important barriers to effective parental involvement.

According to Levinthal, Kuusisto and Tirri (2021) communication is necessary in parental invovelment. An open line of communication between teachers and parents

is viewed as an important facilitator of parental involvement and a primary way of enhancing it. Actively listening to parents not just communicating with them is crucial, as parents my feel distant from school if proper time is not allocated to invest in a dialogue. Lack of communication may pose a serious risks to parental involvement as parents construction and beliefs about involvement in education may differ from teachers' expectations.

Ceka and Murati (2016) argue that when parents involve themselves in the education process of their children, the outcome can be qualified as an encouraging one. Levinthal et al (2021) state that Finnish and Portuguese parents consider partneship with teachers a shared responsibility essential to children's success and parental involvement. Parents view their involvement as complementary and independent of teachers' roles.

Literature further reveals that parents visiting the school solely to receive negative feedback about their children or attend activities with and "audience role" contribute to parents lack of habit in cultivating parental involvement (Levinthal, Kuusisto and Tirri, 2021, p.6). Despite the importance of parental involvement at secondary school level, research reveals that partnering and supporting parental involvement is an area where schools lack confidence and formal education (Levinthal et al, 20121). Therefore there is a need for knowledge to strengthen parental involvement. There is also a need for teacher education regarding parental involvement to enhanve communication between the school and the parents.

2.4.1 Power Struggle between parents and teachers

LaBhan (1995) and Hamunyela (2008) state that various factors prevent parents from being involved, such as parents feeling unwelcome at schools, lack of knowledge and education, and thinking that education is not important. Shortage of time from parents, divorce or death in the family, the family's financial standing, schools not being sensitive to change, and learners may be embarrassed if their parents are not conversant in the language of communication (English). Parents feel that what they may have to offer is unimportant and unappreciated.Parents may also experience anger or frustration if they perceive that their initiatives to increase home-school relation is not welcomed (Levinthal, Kuusisto and tirri, 2021).

Additionally, LaBhan (1995) asserts that parents may not believe that they know that the school is interested in learning, especially when parents do not have a great deal of education. Moreover, Martinez (2015) affirms that parents may be embarrassed because they are illiterate or unable to communicate in English, making communication difficult or impossible. Many schools fail to engage parents fully as they do not provide literature in a second language or interpret at conferences for parents whose primary language is not English (Hamunyela, 2008). Therefore, it is imperative that the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders in education take note of these needs and establish strategies to increase parents' understanding of various forms of home-school communication in existence (Jekonia and Mowes, 2015).

Although teachers, parents and other staff agree that parents should be involved with the school in a variety of ways, and that school personnel should spend time

encouraging and training parents to become involved, they disapprove of parents involvement in administrative areas such as teacher and principal selection and evaluation and are less enthusiastic than parents regarding the utility of parent participation and other activities, such as selection of textbooks and other teaching materials or setting priorities for the school budget (Cotton and Wikelund, 1989; Edsource, 2014).

According to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (2018), parents serving on the school board may apply to the regional director in writing to be allocated to determine the choice of subject options and extra-mural curriculum of the school, in terms of any curriculum policy to procure textbooks and educational materials or equipment for the school. Thus, part of the problem lies in the unwillingness of too many people in the education departments or schools to promote parent participation (Department of Basic Education, 2011). Cotton and Wikelund (1989) states that parents do not have enough training to make school decisions. However, research indicates that most of them (parents) feel they are capable of making sound decisions. According to Menheere and Hooge (no. date), teachers do not strive for quality with parents. Above all, teachers expect parents to respect their professionalism in schools and their decisions in the classroom. However, parents involvement is characterized by affection, love and aspiration for their children and teachers involvement could be represented by professionalism and knowledge of children based on their experiences.

2.5 Strategies to enhance parental involvement in education

Stanikzai (2013) states that teachers have a critical role in facilitating or hindering parents' involvement in their children's learning. Parents who are not highly educated or non-literate need clear and sustained communication and guidance on how to support their children's education (Smith, 2011). Creating a school culture that welcomes and engages the family is the key component to parental involvement, which research shows positively affects learners' academic achievements (Van Zyl, 2013). Hamunyela (2008) argues that no matter how qualified, competent and professional teachers are, how good the curriculum and how caring the school may be, families still carry significant responsibility in contributing to their children's education.

Schools need to work harder to involve parents who have traditionally been more challenged to be involved in school activities, such as single parents, those who live far from school, households where parents work, and fathers (Edsource, 2014). According to the South African goal 22 of education; improving parent and community participation in the governance of schools partly improves access to important information via the e-Education strategy. All stakeholders should therefore be asking themselves and explaining how they contribute towards the realisation of quality education (Department of Basic Education, 2012), as low parental participation in school governance means that schools are less likely to take decisions that benefit communities. MEAC (2019) states that schools should seek support and guidance from parents and community members who work in related

fields or positions of community leadership to gain an external perspective and ensure that the school is operating as part of the community.

Hoover and Dempsy et al. (2005), as cited in Menheere and Hooge (no. date), state that evidence has been found that teachers and schools are not well prepared for educational partnership. The emphasis should be on what parents can do, not what parents are not able to do. Research reveals that the state of Michigan suggests that schools might increase parental involvement via establishing special training, workshops that will help parents develop skills needed to assist their children (Hamunyela, 2008; Khama, 2014, and Niitembu, 2006). In order to enhance parental involvement, it is essential to establish programmes to recruit and train volunteers to work with learners and teachers to create programmes to bring poorly educated, low-income parents into the school each week to learn how they can help at home with school work and to expand their home-making and community-related skills (Fletke, 1997, and Lemmer and Van Wyk, 2009).

To address factors affecting parental involvement, parents should fulfil their responsibilities as partners in education earnestly. According to Fletke (1997), parental involvement is more important in determining school success. Niitembu (2006) concurs that it is crucial for parents to be involved and supportive of their children's education because their children feel encouraged when parents are informed about the progress at school. Van Zyl (2013) affirms that effective partnerships between teachers and parents become even more essential to meet the needs of the children. Communicating with parents is one of the significant types of

parent involvement practices critical to establishing strong working relationships between teachers and parents. More communication between the school and home is needed. Two-way informal exchange of ideas between teachers and parents is much more effective than one-way communication.

Additionally, friendly contact should be established with parents earlier in the year before something has happened that makes it necessary for the teachers to contact the parents. Parents should attend parent- learner–teacher meetings as this enable them to know the teachers better. Cultivating the teacher-parent relationship is also considered essential to the development of teamwork (Victor, 2011). The Department of Basic Education (2012) in South Africa states that extraordinary measures must be taken in poor communities to encourage parent participation. It suggests that the media must be used to disseminate information on the rights and duties of parents in languages suitable to various communities. Schools need to explain to parents who are or may not be literate what their roles in education are.

Furthermore, schools should invite parents to volunteer, as by so doing, the school is letting them know that they are wanted, needed, welcomed and practical at the school. Parents will have an increased sense of pride in the school and the community. The parents will be able to increase their understanding of child development in physical, social, emotional and cognitive development (LeBrun-Martin, 2013). That will help to provide a bond between home experiences and the educational program. Meetings should be arranged as often as deemed necessary by parents and teachers.

Parents should have access to the teachers when they are worried about the child, and teachers should initiate such meetings when there is a cause of concern. It is instrumental to the children's success both in and out of the classroom and in society as a whole (Menheere and Hooge, no. date). Government consultation held in South Africa in 2010 reveals that the potential for qualitative improvements in schools brought about by parents and community activists had been under-estimated. Therefore, parents need to be involved in the education of children at the secondary school level and for them to be held accountable for their children's education.

Parents could play a much more significant role in promoting the quality of teaching and learning and addressing social problems, such as school violence and drug abuse (Department of Basic Education, 2011). The more parents are involved, the more understanding and knowledgeable they become of the school programme and teachers' role. Moreover, school activities that include parents make it more pleasant, productive and secure for learners. They develop positive attitudes towards teachers and their teaching and develop strong confidence in the school (Hamunyela, 2008).

To recapitulate, when parents understand how the child develops, they can provide a more positive learning environment (LaBahn, 1995). Fletke (1997) points out that the most important way parents can contribute to their children's education is by what they do at home. However, information should be given to parents in an informative way to be used by them in their interaction with their children. Information obtained through assessment should be communicated to parents and the learners timely.

2.6 Chapter summary

In this chapter, the theoretical framework informing this study was outlined. The researcher investigated literature regarding parents' involvement which was reviewed from the perspectives of international and developing countries. To narrow the study to parental involvement in the education of learners at secondary schools, the researcher began reading articles and other sources on the related topic widely. Although literature presents convincing evidence of the parents in education, it further indicates that parents in different countries, including Namibia, face various challenges in carrying out their roles.

The literature findings also indicated the lack of or poor educational background of parents, lack of understanding of the difference between roles of the teachers and those of parents and other stakeholders. In such a state, the parents are, therefore, limited in terms of performing their roles. The following chapter describes the methodology of the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design and methods of how the study was designed and conducted. It includes research design, the forms of data collected, and the types of data collection strategies employed to help answer the research questions stated in the first chapter.

3.2 Research paradigm

The constructivist paradigm underpins theis study and was used in the contruction of knowledge in this study. The constructivist believe that there is no objective reality and there are multiple realities constructed by human beings who experience a phenomenon (Atieno, 2009). Atieno (2009) further added that the qualitative researchers do not assume that there is a single unitary reality apart from our perceptions as researchers operate under different ontological assumptions about the world. Mertens (2015) affirms that reality is not absolute but it is socially constructed and that multiple realities exist that are time and context depedent. The qualitative methods were used so that I can understand how realities were constructed by various people who were the parents, principals and well as the teachers as each human being experiences a phenonomenon from his or her own point of view and each experiences a different reality. The best way to understand this phenomenon was to view in its context.

3.3 Research approach

A qualitative approach was appropriate in the study because I wanted to know in details about the phenonomena under study using deep description as little is known about parental involvement in learners education in secondary schools in the Erongo Region of Namibia. I intended to learn more about the need for parental involvement through an investigation. This approach is commonly used to understand people's experiences and express their perspectives. Qualitative methods were used in this study to provide an in-depth description of specific practices (Mertens, 2015) to make sense of or interpret a phenomenon in terms of the meanings people make about the phenomenon. The study relied more on the participants' views (McMillan and Schumacher, 2013) and less on the direction identified in the literature reviewed by the researcher. Therefore, a qualitative approach was a great help to find out about the involvement of parents in the education of learners at secondary schools and how their involvement can address challenges that parents face.

3.3.1 Research design

This study used a qualitative case study design to provide an in-depth discussion and understanding of a single phenomenon (Creswell, 2012a). A case study examines a single unique phenomenon or case in-depth, employing multiple data sources found in the setting (Creswell, 2012a). Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the participants' meanings of their sense of experience within the world (Creswell, 2013). A case study design allows the researcher to collect data in the field where participants experience the phenomenon or problem under study.

This design was necessitated by the nature of the study that intended to focus on investigating parental involvement in learners' education in secondary schools in the Erongo region of Namibia. Therefore, this enabled me to investigate the case in its natural setting and help make sense of the situation. This design also allowed the participants to express their views through telling their stories. It was a case of parental involvement in education in one region, the Erongo Region. The case in this study is a group of secondary school teachers, principals and parents of learners in the selected secondary schools.

3.4 Population

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014), a population is a group of people with specific characteristics that the researcher is interested in. In this case, the target population of this study consisted of parents, teachers and principals of secondary schools in the Erongo Region.

3.5 Sample and sampling procedures

According to Creswell (2012b), sampling is selecting a small group of participants from the population to partake in the study as respondents. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) state that qualitative sampling is done to increase the utility of information obtained from a small sample. Patton (2015), as cited in Nsinano (2018), states that there is no rule for sample size in a qualitative inquiry and that the sample size depends on what the researcher wants to know, the purpose of the investigation, what's at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility and what can be done within the available time and resources. In this study my sample

was six (6) principals, six (6) teachers serving on the school board and twelve (12) parents serving on the school board. All parents involved in this study are those that are serving on the school board.

As I cannot study the whole population, I selected only a small number of individuals to become participants. Creswell (2012b) refers to the sample as a group of subjects from whom data are collected, often representative of a specific population. According to Creswell (2012a), the researcher should select sites and individuals that are information-rich purposefully when the researcher wants to understand the phenomenon and develop a detailed understanding that provides useful information to learn about the phenomenon. Therefore, I purposively selected the parents of learners at the selected schools, teachers and the school principals to be participants in this study and to inform my findings. The purposeful stratified sampling and purposeful sampling methods were used to select the participants (Mertens, 2015). Six schools participated in the study. The purpose of the purposeful sampling was to focus case selection strategically in alignment with the inquiry's purpose, research questions and data being collected. The criterion was that the participants were only selected from three secondary schools where parents are more involved and the other three where parents are less involved in education.

Mertens (2015) states that subgroups are chosen based on specified criteria in purposeful stratified sampling, and the sub-samples are then selected within those strata to capture major variations. At each school, the principal automatically participated in the study. Two parents and one teacher were selected at each school from the parents and teachers (strata). The criterion was that participants were only

selected from three secondary schools where parents are more involved, and three schools where parents are less involved in education were chosen randomly. Purposeful sampling techniques were used because the selection of participants was based on the experiences of the phenomenon investigated, namely, investigating parental involvement in learners' education in secondary schools in the Erongo region of Namibia. In-depth interviews were conducted with the six (6) school principals, six (6) teachers and 12 parents (6 school board chairpersons and six other parents serving on the school board). The sample size was 24 participants.

3.6 Research instrument

I used interview guides and document analysis as data collection instruments for this study. According to Patton (2002), using both interviews and document analysis, the researcher is able to use different data sources to validate and cross-check the findings, as each source of data has its strengths and weaknesses. The researcher made use of a voice recorder, and fieldnotes. Document analysis was used to collect pertinent data that were documented.

3.6.1 Interview guides

Most of the data were generated through interviews because I was interested in capturing individual participants' experience, knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study. Semi-structured interview guides were employed where participants were asked questions in the same order to ensure consistency across the interviewees, facilitate comparability during data analysis, and reduce interview bias. Using semi-structured interviews also allowed the participants' concerns and

interests to surface, providing a broader lens for the researcher's gaze. The interview aimed to allow in-depth probing, which enabled me to discover more views, interpretations, and perceptions of principals, teachers, and parents identified with their roles (Creswell, 2012).

Moreover, this instrument was used as it contained pre-prepared questions and guided me not to lose the main focus of the study. The semi-structured interviews enabled me to ask probing questions on the issue that emerged from the interviewees' responses. I also allowed leads from the participants to determine the ordering of questions and probes to explore relevant points further. In this study, participants were better able to give a broader picture of the phenomenon.

Mertens (2015) affirms that an in-depth interview's advantages are that the researcher gets a full range of in-depth information, enabling the researcher to obtain needed findings emerging from the interviews. Consequently, the richer the data generated from principals, teachers, and parents through this method was important in explaining and understanding the importance of parental involvement in the education of learners at secondary schools.

3.6.2 Document analysis

In order to obtain information that did not emerge from interviews, I analysed documents such as minutes of school board meetings, minutes of parents' general meetings, visitors books and minutes of learner- parent-teacher conferences to investigate the patterns of parent involvement at the secondary school level.

According to Patton (2002, p. 302)

> *Document analysis provides a behind the scene look at the program that may not be directly observable and about which the interviewer might not ask appropriate questions without the leads provided through documents.*

Document analysis was done throughout the data generation period. Information obtained from documents enabled I to pose relevant interview questions for the study (informed the interview guide). Document analysis was also used to complement and strengthen data that was obtained through interviews. These sources provided valuable information in helping the researcher to understand the phenomenon (Mertens, 2015). According to Patton (2002) and Mertens (2015), triangulation is one way to improve the data collected. I used the two data generation instruments to measure the phenomenon from different angles, the interview guide and the document analysis. Document analysis was used to cross-check the oral accounts (interviews) or provide some context (Silverman, 2011); they are not, however, a transparent representation of organisational routines, decision-making processes or professional practices. This process helped me determine the relationship between what the document analysis said and what was obtained from the interviews.

3.7 Data generation procedures

I obtained an ethical clearance certificate from the University of Namibia (Appendix A) and permission from the Executive Director of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (Appendix D) to allow me to generate data in the selected schools. Permission to carry out the research and the ethical clearance certificate was taken

to the selected schools' Regional Director and school principals. That was done to follow research procedures and ensure that the researcher does not enter the sites without the knowledge of the Regional Director and the Principals. I then made appointments with the principals to introduce myself to the principals, explaining the purpose of the visit and the nature of the study. I also made appointments with the participants, briefed them on the nature of the study and its benefits, and established rapport with them. Measures that I took about confidentiality and anonymity of their responses were explained to participants.

3.7.1 Interviews

Before each interview, an introduction and a brief explanation of the purpose of the study was given to each participant. I commenced the interview by establishing rapport to assure confidentiality (Mertens, 2015). The purpose of the study was explained to make participants feel comfortable and allow them enough time to respond to the questions. Subsequently, I conducted one-on-one interviews, where I asked questions and recorded the answers from all participants in the study.

Furthermore, I showed respect to the participants, made them feel safe, comfortable and valued as per research ethics. I listened attentively, maintained eye contact with them, and made appropriate gestures such as nodding her head. Interview questions were read to individual participants. Field notes (main points) were made during the interviews, and all interviews were recorded with the participants' permission. During interviews, each participant was asked questions that allowed them to reflect on their personal experiences about the role and involvement of parents in the

education of children at the secondary school level. I listened actively and repeated important information to confirm what the participants were saying and allowed them to formulate their thoughts into words without directing them. I probed the participants when necessary to get clarification and also encouraged participants to continue speaking. This enabled me to obtain the required data. At the end of the interviews, rich information was obtained from the participants.

Lastly, to find out about the reality of parental involvement in learners' education in secondary schools in the Erongo Region, I used two research instruments that enabled me to triangulate and compare data obtained from various participants.

3.7.2 Document analysis

Information obtained from documents such as minutes of school board meetings complemented and strengthened data obtained through interviews. Documents such as minutes of the teacher-parent meetings, visitors' books, and parent meetings' register were analysed (Mertens, 2015). Information obtained from both interviews and document analysis were later juxtaposed and triangulated to validate the findings.

3.8 Data analysis

Content analysis was used to analyse the data. The information collected was first transcribed into text and coded. Content analysis refers to analysing interview transcripts or documents to identify core consistencies and meaning (Patton, 2002). I analysed data by organising them (data) into categories and grouping them into themes. Data generated was then triangulated, verified and organised thematically

to answer research questions. Triangulation involves checking information that has been generated from two sources or methods for consistency of evidence across sources of data to increase credibility (Mertens, 2015). It (content analysis) has also been used to examine the categories that the data comprised of and condensed them into fewer categories so that they are easier to understand. According to Silverman (2011), content analysis looks for words in a text and endeavours to understand their meanings and relationship to each other. It is a way of discovering patterns in data that aid the researcher's understanding of underlying findings.

Lastly, I employed two data generation techniques: interviews and document analysis to ensure validity and reliability. The two data generation methods increased the *reliability* of the findings. Both ways enabled me to write down verbal conversations and quote directly from the participants. The data was triangulated by comparing data obtained from document analysis and during interviews with the answers provided by all participants. That was done to strengthen the data from one strategy to another. It also ruled out weaknesses and provided rich and valid data. Moreover, I used triangulation to examine the phenomenon from different data sources to validate the data. This reduced risks of threats to validity.

3.9 Measures to ensure trustworthiness of the findings

Each research approach employs different evaluation creteria to ensure the trustworthiness of the inquiry. The qualitative researchers consider credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as trustworthiness criteria for qualitative studies (Guba, 1981; Schwandt, Lincoln and Guba, 2007) as cited in

Anney (no date). This section discussed how this four criterias were used in the study to establish rigor of the inquiry.

3.9.1 Credibility

According to Anney (no. date) credibility in a qualitative research establishes whether or not the research findings represent credible information drawn from participants' unique data and correct interprepation of the participants original views. I used member checks to measure credibility. According to Mertens (2015) this involves the researcher seeking verification with the participant groups about the constructions that are developing as a result of data collected and analysed. I summarised what was said during the interview by the participants to establish whether the information accurately reflected the participationt's opinion. I also had informal talks at the end of the interviews with some of the partcipants on the issues that emanated during the interview to be able to obtain an in-depth understanding of the participants perceptions.

3.9.2 Transferability

Purposive sampling was used to determine the trustworthiness of findings. This provides greater in-depth findings than other probalility sampling methods (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). According to Anney (no date), this helps the researcher to focus on key informants who are particularly knowledgeable about the phenomenon under investiogation. In this sudy the key stakeholders' (parents) views were of utmost importance and considered. This was done to maximise the data uncovered from few participants but not for generalability.

3.9.3 Dependability

According to (Cohen et al., 2011; Tobin and Begley,2004) as cited in Anney (no date) dependability involves participants evaluation of the findings, ineterpretation and recommendations of the study such that all are supported by the data as received from informants of the study. For the purpose of this study I used code-recode strategy whereby I had to code the same data twice by giving at least one week maturation period between each coding. I compared the coding from the two coding to see if the results were the same or difeerent.

3.9.4 Confirmability

Qualitative data can be tracked to their source and the logic that is used to interpret the data should be explicit and that the processes of synthesising data to reach conclusions can be confirmed (Mertens, 2015). Confirmability is "concerned with establishing that data and interpretation of the findings are not figments of the inquirer's imagination but are clearly derived from the data" (Tobin and Begley, 2004, p.392) as cited in Anney (no date). In this study trigulation is used to achieve confirmability whereby I collected data from different sources. This helped me to reduce biasness by cross examining the participants' responses to enhance the quality of the data generated.

3.10 Research ethics

Ethical issues are of significant importance in every research; therefore, it was the role of the researcher to meet the ethical requirements for this research. First and foremost, I obtained an ethical clearance certificate from the unit of Research and

Publications at UNAM. I then obtained written approval from the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture Executive Director to carry out the study in the selected region. The permission letter to research the selected schools was then shown to the Regional Director and school principals. The Regional Director and the school principals allowed me to conduct research in the selected schools.

Before the commencement of the interviews, all participants were briefed about the purpose of the study and informed consent was obtained from each participant. Each participant was requested to complete an informed written consent before participating in the study. The informed consent (Appendix E) was explained to participants at the beginning of each interview. Participants agreed to participate in this study based on the full information conveyed to them about the purpose of the study and how data obtained would be used. No participant was forced, which ensure that participation was free and voluntary. The consent form clearly stated that participation was voluntary. Participants were also granted the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time. Maximum cooperation and the goodwill of all participants were obtained as advised in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2002). This is important to ensure that participants are willing to be studied and that what they say will not victimise them. The researcher showed respect for human freedom.

Furthermore, participants were assured that information obtained from them would be kept confidential, their identities will not be known, and the information would be used only for the research purpose. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured through a coding system where pseudonyms replaced the real names of schools and participants. Furthermore, participants were assured of confidentiality that data

generated would not be used for any other purpose except for the research purpose, and no information would lead to identification.

All in all, I negotiated access to documents and records with the principals. The school principals granted me permission and authorisation to annotate and directly quote from the documents collected from the school record books and files. Once analysed, the data were kept in the researcher's personal computer protected by a pin known only by the researcher. They were entirely deleted after three years.

3.11 Chapter summary

This chapter outlined the research design and methods used to generate and analyse the data. The qualitative case study was considered necessary because of the research purpose and questions, the kind of required data, the forms of data generation strategies required, and the phenomenon studied. The population consisted of school parents, teachers and principals from six secondary schools in the Erongo region. According to Matthews and Loss (2010), in purposive sampling, participants are selected based on characteristics or experiences directly related to the researcher's area of interest and the research questions. They will allow the researcher to study the research topic in depth. Therefore, purposeful sampling strategies were employed to draw the sample: Stratified purposeful and purposeful random sampling, respectively. An ethical clearance certificate was requested and obtained from UNAM, and permission from the Executive Director of the MEAC to allow the researcher to conduct the study in the selected schools was obtained. Written approval from the Executive Director of the MEAC was obtained to carry

out the study in the selected schools in the region. A permission letter to conduct research was then submitted to the Regional Director and school principals. The Regional Director of Education and the school principals allowed the researcher to conduct the study in the selected schools. Appointments were made with all the participants, and they were briefed on the nature and purpose of the study; thereof, the researcher was able to establish rapport with them. All participants were requested to complete a written informed consent before partaking in the study. Participants agreed to participate based on the complete information conveyed to them about the purpose of the study and how data obtained will be used. No participant was forced, which ensured that their participation was free and voluntary. Participants were assured that information obtained from them would be kept confidential and their identities would not be known, and information would be used for the study only. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured to all participants. Cooperation and the goodwill of all participants were obtained. All participants were made to feel comfortable as the researcher showed respect to all the participants. One-on-one interviews were conducted with all participants. All interviews were audio-recorded.

Content analysis was used to analyse the data. Data was first transcribed into text and coded to draw out themes and check for disconfirming data. Data were analysed by organising them into categories and grouping them into themes. Data generated was triangulated, verified and organised thematically to answer research questions. The school principals granted permission and authorisation to annotate and directly quote from school documents. Validity and reliability were assured by employing

multiple data collection methods, namely interviews and document analysis. These methods allowed the researcher to triangulate by comparing data obtained from document analysis with that obtained during interviews to strengthen data from one source to another and rule out weaknesses to provide rich and valid data. Lastly, Data was kept in the researcher's personal computer protected by a pin known only by the researcher, and it was entirely deleted after three years.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analysed and discussed the findings that emerged from the data generated. It is crucial to state that data analysis started while I was still in the field. The data generated was analysed using an inductive analysis whereby categories and patterns emerged from the data. In addition to that, I also reviewed available documents at schools with the aim to enrich data from the interviews and help engage and critically evaluate the views expressed by the participants. The participative management theory which enables organisations such the schools to survive within the changing situations helped in analysing the data generated and in the discussions of the findings.

The study aimed to investigate parental involvement in learners' education in secondary school in the Erongo region of Namibia. The study aimed to answer (a) How are parents involved in their children's education in secondary schools in the Erongo Region? (b) What role do parents play in the education of secondary school learners in the Erongo Region? (c) What factors affect parental involvement in the education of learners in secondary schools in the Erongo Region and; (d) What do secondary schools do to address factors affecting parental involvement in the education of learners in the Erongo Region? I presents the analysis of the case data of all the participants according to the research questions. To enhance data analysis,

findings were organised primarily according to the four research questions of this study. The data is presented under the themes that emerged from the data analysis as the main themes and categories which the researcher used to facilitate the presentation of the findings. The study did not intend to compare the six schools but to collect stakeholders' views on the pertinent issue of parental involvement in learners' education in secondary schools. The participative management theory guided the data collection and analysis as according to Burhanuddin (2013), participative management becomes a strategic approach to making people feel respected for their advice through involving them in important decision making and strategic organizational activites which makes them feel engaged to achieve their organisationals aims.

4.1.1 Profile of Participants

The phenomenon was investigated at four secondary schools and two combined schools: schools A, B, C, D, E, and F in the Erongo Region. Altogether twenty-four participants were involved in this research study.

Table 1: Sample

Participants	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Principals	2	4	6
Teachers	2	4	6
Parents	6	6	12
Grand total	11	13	24

Table 1 presents the participants' profiles; the participants consisted of six principals, six highly experienced teachers, and 12 parents (4 chairpersons and eight other school board members). Out of the 12 parents, 4 of them serve on the SB as chairpersons and five as secretaries, while 3 were additional members of the SB. Parents interviewed had children in Grades 8-12, and the majority, five (5) of them, had university academic qualifications, three (3) had Grade 12 certificates, while four (4) of them had Grade 10 certificates. Of the six (6) teachers, four (4) of them served on the school board, and two (2) were life skills teachers at the schools. There were six principals, four chairpersons, five secretaries of the school board, three additional SB members (parents), four teacher members, and two none members of the school board.

4.2 Demographic profiles of participants

Participants' demographic information considers issues such as ages of participants, gender, highest professional qualifications, and years of experience. The purpose of this information was to enable the researcher to contextualise the interviews conducted with various categories of participants. Tables 2, 3, and 4 present the various participants' demographic information from the six selected schools.

Table 2: Principals interviewed

Principals	**Gender**	**Age range**	**Highest professional qualification**	**Years of experience**
School A	Male	41-50 (46)	Bachelor of Education degree	9
School B	Female	41-50 (39)	Higher Education Certificate	10
School C	Male	41-50 (40)	Post Graduate Diploma and Higher	14

			Education Certificate	
School D	Female	41-50	Bachelor of Education degree	9
School E	Female	41-50 (44)	Bachelor of Education degree and Masters of Education	2
School F	Female	41-50 (41)	Basic Education Teachers Diploma plus a Higher Education Certificate	4

Table 3: Teachers interviewed

Teachers	**Gender**	**Age**	**Highest professional qualification**	**Years of experience**
A	Female	31-40	Bachelor of Education	11
B	Male	51 more	BETD	27
C	Female	31-40	Bachelor of Education	10
D	Male	51 more	Postgraduate Diploma in Education	25
E	Female	41-50	Bachelor of Education	12
F	Male	41-50	Bachelor of Education	15

Table 4: Parents interviewed

Parents	**Gender**	**Age**
A	Male	31-40
	Male	31-40
B	Male	41-50
	Female	31-40
C	Male	31-40
	Female	41-50
D	Female	41-50
	Female	41-50
E	Male	31-40
	Female	31-40
F	Female	41-50
	Male	51 years or more

4.2.1 Age, qualifications, and years of experience

The demographics and characteristics of principals are presented in Table 2. The participants varied in terms of their ages, professional qualifications, and the number of years they served as school principals. In the presentations of the findings, participants' real names were not used; instead, pseudonyms were used to protect their privacy. The ages of principals were in the same age range between 41-50 years, and the years they served as school principals were between 2 and 14 years, but a few were younger than ten years. Two principals were holders of bachelors degrees, and two had Higher Edaction Certificates, and 1 with a Higher Education Certificate and a post graduate diploma in education and 1with a Bachelors degree and a masters.

Table 3 presents the demographic information of teachers. The teachers' age and the number of years they served the schools were almost similar to the principals. Their age ranged from two teachers with 31-40 years, two in the age range of 41-50, and the other two in the age range of 51 years or more category. Out of six teachers, four teachers served on the school board, while the two were teachers at the schools only. All teachers were holders of undergraduate degrees in education.

Last Table 4 presents demographic information of the parents that serve on the school board. Parents that are involved in this study are members of the school governing body, and they constitute the chairperson and the treasurer. Most parents served the school board for 2-5 years. Their ages ranged from 31- 49 years. Most

parents' children had been attending school at their respective schools for 2- 4 years. Some of the school board chairpersons indicated that they served the school board for about 3-4 years and have experience in school governance.

Themes that emerged from the interview and relevant documents analysed were:

- Understanding of parental involvement
- Knowledge and understanding of school board roles
- Challenges faced by School Board in school governance
- Ways to mitigate challenges faced by parents in the school board

4.3 Principals, teachers and Parents understanding of parental involvement

The following paragraphs addressed the first research questions that seek to understand how parents are involved in their children's education in secondary schools. When it came to an understanding of parental involvement, principals, teachers, and parents agreed and echoed the same views that parental involvement entails parents being there for their children's educational needs and sharing in educating the children with the teachers and principals.

4.3.1 Meetings

Although all participants interviewed understand the importance of parental involvement in the education of secondary school learners, it was found out that parental involvement is on the decline. Parents' interest is diminishing, as evident from the document analysed of parents meeting attendance of some of the selected

schools. Because a few parents turn up for meetings, parents who do turn up fail to form a quorum for the meeting to take place.

The study findings were consistent with what literature has on parental involvement. It indicated poor attendance of school board meetings and general parents meetings made it difficult for parents to deliberate on some issues affecting learners' education and the effective running of the school. All this happened due to late knocking off hours, as many parents could not make it for scheduled parent evening meetings (Levinthal et al, 2021). That was also supported by the fact that most of them live far away from the schools and therefore struggled to come to meetings (Van Wyk, 2010). According to Burhanuddin (2013) participative management relates to an oranisational climate which provides for human resources empowerment. This is needed for parents to develop positive views and attitudes towards the schools because they will find it meaningful as they are recognised by the schools' leader.

4.3.2 Decision- making

From the data analysis, it was very clear that parent members of the school board were not fully knowledgeable of what roles they should play in their children's education. As a result, they performed their roles contrary to what is stipulated in the Namibian Education Act 16 of 2001. The findings also revealed that the regional office seemingly delayed the appointment of new teachers. That contributed to the school board's ineffectiveness because one role of the school board is to ensure that schools have enough teaching staff not to interrupt teaching and learning.

Thus, parents need to be informed and made aware of the importance of their involvement in education. It is through the understanding of their roles that they will take part. However, schools regard parental involvement as a problem. When parents are involved, they are involved in non-academic schooling of children (extra-mural activities) as conclusions indicate that very little information on whether attempts were made to find out how possible parental involvement strategies could be encouraged and sustained in the secondary schools. The study also revealed that there was no cooperation between some principals and parents, especially when it comes to the functions of the school board. The principals did not encourage parents serving on the school board to arrange meetings. This left matters unresolved as it was revealed from most participants that parents have little to no understanding of school governance. According Likert (1967) as cited in Burhanuddin (2013), a participative climate is created through a collaborative working and learning environment, gaining support from the team that would eventually produce greater outcomes than could be achieved under other management systems. This climate can be implemented through principals displaying trust and demonstrating their intentions to share power with parents as key stakeholders in education.

This study's findings show that the participants acknowledged that learners' performance is likely to improve if key stakeholders- parents, teachers, and principals are held accountable for the education of learners in secondary schools.

Parents from four of the six selected secondary schools indicated that they attend different matters at their schools. They understood that their roles were to ensure

that all matters concerning their schools were thoroughly discussed and solutions to the problems sort out. From the school board chairpersons of schools, B and C school board members discussed the improvement needed at their schools, for instance, improved parental involvement in school activities, the need to have sufficient teachers, and the necessary educational equipment such as computers and photocopy machines. Other aspects discussed by the school board were different strategies to improve the overall school performance and the use of secondary education grants that the schools receive from the government to benefit the learners. In a participative management organisational structure decisions are made through a collaborative process involvivng the whole staff as organisational members, despite the hierarchical levels and units (Burhanuddin, 2013). The process of decision making uses input from a wide range of members in the organaisation as well as stakeholder for the smooth running of the organisation as consistentnly emphasised by the participative management theory, it increases the moral and commitment of stakeholders to the school.

4.3.3 Discipline

Furthermore, disciplinary issues are another role of the school board's parent members, which all participants stressed. They believed that they had the responsibility of shaping learners into responsible adults. That was per the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (2016) stipulation that the role of the school board is to promote school welfare. Principals commended some parents for enforcing discipline among the learners.

Parents interviewed asserted that as elected members of the school board, they had the power bestowed upon them to assist the school principals and teachers in improving teaching and learning. That was consistent with the MEAC (2016), which stipulates that it is mandatory for school board members to support the principals and teachers in carrying out their duties. However, with the limited educational background, most parents had no expertise and the capacity to assist teachers in the classroom.

Findings showed that some principals, as the school's authoritative leaders, were responsible for whatever was happening at the schools. As such, they directed members on the decisions to be made. The involvement of parents and teachers in the decision-making was too minimal because the principal influenced most of the decisions taken. As the Ministry of Education and Culture (2000) expressed, being accountable to the school does not entail that the principal should influence, but rather they must facilitate and guide the discussions of the school board as stipulated in the Namibian Education Act 16 of 2001. Nikodemus (2013) asserts that principals need to or should not rely on their own old experience, information, knowledge, and skills only because they might find themselves short and render themselves redundant and ultimately obsolete.

At School A, a teacher expressed that it was their role to discipline learners. This is what Niitembu (2006) expresses that the school principals and teachers felt that they alone are responsible for the schools. In this case, the parents were not encouraged to get involved in their children's education; hence, the parents did not do much to fulfil this role.

Moreover, findings from previous studies indicate that accountability should be based on the principle of mutual responsibility, such as that of the parents, teachers, and principals that have to be held accountable for matters involving a shared responsibility (Adere, 2013; Iilonga, 2016). The findings of this study were consistent with the previous studies since there was an acknowledgement that it takes several stakeholders to provide for education. Therefore, holding teachers and principals solely accountable for learning would be unjust, especially if the other key stakeholders failed to play their roles effectively.

The findings suggest a need for all parties: teachers, parents, principals, learners and the community in education to play their roles effectively to establish democracy and empowerment of stakeholders to enhance the teaching and learning process at secondary schools. In short, the findings indicate that children's education becomes a serious undertaking if it is left on the shoulders of teachers and principals alone. Partcipation of all stakeholders in decision making process of the organisation is vital as viewed in participative management theory. According to Burhanuddin (2013), participative management involves efforts of managers to encourage and facilitate participation in making decisions.

4.4 Knowledge and understanding of school board roles

This theme presents the role parents play in the education of secondary school learners. It was fundamental to the study as the researcher’s interest in establishing whether parents, teachers, and principals understand the important roles that parents should play as stakeholders in the education of learners in secondary schools.

According to the result analysis, participants in the selected schools showed that they know that the school board is the highest decision-making body in the school organisations and is needed to enhance parental participation in schools. Tomas and Ileni (2018, p. 15) state that parental involvement is often seen as a cornerstone in children's education. Therefore, no school properly functions in isolation from the community and society of which it should be an integral part. Van Niekerk (2013) assert that the best weapon schools have against uncertainty and the need for change in education is working together. The schools improve if decision-making authority and strategic autonomy are held by those closest to the learners, the parents and the teachers; as such, teamwork involves more people in decision making. Participative decision making promotes the "buy-in" factor and improves the initiative and problem-solving skills of the team (Van Niekerk, 2013, p.266).

All participants interviewed acknowledged that parents are key stakeholders in education. Therefore, it is imperative for a school to have parents involved in their children's education at this level. Parents should be involved in their children's education via the school board, which is the highest decision-making body. The principal of school B stressed that the school board should be there to smooth the school governance. The principal of school C shared similar opinions that the school board members govern the school and make sure everything happening at the school was done democratically as per stipulated policies. The principals of schools A, C, E and F stated that the school board is there to promote the school's interest and that of learners. According to Joubert (2005) in Khama (2014), the school board's participation in the school matters should be far-reaching even though sometimes it

falls short in terms of the full participation in the allocated functions. Ministry of Education and Culture (1993, p.42) requires that schools allow active role players, including learners' involvement in school governance, school management and administration discussion, and evaluation of instructions and learning quality.

Some teachers interviewed shared the same sentiment by stating that parents are partially involved in the education of their children and school board members were not actively involved in the running of schools. Expressing his opinion, a teacher from school D stated that parents are needed in the school board to govern the school and monitor the school's operations. He further added that: "The school board is needed to bring the school to expected levels of achievement."

The teacher from school E echoed the same views that: "parents get elected to the school board to monitor and participate in the governance of schools, but we do not see ourselves as managers of institutions."

Parents interviewed from Schools A to F indicated that they needed to be involved in the schools and schools to have the school boards fulfil their roles as mandated. The school board chairperson of School E explained that the school board is the highest decision-making body elected by the school's parents and the community to oversee what was happening. She further stated that all stakeholders had to make sure that whatever is happening at school was done as per ministerial policies. A parent from the same school alluded that school board members were there to ensure that schools were governed orderly and learners were receiving a quality education. Sharing the same sentiment is the chairperson from School D who stated that the school boards were necessary to oversee their children's education. The chairperson

from school F stated that every school needed a school board to assist the teachers and the principal in carrying out their duties. He added that the school board was there to advise and give ideas and opinions regarding education.

It became evident from all participants interviewed that they are knowledgeable that the school board is the highest decision-making body that requires parents' involvement and has different roles to perform. The roles identified and expressed by participants are discussed in the section that follows.

4.4.1 Parental involvement in the decision making processes

According to the documents analysed, it is evident that there is some degree of parents involvement in the decision-making process in Schools A to F in meetings. Many of them understand that the Ministry of Education with the school board is involved in decision-making in the secondary schools. Parents are involved in the decisions made at these schools as they are allowed to air their concerns and make contributions when topics are raised, and the way forward is figured out based on the majority.

The parent of School A echoed an outcry that: "I feel that our school is not doing enough particularly teaching the community about the importance of their roles and involvement in school-related matters."

The teacher from School B lamented that, for instance, financial matters: "parents do not understand financial matters as the majority are under or not educated and do not make any meaningful contributions; therefore the principal alone makes the decisions in this regards."

The study found that participants were aware of their responsibilities, but some parents lacked the knowledge to perform them and played a minimal role. Rembe (2005) as in Khama (2014) affirms that certain parents cannot equally participate in school boards as some are either illiterate or lack capacity and need extensive training. Based on this study's findings, very little was done by parents of the school boards of Schools A, B and D concerning financial matters of the schools. They instead reinforced existing ministerial policies or relied on policies formulated by educators. Parent participants' responses of the three schools showed that most parents had low educational levels and had limited familiarity with educational issues and activities. Hence, principals of Schools A, B and C shared the same opinion that principals and teachers in the school board had more influence in the decision making because they have more understanding of educational matters. The principal and teacher of School A shared the same sentiments that: "parents played a very minimal role. The school management team develops policies and after parents were then called to endorse the decisions."

On the other hand, it also emerged from Schools D, E and F that decisions were collectively taken with little guidance from the principals and teachers. The principal of school E indicated that parents have more power than the educators; hence, parents made decisions on issues through the chairperson. The chairperson of School E stressed that they had a greater influence in decision making than teachers. She further added that: "As the chairperson, I ensure that school board follows the policy when decisions are taken based on our set goals and purpose which is to help the learners learn in a conducive atmosphere."

The principal of School D stated that she would only guide if the decision taken were not in line or against policies. She added that she does this by providing options to direct decisions. The teacher interviewed from Schools D, E and F stated that both parents and educators took collective decisions during the meetings. The influence of parents, teachers and principals in decision making was of equal value. A parent of school F indicated that the school board took decisions based on the school's internal policies in line with the ministerial policies. He said that"Every school has its internal policies, and we took decisions based on that. The decisions taken were collective whereby everyone shared their opinions on the matter."

From the document review of the school board minute of meetings and agenda items at Schools A and B, it became clear that all the topics discussed were from the principal's side, and the principal influenced most of the decisions taken. Meetings are convened and presided by the principal and not by the chairperson. The roles of parents in these meetings were limited to opening and closing prayers, the vote of thanks and closing remarks. The exclusion of parents from decision making and policy formulation disempowers them concerning their roles and responsibilities in school governance.

4.4.2 Parental role in the appointment of staff members

Research findings revealed that school board members are to recommend the appointment of staff members. Although teacher appointment is one of the school board's key roles, some participants indicated that they do not have the expertise in the area, and as such, the decision is left in the hands of the teachers and principals.

The majority of the school board's parent members interviewed stated that they are instead called to endorse decisions taken by the school management teams. The study also revealed that parent members are mostly avoided when recommending the appointment of teaching staff. To understand precisely how parents in the school board performed their role of recommending staff member appointments, all interviewed principals responded that parent members of the school board recommended the appointment of new staff members at their schools. The principal of School F indicated that school board members set criteria to be used to get the best suitable candidates and have the right to recommend or reject the candidate. She further stated that the appointment of staff members would not go through without the endorsement of the school board members. Sharing her experience, the principal of School E expressed that the school board advertised the post after the need for a teacher is expressed by the school's management team and made sure a suitable candidate is selected. The principal of School A voiced concern about the amount of time spent by the regional office to appoint teachers. He stated that

"the regional office delayed the appointment of new teachers, and learners were left without teachers for a long period."

A parent member from School A affirmed that the regional office or Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture took too long to appoint teachers, and as a result, learners go a long time without a teacher. The principal of School C expressed that parents have to be present in the interview and ask questions. They have the role of recommending a suitable candidate for an appointment. The teacher from School E stated that the principal made the recommendation for the appointment of staff

members, and the parents endorsed it. All parents interviewed from Schools A to F shared the same views that the recommendation for the appointment of new staff members is one key role of parents serving on the school board. A parent from school E explained that as soon as the school management, through the principal, informed the school board of any need for a teacher at school, the chairperson would convene a school board meeting to study the applications and recommend the applicants appropriate for the interview. The parent from School D said that the school management would shortlist the candidate, but the parents must be given feedback about who was shortlisted. A parent from School C expressed her opinion and said if the school needed a teacher, the principal would advertise the post; we would select the suitable candidate and recommend them for the position. A parent from School D voiced similar points regarding the roles of the parent members. He said, "When there was a vacant teaching post, the school board members participated in the recommendation of the staff member to ensure that there was no discrimination or favouritism from the side of teaching staff."

However, recommending the appointment of staff members did not come out as a role of the school board interviewed with some parent members from Schools A and B.

Moreover, in this study, more parent participants argued that the selection and appointment of teachers could not be single-handedly made by officials from the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. They felt that to execute their mandated role of teacher recruitment, the school board members, especially parents, should play a leading role. The study further revealed that decentralisation of power, shared

responsibility and democratic decision-making through the school board is not being realised as parents' voice is often not included or considered. Moreover, from the review of relevant documents of minutes given to me, not all reflected staff appointments as a point of discussion from the schools.

4.4.3 Parental involvement in teachers and learners discipline

All parents interviewed indicated that school boards had the role to play in improving the image of the schools. Parents from Schools A and B expressly indicated banning corporal punishment to learners made schools powerless to instil discipline. A parent from School B explained that they disciplined learners, especially those who truant school and those who fought at school. Parents from all Schools A to F indicated that it was their responsibility to ensure that learners were punctual to the lessons. All parents interviewed echoed the same sentiments that if any learner misbehaved, the school board would invite the parents and the child to discuss how the child could be disciplined.

A parent from School E stated that school board members motivated learners to refrain from bad behaviours. Another parent from School D revealed that if the principal or a teacher misbehaved, it was the role of the school board members to discipline him or her. The parent also stated that school board members monitored the arrival of the principal and his performance. The parent member further added that school board members disciplined any misbehaving individual among teachers and learners.

Interviews with parents from Schools C to F emerged that the school board plays a significant role in instilling discipline among the learners. The parent of School C specifically indicated that they had unruly learners, and therefore, in many cases, they were called to discipline such learners. He said parents of unruly learner/s were called to meetings with school board members, teachers and the concerned learner/s to advise learners on good behaviour expected of them. Instilling discipline among teachers and learners were mentioned as one of the roles of the school board. The importance of the school board in discipline issues was stressed by most of the principals. For example, the principal of School E said, "The parents in the school board members perform their roles because they attended to both teachers and learners grievances."

The principal further underscored that one of the roles of a school board was to listen to disciplinary issues among learners and teachers. The principal pointed out that it was the role of the parents to ensure teachers did not apply corporal punishment on learners, suspend them from lessons and that there were no teachers absent from work without the principal's permission. The principal of School C felt that parents, especially those on the school board, were there to monitor principals and teachers. He indicated that if there were no parents on the school board, teachers and principals would behave the way they want. He further stated that teachers knew that the school board members were watching whatever they were doing. The disciplinary role was also stressed by the principal of School F when he said, "If learners came late to school, the school board would request the parent to come with

his or her child to the office. We met with the parents to advise the child to come to school on time."

From there, the parents made sure the child came early to school. However, instilling discipline was not mentioned by the principal of School B, and because of this, the principal might not encourage instilling discipline by school board members. During the interview with Schools C and E teachers, they indicated that disciplining learners and teachers was one of the parents' roles. The teacher from School C indicated that their school board conducted a disciplinary hearing for learners and teachers when necessary. Sharing a similar sentiment, the principal from School A explained that the school usually calls the school board members to reprimand the learners after the teachers and management attempt failed.

A teacher from School B shared the same experience as the principal explained that it was the role of the teachers at their school, and not the school board, to discipline the learners. The teacher further stated that it was more convenient for them to discipline learners at school. A teacher from School D said that instilling discipline among learners was part of their core functions and one of the roles of the school board. The principal of Schools A and C both indicated that they discussed teachers' behaviours. The principal of School C explained that if a staff member misbehaved, the school board members would invite him or her to a face to face meeting. In this meeting, the school board members would discuss with the concerned staff and request the principal to report the case to the circuit office. The principal from School F emphasised that the school board members have the mandate to

recommend to the principal the possible actions against teachers who are not carrying out their duties as expected.

Teachers interviewed also revealed that school board members discussed different matters in their meetings. Teachers from Schools A, B, D and E specified that they discussed learners' behaviours, how to improve learners' performance and learners' late coming. A teacher from School E further stated that if there is an undisciplined learner, the school board would discuss it and decide on the action to rebuke him or her. Strategies to improve learners' discipline were also evident from the minutes of the school board meetings from Schools A to F.

Lastly, the parents from Schools A and B expressed that they brought many complaints regarding teaching and management of the school observed by the community members into their meeting to be discussed and resolved. In the same vein, the parent member from School A indicated that they discussed indiscipline among learners. Document analysis at Schools A and B substantiates the above statement.

4.4.4 Supporting principal and teachers

All principals interviewed expressed parents' assistance to principals and teachers. The principal of school F said that parents gave support to teachers and principal in successfully carrying out the school's activities, for example, minor maintenance. He further explained that parents volunteered to organise school extramural activities such as bazaars and sports activities and would be in high attendance at such events. The principal of School F also indicated that when the principal and

teachers convened meetings, they were fully attended by parents and always participated in discussions where necessary. Similarly, the principal of School D expressed gratitude for how the school board assisted the school. She indicated that they invited the school board to staff meetings and provided a platform to address teachers regarding learners' performance. Giving examples of the matters discussed during their meetings, he said, "If there are lazy teachers, we discuss what must be done so that they take their responsibility seriously."

A parent from School B expressed similar sentiments that school board members discussed how they could improve what was not going well. On this matter, the principal of School C stated, "Sometimes parents honestly mentioned the names of the teachers who failed to carry out their duties."

Another assistance mentioned by the principal of School C was that the parent members of the school board created the relationship between the school and the community. The principal from School B stated, "parents are the link between the school and the community." He said when school board members heard something that affected the school, they informed the principal. The principal of School A also expressed that if parent members of the school board picked up something from the community that need to be discussed, they liaised with the principal. The principal of School A cited some examples of how the parent mebers of the school board assisted the school. He said, "I know some of the concerns and issues reached my table through the parents in the school board."

Another support identified by the principal of School B was that parent members of the school board members mobilised other parents to take part in the school

activities. For example, he said, “When we need to elect new board members, we ask parents serving on the school board to motivate other parents to come for such a meeting.”

The principal of School C confirmed this by saying, “Sometimes when we needed the support of some parents, we sent school board members to convince them.”

Teachers interviewed indicated that parents supported principals and teachers in many ways. A teacher from School E indicated that school board members advised teachers. She explained that they had discussions with new teachers and informed them what was expected of them before starting their work. A teacher from School D stated that parents motivated teachers and the principal to work hard to improve the school’s performance. A teacher from School A identified the improvement of learners’ performance as one of the topics discussed regularly in the school board meetings. The teacher added that the school board discussed how to improve learners’ performance, educational problems teachers and principals experienced /came across, and how to solve such problems. She further expressed that they also studied the examination results to determine the improvements needed. November/December external examinations results were analysed and discussed during the school board meetings and staff meetings. A teacher from School E shared similar ideas that they planned and organised meetings to motivate learners in their meetings.

On a similar issue, the teacher from School B confirmed that they discussed issues as they arose and tried to find solutions. The document analysis of the minutes of meetings of the school board meetings at School A established that the school board

members discussed how to improve learners' performance and behaviour; however, the topics to be addressed in the parents' meetings were all suggested by the principal and teachers. Communication between the school and the community was another support mentioned by the teacher interviewed. Specifically, a teacher member from School D stated that their school community learn about school activities through the parent members of the school board. She said, "School board links the school with the community by taking any message from the school to the community and vice versa." Teachers from Schools D, E, and F stated that their school boards assisted schools in organising parents meetings. A parent from School F reported that they supported the principal and teachers in teaching and managing the school. The chairperson from School C shared similar sentiments as he said, "Well, the school board assisted the principal by motivating children to work hard and to see to it that they were well disciplined."

The chairperson from School E assertively indicated that their school board supported teachers and the principal by creating good cooperation between the school and the community. The chairperson from School A pointed out that teachers invited school board members at the beginning of the school year to celebrate their achievements and discuss how they could further improve on their weaknesses. At School E, the parent indicated that the school board discussed all difficulties and solved problems the school experienced. However, a small percentage of school board members interviewed saw themselves as motivators of teachers to deliver quality education to learners. The principal of School E indicated that they discussed how they could create a good relationship between the school and the community

in their meetings as school board members. According to this Principal, a good working relationship between the school and the community encouraged learners' performance. She explained that if there were no good working relationships between the school and the community, it would negatively affect learners' performance; therefore, they make sure they created an excellent connection to enhance performances. She further alluded that it was the role of the school board members to resolve any disagreement between the school and the parent community.

4.4.5 Parental involvement in school maintenance

The principals from Schools A and B indicated that school board members discussed school problems such as minor maintenance and school finance. The principal of School D shared the same views and stated that they discussed school building, maintenance, and learners progress in their meeting. A teacher from school F indicated that they discussed the use of school finances by the school. She further explained that the school board controlled the use of money in the school; for instance, if the school wanted to buy books, the request had to go through the school board. A teacher from School E further explained that they also decided on topics for discussion during parent meetings in these meetings. A parent from School E stated that it was the role of the school board to make sure that the school had enough furniture. He further explained that if the school needed furniture, the school board would request assistance from the Regional Office of Education through the office of the Inspector of Education.

> *"I remember we once suggested to the school's management team to ask neighbouring schools for the broken chairs so that we could fix them for our school to have enough furniture for the learners. Management agreed, and through the circuit office we got the broken furniture from other schools and got them fixed."*

The same experience of school board members being responsible for the school furniture was expressed by a parent from School C who stated, "We requested for furniture from the Regional Office through the circuit office as we experienced a shortage."

Parents from all Schools A to F indicated that one of their roles was maintaining the school properties. The parents stated that they encouraged learners to take care of the school properties. The parent from School B explained that if the school building needed minor renovations, the school board would discuss when and how to renovate the school building and the amount to be allocated for such renovation. He added that it was the role of the school board members to maintain the school properties and ensure that buildings are in good condition. The parent from School D stated that school board members ensured that in any instance of vandalism of school properties and buildings, the responsible person for the damage would be held liable for repairing damages.

From all participants interviewed from Schools A to F, it came out that it was the role of parents to discuss matters affecting the school and propose solutions. The parent from School E indicated that they discussed what and how they would improve their school in most cases.

4.4.6 Classroom visits

The principal of School F said that parent members of the school board members at her school conducted classroom visits to observe the lessons. She further explained that sometimes school board members moved around the classes to observe whether effective teaching and learning took place. The principal of School E explained that school board members at her school visited teachers in the classrooms. She was confident that through classroom observations, parents find out whether teachers were teaching or not. A teacher from School D explained that school board members conducted class visits to inspect learners' written work and observe learners' classroom behaviour. Likewise, a teacher from School E shared his experience that school board members conducted classroom observations to observe how teachers were teaching. The principal of School D positively stressed that the school board analysed the previous performances of the school to determine whether the performance has been improving. She said that "I remembered giving them the examination statistics for the previous year." The principal of Schools A, B and C did not indicate during the interview classroom visits as one of the roles of parents as members of the school board. However, the principal of School A stated that parents were requested to come and sit in during lessons if their child is ill-disciplined, disruptive as per the recommendations of the school board. In the interview with the parents, the chairperson from School D, E and F mentioned that they conducted class visits to observe whether teachers were doing their work as expected of them. In particular, the parent of School E stated: "I visited the school

and conducted classroom observations to observe whether teachers were doing their work as expected by the policy."

Expressing how she conducted class visits, the parent from School D stated that she asked the principal to go into classes and observe teachers teaching. The chairperson from School D further stated that she also checked learners' exercise books to see whether they were given the quality and sufficient activities at the appropriate levels for their performance. She further expressed that she asked the teacher to explain for her when there was something that she could not understand in the learners' workbooks. Similarly, parents from Schools E and F responded by saying that they did class visits to see whether learners were given written work and assessed. They specifically indicated that they used the School-Based Evaluation Instrument (SBEI) tool to record their findings during classroom observations. Based on the findings, they would take action if there were aspects that needed improvement. In the same vein, the parents from Schools A, B and C did not comment on this matter.

The involvement of parents in the school board in school governance can play an important role, especially in encouraging teachers to be committed to their work. The general quality of teaching and learning is expected to improve when teachers are motivated and supported.

In conclusion, participants agreed that parents need to be fully involved in all aspects of educating learners at secondary schools, not only in academics, but also behaviour, and attendance too. Parents have to understand that their children are maturing and need guidance in many things besides discipline. It can be concluded from the findings that parents are partially involved, and only a few fulfil their roles.

More still need to be done to reach out to those not involved in taking charge and fulfil their roles as required from them.

4.5 Challenges faced by the school board in school governance

This theme aimed to understand what factors affect parental involvement in the education of learners in secondary schools.

4.5.1 Lack of interest in education from parents

The principal of school D highlighted that most parents were not interested in the children's education as they left everything in the hands of the teachers and principals. The involvement of parents in the education of their children is vital as it supports the teaching and learning at school. The principals were frustrated by the lack of support from parents as they were not adhering to the decisions made during parents' meetings. The principal of school A strongly stated that "parents remove themselves." That showed that one of the possible solutions to improve disciplinary problems was by getting more parents to be actively involvement. According to Levinthal et al (2021) parents may feel distant from the school if proper time is not allocated to invest in dialogues. Parents may also experience anger and frustration when they perceive that their initiatives to increase home-school contact are not welcomed.

4.5.2 Learners indiscipline

The issue of indiscipline proved to be the most significant concern among school board members. The findings revealed that school board members were challenged with disciplinary problems. The parents and teachers stated that since the abolishment of corporal punishment in schools, indiscipline had become an everyday problem for the school board members. All participants were aware of the indiscipline among the learners at their schools. They believed that children needed direction and guidance to achieve desirable goals. The provision of the code of conduct for learners enforced by the school board members could enforce discipline among the learners. However, the school board members alone could not resolve learners' disciplinary problems; they need support from the parents (Quan-Baffour, 2006).

The teachers believed that the only solution to improve discipline among school learners was to encourage greater parental involvement. Therefore, they thought it is always important that school boards involved the parents in resolving learners' disciplinary issues. That is in accordance with Iilonga (2016), who expressed that disciplining the learners is a shared responsibility between teachers, the school board members, the parents and the entire community. The input of parents is crucial to the improvement of learners' education at secondary school. The principal of School C expressed that learners education is "tripartite" it should involve all parties, the learner, parent and teacher, to achieve desired goals.

4.5.3 Parents' low educational background

The low educational level of most parents has played a role in the inefficiency of parents serving on the school board in the selected secondary schools. The principals and the teachers were concerned about the parents as their poor educational background resulted in a lack of understanding of the educational matters. Most of the parents interviewed did not attain tertiary educational levels. Policy understanding is very important but could be difficult for parents whose education may be limited. Limited understanding of policies and how to implement them have a negative impact on the quality of learners' education. This is in accordance with Nakale (2018), who expressed that if the government does not set requirements, then the schools will be negatively affected if parents serving on the school board cannot read or write they will not fully understand their part in school matters.

The teachers and principals felt that the parents did not perform their roles because of poor literacy and poor educational background. Although some of those parents in the selected secondary schools were illiterate and lacked knowledge on educational matters, parents remained important stakeholders in education and formed the majority in the school boards. The Principal of School D stated: "I have parents at our school serving on the school board just because no one else was willing to volunteer to serve."

It is, therefore, the responsibility of the school principals to ensure that parents understand their roles and responsibilities as required of them by the Ministry of Education. Some principals were concerned about the parents' lack of basic understanding and argued that they seemed not to fulfil their roles effectively. A

teacher from school B expressed that the “Majority of parents are under or not educated and do not make any meaningful contributions; therefore, principals make the decisions.” However, one of the most important roles of a school principal is to bring stakeholders together to create an identity for the school. Weak leadership undermines such efforts, but passion and drive can develop a positive, proactive shared vision and identity (MEAC, 2018).

Some parents felt undermined to perform their roles as entrusted to them by the Education Act 16 of 2001 because they do not know about their roles and how they could perform them. It was evident that parents were willing to carry out their roles, but their little education stood in their way. They were inhibited by the limited education they had in the field. As a parent from School A stated “ It is an eye that I should have on the school and also know what children are doing in school. It is very important, I want to be know.”

4.5.4 Lack of training of school board members

It was apparent from the findings that there is a lack of training and capacity building among school board members. As a parent from School B stated “ I was never trained since I joined the school board.” Those who received training indicated that the training was ineffective, while some school board members were not trained. A parent from School D stated: “I was trained at the beginning of the year that I joined the school board at this school but it was not enough. They gave us too many information in one day”.

It was also evident that the lack of training of school board members gave rise to problematic situations as they did not understand what was expected of them as stipulated in the Namibian Education Act 16 of 2001. Lack of training and clear information on the roles of the school board may lead to them contradicting the educational policies. Adequate training would make school board parent members understand what is expected of them. Training guides could help the school board members fulfil their roles.

4.5.5 Prolonged ministerial procedures

Although the parents were responsible for making recommendations of staff appointments, their involvement and power were limited. The parents indicated that due to the lengthy procedures of the Ministry of Education, it took too long to get recommended teachers approved. This was frustrating to the school board members, especially parent members of Schools A and B, as the learners were left without teachers for a long time, and parents thought it was the principal's fault. This shows that the regional office is a limiting factor for parents in ensuring that learners attended school and were being taught. The principal of school A indicated that the school would send in the list of recommended teachers to the regional office for an appointment. Still, it takes too long for them to approve the recommended teacher (s). He added that “sometimes it takes for about nearly three months for a teacher to be appointed.”

The above findings regarding challenges faced by parents in being involved in the education of learners in secondary schools, participants were in support of parents

receiving adequate training so that they are empowered to perform their roles as per Ministerial policies. Iilonga (2016) affirm that it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture to develop the Capacity of school boards and ensure that they perform their roles and responsibilities effectively. The Ministry of Education (2005) further confirm that it is the responsibility of the principals to guide and advise the parents in related educational matters where they may seem to be ineffective. With this, the authors wanted to portray how parents are expected to perform their many varied tasks when the relevant authorities empower them.

4.6 Ways to mitigate challenges that affect parental involvement

This theme addressed the following research question. What do secondary schools do to address factors affecting parental involvement in the education of learners in the Erongo Region? In an attempt to find some possible ways to mitigate challenges faced by parents in the school board.

4.6.1 Training for parents who are board members

Serving on the school board is a multifaceted task, especially for those parents who had not served on the school board before. Therefore, parents suggested that for them to perform their roles effectively, the Regional Office should organise more workshops so that everybody has an opportunity to receive the information on the roles of the school board. All participants agreed they require training for the parents serving on the school board to perform their duties effectively. For instance, a parent of School E expressed that training helped her to look at critical areas such as textbook availability and school finances. Parents believed that they performed their

roles better when they know what is expected of them. It is evident from the statement above that ongoing training should be provided to school board members. For parents to support teachers and principals to teach effectively, the Ministry of Education (regional office) and the principals must ensure that all school board members undergo well-organised training that focuses on their main roles and performance. It is clear that if all school board members are trained, the general running of the schools will improve as key stakeholders (parents) are actively involved and performing their roles as stipulated in the Education Act.

4.6.2 Parents' view about democratic governance

Parents interviewed believed that democratic governance contributed to the smooth running of the school as it allowed them to participate in decision making and share their views on school governance. The parent of School A strongly highlighted that this built teamwork and everyone felt empowered or have a say in the children's education; and it increased good relationship between the teachers, parents and the community.

The principal of school B highlighted that in democratic governance, everyone is aware of what is happening at the school, and all stakeholders were given an equal opportunity to express their concerns, which results in the promotion of the culture of teaching and learning in the school. The involvement of all stakeholders in decision making meant that they contributed equally and were accountable for whatever problem was experienced at the school.

4.6.3 Provision of policy documents

The outline of the "work of the school board" Guidelines for Namibian School Board Members was communicated as a sign that the Ministry of Education planned to empower and assist the school boards. It was clear from the guidelines that it would be difficult for the school board members to carry out their roles effectively without the guidelines.

The parents interviewed indicated that getting a copy of the guidelines would help them understand their roles better. It was found that there were parent members of the school board who did not have the guidelines on the work of the school boards. Without the policies, the parents in the school board could face difficulties in carrying out their roles. According to the Ministry of Education (2005), the school board has the right to advise and see whether policies were being implemented. It will be difficult for parents to advise without knowing their roles and relying on the teachers to provide assistance and information. The unavailability of guidelines or Act means that some decisions were made based on common sense as there may be no reference to the guidelines or policy. Parents will perform their roles better when they know what is expected of them.

All principals interviewed had a copy of the guidelines on the work of the school board. Some parents indicated that they did not have copies of policies on the roles of the school board. This made it challenging for the parents to carry out their roles, make informed decisions and manage schools according to prescribed standards. Hence there is a need for parents to be given policy documents. This could provide them with the confidence to carry out their roles and responsibilities.

Findings revealed that to address some of the factors that affect parents' involvement of learners at secondary schools, a teacher from School E stated: "Parents have to be engaged constantly, and school boards need to be empowered in school governance to be part of the decision-making process and develop projects that will benefit the learners and school."

In agreement with these remarks is Iilonga (2016), who stated that the fact that decisions are made at the school level raises a great sense of responsibility among the stakeholders and especially the school board, thus allowing them to take responsibility for what is happening at the school level. One of the parents of School F interviewed concurred that parents' training is beneficial and enriching to parents and the learners, teachers, principals, and the entire school. A teacher from School B also agreed that in order to overcome challenges, parents need to be educated. "Let them know what they can do and not and what they cannot do." With this, participants tried to emphasise that having competent and well-trained parents is also to the benefit and success of the secondary schools and not only the learners.

4.7 Chapter summary

This chapter presented, analysed and discussed data collected by categorising the data into themes that were dealt with separately. The research questions of this study, the theoretical framework and policy documents of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture guided the analysis of the data. The main findings in this study were classified under four major themes and fourteen sub-themes. The four major themes are Understanding parental involvement, knowledge and understanding of

school board roles, challenges faced by the school board and ways to mitigate challenges faced by parents.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations derived from the study's findings to show the extent to which the purpose and the study's research questions stated in chapter 1 have been achieved. Lastly, the chapter made recommendations for improvement based on the study's findings and proposed research areas for further studies.

5.2 Summary of the study

This study was set out to investigate parental involvement in learners' education in secondary schools in the Erongo region. It was hoped that the study would provide knowledge to teachers, principals, parents, policymakers, and other stakeholders on the importance of involving parents in their children's education and help contribute to the existing body of knowledge. The study was to answer the following research questions: How are parents involved in the education of their children in secondary schools in the Erongo region? What roles do parents play in the education of secondary school learners in the Erongo region? What factors affect parental involvement in the education of learners in secondary schools in the Erongo region? What do secondary schools do to address factors affecting parental involvement in the education of the learners in the Erongo region? To understand the phenomenon,

the researcher engaged respondents to understand roles and challenges that need to be addressed to help parents as crucial stakeholders carry out their roles effectively.

The literature review showed that parents play a significant role in the learners' education and the school governance at large with the appropriate empowerment. In that context, the data collection instruments, namely the interview guide and document review, were employed to answer the research questions. Most of the data were collected using semi-structured interview guides for the researcher was interested in capturing the participants' experience, knowledge and understanding of parental involvement. The semi-structured interview guides allowed participants' concerns and interests to surface through probing, providing a broader lens for the researcher's gaze. Moreover, to obtain information that did not emerge from the interviews, the researcher analysed pertinent documents such as minutes of parents' general meetings, visitors' books, and learner-parent-teacher conferences to explore the patterns of parental involvement at the secondary school level. This enabled the researcher to pose relevant interview questions for the study as documents provided valuable information. Document analysis also complemented and strengthened data that was obtained through interviews.

Moreover, the interpretations and discussions of the findings were concentrated on the roles played by parents in the education of children, challenges faced by parents in carrying out their roles as key stakeholders and strategies to enhance parents' involvement in learners' education. This research has learned important issues that hindered parents' involvement in learners' education in secondary schools.

Firstly, the data generated revealed that the participants had a vague understanding of parental involvement in education. Participants only spoke about parental involvement in terms of behavioural problems and school attendance. The principal of School C stated that “Parents are the educators at home instilling good discipline and so forth”. A teacher from School B echoed the same sendiments that “ At our school they do not attend meetings, and they do not want to be accountable. Some do not fulfil their roles at all”

It was also evident from the data collected that it is important to involve parents in the education of their children. Still, most parents were not aware of their roles as stakeholders in education, especially in the school's governance. This is because the majority of them only mentioned one role, which they considered to be crucial. They said their most important role in the school was the discipline of learners. Parents serving on the school board often participate without having the opportunity to influence decisions, meaning that they are excluded from the process. It emerged that the most significant challenge for parents in fulfilling their roles is a lack of understanding of their roles. A teacher from School B called on parents to be educated on the importance of their involvement

> *“Educate parents to take responsibility. Liberate them that teachers are not to be feared and parents must be educated and know their responsibility. Make them understand the importance of education. Beginning of every year, communicate expectations to get their interest in the school or education of their child/children. Sensetise parents.”*

Secondly, the study finding was consistent with what the literature has on parental involvement. Regardless of the participants’ perceptions of parental involvement in

education, the participants acknowledged the importance of parental involvement in learners' education. Literature reveals that the lack of parental involvement in secondary schools is detrimental to learners' education. There has been a carefree 'demeanour' in most parents since they are not held accountable for learners' educational achievement (Adere, 2013, p.163); for this, teachers contended that parents had not been committed to being involved in learners' education. Moreover, data generated made it evident that most parents are not involved in the academic education of learners but rather in the non-academic such as disciplinary matters. This shows that the parents are voiceless and are dominated by the teachers and principals regarding academic issues. The governance of every public school is the task of the school board members, and the school management. A teacher from school C indicated that "They do not fulfill their roles. They do very little. We experience lack of parental support." A parent from school D stated: " We are not fulfilling our roles as we are not aware of what is going on. We only meet once a month to address issues identified by the principal. Lack of know and we feel intimidated." The principal of School B stated that "Educate and create awareness among parents, get parents with diverse knowledge into the school board to address issues that the school may face."

Furthermore, all participants interviewed stated that lack of parental involvement negatively influences teaching and learning, and as such, learners at secondary school suffer the consequences. The study also established that lack of parental involvement could closely be related to learners' performance since the learners lack motivation from home. Learners become demotivated, leading to a drop in

attendance and eventually in poor academic performance. A parent from School D stated that some parents may experience social problems. “The community in which we live in, circumstances under which we live- poverty and sometimes distance to school causes us not to be involved.” A Teacher from School F stated that “ There is a need for parents to come on board if there is a need for better results.” A Teacher from School E echoed the same sendiments that “when the triangle is always there children do not take chances.”

Most participants in the study indicated some ways to improve and empower parents, such as the need for sufficient training. The majority of the participants indicated that members of the school board of the selected schools were not provided with adequate training about their roles and responsibilities, which they are supposed to carry out following their election as members of the school governance. They argued that having competent and well-prepared parents in the school board was also to the benefit and success of the whole school and not only the learners.

Another key finding was that it was also evident from the data that there was no collective decision making among all the stakeholders. Although the Education Act has mandated the school board members to be involved in school governance, there is a need to look at how this regulation informs practice. The participants suggested that collective decision making would enable school board members to minimise the challenges they faced in being involved in learners’ education. As parents lacked sufficient skills to democratically, engage in school governance and contribute meaningfully to their children’s education in secondary schools.

It was also apparent from the findings that parents do not fulfil their obligations towards learners' education in secondary schools as schools regard parents as lacking the knowledge or know-how of education. When parents are involved in school, it promotes the connections between them and the school and creates congruity in behaviours, values and attitudes across children's micro-systems. The findings also revealed that teachers want to involve parents, but they do not know the best way to do so because parents do not show support for schools.

Lastly, findings reveal that parents require a high level of commitment and dedication towards their children's education. This guarantees quality education as families of learners are considered a crucial factor in the children's education.

All participants expressed that all schools needed to have school boards, for they played a vital role in the governance of the schools. Some of the key responsibilities of parents as the highest decision-makers in the school were: recommending the new appointment of staff members, participate in decision making, school finances and helping schools solve disciplinary problems. The roles of parents in the interview of the candidates who applied for teaching vacancies were of concern, as they were present as mere observers or not involved at all. In this case, school board members were not fully performing this role. Parents as members of the school board played a minimal role in selecting the best suitable candidates to be recommended for appointment as teachers. It became evident that the regional office delays the appointment of new teachers. This contributed to school board ineffectiveness as learners remained for longer periods without a teacher.

It surfaced from the data that the principals and teachers had taken more responsibility for budgeting than is required under the Namibian Education Act 16 of 2001. Again, even though they were not involved in the budgeting process, the parents decided how much to spend on what because they reviewed and approved the budget that the teachers and the principal prepared. The parents relied much on the teachers and principals' guidance in dealing with school finance. Lack of parents' involvement contributed to their ineffectiveness as members. The way school board members performed this role was contrary to what is stipulated in the Namibian Education Act 16 of 2001, as parent members were not involved in the initial budgeting stage. It is also worth noting that the level of education among parent members has significance in how the budget is prepared and monitored. It emerged from the findings that principals were too influential on decisions taken in school board meetings, resulting in a lack of shared governance and shared decision-making. This has negatively affected the performance of the school board members. In this case, it is evident that democratic governance, where participation from all stakeholders is encouraged, has not yet occurred in most of these schools where interviews were conducted. According to the (Ministry of Education and Culture 1993, p.168), "to improve our education system and upgrade our schools' quality, it requires a good deal of work in our communities. To achieve that and maximise the local contributions to our education system, we need to decentralise both responsibility and authority." Jekonia and Mowes (2013) echoed the similar sentiments that to be effective, the form of involvement need to be focused on improving achievement and to be designed to engage families and learners in developing specific knowledge and skills.

With regard to discipline, the school board members expressed that they had the role of maintaining good discipline among teachers and learners. Based on the findings, it is clear that even though parent members tried to maintain discipline, there were cases of indiscipline among learners. Parents believed that they had the responsibility to mould learners and teachers. This is per the MBESC (2004) stipulation that the role of school board members is to monitor activities and ensure that teachers and learners attend to their duties regularly.

The data revealed that school board members discussed various issues affecting their schools; however, these discussions were not effective as they did not include all school board members. The data has shown that the agendas for school board meetings were all from principal and teacher members and dominated the meetings. The findings further revealed that parent members did not present topics in their meetings, and principals influenced their decisions. The participation and decision making of the parent members in schools' essential issues was minimal. These practices where the parents were excluded from decision making are against the idea of participative management (Ngubane, 2009). This showed that participative management has not yet taken place in some schools. Little has been done so far to involve parents in school matters. It is also evident that school board members were not knowledgeable about the stipulation of the Namibian Education Act 16 of 2001 regarding this role. According to Nikodemus (2013), there should be extensive and intensive engagement with all the relevant stakeholders, especially parents. He added that it is easier to participate and own the change when people are active players in the change initiative.

Parent members also felt that they assist the principal and teachers in instilling discipline among teachers and learners. In contrast, the principals felt they have consistently helped and guided the parent members to the extent that they did most of the parents' roles.

Thus, all parents expressed that they faced several challenges in carrying out their roles. The challenges faced but were not limited to included: late coming and absenteeism of both learners and teachers, lack of support from the general parents and the community, lack of training for school board members, literacy and lack of understanding of educational matters. The school board members were struggling to cope with high incidents of absenteeism as some parent members did not take part in decision making. Absenteeism delayed school programme implementation as the school board, and general parent meetings had to be postponed because no quorum was reached. In some instances, school board members' elections failed due to low attendance from parents during parents' meetings. The parents were not interested or showed no interest in their children's education as they left everything in the hands of the teachers and the principals. According to van Zyl (2013), this was consistent with the literature; parents did not believe that they could assist children as far as schoolwork was concerned. They believed that formal education was not the domain of parents. High incidents of absenteeism among school board members and parents from the community were highlighted. The absenteeism of the school board chairperson was cited for contributing to the ineffectiveness of the school board's performance. Some parent members did not attend meetings nor

extend an apology, and no action was taken against parents who did not attend the meetings.

The findings revealed that only introductory training for newly elected school board members was conducted during the first year of office of the school board members, which was generally ineffective and inadequate for it did not cover what school board members experienced in the field and was only provided to some members. Some participants reported that those who received training lacked the skills to use the knowledge gained and, in some cases, could not share with others who did not receive training. It was important and commendable that the Ministry of Education, Arts and culture offered training to school board members to capacitate them. However, much still needs to be done for the members to serve as expected. What seemed to be the case was that there was no evidence of continuous training of the school boards to promote the effective performance of their functions. It was apparent from the data that parent members had a limited understanding of educational matters, which may have contributed to their ineffectiveness. Most parents had insufficient knowledge about the complexities of the teaching profession and therefore lacked the expertise to evaluate teachers and give much-needed feedback for improvement.

However, participants interviewed mentioned different strategies that could be used to enhance their effectiveness. The key method mentioned by the participants were: provision of training; it is essential for the school board members (parents) to be given the necessary training, which should allow them to acquire the required knowledge so they would be in a position to participate meaningfully in the

governance of schools. According to MoE (2005), the regional office should train school boards on their roles. The regional office could be blamed for lack of knowledge that hindered parent members of the school board from evaluating their work, monitoring and evaluating school board members, and availability of the policies on the roles of school board members. It was evident from the data that school board members did not own copies of the Namibian Education Act 16 of 2001 and the "work of the school board" Guidelines for Namibian School Board Members. Some board members were not aware of these guiding documents.

Consequently, school board members did not know the provision contained in these documents which guide them in their work. The school board members must be knowledgeable in educational law and be familiar with the Namibian Education Act 16 of 2001. The non-availability of the guidelines from most of the school board members could mean that the school board members carried out their roles differently without a guide. Doing this can do whatever they think is appropriate, not knowing that there are guidelines that stipulate their roles. School board members had some strengths in performing their roles. These were the ability to motivate teachers and learners to work hard and improve the schools' performance, inducting novice teachers on school board members' operations before starting with their work. In addition, school board members had been instrumental in investigating disciplinary problems in their schools.

5.3 Conclusions

This study provided explanations regarding why parents did not participate in carrying out their roles and responsibilities in the education of learners in secondary schools. This can be used to find ways to get more parents involved in their children's education at the secondary school level. Prior researchers stressed the importance of understanding parental involvement as contributing to learners' academic achievement in schools. Therefore, parental involvement is a phenomenon to be concerned about in secondary schools in Namibia because it is a serious contributor to quality education and decision making in the school organisation. The school principals and the school board should take the lead in engaging parents and considering how to achieve greater parental involvement in secondary schools. In secondary schools, just like primary schools, it is imperative to strive to create conducive teaching and learning environment to improve the quality of education provided to the learners. Thus, secondary schools experienced minimal parental involvement that needs to be addressed so that it does not negatively affect learners' performance and help boost the quality of education. This research argues that participative management gives parents more authority and responsibility as key stakeholders to participate in decision-making. However, school board members did not carry out their work effectively due to a lack of training and empowerment from the regional office and the principals. Parents admitted that they lacked skills and knowledge on school board roles.

Moreover, this study provided a detailed analysis of challenges experienced by parents in their quest to be involved in their children's education. Most parents did

not understand educational matters; therefore, they did not show interest in their children's education. Indiscipline among learners was a serious concern. The school board members were struggling to cope with the incidents of absenteeism as some parent members did not take part in decision making. School board members interviewed believed that recognition of the parents, consultation and practical training, and ongoing training of board members on issues pertaining to the functioning of the school board, would help contribute to the effective functioning of the school boards.

5.4 Recommendations

The recommendations below are based on the findings of the study. Because the participants reported that they did not receive sufficient training and some were not trained, the research suggests that it is imperative for the Regional Directorate of Education Arts and Culture in the Erongo region to introduce training manuals for all school board members. The researcher suggests this because, based on the findings presented, some school board members were not trained, and those that received training were briefly trained. Therefore, the researcher suggests that parents be trained and well acquainted with their policies as they have a mandate to ensure effective teaching and learning takes place in schools.

Secondly, parents should be held accountable to some extent for the learning outcomes of their children. The findings indicated that not holding parents accountable for their children's education is damaging for children. The provision of education involves different parties who should play their roles effectively, and

since education is a shared responsibility, parents should be held accountable for their children's educational outcomes. Working together will help partners: parents, teachers, principals and learners in education achieve their goals.

Thirdly, the research suggests democratic school governance to improve the democratic participation of all stakeholders in school governance. This is because the research findings presented indicate little evidence of democratic participation in the structure of stakeholders in school governance; parents are valuable contributors to the children's learning at home and school. Lastly, policy development should involve all stakeholder groups especially parents. People involved with the school want to have a say in how issues are dealt with and know their roles. Therefore, the promotion of participative management should be encouraged as this promotes participation.

5.4.1 Recommendations for further studies

Firstly, future research must investigate methods, and the effectiveness of school board training.

An assessment of the degree to which parental involvement is emphasised in teacher training programmes at institutions of higher learning.

Lastly, explore strategies to improve parents' involvement and commitment in learners' education at the secondary school level.

5.5 Chapter summary

This study investigated parental involvement in learners' education in secondary schools in the Erongo region. The study revealed that parents have significant roles in the education of learners in secondary schools. The findings from participants' responses indicated that parents are faced with numerous challenges. The significant challenges were poor educational background, lack of understanding of educational matters, language barriers, and indiscipline among learners, poor attendance and absenteeism from meetings. For school board members to execute their roles effectively, they must be given the necessary training regularly, including the opportunity to acquire the necessary knowledge for them to be able to participate meaningfully in school governance.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTICATE

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ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: FOE-001-2021 **Date: 04-02-2021**

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Research Ethics Committee (UREC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee sitting with the Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Title of Project: INVESTIGATING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN LEARNERS' EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE ERONGO REGION OF NAMIBIA.

Nature/Level of Project: HUMAN RESEARCH – NON-HEALTH: RESEARCH PROJECT

Researcher: NGHIPANDULWA NDEMUTEKONGHEDI PENEHAFO

Student Nr: 201036053

Faculty: FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Supervisors: DR. J. MUSHAANDJA

Take note of the following:

(a) Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the UREC. An application to make amendments may be necessary.

(b) Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the UREC.

(c) The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the UREC (through the Chairperson of the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by UREC.

(d) The UREC retains the right to:

(i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,

(ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

REC wishes you the best in your research.

REC Chairperson

Dr R Bock

APPENDIX B: RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

CENTRE FOR POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

University of Namibia, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia
340 Mandume Ndemufayo Avenue, Pioneers Park
☎ +264 61 206 3275/4662; Fax +264 61 206 3290; URL: http://www.unam.edu.na

15 February 2021

Student Name: NGHIPANDULWA NDEMUTEKONGHEDI PENEHAFO
Student number: 201036053
Programme: Master of Education Leadership, Management and Policy Studies

Approved research title: Investigating parental involvement in learners' education in secondary schools in the Erongo region of Namibia

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

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

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

Best Regards

15/02/2021

Dr. Seth J. Eiseb
Acting Director: Centre for Postgraduate Studies
Tel: +264 61 2063414
E-mail: directorpgs@unam.na

Date

APPENDIX C: LETTER SEEKING PERMISSION

P .O. Box 187

Swakopmund

01 April 2019

The Executive Director

Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture

Private Bag 13186

Windhoek

Dear Madam

PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA IN SCHOOLS IN THE ERONGO REGION.

I am a student at the University of Namibia pursuing a Master Degree of Education in Education Leadership, Management and Policy Studies under the Department of Educational Foundations and Management in the Faculty of Education. Currently I am conducting research for my mini thesis, which is one of the requirements for my degree.

Literature have revealed that parents are minimally involved in the education of their children in secondary schools, and even those who are involved are not able to carry out their roles as required (MEAC, 2016; Niitembu, 2016; Iilonga, 2016). Currently it is uncertain what factors parents face because no attention has been paid to researching the involvement of parents in secondary schools especially in the Erongo Region.

In the light of the above information I would like to investigate parental involvement in learners' education in secondary schools in the Erongo Region of Namibia. By conducting this research it is hoped that the study will enlighten teachers, parents, principals, policy makers in the Erongo region and other stakeholders in Education about the importance of parental involvement in learners' education at secondary school level. Furthermore, this study will help policy makers to plan interventions to address factors preventing parents from partaking fully in the education of their children, and thereby improving the quality of education. Attached hereto are the research instruments I will use to collect data from the respondents.

I am kindly requesting for permission to collect data in schools in the Erongo region. I will ensure that the school programme is not interrupted. Data will be collected after school hours. Please note that research is purely academic and information obtained from the schools will be treated strictly confidential. I will be very grateful if you consider my request favorably.

Yours Faithfully

Penehafo N. Nghipandulwa (Ms.)

APPENDIX D: PERMISSION LETER FROM MEAC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Tel: +264 61 -2933202
Fax: +264 61- 2933922
Enquiries: G. Munene
Email: Gibron.munene@moe.gov.na

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

File no: 11/1/1

Ms Penehafo N. Nghipandulwa
P. O. Box 187
Swakomund

Cell: 081 667 5705

Dear Ms Nghipandulwa,

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN ERONGO REGION

Kindly be informed that permission to conduct an academic research for your Master's Degree in Educational Foundations and Management in *"Investigating Parental Involvement in Learners Education in secondary Schools in Erongo Region in Namibia,"* is here with granted. You are requested to present this letter of approval to the Regional Director to ensure that research ethics are adhered to and disruption of curriculum delivery is avoided.

Furthermore, we humbly request you to share your research findings with the Ministry. You may contact Mr G. Munene at the Directorate: Programmes and Quality Assurance (PQA) for submission of a summary of your research findings.

I wish you the best in conducting your research and I look forward to hearing from you upon completion of your study.

Sincerely yours

Sanet L. Steenkamp
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
Office of the Executive Director
2019 -11- 06
Tel: 061-293352 3/4
Fax: 061-253671
Private Bag 13186 Windhoek Namibia

All official correspondences must be addressed to the Executive Director.

APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT

I (initials & surname) _____ hereby acknowledge my participation in the research study, I understand the content thereof and agree to give true and correct information to the best of my knowledge. Furthermore, I understand that I have the right to withdraw or change any information I provide in this interview and my participation is voluntary. I consent to participate in this study.

Signature: _____Place_____ and Date: _____

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS

Introduction

Firstly, thank you so much for agreeing to partake in my research study and for your time to share your views and perceptions on parental involvement in learners' education at secondary schools. The purpose of the visit is to talk with school board members (principal and teachers) in this secondary school to help me understand their views and opinions of parental involvement and their experiences about how parents are involved in their children's education in order to support learners' learning and growth. In this interview I am inviting you to share with me your views regarding this pertinent roles that parents play in the education of their children at secondary school level.

Instructions

The questions I am about to ask you have no right or wrong answers and all the responses will be treated with utter confidentiality and anonymity, your name will not be mentioned in the final report. Please feel free to answer the questions to the best of your experience, understanding and knowledge. May I also request for your consent to voice- record the interview.

Thank you, we may start.

A. Personal and school information

. Gender

Male

Female

2. Age range

Less than 30 years……. Between 41-50 years……..

Between 31-40 years…… 51 years or more……

3. What is your highest professional qualification?
4. How many years of experience as a secondary school principal/ teacher do you have?
5. Please give me a brief background of the school.

   5.1. When was the school established?

   5.2. How many learners are enrolled in the school?

   5.3. What learning resources are available in the school?

   5.4. Is there anything else about the school you would like to tell me?

B. How parents are involved in the education of their children at secondary school level

6. How would you understand parental involvement?
7. How do you describe parents' understanding of their involvement in the education of learners at secondary school?
8. Would you say parents are your key stakeholders with whom you share the responsibilities of the education of learners at this secondary school? Why would you regard them as such?
9. What are your experiences of parents' involvement in the education of learners in this secondary school over the years?
10. How does parental involvement influence learners' learning in this school?
11. How do you work with the parents to support learners' learning?

12. In your opinion, how can parents' involvement in the learners' education at secondary school be improved?

C. Roles parents play in the education of secondary school learners

13. According to your experience, do you think parents fulfill their roles in the education of learners in this secondary school? Please justify your answer.
14. How do you describe parents' understanding of their involvement in school governance?
15. What role should parents play in the education of secondary school learners?
16. How do parents fulfill those roles?
17. How do parents in the school board at your school perform their roles?
18. How do parents in the school board link the school with the community?

D. Factors affecting parents involvement in the education of learners in secondary schools

19. What do you think limits the parents to partake fully in the education of learners in this secondary school?
20. What problems do you experience in promoting parental involvement in supporting learners' learning?

E. Addressing factors affecting parental involvement in the education of secondary school learners.

21. What are the causes of the problems you mentioned in question 20?
22. How do you overcome those problems you mentioned in question 20?

23. What support and interventions strategies does your school have put in place to sustain active parental involvement in learners' education?
24. What strategies do you use to communicate with parents for the benefit of learners' learning?
25. What else would you like to tell me about parental involvement that could be of assistance to this study?

End.

Thank you very much for your time and responses.

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Introduction

Firstly, thank you so much for agreeing to partake in my research study and for your time to share your views and perceptions on parental involvement in learners' education at secondary school. The purpose of the visit is to talk with school board members (parents), in secondary schools to help me understand their views and opinions of parental involvement and their experiences about how they involve parents and how parents are involved in their children's education in order to support learners' learning and growth. In this interview I am inviting you to share with me your views regarding the roles that parents play in the education of their children at secondary school level as well as the challenges that they face in executing their roles as parents.

Instructions

The questions have no right or wrong answers and all the responses will be treated with utter confidentiality and anonymity, your name will not be mentioned in the final report. Please feel free to answer the questions to the best of your experience, understanding and knowledge. May I also request for your consent to voice- record the interview.

Thank you, we may start.

A. Personal information

Provide the following information.

1. Gender

12. Where do you think the parents' support for children's education in this school is limited and why?

C. Roles parents play in the education of secondary school learners

13. Do you think that the environment you provide your child at home influence how he or she performs in this school? Please explain.

14. How much help do you give to your child when he or she does his or her homework?

15. What do you think are the main roles and powers of parents in the school board in this school?

16. How do parents in the school board assist the principal and teachers to improve teaching and learning in this school?

17. How do you maintain the good relationship among stakeholders, namely parents, teachers, learners as well as other stakeholders?

18. In your opinion how do you think the environment you provide your child/ children at home influence how they perform academically?

D. Factors affecting parents involvement in the education of learners in secondary schools

19. What makes it difficult for you to contribute to and support your children's education?

20. Do you feel that school board members are well trained to carry out their roles and responsibilities? Please justify your answer.

21. In what ways does the school board create barriers to effective parental involvement?

E. Addressing factors affecting parental involvement in the education of learners.

22. In your views what strategies does the school board use to overcome the problems you mentioned in 21 above?

23. How do you motivate other members of the school board to enhance their effectiveness?

24. What action would you like to see the school taking to enhance the relationship between the school and parents?

25. What else would you like to tell me about parental involvement?

End.

Thank you very much for your time and responses.