UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN THE EDUCATION OF THE EARLY GRADE

LEARNER:

THE CASE OF ASESEWA

BOTCHWAY ATSWEI AYESHATU

2022

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LEARNER:

A CASE STUDY IN ASESEWA

BOTCHWAY ATSWEI AYESHATU

200051703

A DISSERTATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES, SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF EDUCATION (EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION) IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA.

**2022**

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Botchway Atswei Ayeshatu, hereby declare that: The role of parents in the education of the early grade learner, a case study in Asesewa, is my own work and that all primary and secondary sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature ……………………………………………………

Date: ……………………………………………………

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guideline on supervision of dissertation laid done by the University of Education, Winneba.
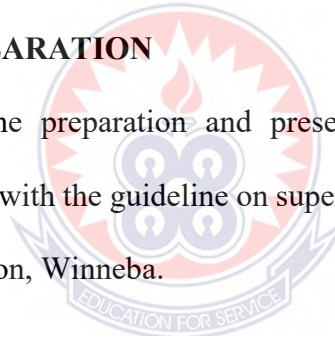
Supervisor name: Professor Charles Owu-Ewei

Signature ……………………………………………………

Date: ……………………………………………………

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

The role of parents in their children's education presents significant evidence in schools' academic results, when parental roles in education are given priority. It is noted that parents play a significant role in improving a school's academic results. The purpose of the study is to examine the role of parent in the education of the early grade learners at Asesewa in the Upper Manya Krobo district in eastern region. A qualitative research approach was utilised, employing research methods which included face-to-face interviews, reading school policies and going through parents' meeting minutes. In this case, the targeted population for the study comprised parents, teachers, and head teachers in primary two (2) classes at the Asesewa circuit "A, B & C" in the Asesewa town schools, at the upper Manya Krobo district. The researcher focused on pupils in the primary two (2) only, children in this class have pass through KG and parents have enough experience observing their children. Hence, the purposive sampling technique was employed in the selection of participants for the study. Thematic and content analysis was employed to analyze the responses to data collected. Through the investigation, it was revealed in the study that parents themselves overlooked the role they play in the education of their children in their schools. Therefore, although some parents are involved in some school activities, there is a need for training on how the school teachers should optimally involve parents in school activities. Also, parents involvement in parent-teacher meetings are significant to encourage parental participation in their children's education and parents or families can assist in student's homework. The study therefore recommended that Ghana Education Service (District Offices) in collaboration with schools should designing and implement strategies to attract parents to render voluntary services at school. Also, schools should develop a homework policy in reference to the format of the Education Homework Policy, clearly defining the role of parents.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the background to the study, statement of the problem, and purpose of the study. It also looks at the research questions, significance of the study, delimitation, limitation and organization of the study.

1.1 Background of study

Education they say is the key to success and therefore the government as argue every parent to make sure that, their children goes to school. This is the reason why the government has established the free education from kindergarten to senior high school again to help parents to afford the rest of the school bills for their wards to be educated. Teachers and other stakeholders are playing their role to see that the children get good and quality education but some parents just relax and put all the work on the government, teachers and other stakeholders involve in children education.

Furthermore, education in this second half of the twentieth century has been characterize by increase in the provision of educational programs for preschool-age children. Preschool was established in 1960's to help children overcome the cognitive, social, emotional and physical deficits that frequently accompany growing up in economically deprived home. By providing an array of educational and social services to children and their families. Head start programs are designed to foster general well-being and enhance school readiness, so that these children might gain the full benefit of the school experience and be more successful in life generally. The role of parent is equally vital in educating their children. It matters for their achievement, motivation and well-being at school. In past decades' parent role in children's education has received considerable attention from many researchers and also has become a key

component in school policy and government policy concerning the development of children education.

If head start and other programs for economically disadvantaged children can be shown to make a positive difference in what children's school and life experiences, their impact can be very widespread. Schweinhart (1985) points out that one-fourth of all children under the age of six are living in poverty, and that three-fifths of the mothers of three- and four-year old children now work outside the home. However, fewer than 20 percent of the nation's three and four-year-olds from poor families are currently enrolled in Head Start programs.

Kindergarten enrollment has also increased dramatically in recent years. While all the regions mandate kindergarten attendance, about 95 percent of all children currently attend kindergarten (Sava 1987), and 23 percent of these attend full-day programs (Karweit 1988). In addition to the generally recognized need to provide some kind of extra support to children from low-income homes, there is another reason for the dramatic increase in educational programs for children before first grade. This is the increase, alluded to above, of mothers in the workforce. Many parents who are not at home with their children in the daytime are not satisfied with unstructured day care or babysitting, preferring that their children participate in more formal learning experiences. Finally, some of the increased interest in and push for structured preschool programs comes from the unfortunate notion, held by some, that education is a race to be won, and those who start first are more likely to finish ahead. Commenting on this source of pressure for preschool education, Elkind (1988) says: "...the choice of the phrase "Head Start" was unfortunate."

The "Head Start" does imply a race, and not surprisingly, when middle income parents heard that low-income children were being given a "Head Start," they wanted a similar "Head Start" for their children. A great many educators and researchers view early childhood education as beneficial to children's cognitive and social development. These proponents including virtually all of the researchers and theorists whose work was consulted in order to prepare this document base their conviction on personal observation and on the many research studies linking early childhood programs to desirable outcomes. It is important to note, however, that some educators, such as Elkind (1988), Katz (1987), Zigler (1986), and representatives of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (1986) warn against too much formal, highly structured education for very young children.

From the above, however, a new curriculum has been introduced and educators are trying their very best to impart both formal and informal learning approaches to help learners improve in their academic performs as they continue their education. But there is the need for parents to play their role in their children's education which will increase their academic performs. However, Lemmer (2012) regards the parental role in a child's education, as it is historically limited to fundraising for schools by parent organizations, volunteering in school activities, and attending parent-teacher meetings. The above authors' view on the significance of parents in education highlights the need for schoolteachers to design strategies to enhance community and parental interests to be involved in their children's education. To increase the parents' participation, more direct impact programmes and interventions aimed at enhancing the relationship between parents, learners and teachers, other than their governance, are needed (Mmotlane et al., 2009). In this way, the schools would produce quality education.

According to Lemmer (2012) and Mncube (2009), school teachers expect parents to engage in scheduled non-professional roles at school. Roles such as working on a volunteer basis, performing non-professional duties, maintaining the school building, fencing the school, attending parent-teacher meetings, and buying exercises books or voluntary contributions during school fundraising events. However, the Ghanaian education system mandates a full partnership between parents, communities, and schoolteachers in decision making and policymaking processes concerning their children's education. Thus, in Ghana education, some extreme changes have occurred. For instance, parents are now carrying the status of being in full partnership with teachers in their children's education.

To conclude, teachers want parents to play their role in educating their own children, such as buying exercise books, school uniform and other basic needs of their children. Also assisting the children with their home works. But this is not so in some of the Asesewa district schools as children do not go school often because parent says they help them in bead making, gari production and also farm work. Because of the importance of the role of parents in the early learners' life, the researcher deemed it is very necessary for an interpretive case study research approach to utilized, and identify good practice in the relation between parent role in their children's education.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Education in this second half of the twentieth century has been characterize by increase in the provision of educational programs for preschool-age children. The success of these programmes to a certain extent depends on the role parents play or are allowed to play in this. Thus, the role of parent is equally vital in educating their children. It matters for their achievement, motivation and well-being at school. In past decades' parent role in children's education has received considerable attention from many researchers and

also has become a key component in school policy and government policy concerning the development of children education.

According to Van Deventer and Kruger (ibid), the enhancement in school academic performance, reduced dropout rates, a decrease in delinquency, and a more positive attitude towards the school are the benefits of parental role in education. Van Deventer and Kruger (ibid) state that, "the 'phenomenon' parental involvement has a significant effect on the quality of learners' experience of teaching and learning in the school, and on their (academic) results." Parental involvement in education has consistently been associated with school success in a multitude of areas, such as better achievement and behaviour, lower absenteeism, and positive attitudes towards school (Hayes, 2012). Bronfenbrenner (1986) states that parents' conduct at home could influence children's academic performance at school. The demographic, cognitive, and emotional barriers have a negative impact on parent involvement in their children's education. Parents should prepare an environment where the home and school are suitable for a child's teaching (Epstein, 1995).

Frequent visits to schools in the Asesewa Township as well as being a teacher in the same town reveals a worrying situation. As a teacher in the upper Manya Krobo district, it was observed that, most of the parents showed little or no interest in the education of their children. This is because of the observations made which included: parents' failure to attend parent teacher association (PTA) meetings; failure to provide text books and learning materials for their children, pupils' failure to do their assignments/home works that are given to them, etc. this low role parents play in the education of their young once has affected the children's learning outcomes in reading, writing, and overall performance of pupils, despite the effort made by teachers to help manage the situation. It was unclear as to whether these parents were not aware of the critical role they play

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as stakeholders in education, or these parents did not simply recognize the need for the education of their children. It was therefore pertinent to find out the role of parent in the education of the early grade learners in Asesewa Township in the Upper Manya Krobo district.

The nature of the role of parent in the education of the early grade learners is crucial and has ultimate impact on the achievement of the children. Effective "school-parent' interaction program" could encourage parents to play their critical role o result in higher academic and non-academic achievement for children.

1.3   Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to examine the role of parent in the education of the early grade learners at Asesewa Township in the Upper Manya Krobo district in eastern region.

1.4   Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objective

- Investigate the extent to which parents play their role in the education of their children.

- Assess the perceptions of teachers and parents on the role of parents in the children education.

- Examine how the roles of parents can be played effectively in their children's education.

1.5   Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

- What role can parents of Asesewa play in the education of the early grade learners?

- What are the perceptions of teachers and parents on the role of parents in the early grade learners' education?

- How can these roles be played effectively by the parents of Asesewa?

1.6 Significance of the study

This study endeavors to close the gap on the role of parent by using strategies and techniques to achieve good examination results; and the Elish-Piper (2008) dimension that is often a neglected aspect in children's beginning school years.

It aims to add value to existing knowledge on the role of parents in their children's education, improve practice, and inform the importance of education on the role of parent in the early grade learners in three perspectives: legal, educator and manager perspective.

The schools personnel, school governing bodies, and parents will hopeful refer to the findings and recommendations in this study.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

According to Simon, (2011) delimitations in a study are those characteristics that limit the scope and define the boundaries of the researcher's study. The delimiting factors include the choice of objectives, the research questions, variables of interest, theoretical perspectives that the researcher adapted (as opposed to what could have been adopted) and the accessible population (Simon, 2011). The study was delimited to the role of

parent in the education of the early grade learner using schools in Asesewa Township in the upper Manya Krobo district in the eastern region of Ghana. All the early grade schools at Asesewa town were selected for the study, thus, the population size and the number participants in each school but at the end only three 3 schools were used. The study also sought to find out the perceptions of parents regarding their role in the education of their children at the early grade level; also the extent to which parents play their role effectively as well as the barriers involve in the role parents play in the education of their children in schools in Asesewa town in the upper Manya Krobo district.

1.8   Limitations to the study

 In every endeavor there are bound to be some imposed restrictions which are inevitable and must be managed. Some of the interviewees were unwilling to divulge certain pieces of vital information due to fear. Again since the research used the recording device during the interview, some challenges emanated from this source as they felt their voice will be used for something. Due to that some of the questions asked were not answered by some of them. Despite this limitation, it is hoped that the finding of the study could be fairly generalized to all early childhood schools, parents, teachers and head teachers in Aseseswa Township in the upper Manya Krobo district in the eastern region of Ghana.

According to Simon (2011: 02), study limitations are potential weaknesses or characteristics that are out of the researcher's control. Hence, like any other study there were limitations in this present study:

- The first limitation was the time given to collect data in these schools. It was very limited and it was a busy period for parents. Therefore, it was not easy to get parents during the interviews. As a result, the researcher could not conduct investigations on the parent-teacher meetings, as it was one of the intended data sources.

- The second limitation was financial constraints and safety. The researcher could not prolong the data collection process. Therefore, this study was limited because the researcher had to avoid huge travelling expenses; for security and time saving purposes.

- The last limitation was the volume of collected data. This is an intensive study with massive data sources; it became difficult to summarise all the collected data into a single study. Furthermore, the researcher at proposal stage intended to employ focus group interviews of five parents from each school but when data collection commenced, he realised that the data would be too much for him to summarise into a single study. This then led to the withdrawal of using focus groups as a data collecting method.

1.10 Organization of the of the study

This study was organized into five chapters as follow: chapter one outlined the background to the study, statement of the problem, and purpose of the study. It also looked at the research questions, significance of the study, delimitation, limitation and organization of the study. Chapter two presented an in-depth review of relevant literature. Chapter three discussed the methodology. This included the study design,

population, sampling technique, research instruments, and data collection procedure as well as data analysis. Chapter four focused on the discussion of field data and findings. The implication of results was discussed in relation to the research questions stated in the study. Chapter five, the final chapter presented a summary of the findings of the research and conclusions. It further provided recommendations for improvement and suggested areas for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a relevant theoretical and literature review on the role of parents in the education of the early grade learners. Theory is defined as a framework that offers an explanatory device, often in the form of categories and relationships (Ridley, 2010). The literature review covered three areas; theoretical framework, conceptual review as well as empirical review. Bronfenbrenner's theory (1979) which is the ecological systems theory is the framework which constituted the theoretical bases for the study. The conceptual review covered definitions of the role of parents in education, Ghana's view on the role of parents in education, international view on the role of parents in education, benefits of the role of parents in education and barriers on the role of parents in education as well as strategies for increasing the role of parents in the education. Then finally, the empirical review included studies on the parents and teachers perceptions on the role of parents in education.

The researcher utilised the ecological systems theory to explore the role of parents in the education of early grade learners. Bronfenbrenner (1979) developed a theory in the subject of human development. This theory claims that the development of children is influenced by ecological systems. Thus the core concept in Bronfenbrenner theory is that the student's development takes place in microsystems (parent, family, school and the community as a system); for that reason, school personnel ought to effectively initiate and manage parents, school and community partnerships to enhance academic performance. Therefore, teachers, learner and parent behaviour, and development are the joint function of the characteristics of the individual and of the environment

(Stewart, 2011). For this reason, the school-community and home partnerships play a major role in the education of their children.

As it is mentioned from above, the core in this study's research problem is the lack of effective parents' role in school, home, community partnerships, particularly in some of the Asesewa district Schools, which leads to poor academic performance as pupils move further in their educational ladder. Nonetheless, enhancing student learning is a complex process in itself and is related to a variety of factors. For instance, parents, schools, and teachers affect students' performance (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Isa, 2007). In this presentation, it could be deduced that the community in which learners live can negatively affect their academic performance. In addition, this view depicts the notion that parents can play their role effectively if the school personnel value the parent-school and community partnership as a constituent in the school culture. It is also revealed in international literature that in promoting achievement across elementary school levels, the significant role of families (parents), family-school relations, parenting and parental involvement in education is highlighted (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

This is supported by the fact that when parents are involved, learners' behaviours are recorded as more positive and productive in nature (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In addition, higher test scores are reported to be achieved at school (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Accordingly, Isa (2007) and Mmotlane et al. (2009) are in the same motion when stating that "To increase participation of parents, more direct impact programs and interventions aimed at enhancing relationships between parents, students and teachers are needed". In this regard, one may argue that these programmes should vary from school to school and country to country. In précis, good academic results, especially in basic 3 should be the outcome of these programmes in lower primary schools.

In this chapter, the researcher reviewed national and international literature on the role of parents in the education of the early grade learners. This was achieved by scrutinising global literature on the role of parents in their children's education with the aim of improving their academic performance. The researcher perceived the parental role in their children's education in three broader perspectives: legal perspective, the management perspective, and the educator perspective.

2.2 Theoretical View on Parent-School, and Community Partnership

The sequential overview of ecological systems theory

The ecological system's theory was utilised in this study to form its theoretical foundation on the role of parents in enhancing learners' academic performance in the Education of Asesewa District in the Eastern region. During the late 1970s, Bronfenbrenner (1986) developed an interesting ecological systems theory. This mission was accomplished by identifying the interconnectedness that influences human development (Amatea, 2013), or learners learning in this case. The ecological system's theory is internationally acclaimed in the fields of academic development at school; in the discipline of learners living with learning barriers or disabilities and students with no learning barriers or disabilities. In other words, this theory fits into all kinds of learners' conditions in any institution of learning.

Accordingly, Aldrich, Eloisa and Darwin (2009) give two axioms of ecological paradigm regarding human development. The first axiom is that, development is an evolving function of a person's environment (school, home, and community) and interaction. The second axiom is that ultimately, this interaction must take place in an immediate face-to-face setting in which the person exists (Aldrich et al., 2009). Hence, this gives plea to parental control in their children's education. As the researcher is in

line with the Michigan Department of Education's (MDE) two recommendations on parent involvement in their children's education (MDE, 2001):

- Parents should be involved in their children's education as early as possible (i.e. from infant, pre-primary, and primary and throughout higher education).
- The most effective forms of the role of parent are those which engage parents in working directly with their children on learning activities at home.

In addition, primary school going learners need their parents to be involved in their education because they need to be controlled and monitored in their homework, school work and getting private tutoring when necessary. This identification behaviour may affect a learner's performance, behaviour at home and at school. Based on the above discussion, one may argue that this is overwhelming evidence on the relevance of ecological systems theory and the role of parents in schooling.

Ecological systems theory and the role of parents

According to the Ecological System's Theory, development of a human being is in systems namely; microsystems; macrosystems; mesosystems; exosystems and chronosystems (Amatea, 2013; Bronfenbrenner 1986; Lemmer, 2012; Muuss, 1996; Stewart,2011). The biological aspects internal to the individual and the nested social and cultural contexts that shape development (of a student in this case), may influence the child's learning at school. The emotions of a learner caused by unhealthy parent-teacher relationship could have a negative effect on their academic performance.

Microsystems model

Microsystems in this study are patterns of activities. These patterns include roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social, and symbolic features which invite, permit, or inhabit engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activities in an immediate environment (Aldrich et al., 2009; Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Muuss, 1996; Stewart, 2011). There is evidence that learner perform better in their schoolwork when they get adequate parental support at home.

This denotes that parents should motivate and build their children's self-esteem through supporting them in their schoolwork by monitoring their homework, visiting their school, attending parent-teacher meetings and sporting activities and organising a private academic tutor to support them at home, when necessary.

Furthermore, parents are expected to support their children during the examination period, which practice is related to the Microsystems perspectives. Microsystems is an interaction between the learner and the immediate environment which includes the parents' role and the school's role in education (Taliaferro et al., 2008, as cited in Mmotlane, Winnaar & waKivilu, 2009). In addition, a microsystem is the immediate interpersonal context in which the child interacts (Amatea, 2013). For example, the type of community in which a child lives, poverty, parents' poor education and the school culture in teaching and learning could be factors which affect the learner's academic progress.

Macro-system model

The macro-system consists of the overarching pattern of micro-meso and exosystems. It is characterized as a given culture, subculture, or other extended social structure with particular reference to the developmental instigative belief systems, resources, hazards, lifestyles, opportunity structures, life course options and patterns of social interchange that are embedded in such overarching systems (Aldrich et al., 2009; Patrikakou et al., 2002). Therefore, a good culture of teaching and learning in this study is regarded as a culture that consists of parent-school partnerships.

Mesosystem model

Mesosystem is about how the parent's role and school influences the development (academic performance) of a learner at school (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). It comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person (Aldrich et al., 2009). The interactions between parents, teachers, and the school can form the child's meso-system (Amatea, 2013).

Ecosystem model

Exosytem refers to settings beyond the student such as parents' work place (Woolfolk, 2007). Parents' work conditions may affect the child's academic performance. For example, a parent may be unable to assist his or her child with schoolwork because he or she gets home very late and exhausted, and leaves very early in the morning for work as well as illiterate parents who can to assist their children due to the fact that they do not understand what is written. The exosystem comprises linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person, but in which events occur that indirectly influence processes within the immediate setting in which the developing child lives (Aldrich et al., 2009; Patrikakou et al., 2002).

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Chronosystem model

Chronosystem refers to the influence of change that takes place over time on the other systems (Lemmer, 2012; Patrikakou et al., 2002; Woolfolk, 2007). These changes are social, demographic, and financial circumstances in a child's home. Overall, it includes major life transitions, environmental events, and historical events that occur during development. The specific incidents tend to change or transition how the child interacts with all the rest (Education-portal.com). In this case it could be fellow students, teachers and people at home. Moving to another city is one example because the child will join a new school in the middle of the year. Changes in family finances create changes in the learners learning resources.

2.2.2 Implications of the Ecological Systems in This Study

The enhancement of students' academic performance in Ghanaian schools could be understood by applying the ecological systems theory that claims the development of a child takes place at home, school and in the community; whereby the child is at the centre. The family, school, and community are the overlapping spheres or environments in which children develop (Epstein, 1995; Lemmer, 2012). Based on the ecological systems theory, parents, schoolteachers, home, community, and peers have a greater impact on the academic performance of a student at school. In spite of this, the balance between parent's role and the school's role regarding the child's schoolwork should be in equilibrium, in order for a student to acquire good academic performance. However, this denotes that the schoolteachers have to design measures to help parents in establishing a home environment that is conducive to the pupil's learning.

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The schoolteachers may improve on their academic results by allowing parents to play their expected role at home and at school. It is the imperative task of the schoolteachers to develop strategies to improve parent involvement in their schools and to improve the role of parents in their schools. In other words, the schoolteachers have a task of building the relationship between these ecological systems in their schools. They ought to devise a strategic plan for parental involvement, creating an inviting school climate thus improving parent and teacher instruction in elements of parent involvement. The schoolteachers have to improve their means of communication with the child's home. The school should design effective forms of school to home and home to school communication on school programmes and children's progress. The two–way positive communication between home and school promotes positive students' academic performance. When teachers use relevant means of communication to inform parents about school programmes and students' progress, parents are able to contact schools about their children's school life (Epstein, 1995; Lemmer, 2012). Furthermore, the schoolteachers may make use of newsletters, report cards, memorandums, telephone calls, accessible internet software to parents, home visits, and parent-teacher conferences (Epstein, 1995; Lemmer, 2012).

The family supervision and assistance on children's schoolwork may improve their academic performance, but parents need to be trained to deal with young-adults. That means schoolteachers have a responsibility to design measures to help all families establish a conducive home environment for children. Epstein (1987) claims that it is the parents' basic obligation to provide for their children's needs. These are primary and secondary needs as espoused in Maslow's hierarchy of needs; love, food, shelter, health, and safety, education, brighter future and a sense of belonging. Epstein (1995) also sustains this point of view when claiming that parenting skills can be highlighted

in parent-teacher workshops. The parents should prepare for their children's schooling and continue parenting throughout childhood, adolescent, and university level. However, literature reveals that schools could help parents improve their parenting to develop their children's level of performance, even in high school education. One may claim that improving the home environment increases the learner's school achievement. Moreover, international literature highlights that educational aspirations have a strong positive effect on learners' academic growth regardless of socioeconomic status or ethnic group.

The schools should form parents' committees that can provide support at school. The parents' committees would improve the perception of parents' role, both at home and school. Another important activity is to engage parent's committee members in school activities that can establish effective opportunities for contact between the school and home, and draw up an annual programme for parental involvement in their children's education (Kruger & van Zyl, 2006); and to encourage other parents to participate in the school programmes. Hence, the knowledge of the ecological systems theory is related to school-home and community partnerships in the sense that every student develops within a Microsystems (parents, friends, school activities, and teachers). Inside a mesosystems (the interactions among all the microsystems elements), embedded in an ecosystems (social settings that affect the student, even though a student is not a direct member such as community resources, parents work place, and etcetera). All of these are part of the macro system (the larger society and its laws, customs and values) (Woolfolk, 2007).

Conclusion

The heart of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is that the school, home and community affect a student's academic achievement. For this reason, all three components (parents, school, and community) should work harmoniously to achieve the students' good academic performance. Literature confirms that there is a positive correlation between these three components. Therefore, the school managers should always try to balance the role of parents, school, teachers, and the community in enhancing the students' academic performance. This may be done by encouraging parents to support their children in doing homework; improving communication between home and school on the child's education; and encouraging community members to volunteer their services at school (Epstein, 1995). The parents' role, school activities, and community overlap and share a similar mission and goals. Accordingly, Shumane (2009) expands this perspective when asserting that "parents can make a consequential contribution to school activities, especially in those activities that fall outside the teachers' expertise and where such a parent is an expert. For example, in school subjects such as life skills or life orientation, creative arts, music, history and technology".

2.3 Ghana's View on the Role of Parents in Education

The social structure into which children are born and in which they are cared for shapes interpersonal variations, economic and social status in later years (Heckman & Masterov, 2007). Some poor families do not function well, resulting in negative consequences for their children now and in later years. Such children can be compensated for through effective government policies that service their needs and those of their families (Sims, 2008). Currently, there is a global move towards effective early childhood education policies to improve the conditions of all children.

Ghana, a country in West Africa and a former colony of Great Britain, has made significant attempts in the last five years to eradicate poverty and suffering, particularly for children in marginalised communities. Emerging research supports the notion that better experiences in the early years are critical to raising educational outcomes in later years of schooling (Daniels, 2001;Potter & Hodgson, 2007; Thornton, 2008) and equal access to early childhood education leads to poverty reduction, narrowing the exclusion gap and raising community living standards (Sims,2008). Similarly, higher literacy and numeracy levels and a healthier population are associated with societies investing more in early childhood education (Irwin et al, 2007; Sims, 2008). These writers reiterated that: 'A healthy start in life gives each child an equal chance to thrive and grow into an adult who makes a positive contribution to the community – economically and socially' (Irwin etal, 2007, p. 5).

Ghana sees the urgent need for education and social policy that supports the holistic development of young children. The function of early childhood education in Ghana has been in existence since 1843, when the Basel Missionaries introduced day-care centres concurrently with Early Years Policy and Practice in Ghana primary schools, and yet it was not until 1960, three years after independence, that the government of Ghana provided directives on early childhood development in the form of reports, acts and decrees (Boakye et al, 2007). Early childhood development services were fragmented, operated as business entities, favoured the rich and widened class boundaries. This article examines the extent to which the current major changes under way within early year's policy and practice in Ghana are likely to support the government's effort to develop comprehensive and fair early childhood practices that address the needs of marginalized children in poor communities.

The role of parents in the guiding and monitoring of child activities is critical towards the development of the child. In Ghana reforms taken, especially at the basic school level, have focused on improving school infrastructure and enrolment ignoring parents awareness to actively involve themselves both at home and in school activities which the researcher believe is critical toward the attainment of the much needed improvement in performance of students. The research will explore the practice of parental monitoring activities in Ghanaian homes which are needed to improve child performances at school. Specifically the study will explore the practice of parental monitoring in the Junior high school and to determine the relevant aspects of parental monitoring necessary to improve a child academic performance. A sequential explanatory mixed design strategy was adapted for the study. Primary data was collected using a questionnaire from parents of 810 selected basic school students across five regions in Ghana. Sampling of respondents in this study employed the use of multi-stage sampling techniques involving; a purposeful sampling of Five (5) Regions including: Ashanti, Greater Accra, Central, Northern, and Eastern, followed by simple random selection of 10 pupils per each grade in starting from Grade 1 to 6 in each of the selected randomly three selected schools in each Region. Data obtained during survey were entered into a SPSS statistical software subsequently analysed using both descriptive and inferential methods. Parental monitoring was measured using seven monitoring activities including: Setting Tv time for child, limiting playing time, monitoring homework, Selecting TV programme for child, Setting time for children to come back from school, setting study time for children and selecting subjects for children.

The Factor analysis technique was conducted on the measurement items of the parental monitoring construct. The study found that parent involvement in all monitoring activities of their children toward academic work was low. The study also establish six major aspects of parental monitoring which parents need to actively engage in for the realization of improved performance.

Over the past five decades, Ghana has undertaken major decisions and changes in her educational system in order to improve on the standards of education. These reforms have gone along with huge financial outlays and investments into education. For example, Thompson & Casely-Hayford, (2008) stated that, US$1 billion was spent on the Ghanaian education sector in 2006. It is on record that these reforms and investments have although have improved enrolments at the basic level have somewhat failed to translate into the much expected performances of these student. Ankomah, Y. et al, (2005) iterated that despite all these huge financial interventions, and expenditures, the quality of basic education leaves much to be desired. It is evident from the discussions points to the fact that the most influential concern of the basic school education is yet been addressed in the Ghanaian basic institution. Several study elsewhere have suggested that impact of parental involvement in their child's education is very significant in improving child performances and hence could be critical in addressing this gap between policy and expected performance of students at the basic level of education.

Parental involvement in a child's education is known to have substantial contribution towards a number of positive outcomes of the child. Such outcomes include high expectations of children, improved academic performance, and good behaviour. Epstein (1992) posited better school attendance, lower rates of suspension, decreased use of drugs and alcohol and fewer instances of violent behaviour are the results of

parental involvement in their children's education. Despite such laudable benefit amassing from parent-school collaboration, it is yet to be established through an empirical study how the various aspects of parenting or family processes influence pupil achievement in the search for quality basic education in Ghana.

One key aspect of Parental involvement is the Parents ability to monitor child activities such as their time and choice of programmes on television, regulate playing time after school, supervise child to do homework. These factors are believed to influence the child's studies after school. Cho & Han (2004) also explained that a parent monitoring activities include the following; the ability of parents to regulate the child exposure to media content especially to television and computer games, set time for child to study and complete their homework after school hours, to regulate the time children spend playing after school , ability of the parents to guide the academic progress by helping student to select subjects , and lastly the ability of parent to monitor the return of their children from school.

It is for a fact when children spend so much time on activities such as playing computer games, watching TV and do not study at home that the negative effects of such activities outweigh the positives and to such effect Parents are supposed to take it upon themselves to monitor the activities of children. Studies from Ghana sadly, have shown that most parents do not show interest in their children's school (Casely-Hayford, 2000; Minor, 2006; Pryor & Ampiah 2003, 2003b). These parents due to the quest to make up for their family spend most of their day outside the homes and hence have little input in the monitoring of their children.

Conclusion

Parent involvement in monitoring activities toward child academic work is found to be low in the country. Key contributing factors leading to the observed low involvement are the work schedules and the socio-economic status of parent. Parent need to understand that their role in the development of their children is critical toward their children's future. Result of the study suggest that Parents will need sacrifice and to pay keen attention to child activities such as setting TV time, select TV programme for their child, limit playing time, monitors homework, setting time for children to come back from school, setting study time for children and most importantly help and encourage their child during studies. The finding for the present study the do not only has practical implications, but is also relevant towards policy and future studies. The finding of the study adds to literature as it establishes a standard measure of parental monitoring activities necessary to improve performance in the Senior High School. The findings are also necessary toward decision making at the school level. Schools need to organize workshops or meeting where they can communicate and educate Parents on the subject of monitoring. Future studies could also explore major parenting aspects such as Parental Discussion and Parents Press for Intellectual Development of the Child.

2.3.1 International View on the Role of Parents in Education

Children's rights have been argued about for centuries, and the concept touches raw nerves when adult decisions and actions are put to the test (Stainton Rogers, 2004). 'Rights are entitlements, valuable commodities' which we 'do not have to grovel or beg to get', according to Freeman (1996). Children's rights do not receive widespread public or political support in New Zealand, and perhaps even less so in Australia. Children's rights have often been perceived as 'a political hot potato', which, rather than advancing children's interests, jeopardize them (Melton, 2005). This is a disturbing state of affairs,

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which one would like academics and professionals working on children's issues to fight. There is a responsibility for education about children's rights to be implemented in countries which have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Convention). Article 42 obliges the state 'to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike'. It is particularly important, therefore, for early childhood teacher education and professional development programs to ensure that the principles of the Convention are understood and implemented in early childhood services.

Professionals working with children have an important role in advocating for them: by taking a proactive approach towards recognising the rights of all children; and responding by trying to change systems, policies and individuals. Child advocacy involves raising the status of children, increasing their self-determination and the responsiveness and accountability of institutions affecting them (Melton, 1987). Professionals should be educating government and local agencies about the Convention and using it to provide a common basis for understanding, and a framework to plan and operate services for children. Child advocacy is not about undermining the role of parents, families or teachers, nor is it about denying children their childhood. The Convention provides legal and ethical grounds on which to argue for changes to policy in favour of children's rights. Greater collaboration between agencies concerned with the rights of children in different spheres, and even between different countries, could do much to speed implementation. The Convention is a powerful international treaty, ratified by all but two countries in the world (US and Somalia), which is being used proactively in many countries to persuade governments and communities to support better policies for children. Even if countries do not fully comply with the Convention, ratification of it signals an intention for them to progressively implement it and

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incorporate it into their domestic law, policies and practice (Ludbrook, 2000). The Convention provides an internationally accepted standard to be applied to basic human rights affecting children. Freeman (1995) argues that, while the Convention is not the final word on children's rights (because it is a result of international compromise); it goes well beyond any previous international documents and reflects a world consensus on the status of children. Melton believes that the Convention is unusual in the breadth of its coverage. Not only is the Convention a nearly universally adopted expression of respect for children as persons, but it is also unparalleled in its conceptual breadth. No other human-rights treaty directly touches on so many domains of life. It is a document of reconciliation which treats parents and children with respect. It has had a major impact on other fields, including law, welfare and health. The following quote from the Principal Family Court Judge in New Zealand, referring to a new law, the Care of Children Act, 2005, illustrates well the different perspective on children associated with the Convention. Children are citizens and social participants in their own right. This is a fundamental shift from the old adage 'children should be seen but not heard'. No longer are children to be thought of as the property of their parents, unwarranted of consideration until the attainment of adulthood. Children are human beings and entitled to the same degree of respect as adult human beings. ... This position of being people unto themselves, while also being dependent on others, is clearly recognised in the pre-eminent human rights instrument specific to children. That is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC). As the most widely adopted human rights document in history, ratified by 192 countries, UNCROC provides a powerful backdrop to the Care of Children Act. (Boshier, 2005). There are other the Convention articles which are also important for early childhood education (Smith, 2000), but it is participation rights, in particular Articles 12 and 13, that are the most challenging.

Article 12 says the views of children should be taken into account in decisions affecting them (according to age and maturity). Article 13 says children have the right to express their views and to be given information. Article 12 is 'the linchpin' of the Convention (Freeman, 1996) which recognises children's personality and autonomy; children as people and not just objects of concern, and that children must be listened to.

Some international literature reveals that the involvement of parents and families in children's schooling is an imperative facet to enhance pupils' academic performance. In the United Kingdom (UK), Henderson (1981; 1987) and Henderson and Beria (1994) as cited in Baksh, Hache and Singh (2000), 125 studies carried out between 1966 and 1993 were reviewed. These studies examined evidence regarding the effects of the role of parent involvement on the early grade learners' academic achievement and performance at schools. Findings confirmed that the benefits of the role of parent involvement were learners' higher grades and test scores, better class attendance, positive attitude and behaviour (Baksh, Hache & Singh, 2000). Parent involvement has surfaced during recent years as an important influence on a child's schooling (Patrikakou, Weisberg & Rubenstein, 2002). Antara and Mertens (2008) state that parent involvement in education is a top priority in order to improve students' academic performance. For instance, federal and state policies in the United States of America (USA) have elevated parent involvement in schools to a national priority. This is partly due to the large number of failing schools, and an increased achievement gap between White, African American and other ethnic minority students (Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey & Sanders, 2011). In addition, the interest in Latino parents' involvement in their children's education in the USA has been spurred by reports of alarming differences in educational achievement between Latino students and students from other ethnic backgrounds (Walker et al., 2011).

In agreement with the above view, Anfara and Merten (2008) present two examples: firstly, in 1994, the United States Congress enacted Goals 2000 which requires the promotion of partnerships, increase of parent involvement and participation in every school to promote the social, emotional, and academic growth of children. Secondly, since 2001, the No Child Left-Behind Act improved the quality of education in the USA (Anfara & Merten, 2008). However, Cheng (2005) has a different view on the role of parents in academic performance when stating that 'in Asia-Pacific region, the home-school collaboration has been strongly emphasised in current educational reforms and the traditional approach to home-school cooperation is often based on a division of labour between home and school. The school in Asia is mainly responsible for the child's cognitive development, whereas, home is responsible for satisfying children's material and emotional needs (Cheng, 2005). On the contrary, this is not the case in South Africa where parents are expected to serve as teachers at home by developing children's cognitive development and provide assistance at school in governance matters regarding the child's cognitive development.

The international view on the role of parents in education reveals that focusing on building trust, mutual relationships among teachers, families, and community members are the three key practices in school-community efforts to enhance student teaching (Henderson & Mapp 2002, cited in Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005). Schoolteachers and school governing bodies should act in such a way that can strengthen trust, mutual relationship among teachers, parents, or families, and the community. There is a need for the school governing body to design school programmes that will sustain parental interest in the education of their children. The participating schools should have student-performance awards ceremonies on a quarterly basis to acknowledge and motivate students who perform best in their studies with certificates in the presence of

their parents. Schoolteachers and school governing bodies need to empower parents to give enough support to teachers and their children in educational matters. The mutual trust between teachers, learners, and parents can improve the quality of education.

Deslandes and Bertrand (2005) correctly state that parent involvement in education is the parent's role of educating their children at home and in their school. Walker et al. (2011) state that "Parental involvement is an enactment of a wide range of cognitive and effective activities practiced by parents at home, school, and in the community in which the students inhabit." For example, a retired parent can volunteer in a project to support teachers by utilising a community hall to help students in their homework, or open reading clubs to improve children's reading skills. Cheng (2005) has a different view on the role of parents in academic performance when stating that 'In Asia-Pacific region, the home-school collaboration has been strongly emphasised in current educational reforms and the traditional approach to home-school cooperation is often based on division of labour between the home and school. Cheng (2005) further states that "Asian Schools are mainly responsible for children's cognitive development, whereas the home is responsible for satisfying children's material and emotional needs." However, this is not the case with South African parents; they are expected to serve as teachers both at home by developing children's cognitive development and at school by assisting in governance matters.

Hence, there is a strong academic consensus and adequate evidence on the perception that 'at home and in school, parents are imperative in stimulating students learning to achieve expected academic results'. Furthermore, this view on the role of parents in education reveals that those children with parents who play a crucial role at home and in school involvement regarding their education acquire good academic results at the end of the year. In this study, home involvement means playing a role such as listening

to children, sharing own aspirations with the children, guiding a child on choosing a right career and participating in home learning. School involvement is when parents engage in roles such as maintaining the school building, managing school resources, fund-raising and managing school finances, serving in the School Governing Body (SGB) as governors, disciplining learners, and many more.

2.3.2 Benefits of the Role of Parent In education

Parents play a significant role in the academic achievement of primary and secondary students (van Deventer & Kruger, 2009). According to Van Deventer and Kruger (ibid), the enhancement in school academic performance, reduced dropout rates, a decrease in delinquency, and a more positive attitude towards the school are the benefits of parental role in education. Van Deventer and Kruger (ibid) state that, "the 'phenomenon' parental involvement has a significant effect on the quality of learners' experience of teaching and learning in the school, and on their (academic) results." Parental involvement in education has consistently been associated with school success in a multitude of areas, such as better achievement and behaviour, lower absenteeism, and positive attitudes towards school (Hayes, 2012). The students perform better in school socially and academically when schools reach out to parents and communities. Additionally, effective parental involvement makes a school to get a more positive image in the community, and a better relationship with the community (St John, Griffith & Allan-Haynes, 1997).

Furthermore, parents are financial donors who help raise school funds and serve as classroom volunteers. Parents could develop a 'neighbourhood watch' committee for the schoolchildren who walk to and from school. Parents may champion school special events; work on projects such as helping Grade 12's revision in high impact subjects such as English, Mathematics, and so forth (St John et al., 1997). The formation of

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parents' clubs could be beneficial to the school. Clubs such as 'Dad's clubs' for renovating or repairing the school's physical environment; and 'Mom's clubs' for painting the school to create a suitable teaching and learning environment for their children (ibid). When school personnel work to overcome barriers that might hinder achievement of the benefits mentioned above, they can make the school provide a balanced curriculum that may improve the culture of teaching and learning. As a result, the acknowledgement of the parents' role at school may result in the increase in students' academic achievement. Studies by Paulson (2004) and Trust (1999), as cited in Hayes (2012) provide some valuable insight into the potential forms of parental involvement with high school adolescents.

2.3.3 Barriers on the Role of Parent in Education

In this study, academic performance is part of the main theme. The barriers affecting the student's academic performance expressed are based on a global academic perspective. A developing child undergoes social, cognitive, and an emotional dimension. Parents' behaviour could influence learner's performance. Bronfenbrenner (1986) states that parents' conduct at home could influence children's academic performance at school. Hence, the assumption in this study is that involving parents in schooling will improve the children's academic performance. The demographic, cognitive, and emotional barriers have a negative impact on parent involvement in their children's education. Some of the barriers to parent involvement are the family organisation, family income status, and ethnic background, quality of housing and social class. Parents should prepare an environment where the home and school are suitable for a child's teaching (Epstein, 1995).

2.3.4 Demographic barriers

The present study regards demographic barriers as including social barriers (marital status of parents, availability of parents, gender and age child), environmental barriers (parents' level of education), and economic barriers (family income, parents' work status and availability of time to be involved) (Hayes, 2012). These barriers play a greater role on the performance of a child at school (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). For example, children growing under poverty, a lack of learning environment and proper care at home are more likely to perform badly at school. Furthermore, children who do not get safety on the way to school and back possibly will bring their stress into the classroom and their stress can affect their performance and the performance of other learners. According to Delgado-Gaitan, Macbeth, Walker, and Colvin and Ramsey, cited in Smit and Liebenberg (2003), it is imperative for schoolteachers and parents to provide students with safety, security and social support for children to perform better at school.

2.3.5 The parents' state of health and availability of parents at home

The parents' state of health and availability or unavailability can serve as a barrier in involvement at school. Some parents do not attend school meetings owing to their state of health, time of the school meetings, and distance from the school to home and the unavailability of transport fare to attend the school meetings. Globally, there are families that are led by children owing to the dearth of their parents. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2007) support this point of view in their study, when stating, "HIV/AIDS orphans, and vulnerability of students are often observed as a barrier on parental involvement in the education of their children."

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2.3.6 Ethnic background and socio-economic status of parents

According to Harris and Goodall (2008) the level of parent's involvement in their children's education is mostly influenced by the ethnic background and socio-economic status. Harris and Goodall (2008) state, "Engaging all parents in children's learning improves both parental engagement and students' achievement." Bower and Griffin (2011) claim that schools continue to struggle with increasing parental involvement with learners of 'colour' and students of low socio-economic status. This is also common in former Model-C schools whereby the 'African' parent governors serving in the school governing bodies show reluctance in playing their full role as mandated by legislation (Mncube, 2009). This view points that some researchers claim that parents of poor socio-economic status do not enthusiastically participate in their children's education.

In agreement, Henderson and Mapp (2002) as cited in Bower and Griffin (2011) state that, "regardless of parents' ethnic background or socio-economic status parents can be involved in the education of their children, and students with involved parents are more likely to perform well academically, attend school regularly, and advance to post-secondary education". Moreover, Bower and Griffin (ibid) support this discussion; "families from lower socio-economic backgrounds expend considerable efforts, including more informal conversations and unscheduled visits to demonstrate their involvement with teachers and the school at large". However, Freeman, Bower and Griffin (2011) regard this less structured visit by schools and teachers as obtrusive. In conclusion, amongst the non-school factors of school achievement such as socio-economic background, parents' educational attainment, family structure ,ethnicity and parental engagement, it is the latter which is the most strongly connected to achievement and attainment (Harris & Goodall, 2008).

2.3.7 Parents' work commitment and matrimonial status

According to Harris and Goodall (2008), the parents' work commitment is one of the most cited reasons for them not being involved in their children's schooling. "Lack of time and child-nurturing difficulties seems to be significant factors, predominantly for parents who work full-time" Harris and Goodall (2008). Bower and Griffin (2011), sustain this view in their case study that assessed the effectiveness of Epstein's model of parent involvement in high-poverty, and high minority elementary schools. The type of work done by parents affects their availability in school activities, therefore the school should set time and dates that suit parents. Furthermore, it might not be easy for a single parent, especially women, to attend school meetings in the evening while they are supposed to cook for their children and monitor their homework at the same time.

2.3.8 Cognitive barriers

By cognitive barriers, this study refers to the level of academic support a child gets at home, in the family and in the community; the relationship between the child and family concerning school work. Children who do not get enough school resources from home are more likely to underperform at school. Parent involvement in organising resources for learning motivates the children's performance at school.

2.3.9   Parent linguistic and cultural background

Mncube (2009) states that parents with linguistic and cultural backgrounds different from those of the host culture are likely to be less actively involved in school activities compared to their 'mainstream' counterparts. Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (2011) are of the view that the English language is a barrier for parents to be involved in schooling. Limited parental education, poverty, discrimination, and residential instability are also contributors to the lack of parent's motivation for involvement in their children's schooling (Walker et al. 2011). Moreover, Mncube (2009) in his study

on the role played by African parents in former model-C schools in decision- making initiatives in the school governing bodies, reveals that language barriers affect parents in playing their role as mandated by legislation.

2.3.10 Parents' level of education

Mncube (2009) states that the level of education of parents in general, and the lack of parental knowledge on parent involvement in school activities were the major barriers presented in his study on parent involvement in school governing bodies. Walker et al. 2011), substantiate Mncube's view when stating that "language barriers, limited parental education, poverty, discrimination, and residential instability are the cause of poor parental involvement". This clearly informs the school personnel to screen and recruit parents according to their readiness and capabilities before assigning duties in school activities and serving in the school governing body.

2.3.11 Curriculum difficulties

The older students' school subjects that may be unfamiliar to parents or that exceed their comfort levels or expertise (Elish-Piper, 2008) can serve as a barrier to parental involvement. However, students may disregard their parents in school matters because of the lack of academic support from them. Eventually the parent's inability to help their children may cause them to be lenient in controlling them regarding school affairs.

2.3.12 Emotional barriers

Emotional barriers relate to the parents' consistency in the procedures used with the child and the parents' expectations on their child's academic outcome. The parent's tendency of not meeting the child's school needs is the cause of poor performance in school; for instance not providing books, uniform, school fees and not visiting the school regarding the child's academic performance and social challenges. In some

homes, parents are unable to communicate about their children's school life. For example, by not asking how the school was on each day can serve as a barrier in a child's interest towards their education. The habit of not asking questions such, as "how was your day at school today? What did you learn today? Alternatively, do you have any homework today? This type of involvement creates the child's emotional security at school and home regarding their schoolwork. Children who have support at home are more likely to perform better in school.

2.3.13 Fear of academic Victimisation of their children

According to Mncube (2009), there is a lack of enthusiasm of parent involvement and parents are reluctant to participate in the school governing body activities, particularly in decision-making processes because of the fear of victimisation of their children by the schoolteachers. Parents do not want to speak openly at school on school governance and management matters. It is assumed that parents do not want to give pressure to schoolteachers by questioning matters in the running of the school in a bid to protect their children.

2.4   Parents and Teachers' Perceptions on the Role of Parents

2.4.1 Parents' perceptions on the role of parent in education

The examination of parental ratings to evaluate the influence of parental involvement on adolescent outcomes has been utilised in previous research (Hayes, 2012). For instance, Paulson (2004) cited in Hayes (2012) examined parental perceptions of a multidimensional measure of parental involvement that consisted of values towards achievement, interest in schoolwork, and involvement in school functions. Achievement values refer to parents' values and attitudes about the importance of effects and academic success. Interest in schoolwork refers to parent's involvement in

their children's academic performance, such as making sure children do their homework and knowing how their children are doing in school.

Involvement in school functions refers to parent's involvement in school activities such as attending parent-teacher conferences and doing volunteer work at school (Hayes, 2012). Furthermore, the study by Hayes (2012) reveals that "an achievement value is the most salient parental involvement factor, although all three-involvement measures predicted higher grades for adolescents, values towards achievement consistently predicted the greatest proportion of variance in adolescent achievement outcomes." Furthermore, a study by Trust (1999), cited in Hayes (2012) reveals four factors of parental involvement; parent reported home-based, student-reported home-based, parent- reported school- organization, and student-reported school- based.

Home-based involvement refers to the frequency within which parents discuss schoolwork, school activities, and school-organisations with their children. Parents at home also engage in activities such as giving parental support on the children's studies, discussing future careers with their children, giving guidance on social life, and choosing the best universities for their children. Furthermore, parental styles at home continue to have a greater impact on the child's academic achievement even in late adolescence. Patrikakou, Weissberg, and Rubernstein (2002) also support this view.

School-based involvement refers to the frequency in which parents participate in school events and communicate with school personnel (Hayes, 2012). Accordingly, Trust (1999), in Hayes (2012) states that parent communication with students and support of student's educational endeavors are more important in long-term educational development, than parents' direct school involvement. Hence, Hayes (2012) is

coherent with Trust's (1999) point of view, when stating that, "home-based involvement has the strongest effect on adolescents' educational expectations."

2.4.2 Teachers' perceptions on the role of parent in education

According to Souto-Manning and Swick (2006), "chasm that often develops to create unhealthy dissonance between teachers and parents is greatly influenced by teacher beliefs." Souto-Manning and Swick (ibid) define teacher beliefs as many hidden assumptions and generalisations that influenced teachers by often-isolate experiences and factors. De Quan and Dolmage (2006) present the succeeding four core points about the perceptions of teachers on parent involvement as:

- The teachers value the role of parent in the education of their children.

- They believe that when parent play their role it will have a positive impact on student success.

- Teachers believe that the role of parent is a more positive effect on their children's emotional or social development.

- Teachers believe that the level of the role of parent has little influence on the teachers' authority to educate or their responsibility for educating the students (De Quan & Dolmage, 2006).

According to Souto-Manning and Swick (2006), teachers' beliefs about parents and families are heavily influenced by current and past contextual and cultural elements. They further declare that education practitioners' experiences influence the schemes they develop on parent's involvement in education. There is a lack of experience where parents are in leadership roles. The history of using a teacher-dominant family involvement paradigm is always in the decision-making role; instant of creating a partnerships approach (ibid, 2006). Patrikakou et al. (2002) have a view that "Due to

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the mounting of evidence that emphasises the important role that parents can play in their child's academic, emotional, and social development, as well as their impact on the effects of school interventions, researchers and educators alike have been calling for systematic efforts to increase parental involvement in children's education."

Conclusion

The primary essence of Bronfenbrenner's theory is that school, home, and community play a major role in the success or failure of students at school. The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 gives the school personnel the task of managing teachers, non-teaching staff, parents, and learners. An effective school-parent partnership could be achieved if the schoolteachers embark on these tasks: policy making, organising, personal management, and administration including training of teachers and parents, promoting, motivation, leadership, procedure determination and controlling; communication and planning. These tasks are essential if effective parental involvement is to be established or improved in the Asesewa Education District schools. In this study, the reviewed literature on the perspective roles of parents in their children's education was discussed in detail. Lastly, the benefits and barriers to parental involvement in their children's education were explored and explained in-depth.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The methodology considers the research method used to carry out this research. It comprises the research design, the population from which a sample was selected, sample and sampling procedure, research instrument, data collection procedures and data analysis procedures.

Research is a process of steps to collect and analyse information to increase the understanding of a topic or issue (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, in this study the researcher focused on research methods that are imperative and pertinent in this case study to furnish the enlightenment on the research problem.

3.1 Research Design

The study was designed as a descriptive survey in making a qualitative inquiry to determine the role of parents in the education of the early grade learners using schools in Asesewa town in the upper Manya Krobo district at eastern region of Ghana. Qualitative research is a research approach seeks to probe deeply into the research setting to obtain in-depth understanding of the way things are, why they are that way and how participants perceive them in their context (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). In the context of this study, the approach helped to qualify data that were collected on the perspectives of parents concerning in their role; role teachers and schools play in supporting the role of parents in the education of their children.

3.2 Target population

According to Bertram and Christiansen (2013:59) in academic research, the word 'population' means the total number of people, groups, or organisations that could be included in a study. In other words, the study population is a group of people, institutions or organisations from which data can be collected. In this case, the targeted population for the study comprised parents, teachers, and head teachers in primary two (2) classes at the Asesewa circuit "A, B &C" in the Asesewa town schools, at the upper Manya Krobo district. The researcher focused on pupils in the primary two (2) only, children in this class have pass through KG and parents have enough experience observing their children. But it seems parent still do not have a fair idea of the importance of the role they have to play in the education of their children. Also, class two (2) is part of the early childhood class and can be selected for the study. Therefore, the data from the Asesewa district office of GES (2021) showed that, there were fifteen (15) primary two (2) teachers and head teachers and 370 parents as well as children in the primary two classes in the 15 schools in the Asesewa circuit "A,B&C" at the upper manya krobo district in the eastern region of Ghana. The study population constituted parents who had their children in class two (2) of the various schools in the Asesewa circuit "A, B & C.

3.3 Sample and sampling techniques

There are (15) schools within the circuit "A, B & C" in Asesewa town schools which are at upper manya krobo district in the eastern region of Ghana, each with an early childhood center. All the 15 schools were used for the study. There were fourteen (15) teachers, head teachers (15) and three hundred and seventy (370) class two 2 learners in the fifteen (15) schools in Asesewa town chosen for the study. Using the simple

random sampling to determine the sample size, a sample of 185 was chosen from a population of 370 learners. The parents of these 185 children were used in the study.

3.4 Asesewa Townships as a Study Site

Asesewa Township is one of the oldest townships in upper manya krobo in the eastern region of Ghana. It is situated about 11 Kilometers (Km) from Koforidua. The people are mostly farmers and traders and with few people been bead makers. With respect to their religious beliefs, Christianity dominates. In terms of education, it is the district that holds educational institution from crèche to the senior high; it has one hundred and ten (110) public basic schools and seventeen (17) private basic schools. The district embraces early childhood education, which has made the district seen an increasing growth but some teachers and parents have little knowledge on how parents can play their role in their children's education.

This study's focus was on the schools in the upper manya krobo district that consists of one hundred and ten (110) schools, where Asesewa township schools with circuit A, B & C are the focus in the study. The study population was the group of people wherein the data was collected. To be precise, all the people having the responsibility to serve at school (school heads, teachers, parents and pupils) were this study's accessible population. Asesewa Township has sixteen (16) schools, one (1) public senior high schools, and fifteen (15) public basic schools.

The Asesewa community is varied in terms of income groups. There are people who earn a middle income. This middle-income group dwell in the main town. However, some of the residents mostly live under extreme conditions of poverty because of the faming. In Asesewa Township, some are well educated, there is also higher rate of unemployment and less educated once. In spite of this, education in Asesewa Township

was very important in the past, and is still very important even to this day. This is evidenced by the quality of school buildings and the number of schools in this area.

3.5 Collecting Data

The data collection processes were qualitative in nature to acquire answers for the study's research problem. These data collection processes were site observation, document analysis, and face-to-face interviews (McMillan, 2012:271). These qualitative case study's data collection processes are detailed below:

3.5.1 Observations

The study applied observation as one of the data collection methods from each school. Robson (2002) as cited in Mncube (2009: 85) asserts that observation makes it possible for a researcher to experience what happens in the real world. In this study, to observe means watching what school personnel and parents do and listening to what they say and sometimes asking them to clarify questions (Gillham, 2000:45). The observation was done for three weeks to observe one parent–teacher conference and one formal meeting of the school in each selected school. The purpose of the observation was to ascertain how the school welcomed parents; how they accepted the school SMC responsibility in their school; and how the school applied their school-parent involvement plan.

This strategy was used because it helped to collect data on non- verbal behaviors. Also, the information collected through observation serve as a supplement to information gathered through the observation. It also revealed important aspect of the study that was not captured in the interview. Furthermore, the strategy was used to observe how teachers involve parents in playing their role in the education of their children.

This observation process was successful, since there was an observation guide that was approved by the Department of early childhood Education and the Ghana education service in upper manya krobo district Ethical Clearance Committee as meeting their standards of academic research tools for gathering information. Furthermore, the researcher negotiated with or disclosed to use the observation guide to the participating schools before the investigation took place.

3.5.2 Official School Documents

The researcher scrutinised schools documents to gather data how and what these schools were doing to involve parents. These school documents are the agendas and minutes of School parents and teachers association (PTA) meetings, letters to parents, and annual reports to parents, disciplinary records, qualifications of teachers and parents in the PTA, internal school results for for the past three years, school improvement plan, school policies in particular parent involvement policy and homework policy.

A. Document observation guide:

1. **The following things will be checked on school-parent involvement policy:**

- Does the school-parent involvement policy state clear roles of parents in the school?

- Do parents form part of school committees?

- Does this policy give parents a liberty to visit head teachers and teachers concerning the Early grade learner's educational matters?

- Is this policy in line with the Ghana education service (GES)?

2. **The following were checked on homework policy:**

- Did the SMC chairperson sign homework policy?

- Does the homework policy state clear roles of parents?

- Does it state clear what will be done if a learner did not do homework?

3. The following things will be checked on minutes of parent meetings

- Does SMC chairperson sign the minutes?

- The frequency of their meetings

- Does the relationship between chairperson and school head teachers good?

4. **The following things were checked on minutes of school**

- Do the minutes cover school vision and mission, and review of all school policies?

- Do the minutes cover the issues on school improvement plan?

- Do the minutes cover school staff establishment?

- Do the minutes cover analysis of learners' academic performance in internal and external examinations?

- Do the minutes cover school finance matters?

B. **SMC meeting observation guide**

- Does SMC chairperson speaks freely and is she/he in control of the meeting?

- Does the SMC discuss issues or it is just reports form the school head and teachers?

- How the SMC chairperson and school head relate to each other during the SMC meeting?

- Who is doing most of the talking in the meeting, is the SMC chairperson or school head?

- To what extent is the SMC functional in terms of implementing decisions?

3.5.3 The face-to-face interview schedule

In-depth face-to-face interviews using twelve (12) open-ended questions about the role of and management of parents in these schools were conducted within the school management team (parents, teachers, and heads). The open-ended questions examined were:

1. The understanding of the role of parents in the education of the early grade leaners.

2. The management programmes used by the school personnel to involve parents in their children's schooling.

3. Barriers experienced by the school when attempting to involve parents in the education of their children.

Teachers serving on the schools were interviewed using these twelve questions to maintain data credibility. The management programmes used by the school personnel to involve parents in schooling were also explored. Barriers experienced by the school when attempting to involve parents in the education of their children were established.

The individual interview questions were in both English and Dangme, since the school heads confirmed that parents serving in the school PTA conducted meetings in English and Dangme. Thus, they have a good understanding of the language. Therefore, interviews ran smoothly, participants were comfortable working with the researcher. This could be because of the fact that participants knew the researcher since she is a teacher in a neighboring school; they knew her well and this acquaintanceship made it easier for the researcher to conduct this research.

The fact that the school heads were familiar with academic research ethics and the full disclosure of the essence and purpose of this research by the researcher before conducting the investigation, made them very comfortable to participate in the study. However, participants were uncomfortable with the use of a tape recorder. As a result, the researcher did not use a recording device to maintain the participants' calm and trust.

3.6 Data Collection Protocol

An introduction letter from the Head, Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Education, Winneba was obtained to seek permission from the Director of Education, in the upper Manya Krobo District, to enable the research use the schools selected for her Educational researcher study. Head teachers, teachers, pupils and parents. Head teachers, teachers, pupils and parents were given explanations on the purpose of the research and what the data to be collected were intended for. They were also assured of the confidentiality of the information to be provided as well as their identity. 185 participants were interviewed. Face-to-face interviews was conducted using the interview guide on 15 head teachers, 15 teachers and 185 pupils as well as 185 parents. All interview with teachers and pupils were carried out for 10 minutes from the hour of 3:00 noon and 4:00pm each interview day, when schools had closed. The timing was so chosen that classes were not disrupt and to affect teaching and learning. Interviews were recorded in a written form of questions and responses (Patton, 2002). It further enhances the validity of the instrument as suggested. Likewise recording the interviews allowed the researcher to give full attention to the interviewees due to the fact that the researcher will not be bayaze in the recording (Patton, 2002; Elliot, 2005).

The researcher used a complete observation to observe on how parents play their role in education of their children for three consecutive weeks.

3.7 Qualitative Data Analysing Methods

Data analysis is the process during which the researcher identifies themes as they are suggested by the collected data and where an endeavor is made to demonstrate support to those themes (Lemmer, 2012:87). Data analysis is one of the most important steps in the qualitative research (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007 in Ngulube, 2015:131). This is because it assists researchers to make sense of their qualitative data (Ngulube, ibid). In addition, qualitative data analysis is the process during which the researcher formally identifies themes as they are suggested by the collected data and an endeavor made to demonstrate support to those themes (Lemmer, 2012:89).

According to Maree (2010:101), data analysis can be conducted by using different data analysis procedures. These are (1) conversation analysis (the study of talk in interaction), (2) discourse analysis that focuses on the meaning of spoken and written words, and lastly (3) narrative analysis that refers to procedures for interpreting narratives generated in research. Overall, data obtained from in-depth interviews and observation were analysed by means of qualitative case study procedures as suggested by Leedy and Ormrod (2001:160). These are the organisation of details about the case, categorisation of data, interpretation of single instances, identification of patterns, synthesis, and generalisation. The study adopted thematic and content analysis.

3.7.1 Data analysis

Participants' responses were analysed to understand their opinions, practices, and beliefs on the parental role in their children's education. The researcher transcribed, coded, and grouped all interview responses according to questions posed. Then an interpretation of single instances was done, and data were divided into smaller and more meaningful units or themes to make meaningful data analysis, then sub-themes and patterns were identified. The data patterns informed the researcher of the synthesis and generalizability or applicability of the data findings. This generalizability or applicability of data findings was further explained in Chapter 4. However, the study will not be generalised to all Asesewa primary schools. Therefore, generalisation from one school to another in the same area will not be possible since school circumstances, management styles vary from school to school, and too many elements might be unique to each school. The outcomes of data synthesis and generalisation are detailed in Chapter 4.
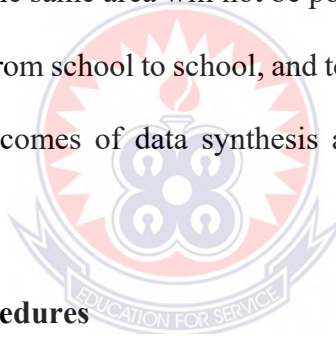
3.8 Data Analysing Procedures

3.8.1 Trustworthiness

Participants observed and read a project-permission letter before this research was conducted, for ethical and trust purposes. The verifiability of qualitative research is assessed in terms of its reliability and validity, qualitative research is more accurately assessed in terms of its trustworthiness (Kimu, 2012:116). In this study, Lincoln and Guba's model Truth-Value, Applicability, Consistency, and Neutrality was employed to ensure the trustworthiness of qualitative data:

- Truth-value: Truth-value demonstrates how the research is conducted and how accurately the phenomenon under study is described (UNISA 2003:79, cited in Kimu, 2012:116).

- Applicability: Applicability refers to the extent to which the findings apply to other context settings and groups (Kimu, 2012:116). In qualitative research, the purpose is not to generalise findings to a larger population but rather to describe a phenomenon or experience (Kimu, 2012:116).

- Consistency: Consistency, which is the alternative to reliability, refers to the extent to which the findings would be consistent if the study were to be repeated in similar contexts or with the same subjects (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:207).

- Neutrality: Neutrality is the degree to which the findings are a function only of the participants and conditions of the research and not of other biases, motivations and perspectives (Kimu, 2012:116. In other words, neutrality can be the way of nonconformity from bias in research procedures, results and whether the findings would be consistent if the inquiry was to be replicated with the same participants or in a similar context.

3.8.2 Data credibility

Credibility is defined as the extent to which the data, data analysis and conclusion are accurate and trustworthy (McMillan, 2012:302). In this study, the credibility of the findings were verified using member checking processes, triangulating data sources and applying a data auditing technique (Creswell, 2009: 326).

- Firstly, the researcher maintained the credibility of data by using the same data collecting tools and collecting data using more than one tool (triangulation).

- Secondly, data were transcribed as soon as it were collected and the researcher was able to recall them well.

- Thirdly, participants' responses, and not the ideas of the researcher when recording and analysing data, were paramount in this study.

- Lastly, after the transcription of interview responses the researcher e-mailed the transcription to participants to confirm if he had quoted them well. In the email, participants were given liberty to change or modify their quotes for clarity if they felt the need to do so.

3.8.3 Generalizability or Transferability

In this qualitative case study, generalizability was regarded as the transferability of data findings to a similar context. Transferability refers to the appropriateness of applying the results to other contexts and settings (McMillan, 2012:304). It is expected that the findings and recommendations in this study could be applicable to every public school in Asesewa Township, since the schools in the area share the same learner and parent characteristics with similar socio-economic status, religion and culture, community or environment.
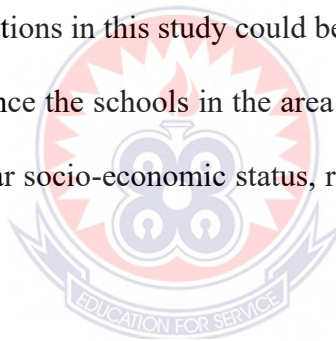
3.9 Ethical Issue

The University in Ghana requires that every student who wishes to conduct research or collect data apply for an ethical clearance letter before conducting the research. Research permission letters from the University of Education, Winneba the Department of early childhood education (ECE), consent letters from participating schools allowing questions and observation schedules were submitted to the Ghana education service in the upper Manya Krobo district office through the research supervisor for the application of an academic research ethical clearance letter. The researcher employed ethical issues as recommended in Henning et al. (2004:73). Precisely, these were informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and right to privacy.

3.9.1 Permission and Consent

The researcher directed permission letters to the District Office of Education. A telephonic appointment was set with each selected early grade school heads. The researcher visited the school with a copy of the approval letter. The researcher gained trust from the school head teachers, and interviewing and observation times were negotiated. Then the researcher issued and interpreted the permission letters from the two groups before the study was conducted for purposes of trustworthiness. Participants gave their consent in writing during the face-to-face interviews. Each participant signed a consent letter concerning ethical issues before the interviews commenced. The copies of transcribed data were issued to the participants (school heads, and teachers) for authentication of their responses before submission and publication of the research report.

3.9.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

The researcher ensured confidentiality and anonymity by using pseudonyms for the schools (i.e. School B), to remove all identifiable remarks from the data. Each participant had a specific code, instead of a real name. In this regard, the researcher transcribed participants' responses, filed them in the computer, and locked original responses in a cabinet in the researcher's office for future use, confidentiality, and anonymity. In this study, participating schools and staff names remained confidential. That means the real names were not utilised and there was no easily recognizable information about the participating schools. There was a removal of all identifiable remarks from data, and specific codes on each participant were used to protect their right to privacy and confidentiality. The informants were assured that since this study was conducted for a degree requirement, therefore nobody would have access to their responses for whatever reasons. Moreover, as soon as the data was collected, it was

transcribed at once and the raw data was kept in a locked cabinet to promote confidentiality and anonymity.

3.9.3 Privacy and sensitivity

The researcher explained to participants that they were voluntarily participating in this project and were free to stop at any point if they so wished. They were informed that their names and names of their schools were not going to be mentioned. Furthermore, the researcher and participants always negotiated a convenient time and place for the face-to-face interviews. The participants' right to not answer questions they felt sensitive or infringing on their privacy and voluntary participation was clearly explained to them plus the right to withdraw without penalty at any time they so wished. In addition, the researcher enlightened the participants about their right to skip questions they felt were sensitive or affected their privacy.

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher achieved the critical aim of exploring existing global literature on the 'phenomena' of research designs and research methodologies applied in social and human sciences, to furnish the enlightenment to the study's research problem. Moreover, this chapter presented, in detail, the research methodology; research design, and overview of research design theories utilised. Furthermore, it investigated and presented the reviewed literature's point of view on the meaning of 'case study', research design the characteristics of qualitative research methodologies to enable the researcher to make informed choices on the appropriate research methodology and design to execute when collecting data. Qualitative data analysing procedures, ethical issues, population and procedures utilised when recruiting participants were presented.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The purpose of the study is to examine the role of parent in the education of the early grade learners at Asesewa Township in the Upper Manya Krobo district in eastern region. This chapter reports the conclusions of the study according to each research question. As the questions were open-ended, participants had the opportunity to elaborate on their responses to clarify answers as needed by using face to face interview and the observation. This chapter presents the findings, interpretations and discussions that were made from the output.

4.1 Socio- Demographic Characteristics of respondents

This section parents the background characteristics of the parents and teachers who served as respondents for the study. The bio-data of the parents in the chosen schools in Asesewa town in the upper Manya Krobo in the Eastern Region of Ghana were involved in the study. From the findings data collected for the parents, the total was 185 the data shows were females 140 while 45 were males. Also, with respect to the marital status of the parents, 150 were married and 35 were single. With my observations it follows that most of the parents were married.

Concerning the age of parents, 95 were between 20- 29years 56 were between 30-39 and 34 were beteen40-49 respectively. Which shows that majority of the parents were between 20-29 and with regards to the educational background of the parents, 40 had no formal education, 55 had reached JHS, 50 reached SHS and 40 Attained tertiary education. This findings is good for the study because it is assumed that, as a result of the mare of the parents being educated, they will appreciate the need for them to be

involved in the education of the children. In line with this, Tinkler (2002) asserted that, educational level of the parents can also influence their level of involvement in their children's education. Also it is clear from the data that 50 were employed, 55 were unemployed and 80 were self-employed. However, putting the percentages of employed 25% and self-employed parents together will results in 43.24% which is above the 27.5% unemployed parents. This finding is important for this study because for parents to be able to support the education of their children, they need to provide money to buy them the necessary learning materials. Therefore, it will be difficult for parents to do this if they are not gainfully employed. Studies have showed that, poverty is a significant barrier to parents being involved in their child's education (Sheldon, 2003; hill & Taylor, 2004; Payne, 2008). Thus, parents of higher socio-economic status are more likely to be involved with their child's school and to advocate for their children than parents from lower socio-economic backgrounds (hill& Taylor).

Beside parents, teachers also constitute important stakeholders in the education of the children. Hence, the socio-demographic characteristics of teachers were from the data findings, came out that, 15 teachers who were involved in the study 10 were males, whiles 5 were females. So a greater number of the respondents in the study area were males. Again, with respect to the years of teaching experience, 8 had taught for 4-10 years and 7 had taught between 15-20 years. Therefore, the majority of the teachers had taught 4-10 years. This finding is important for the study because, it can be said that, again with respect to years of teaching experience, 41.6% has thought for 4 to 10 years and 58.4% has thought between 15 to 20 years therefore the majority of the teachers has thought between 15 to 20 years. This signing is important for this study because can be said that, the majority of the teachers has enough teaching experience and could

provide the needed information with regard to the extent of parental involvement in the role in children education.

It is also evident from the data that, the majority of the respondent were professional trained teachers as 91.6% were train while only 8.4% were untrained. With respect to highest professional qualification of the teachers in the study area, 16.7% had diploma in education and 83.3% 1st degree in education.

That is the majority of the teachers in the study area had first degree in education a faster that could help them to train children in a professional manner.

Having analysed in discuss the social demographic characteristics of respondents the subsequent sessions of this chapter is dedicated to examine the face to face interviews and hypothesis that guided the study.

This session present the results and discussion of data collected to answer the three research question and the hypothesis formulated to guide the study. It complies data from the face to face interview of the teachers, parents and the test for the pupils. The following research questions were answered,

4.2 What role can parents of Asesewa play in the education of their early grade children?

In this study, observation was chosen to authenticate the collected data from interviews, with the intention of observing some of the things that participants might not talk about and some of those they spoke about in the interviews. Accordingly, Bertram and Christiansen (2014:84-5) state that observation means that the researcher goes to the site of the study, which may be a school, a classroom, a staff room or a community meeting space, and observes what is actually taking place there. During the observation of the meetings, the researcher was able to get first hand data (ibid). Therefore, to get

more trustworthy data, the researcher read the parent-teacher and school P.T.A meeting minutes, school policies, and visited parent-teacher and school management committee meetings to minimise the possibility of the misrepresentation of the truth by the participants about their school conduct and practices. Below is the report on the chosen schools.

4.2.1 Parenting

When it comes to parenting, all the parents have high expectations of their child's education. They all voiced their expectations that their children's education would open doors for them with regards to their future. A parent from school B mentioned that he works hard and all his money goes towards his children's education. The parents all expressed their desire, and their expectations, for their children to do well in school and to become something. They all want a better life for their children, than what they themselves had. For instance, he said he wants his son to:

> *...become something in future, better than what I have become.*

Another parent said has similar expectations for her daughter's education:

> *Well, I expect that what she is getting will equip her for life and also to pass exams, but more, that her education will take her where she wants to go.*

The same goes for a mother. She wants her son to:

> *... Do well and get qualifications to do a job with some title.*

All the parents told me that, not only do they have expectations for their children's education, but also they convey these expectations to their children. Thus, the students are well aware of what their parents expect of them. Parents of the students in basic 2 are especially expressive to their children of their expectations. All of them have regular and open discussions with their children about their schoolwork and education. Another

mother in school B also told me that she has regular discussions with her daughter about setting goals and what she needs to do in order to reach those goals:

> *We had one major one at the beginning of the year. Basically at the beginning of every year we sit down and I say to her, you know, 'What do you expect to get out of this year? What do you think you need to put in and exactly where do you want to go?' So that she knows where to concentrate her energies.*

In spite of having high expectations, the parents are well aware that they can only be supportive, rather than telling their children what to do. Likewise says another mother:

> *I expect him to finish basic school and go on to senior high then to university. But I cannot tell her what to study, just to support whatever she chooses.*

She seems to agree with this and does not want to push her son too much:

> *...because I know he can really push himself so I don't want to go to that extent. I'm just telling him, 'This is my expectations, I know yours is also similar to mine. But at least this way we can meet both.'*

Education is very important to all the parents I spoke with. They all have discussions with their children of how important it is that they receive an education and graduate from basic for further studies. Her view is that, without education, her daughter's future will be bleak. She tells her daughter that people can take everything away from her, except her education. Another mother also has the same thoughts about the importance of education for her son:

> *Because if you didn't have any education then I warned him, he is not going to be successful in any way in this world.*

Another father in school B illustrates very well how important education is for the parents:

The first thing in the life is health and education.

I asked the parents what they believe parents can do in order to prevent their child from dropping out of school. They all had strong opinions in this matter, mostly in the form of guidance, support and open discussions with the child and just to be there for the child. A father mentioned the importance for parents to create an environment for their children that is suitable for studying. She also spoke of the importance of a good role model for the children. And said:

But if you can, to mainly prevent the children from dropping out, just support the children, just be there for them. Especially the at young age, at the adolescent age, it's very difficult.

One parent was very vocal about both the reasons and prevention of children dropping out of school. She believes there to be many different reasons as to why children drop out of school; for instance, it can be because of the teachers, or either lack of support from the family or lack of motivation:

> *...find out what it is that motivates your child and keep your child motivated by getting interested in their work and with them. And when you feel that they are de-motivated, keep pushing them, and also, be involved in the school so that you find out, because both of us are responsible to the school and our self. Find out what it is they are doing that can help your child not to drop out of school.*

Another parent was concerned with the peer group and its influence on children:

> *…you must always educate the child, how important it is this school, how important it is to attend all the classes and how important it is to get that something out of this school. Always talk to the child. If you are not talking to him then he will have other talks from the peer groups, and then…*

In addition, the parents mentioned the importance of expressing their expectations to their children. If the children are aware of their parents' expectations concerning their education, they are less likely to drop out of school. Thus, it is important to convey your expectations to your child and to let them know what you want for them. A parent also stated that parents must educate their children of the importance of being in school and attending all the classes. One father believes it is also important for parents to sign their children up for extra classes in subjects in which they may be experiencing problems. When asked about their opinion of parental involvement in children's education, all parents believe it to be very important to be involved. Parents said that she finds it very important to involve herself in her son's education and to meet with his teachers. That way she has more knowledge of his progress and behaviour at school and is better prepared to talk to him. Another parent agrees with this and says that it is necessary for parents to be involved, because if parents are giving their children to someone else to educate, they need to know what is going on. A parent agrees with this importance and says:

Of course, parents do have to be involved. I mean, it's a partnership between teachers and parents. Because there's no point of good teachers, good school if the parents have no interest and they don't provide the environment for the child to study. Uh, I mean, they will see what the point is and it's not really important. So parents do have to play their role.

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The other parents of school' A' mentioned that they do not have much time due to their work and farm work it's make it difficult to get involve in their children education and also with their whole life. As said by one of the parent:

> *Yes, I think, I should play my role but time is not on my side for everything. What she doing in school, even in the street when with friends. When she is going to the shopping, but I want to know what she doing when she gets some friends or some school mate talking. You know, I am the father you know but where is the time to do that.*

Majority of the parents in school 'A' consider themselves to be not involving with their child's education and to monitor their schoolwork. Every now and again, they look at their child's going to school and buying books but does not ask questions about their work. They also do not follow their child's progress at school. A parent said he likes to look at his son's homework and see whether he needs to work harder but he cannot do it because he cannot read. A parent said, she is especially interested in her child's progress in English since that is not his mother tongue. But she cannot monitors his work and pushes him to make sure that he reads. Another parent said: I try to do my best to assist my daughter with schoolwork, if she has any problems even though I do not know if I am right or wrong. Another parent also said that, considers herself very involved in her daughter's education but does not have time to help. If her daughter has any problem at school, she makes sure that she meets with that particular teacher and they work things out. As she continued and said:

> *Every week I try to find out what the expectations are for each subject, what tests are for that week. And then because I think if you make it a month, somewhere the children will slip away, and it's too far. So for a week, usually by Monday or Tuesday, they have an understanding of what's happening for the week, the tests they have, the projects, the*

assignment, and then how they are going to, to use that week but not able to put them to use.

Another parent told me that whenever he comes back from the farm, he makes it his priority to spend some time at his child's school. He talks with his daughter's teachers and finds out how she is doing in school, both educationally and behaviorally. It was interesting that two of the parents specifically mentioned the importance of the behaviour of their child at school. Both parents find it very important that their child behaves well at school. When asked whether they monitor how their children spend their time outside of school, some said yes. The parents expect their children to notify them where they are and with whom. She says she does not follow her son's whereabouts when he is out of school, but said:

Yes. I think, maybe, almost 50%. My husband and I, we are not that strict on our children. ...because I think there's a lot of influence outside that if we do not get hold of, can actually influence the child negatively. So, even her friends we do not know them all, and we ask her friends to come home so that we can monitor, or she goes to visit, she tells us exactly what time to be expected back. We even try and collect her, if possible from wherever she needs to go and we give them a specified time to socialise. So we know exactly but it is not so because they the children need their space to play and monitoring them becomes difficulty.

Most of the parents are not strict when it comes to knowing what their children are doing. Guardians do not seem to be any less strict than blood parents are in this regard. As she said:

Yes. Yes. Yeah, I do not monitor. I mean, I allow them to play, but if I see that he goes out Friday, Saturday and Sunday, it's too much so he needs to leave two days at least to prepare his uniform and his, uh, homework.

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Communication

All parents were asked how often, on average, the school contacts them. Four of the parents in school A maintain that the school contacts them regularly, if there is any information for them. According to them, this contact is mostly in the form of verbal information through the information centers, the children and also written letters to them on what is happening or requesting their attendance at school. However, according to other parents, the school only contacts them once a while and a father said the school had not contacted him at all this school year:

> *No, not much. I haven't been [contacted] since he moved to the town*
> *School, they haven't contacted me.*

In spite of such lack of communication, he believes it is very important for the school to have a fair amount of communication with the family. Five of the parents contact the school themselves regularly, because they have a longing to know everything that is going on there. According to a parent, such contact between the home and school is very healthy. She said that whenever she has any questions she does not hesitate to contact the school. Other parents agrees and said:

> *Every time they hear something, they will phone or go to the school*
> *head and ask about it… Because I am not paying for the school fee, I*
> *want to know everything that goes on there.*

Parents were asked if they have anything to say, A mother said, she talks with a teacher when she goes to her child's school and ask question. Denise, however, has so far not contacted the school at all. However, all the parents find it very important to be in contact with the school and want more of such a relationship. Like what the woman said:

> *It should be more often. And also to go through the work and what*
> *problem she have and all that stuff so that we can know which kind of*

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> *communication and what can I say, uh, the way she is behaving at school.*
> *So that we can also help at home so that we can talk together.*

Other parent's view of this is similar:

> *I like it. It's important, I think, for me to keep understanding what's going*
> *on at the school. So, I like to be contacted regularly.*

Another parent said:

> *It is very important to be in contact because sometimes, we are here at*
> *home so if something goes wrong, maybe out of school. I trust my*
> *daughter, but we want to know because there is something we do not know*
> *but the teacher may know and we need to be informed.*

Most of the parents consider them to have a good relationship with their child's teachers and to know them. A parent said that her daughter openly discusses her relationship with her teachers, and what is going on at school with her mother, and through that she relates to the teachers. She considers her to know her daughter's teachers very well. Two of the parents, however, have not met any of the teachers at school, and only met the head teacher when their child began their schooling at one of the School in school A.

Parents in school B mention the frequent changes of teachers in some of the school and find it even more difficult to get to know the teachers because of it. As soon as they have built up a relationship with a certain teacher, he or she leaves and someone else starts teaching their child. This is due to the living conditions and the teachers ask for transfer to another town or region. All the parents agree that the school communicates their child's progress adequately. As another parent said:

> *Yes, they do, they do. Every year, or even in the middle of the term,*
> *especially the head teacher is very much concerned about the best learners.*
> *And if they see that there is something, seems like… is stepping a bit*

> *backwards and they will call and ask 'Is something wrong at home?' or*
> *'What is happening at home?'*

Another parent said:

> *Yes. I think whenever we meet, which is like PTA, we need to discuss with*
> *the teachers, and specifically we must talk to a specific teacher. So they give*
> *us, enough time to talk about our child's progress and the good things*
> *happening at the school, but they actually say if we need more time, we can*
> *come back at the appropriate time if we want to talk more. And that is find*
> *by me.*

When asked about school policies and programs, majority of the parents did not know much about that both school A&B. The parents all know nothing about it, for instance, policies with regards to the uniform, and what is considered proper uniform and not, and what behaviour is appropriate at school. But when asked about sports it seem that they have idea about it because they love sports always want their children to get involve and that it is available to their children. As a parent said:

> *Yes. Um, I think in the beginning we did not get so much, I did not get so*
> *much information, but then when I started to ask about the policies of the*
> *school I discovered that there are very well laid out policies and so I began*
> *to follow those.*

Another parent said:

> *Yes, I do. But cannot read, If not because I was communicating with the*
> *school I will not understand the school policy that they have to wear*
> *uniforms because I though the government will provide, no jewellery, or*
> *dirty uniforms and so on.*

A parent in school B said:

> *Yes, probably this school policy must be explained to us during PTA meetings for us to understand it well as not all of us has been to school.*

The parents were asked whether they find the school responding effectively to any problems their child might have at school. Most of them feel the school responds both effectively and promptly to any kind of problems. A mother said she trusts the school completely to solve any problems that may arise. She continued and said:

> *Yes. I find the school fix. I think, yes, if something happens in the school the first person who can found the solution or can fix the problem is the school.*

A parent also said, she thinks the school does its best to solve any problems learners may have. If her daughter, for instance, has any problems she makes an appointment with that particular teacher, or the head teacher, and together they solve the issue.

The parents were also asked whether they feel the school is trying to reach out to parents and build a relationship with them. Most of them believe so, however, they mentioned that the problem appears to be parents themselves. When the school is organising a meeting with all the parents, usually it is the same group of parents who attend those meetings. More often than not, those are the parents whose children achieve at school. Therefore, the parents who really need to be there are the ones that do not attend.

Another parent said:

> *I think, let's say, I think this year and last year, I think the school is really trying to reach out much more than they were doing before. They are really trying to reach out to parents, but I do not know if they are getting the response that they should be getting from all parents… But I think, what is important is that more than educating parents to understand the role that they must play in their child's education, because as much as you are trying to reach out them, they do not know why the school is trying to reach out to*

them… So I think what is more important is that, apart from just the reaching out, educating them to understand why the school is reaching out to them will help.

However, according to a parent, the school is not particularly trying to reach out to the parents:

Not really. I think there's more communication at the beginning of the year and during the year, no, no. She believes that since her son is doing quite well at school which is one of the reasons the school is not really trying to reach out to her specifically.

Volunteering

The parents were asked whether they had done any volunteering at their children's School. Such volunteerism can come in many different forms, such as teaching or giving any kind of assistance within their own profession. Only 2 parents in school B respectfully claim to volunteer at their children's school. One just recently started, as she said:

Well, I have just started this year. I have started to try and volunteer, but the year before there was no opportunity.

Another parent in school A said that whenever she is contacted by the school for any kind of assistance, she tries her utmost to accommodate them. As a result of her work, she is in a position to assist them with gathering different kinds of information and this she does. However, the rest of the parents have never volunteered at school, but the desire appears to be there, at least for some. She told me that she had offered the school to teach English on a volunteer basis:

> *No, I've never been contacted to do. I did actually ask at the school before if they need a teacher to teach English language, then they can fall on me, but no, nothing has come out of that. And there has not been any request for any volunteer work.*

The parents were also asked whether they have done any fundraising for the school. No one, except one parent in school A has been asked to assist with fundraising, and no one appeared to know about any fundraising event for the school. She said before on volunteering, she just recently started and has now joined the SMC at the child's school, which will lead and organise fundraising events at the school:

> *I have never found myself involved in any fundraising event until now that we have, I have just brought myself into a committee, where we think we need to start raising funds because, you can say you are involved in improving the school, but what is important is the action behind it. We need to do something.*

When the parents were asked whether they attend any school events, they all appear to be eager to attend events such as parent-teacher meetings, fundraising and prize giving days. But one parent in school B said:

> *Yes, yes. Like there has been, like a soccer, there was a soccer match between schools and we went to support them and then the school quiz day, children's quiz day in the school and I have attended every one. Yes.*

However, in school A three of the parents do not regularly attend school events. Because of their farm work, they go the villages for five weeks, so they finds it difficult to attend school events. He also told me that since his wife does not speak English, she does not attend school events either. One parent told me that she has never received any information from the school to attend any event:

> *Well he did not tell me anything. I know he went, he goes to, he tells me he goes to a school activity but I did not because at the other school they*

> *used to send a paper and just say, this PTA meeting. Yes, but not at this*
> *school, I have not received anything.*

A parent also said she has never attended any school events at her child's school. Her daughter just started the school last January, same as my son said another, and at the old school, she says she was quite active. There she participated in fundraising for the building and attended many school events. However, she maintains that she is very shy and finds it difficult to get to know new people at school. In spite of that, she appears to be eager to assist in any way possible, if the opportunity arrives.

One parent in one of the schools in A said very much the same thing, there is no parental activities at the schools. This is such a shame, because it seems that both parents would be more than willing to participate in any school events and assist if possible. She said when I asked her whether she would participate if the school would contact her:

> *Yes, of course. I mean, I suppose it's like, supportive for the kids or*
> *something.*

All the parents were asked whether they feel welcome at school or not. They all appear to agree that the school does make them feel welcome. For instance, they always feels very welcome whenever they visits the school to talk about their children's progress and behaviour. They mentioned the warmth with which the teachers always greets them. And also feels welcome at school and mentions the open and friendly atmosphere there. Parents feels welcome at school and was quick to answer when asked:

I found myself, feeling very, very welcome.

Even parents who have not been to the schools very often feel welcome. Said a parent in school A: *To be honest, I have been there twice. But it's nice, it's a nice school.*

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Learning at home

Some of the parents I spoke with all agree that homework is very important and they emphasise that their children do their homework. They see it as an opportunity for their children to revise what they learned at school. Said a parent in school A:

> *Yes. It's normally very important, it's just a way of revising and a way of practicing what he learned.*

Then a parent in school B was asked about the importance of homework, she said:

> *Absolutely. I think it's absolutely important because in my view work done at home will demonstrate retention and learning. Because work done in the classroom, the information is there and they have got skilled help. But when they go home, they are practicing the skills they learnt at school...*

Parents that monitors their child's homework and make sure that the homework is finished. One parent said, she looks at her daughter's homework to make sure she has completed everything. Another said, he requests that his son writes everything he is supposed to work at home in a book so that she has a better overview of his homework. This makes it easier for him to monitor his homework and to make sure that he completes it. A parent says that this year her monitoring is not as much as she would like it to be. The reason being that she has a young daughter and much of her time is geared towards her:

> *Yes. I mean... not this year much because I have a one year old daughter... But, yes, before I have to constantly check what he is writing, especially in English...*

All the parents maintain that they assist their child with homework whenever possible. However, they are very aware that their assistance is more in the form of guidance, rather than telling them the right answers. As one says, she only tries to guide her son in the right direction if he has problem with homework.

Another parent says that if his daughter has a problem with understanding a certain question, he tries to assist her with comprehending it. I assist my daughter if possible, otherwise she finds some person who can give her extra lessons. But another parent concurs with this and says that if her daughter has problems, they try to talk it through but if that does not work, she contacts the teacher and asks for assistance. A parent agrees with this and says that she and her husband help their son whenever possible. They will sit down with their son and try to work through the problem. Said a mother:

> ...but sometimes there are specific questions that she asks that I assist. For example, when she's working on her English homework. And what I try to do is not to give her the answer but to guide her towards thinking a bit more open...

Some of the parents are aware of all the subjects their children are learning at school. However, they are not fully aware of the syllabus in each subject, but they have a fairly good idea. A parent in school A says that she has a good idea of what her daughter is learning at school. Another goes along with this and says that she knows all the subjects her son is studying and how he is doing in each subject.

Another parent also says:

> Yes, I know the subjects. About the material, I do not know all but...

A parent in school B said:

> Uh, yes. When I look at it now and again, I come and see what he's reading about and studying, yes.

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Some of the parents maintain that they have regular discussions with their children about both schoolwork and homework and they find these discussions to be very important. And says that to him these discussions are crucial, especially since he is away from home for such a long time. Whenever he comes back home, he always goes over his daughter's schoolbooks with her. This way, he catches up with his daughter's schoolwork:

> *It's very important. We doing that, always... I want to see, to see the books. Yes, even now I came last night, maybe tomorrow we are going to do that, because I do not know what happened during the time I was not around. So it's very important.*

The parents were asked if they recognised what kind of a student their child is, that is whether their child is quick to learn, or really has to work hard at getting good grades. Every parent was quick to answer and it is apparent that they have a good idea. A parent says that her son has had to work hard to get good grades. The main reason for that is the language and that he finds it difficult understand. She claims that the school system in the public schools is not the best and that made it very difficult for her son when he started school. Therefore, he has had to work very hard for his grades. Another parent says that she is very much aware of what kind of a learner her daughter is:

> *Yes, I think I am aware of the kind of learner she is. I think she's a learner that, um, needs to work very hard... I believe that she's an academic because she actually likes to read.*

A parent in school A recognises her son to be a very quiet learner and appears to worry about him being too quiet at times. However, he does get good grades and she is thankful for that. Another parent tells me that she needs constantly to push her son to study. According to her, he spends too much time with his friends at the expense of his studies. Therefore, she feels that she needs to repeatedly steer him on the right track.

Trina's daughter has never needed to study hard in order to get good grades; so learning comes very easy to her. Josef describes his daughter as a very eager learner:

> *...but the best thing she has got is uh, she is very interested. If she has difficult to understand maybe she does not sleep the whole time... very interested to understand, to sort the problem.*

Most parent do not have regular discussions with their children about the child's aspirations of going to university. Everyone expects their child to go on to a university and become a great person in future but the parents do not actively encourage them in that direction. According to the parents, the children have good ideas about it. How?

Many of the parents claim they talk to their children but nothing shows that they are concerned For instance, through my observation, most of the parents are so busy with work that they do not have time for their children. How they dress to school, whether they have done their homework or not and paying attention to their grades. A parent said her daughter:

> *Yes. Yes. We sit down and I talk to her to learn or do her homework if*
>
> *any. I also dress her before allowing her go to school.*

Thus, every parent finds it extremely important for their child to get good marks at school but the concern is a bit low.

Decision-making

In public schools, there is no official parent association. However, some of the parents discuss with other parents, the school and any issues they may have. These discussions appear to take place at meetings at school that the school has organised and invited parents to attend. One parent says that, at these meetings, she often socialises with some of the other parents. For instance, they may discuss where the school is going and things like that. Also another says:

...and during that meetings, parents are free to discuss. But I feel the forum is too wide. For those parents that are not so outspoken and for those parents that really need a smaller forum to discuss the issues, there isn't that rapport.

A parent said he only knows two other parents at his child's School and he and his wife sometimes discuss with them issues relating to the school. The same goes for Hilda. She only communicates with a few other parents at school. Clara discusses issues related to the School only with one other parent.

However, some parents have not had any communication with other parents at their child's School. A parent says there have been no opportunities for her to meet, or discourse, with other parents:

> *No, not any of the parents at all... any opportunity to meet other parents, not that I am aware of. Unless the invitation did not get to me.*

When asked whether they believe that head teacher listens to and really hears, what the parents have to say, five of the parents believe that it will be useful. Another parent says that whenever he goes to a meeting at school, the parents are always asked about their view on things, and he feels that the school listens. A mother agrees, and says that the school hears them. A father says that, in her experience, they do listen. Not only do they listen, but also they truly care about the learners and thus the family. Trina tells me she does not know if that is the case or not, since she has never talked to anyone at school about school issues. The only times she goes to school is at the beginning of each month to pay school fees. Teye, however, does not believe the school listens to the voices of parents. She has never received any invitation from the school to attend any meeting or another event. Thus, she does not think that parents are being listened to by the school.

Collaborating with the community

The parents were asked whether they had taken their children to visit museums or introduced them to libraries, to widen their horizon and make them more aware of their community. None of the parents have taken their children to visit museums, and when they are travelling, they always make sure to visit museums or historical sites but none has been done. The learners themselves will have love to go for such visits, but has never had that opportunity as a parent says about her son:

> *She has never plan a visit with her children before.*

Some of the parents have taken their children to the public library and they are members there. A parent says that her daughter, is already a member of the public town library, now wants to join another library. She supports that idea since she believes that will expose her daughter to so much more learning. Another says that her daughter also wants to join the library at town. None of the parents are member of a community association. However, they are all active members of their local church, some of them teach at their local churches. A parent says that she is very much involved in church work and she teaches the young people, at her church, about her faith. She also participates fully in her church activities. Her responsibilities are poor people that need urgent help. In addition, she is a member of the permanent task force of orphans and vulnerable children in the town:

> *...helps the government to understand what is happening on the ground with vulnerable children because they [the government] do not have enough information.*

When asked about their attitude towards their Learners School, the parents all agree that their attitude is very positive, except for one parent. Clara was not very positive

and on the scale of one to five, where one is very negative and five is very positive, she only valued the School at two:

> *I would say, compared with other public schools, I am not happy with what we get out of the school. Every year, the mark for learners are very low and that is not what I expect. Not when I buy all the books they need every year.*

Other parents, however, were very positive towards the school. For instance, a parent mentions how important it is to her that the school allows the learners to think outside the box and that the school lets each child build on his or her own strength. Another parent agrees and says that what she particularly likes about the school is how it works holistically with each child. It strives to develop the children's whole being, not only their brain. Another parent said, he likes the new curriculum and also how many of the teachers come from other regions. He believes that it exposes the learners to different cultures, which is a positive thing.

Parent-teacher meeting

The researcher observed that the number of parents in the meeting formed a quorum. It was observed in the meeting that parents in both schools were allowed to speak up on their views on a tabled matter. However, it was established that some parents were reluctant to speak out their views in the agenda, instead they would relay their thoughts to another parent sitting next to them, and then that "brave" parent would raise their hand as a signal that they wanted to speak. This researcher's observation of parent reluctance in speaking out in the meeting is found in Mncube (2009:84) findings that reveal "parents in Asesewa public schools are still experiencing 'client' treatment at some schools, rather than partners in children's education". Most parents attended, although more than half of the parents in the meeting had to leave before the end of the

meeting to catch trains, buses and taxis since they stay outside the school area. This is what some parents reported to the researcher.

Summary

My main findings show that the parents I spoke with consider education to be very important for their children and they are somehow involved with their education. They all expressed their desire to follow their child's progress closely and to know what is going on at school. They do not have regular discussions with their children about schoolwork and school related matters, but have high expectations with regards to their children's education. Most of the parents, also feel they have a good relationship with the school. The parents consider homework to be important and do their most to assist their child when necessary. In addition, every parent expects to know how their child spends his or her time out of school and with whom.

Research Question 2: What are the perceptions of teachers and parents on the role of parents in their   children's education?

Participants' responses in this study presented extensive data on the techniques utilized by participating schools to involve parents in their children's education. In this research analysis and report chapter, data was based on the observation and voices of participants in their natural setting. After reading the entire transcribed data more than once, the researcher realized that five major themes with their sub-major themes emerged:

● Teachers are convinced that parent-teacher meetings are significant to encourage parental participation in their children's education. ● Teachers involve parents or families in student's homework. ● Teachers provide a welcoming school climate for the community to uplift their school performance. ● School personnel offered a limited

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parent's role in decision-making in the schools. ● Parental education, school culture and socio-economic status hinder participation in student learning.

4.3.1 Theme 1: Parent-Teacher meetings are significant to encourage parental participation in their children's education.

The Parent-Teacher partnership and parents' participation in the day-to-day professional functions of their school was encouraged in various ways in school. The most popular way was through parent-teacher meetings. A head teacher confirmed their ways to encourage parents was, "Our school encourages parental participation in their children's education through parent-teacher meetings, grade meetings, and individual parent meetings. On top, the school management informs parents about anything happening at school". They believe in informing parents about everything at school through parent-teacher meetings or conferences, the class the children are and individual learner parent teacher meetings, and parent-teacher discussions on pupil's performance.

It was reported that when parents are called to a meeting, their children (learners) are also welcomed in that meeting. "This is the best strategy for schools to enhance good parent-teacher attendance, since each student would persuade his or her parent to be amongst other parents in the school meeting". According to the head teacher, "this strategy of calling parents and students to the meeting with teachers does work because the attendance in the meetings improved since it was stated".

So far, the researcher realised that the school personnel had a communal notion that when giving information to parents on what is happening at school through parent–teacher meetings, they are efficiently encouraging participation of parents in their children's education. Van Dixhon (2012:32) is in line with school personnel's views

when stating that, "what school staff considers as day-to-day business is often new information to parents" who feel appreciated and needed if they are informed by the schools. Hence, this was communal in both schools. The some of the teachers explained that they encourage parental participation through parent-teacher meetings at the beginning of the year. The head teacher in School A, reported that their school organises meetings at the beginning of the year according to the different grades and individual-parent teacher meetings when necessary to map out the school programme or year plan, assessment (tests) programme and learner pass marks. The head teachers also supported this view.

The parental interests in these schools are provoked by introducing teachers to parents in each subject and marks at the beginning of each year. "Parents are given time to interact with teachers during portfolio day, where each parent would come to the school to observe his or her child's work for the whole year" said the head teacher. The portfolio day makes parents feel welcomed and that schoolteachers appreciate the work they do at home. Furthermore, parents feel welcomed on issues concerning their children's education. The head teacher further elaborated that the school organises workshop for parents on their role in their children's education:

"We inform parents on the school's expectations from their role as parents of pupils in the school expected in the learning of their children at home and school. Also, we even invite the members of department of education to address parents on their role" said a teacher. This workshop gives parents a sense of belonging in their schools as educators and managers of their children's education.

However, the researcher noticed that the parent-teacher meetings were mostly characterised by client orientation in both schools. This shows that there was a

deficiency of parent-teacher partnerships in school matters in the sense that school personnel inform parents about everything happening at the school including learner progress, progression and promotion requirements, school projects and many more. Parents passively listen to the professionals in the field since their area of expertise is being parents at home. The researcher is also in line with Lemmer's (2012:83) findings in her research on parental involvement in their children's education when stating that, "Parent-teacher conferences are characterised by client orientation to parents, rather than partnership orientation to home-school relation". "This practice of informing parents on school matters was confirmed in the interviews that the parent-teacher meetings and conferences in these schools are teacher-centred rather than parent-teacher centred". This is common because "parents are reluctant to speak out" on their views said the head teacher.

Discussion

The researcher observed that these schools communicate well with their parents. According to collected data, the schoolteachers in all the selected schools involve parents in their children's education by inviting them to school meetings. It was evident that these schools use grade meetings to attract more parents, and this allows teachers to have a manageable number of parents during school meetings. The manageable number in their meetings may allow the school personnel to listen to the voices of parents in the meetings. However, the school personnel should keep parents informed about children's progress. Regular and on-going communication through phone, in person, and letters could help to avoid surprises and would involve parents throughout the school year in monitoring learners' work; rather than relying on the report card to communicate how a student is progressing in the school. This finding is related to Kruger and van Zyl's (2006:241).

Some authors, for example Glanz (2006:16); Lemmer (2012:84); Kruger and van Zyl (2006:241), highlight the provision of on-going communication between the school and home. This on-going communication promotes the effective co-operation between parents, teachers, and students; in turn it makes students perform at their best in schoolwork. The schools should design effective forms of communication from school to home and home to school on school programmes and students' academic progress, which is two-way communication (Lemmer, 2012:83). However, the participating schools are unable to use modern means of communication to all parents because of their socio economic status. In this instance, school heads can accomplish this on-going communication by working in collaboration with parents serving in the school. They can also plan their meetings in advance so that during students' registrations, parents are given the dates of the meetings. Furthermore, broadcasting on local radio stations can also be utilised by schools as a means of communicating with parents because most families have radios in their homes. In conclusion, the school personnel should see to it that they foster adequate communication to get good parental support.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Teachers involve parents or families in students' homework or tasks

Learners' good homework habits and support of parents and families at home is not encouraging, in all the selected schools. It was observed that there is no clear and well-communicated homework policy to parents and learners. This policy promotes parental support and in turn, a good quality of teaching and learning in these schools is accomplished. Teacher 1 in one of the school said, cited this: "If a student did not do his or her homework at home, we (schoolteachers) call parent in (we need co-operation on their part) to make sure that such learner's home work is done in good time". "With this kind of intervention, it never makes the parents to look at their children's books

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every day, even though they are aware of the content in the school homework policy"
as said by a teacher.

The School homework policy states that, "a parent must be called to school to sign on behalf of his or her child's misbehaviour of not doing homework and if this bad behaviour perseveres in one student for more than three times per term, such a student should be referred to the school disciplinary committee for corrective purposes. Then if this matter goes beyond the hands of the school disciplinary committee, they must be referred to the governing body that is the highest constitutional and disciplinary structure in the school."

On the other hand, the researcher noticed that there is a lack of homework policy on the list of policies submitted for analysis during the documentation reading in some of the school. In spite of this, one teacher in that school reported that some teachers in the school involve parents in leaner homework and parents are asked to sign the learners' books. However, some students bring unsigned work from home. Another teacher also elaborated: "the homework books have a space where a parent should put his or her signature and I usually encourage my students to give their books to parents to sign after finishing writing their homework, but some parents do not sign" (Teacher 2). It was reported that only literate parents are actively involved in their children's homework.

However, the head in those schools had a different view with regard to the illiterate parents in their school. The head teacher reported that "the illiterate groups of parents in my school are very active in their children's schooling matters; they even organise somebody to help with homework".

"The lack of homework policy in some of the school, leads parents to be ignorant towards school homework and inspecting the children's books" said Teacher 2, in that School. It was realised that involving parents in homework does not seem to be encouraged by all teachers in some of the schools because of the perception that parents are illiterate and do not know anything about schoolwork. This observation was sustained by Teacher 1 in school, when arguing, "Most parents are illiterate in our school, students are struggling at home, and there is no parental support at all in their homework." In this point by Teacher 1, it could be realised that social problems prevail and form barriers to parental participation. Furthermore, the researcher noticed that in School, the school personnel did not support their parents to be able to support their children at home, as recommended by Epstein (1995:704). It seems as if the teachers believed that there is no way that they can improve this lack of parental involvement in homework. This was established from the words of the Deputy Principal in School A, who stated that "in some homes, there are no parents to take care of children owing to parental dearth and urbanisation; some learners stay with their relatives or siblings."

Moreover, Teacher 2 in another school, confirmed this view on the lack of parental support at home "The school have a strategy to deal with this lack of parental support in home works by forming extra-classes after school." The head teacher in that school also cited the after school homework programme during face-to-face interviews; "learners take one hour after school to do the work they were supposed to do as homework because of unfavourable conditions for learning at home. However, some

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parents look after their children's homework every day although the school have no strong policy on homework." This was also supported by the words of the head teacher in that school below:

"Parents are allowed to come to school when they are not satisfied by the quality of work provided by teachers to their children. I remember last year (2013) in the first school term, one parent visited the school to complain about a grade 11 teacher who do not sign learner homework books". In another case there were learners who always came from school with no schoolwork when the parents checked their books. The class teacher was called for questioning and then the questioning revealed that although the students were always present in the class register, they did not attend class. Furthermore, the learners' classmates confirmed this habit of bunking classes in some of the other teacher's periods. Apparently, these learners had a tendency of not coming to school for about two weeks. Their parents were very disappointed to hear that their children were absconding from classes. "The most awful part was this bad and unacceptable behaviour of forging schoolwork to submit at home, as they knew that their parents wanted to see the schoolbooks on a daily basis" said a head teacher. These parents' intervention helped a lot because schoolteachers were able to deal with this learners' behaviour in collaboration with the learners' parents for the best interests of the learners.

Discussion:

The school head teacher and one of the teachers can pay home visits to revive parents and families' interests in their children's education matters. Glanz (2006:16) states that "if schools reach out to parents and communities, learners perform better in school on the range of social and academic indicators". Kruger and van Zyl (2006:241) state that "Today co-operation between parents and teachers is vital for effective teaching and learning at school, but parent involvement does not happen automatically." They (ibid) regard the improvement of parental involvement in the education of their children as the most challenging task facing teachers nowadays. Kruger and van Zyl (ibid) sustain the above point of view; "effective management is a precondition for parent involvement." This could be possible with student's portfolios and student's report cards. Schools may possibly communicate with the learner's home by using telephone and give information at the information centers because students keep the school letters in their school bags without giving them to parents.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Teachers provide a welcoming school climate to their community to uplift school performance

The researcher's observations revealed that there is a strong culture of parent or family friendliness in both schools. The school personnel in these schools have a warm welcoming ambiance to community members and parents when visiting these schools. Furthermore, according to the words of the head teachers and teachers this parent-friendly policy promotes a positive interest for parents towards the school.

The welcoming atmosphere in these schools allows parents and teachers to work together in improving the quality of teaching and learning. For instance, the head in one of the schools reported that, "At our school we encourage parents to check their children's books regularly. Regular book checking of children by parents motivates

learners in their schoolwork. At the same time, it promotes the link between parents and teachers on the students work at home and school". The head teacher further elaborated that:

> *"At our school we have a friendly welcoming policy to parents and community. I always tell 'my staff' to try by all means to make parents feel welcomed when visiting the school, at least by giving a warm greeting even if the person is not going to help a parent when the school receptionist is not on her desk".*

The school teacher in school B created a welcoming atmosphere for parents in their school activities in various ways; they conveyed warmth and sincerity to make parents feel welcomed and comfortable when they visit the school (head teacher in School B). Kruger and van Zyl (2006:241) also support this technique of managing parents at school. Parents in School B "respond positively towards the teacher invitations on school activities" (head teacher, in School B). This was observed when parents were organising a farewell function for a teacher who was leaving school B (Teacher 2 in School B). This school welcomes parents on school activities. However, in School A, it was reported that it is only those parents who serve in the school governing body who are active (head, in School A). It was observed during the reading of school documents that parents are not members of the school sub-committees. The head teacher in School A supported this view; "parents are very reluctant to join school committees because of the low self-esteem."

Likewise, the Principal in School B reported, "the school teacher encourage parent to play their role in children's learning at home by supporting and checking children's books regularly". In relation to literature, van Deventer and Kruger (2009:09) argue that the phenomenon 'parent role' has a significant effect on the quality of learners' experiences of teaching and learning in their school, and in their results.

The school should recruit and organise parents' help and support in the classroom. Furthermore, the schools should provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and curriculum–related activities, decisions and planning (Epstein, 1995:703). Parents have an important role to play at school, for instance assisting educators in the classroom, maintaining learner's discipline, organising fundraising projects for the school and helping the school in sporting activities.

- Schools utilise community resources for the benefit of teaching and learning

The researcher noticed that these schools work in collaboration with the community around them. Learners use the community library. "The school has a good relationship with the community members and Love Life (a child health promoting non-profit organization), social workers, school nurses, education psychologists, big companies donate funds since the school is a no fee and community police"; reported head teacher, in School B.

"We are using community library, Gugastebe (the name of their community cultural project), community hall, social workers, nurses, musicians from community in our music programmes and police" (head teacher, in School A). When the community responsibility ends, the school responsibility commences and vice versa. Hence, paying cautious attention to building bridges between school and community is a great effort in promoting the school-community partnership. Furthermore, seeking opportunities to engage community members in school activities and involving students and teachers to administrate in community functions outside school is the best way of enhancing academic performance in secondary schools.

The school personnel in these schools believe in effective communication between school and home. According to Lemmer (2012:84), the most common form of direct communication between parents and teachers in schools worldwide is parent-teacher conferences. Lemmer (2012:83) further states, "Purposeful parent–teacher conferences afford the teacher and parent the opportunity to address a particular topic related to the child, such as academic progress and behaviour". Likewise, the deputy principal in school A stated that, "the school informs parents about anything happening at school with the use of school letters, parent-teacher discussions on the performance of their children and school newsletter quarterly" (teacher, in School A).

From this view, it is established that in these schools parent-teacher meetings are the pillars of communication between parents and teachers. However, most of the teachers in both interviews had an opinion that the use of school letters when communicating with parents or families is ineffective because there are students who do not give school letters to parents nor verbally convey the message to their parents. In this case, the school should communicate directly with parents through information centre or the telephone. The head in School B suggested this: "We are communicating with parents in the form of school letters and telephone; however, this communication strategy needs to be improved because some students do not give invitation letters to parents".

However, the head teacher in School B stated that the communication with parents through school letters was not sufficiently reflected in their school. She cited a report of one parent in a school-parent meeting as follows: "I remember one parent who reported to me in the meeting that she was not aware of the meeting until another parent informed her but not from the letter of the school, which was supposed to be given by her child to her". However, in this regard the teacher1 in School B suggested a plan to improve the home-school communication: "I think the school needs to utilize short

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messages system (SMS) and information centers to communicate with parents, since our school has enough resources in this regard".

These teachers elaborate that their schools communicate with parents in the form of school letters and information centers. However, this communication strategy needs to be improved. This view was also supported by the head in school A, when remarking that their school should use other effective means of communication: "I think the school heads has to buy data bundles for teachers to communicate with parents, because we (teachers) use our airtime to phone parents regarding their children's educational matters". However, this might not be easy since the head in School A reported that some parents do not have enough communication facilities such as cellular phones, emails, and even landline telephones at home owing to their poor socio-economic status.

Discussion:

The empirical data collected revealed that in these schools there is a culture of parent-teacher and community relationships. By creating a welcoming and accessible environment, the school begins to build partnerships with parents rather than create adversaries (Dixhon, 2012:32). 'Parents and teachers need to share with, and learn from each other during regular, open, two-way communication in the interests of the child' (Lemmer,2012:84). Communication between the school and home is encouraged in these schools. The most common means of communication used are the information centers and learners report cards on their academic performance and participation consent forms when the schools needs parent decisions for learners in extra-curricular activities. (Schoolteachers in School A and B). This practice is in line with Michael, Dittus and Epstein (2007:578), who state, "One of the strongest predictors of family and community involvement is what the schools do to it.

However, in order for the schoolteachers to sustain the schools' welcoming ambiance, they should convey warmth and sincerity so that parents feel welcomed and comfortable when they visit the school (Kruger & van Zyl, 2006:241). The schools should welcome parents at every opportunity; signs and posters should reflect welcoming messages to parents and the community. Furthermore, schoolteachers should clearly communicate what is expected of the parents by the school in the education of their children.

Although the parent management techniques vary from school to school, in both schools I observed that the head teacher office was a welcoming place for parents. Correct conduct on the part of staff, Positive attitude on the part of staff, a neat head teacher's office that is functionally arranged and that gives parents an impression of professionalism (Kruger & van Zyl, 2006:242).   Furthermore, these notices reflect attempts by educators to preserve schools as islands of professional expertise, calm, order and learning, situated apart from their teeming, disorganised, unknowing surroundings" (Vincent, 1996:01). In addition, Michael et al. (2007: 578) state, "head teachers must be engaged in partnership efforts, and they must develop strong support for partnerships among families, teachers, and community members." These views convey a strong massage for school managers to strive to develop a welcoming school environment to enhance parental role in their teaching and learning culture.

4.3.4 Theme 4: Schoolteachers offered a limited parents' role in decision-making in the schools.

Almost every participant in this study responded confidently on the question of parent role in school decision matters. Their responses were on the basis that parents are represented in the School and they are in the majority. Therefore, any decision taken in the school is according to their majority vote and is for the best interest of their

children's education. This idea is in line with G.E.S, yet this involvement is limited to school reports during the parent-teacher meetings. These finding are related to Lemmer and van Wyk (2004: 261) who state that "in general, educators feel that parent's role in decision-making on school matters should be limited to voting for, or serving in the school".

Hence, the head teacher in School A stated that parents of learners in their school are involved in decision-making in the form of school governing body meetings, general parent-teacher meetings where they get reports of everything that is happening in the school. This view means that parents and families are not pro-active in decision-making on school matters. For instance, the head teacher in School A reported that when the school has projects, teachers make consultations with the school body. In that way, they believe that they are involving parents in decision-making in the education matters of their children. Echoing these sentiments were the head and a teacher serving in School A. Another teacher in school A reported that, "it is only parents serving in the school body who are active in school matters concerning parents."

The heads in School B reported that parents are fully represented in decision making, in the form of school body meetings and general parent-teacher meetings. The heads, in School B supported this view by stating that, "When we have school projects, we do consultations with school body". In spite of this, the rest of parents do not honour the school invitations, but only come when they are called for their children's misbehaviour in the school. The heads in School B, continued "We are calling parents in parent-teacher meetings, but parents do not come, their cited reason is that they are not teachers, so they should not be bothered on the running of the school, as it is the responsibility of teachers, since they are not employed to do such that".

- Parents serving in the school body play a less academic role in the schools

It was reported that parents serving on the School management committee (S.M.C) support the smooth running of teaching and learning in school A by protecting school resources against vandalism and burglary, (head teachers, in School A). "This improves the quality of education produced by teachers in our school," reported (head teachers, in School A). A teacher in School A stated that the S.M.C deals with school finances and general parent meetings. The heads in School B was echoed by the heads in School B when stating that "The parent component in our school management committee serves as a back-up for teachers in the school in the teaching and learning". Whilst in School A it was reported that, "It is only the parents who are serving in school body who are active in academic and non-academic activities to uplift the good quality in student learning and social life in the school" (head teachers, in School A). Furthermore, "the school body parents are responsible in our school to control or deal with school finances" (Teacher 2, in School A). Another participant further elaborated that, "School management committee members are responsible for checking and discussing financial statements, financial report, and handling general parent meetings regarding school finances" (head teachers, in School A).

Additionally, it was noticed that in both schools parents are assigned to some special important duties. For instance "The school management committee members form part of the selecting panel during the filling of advertised posts by making their recommendations for teaching and non-teaching staff candidature" (head teachers, in School B). This evidence was also observed in the school management committee minute book. According to section 4.5 in the Constitution of the School management committee in School B, parents serving in school management committee have a responsibility of encouraging other parents in the school to provide support to the

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school heads and teachers in improving the culture of teaching and learning in the school.

Lastly, the sampled schools acknowledged that there is a fundamental need to encourage parental participation in their day-to-day professional functions. The researcher observed that both schools have a school management committee constitution as required by the G.E.S School Act No. 84 of 1996. The school management committee are properly constituted and have complete membership according to the education Act, and parent members are in the majority. A few of the key school policies listed in the school Act such as language, admission, code of conduct for learners, were submitted by the school heads.

- The teachers perceive the parents as having a less academic role on their children's education

The collected data acknowledged the excellent role of parents in non-academic activities in both secondary schools. However, there is no strategic plan on programmes to attract all parents in the school activities. Both school principals stated that their schools had no focus plan on the parents. "However, there are parents with sound academic backgrounds who give enough support to teachers in the school" (head teacher, in School B). These parents support teachers by invigilating during the internal and external examination period.

On the other hand, the head teachers in School A said, "parents are not interested to participate on academic matters in the school on a volunteer basis." This could be noticed by the response of Teacher 1, in School A who reported to the researcher that "If the teacher in our school request a parent to invigilate or be on guard for his or her

classroom, while busy doing something else….maybe marking, the parent will demand paying for undertaking the job from the teacher".

However, this does not occur in School B. Parents work on a volunteering basis when the school personnel invite them to do so without expecting payment or rewards. The heads and teachers in School B supported their view when stating that parents were actively organising a farewell for a teacher who was leaving the school at the end of the following term. "Parents started on fund-raising for this farewell function without asking for the school's money and it was successful" (heads, in School B).

Discussion:

The G.E.S mandates parents to support teachers in their daily - teaching and learning. To be precise, by the states that "the school management committee of public schools must support the head teachers and educators of the school in the performance of their professional functions" (Department of Education, 1996). To the same extent, Mmotlane et al. (2009:529) puts emphasis on the need to increase parental participation in children's education for better school results.

The comprehensive parent involvement is a prerequisite for improving the culture of teaching and learning in schools (Lemmer & van Wyk, 2004:261-3; Mncube,2009:84), Hence, the acquired data revealed a strong co-operation between the parents serving in School management committee (SMCs) in School A and School B. However, there was significant evidence that school teachers in participating schools were encouraging parental participation in their professional functions, as per the requirements. This puts emphasis on parents as the dominating constituent in the school management committee and assigns them the crucial task of supporting school personnel in their

professional functions. Firstly, it was observed that the structure of S.M.C was formed according to the stipulated membership in the school.

It was noticed that during the school documentation readings, both schools have school management committee constitutions as per the school mandate. This states that every school must have a management committee with its own constitution. The number of parents in the school management committee was according to the constitution. However, the SMC constitution in School B had not been reviewed since it was dated and signed by the previous school management committee's chairperson and secretary. However, this was not the case in School A, the chairperson and secretary of the school management committee signed the incumbent SMC constitution. Furthermore, the researcher observed that in some of the SMC minutes there was indication of training that took place in the previous school term (April–June), on the role and responsibilities of school management committee in their schools. This was a good sign for developing SMC's because fully capacitated school boards are able to steer the school and give strategic direction.

4.3.5 Theme 5: Teachers' experienced factors that hinder parental participation in student learning.

The researcher observed that the schools experienced some factors that hinder full parent participation in their children's education. Some of these factors were caused by the schools. For instance, the lack of parent involvement policy and homework policy and the meeting times were generated by the school management practices. On the other hand, the parents' level of education, unavailability of a real parent at home, parents working constraints, distance from home to school and poverty are barriers that are not caused by the school teachers.

- Lack of school-parent involvement policy in the schools

The researcher's observation was that effectual management of parents in their children's education is still a challenge in the participating schools. During the artefacts construing on the school policies, the researcher could not find a parent involvement policy amongst those provided by the school principal in school A. The school personnel also disclosed during the   face-to-face interviews that parental involvement as a component of the school culture of teaching and learning was not their focus management area. Hence, the Principal in School A confidently stated, "We do not have such a policy in our school". Furthermore, this was the common case in School B. Lack of parent involvement policy was also evident in School B. School B submitted their policies but amongst those submitted, there was no policy addressing parents in the school. The school heads also confirmed this researcher's observation during interviews:

> *"At our school, we do not have a parent involvement programme yet." The heads in School B, further confirmed that there was a lack of parent involvement policy in their school; "We have no focus plan for parents."*

> *This clearly shows that the school personnel in these schools are not aware*
> *of or take lightly the role of parents in learners' education*

- Teachers believe that the parents' level of education impedes participation at these schools

According Mncube's (2009:85) study on parent role in the school management committee, parents are reluctant to say their views to teachers, since they underestimate their knowledge on educational matters. Parents give higher respect to teachers. Another factor in this regard is that parents come to school with a variety of previous school experiences; some positive and some negative. In school A, the school management committee revealed that the majority of their parents are illiterate and do not take any care for the education of their children:

"Most parents are illiterate, students are struggling at home, and there is no parental support at all in their home works" (heads, in School A). In support of this view, a teacher in school B, reported; "there is no parent participation, except parents meetings. Nevertheless, not all of them (parents) attend meetings". "Parents serving in school management committee are actively participating in learner discipline, fighting and insulting teachers. However, there are parents with sound academic acumen amongst our parents and those parents support the schoolteachers" (heads in, School B).

- Unavailability of real parents at home

Societal social problems prevail. In some homes, there are no parents to care for children (learners) owing to parental dearth and urbanisation; some learners stay with their relatives or siblings (heads, school A). Furthermore, it was reported by teachers in both schools that most of their students stay with their grandparents, and that they are too sick and old to attend school meetings. Teacher 1 in school A elaborated that;

"Some students stay with relatives, their parents are in Accra, at other homes learners are also acting the parent role to their young siblings' schooling".

- Work constraints

The majority of parents work far away from their homes. Therefore, it is not easy for them to attend school meetings after work. Some parents in the parent-teacher meetings, which the researcher observed, reported this. In this regard, one parent reported to the school principal that it was her first meeting to attend this year because she uses a car to and from work and as a result she arrives at home very late to prepare supper for her children, and there was no time to attend school meetings (Parent, in School B).

Some parents in the school meeting defended their habit of not attending school meetings. One parent stated; "Our employers do not issue us early time off from work because of the school–meetings. They do not care about school-meetings, they need production". Another parent stated that he does not have time to look at his children's books because he gets home from work very tired. Most parents in the meeting were in chorus with the speaker, passing their excuses of not attending meetings because of work, let alone the school functions and activities. This is related to the literature which states that "parents whose employment is relatively demanding and inflexible tend to be less involved than parents whose jobs or like circumstances are more flexible (Garcia-Coll et al., 2002; Weiss et al., 2003 in Green et al.,2007:534). Furthermore, parents with multiple child-care or extended family responsibilities may also be less involved, particularly in school-based activities" (Hoover Dempsey et al., 2005 in Green et al., 2007:534).

"I think teachers should do their work which is to teach our children, and leave us as parents alone because we know nothing about schoolwork" (Parent in the meeting, in

School A). The meeting murmured in support of the speaker about their lack of time to be teachers at home.

4.5   How can these roles be played effectively by the parents of Asesewa Township?

Teachers, head teachers and parents were interviewed on how parents can play their role effectively in their children's education using the interview guide questions.

All the teachers and parents I interviewed shared the following views on how to go about the problem above.

4.5.1 Parents must be role model

Children are easily inspired by what their parents do. So it would be good to be a role model in their learning phase. Parents are children first teachers and so learn the first things together at home. Show them how exciting and meaningful a school life can be if they give out their best. Inspire them to learn novel elements in and out of school with friendly reminders and guidance.

It is also important to have an eye on children's activities in school and home. Their general habits are closely linked to how they perform in their studies. So give timely advice and correct any abnormal behavior right from the childhood days and inspire them to be good citizens. Help them to be more organized with their daily routine and find enough time for the lessons.

Parents should make sure that the children are provided with a peaceful and pleasant atmosphere at home. It is good to avoid discussing family problems in the presence of the children and do not create a mess at home with unnecessary quarrels. Both mother and father should consider the importance of their study life and give them adequate moral support.

Attending P.T.A Meeting

A parent-teacher association, or PTA, is an organization composed of parents and teachers that is intended to facilitate parental participation in school. Most primary and Junior high school (whether public or private) have P.T.A. it helps parents to share their thought and also problems they are facing both at home and school. During meeting parents are able to ask questions they find difficult to approach teachers for. All kinds of discussions takes place which at the end of the meeting parent become relief from their problems.

One parent said:

> *I really express myself most of the time during PTA because I use my native language.*

Most of the parents and teachers said, *PTA meeting help shape the children behavior both at home and school because there has been a common discussion.* Parents should be involved in the education of their children at all stages, not just when a problem arises. Through parent teacher meetings, teachers can spot potential issues early on before they escalate into bigger problems. They also collect data about each learner, which makes it easier to help individual child. Parent-teacher meetings happening gives insight to everyone into their child and learners. Parent teacher meetings are also important because parents can help teachers understand more about their children and give advice on what they need help with or what they excel in. For example, a parent may tell the teacher that their child has trouble sitting still at the dinner table or that they want to be read to before bed. This gives the teacher information about the student and lets them know what they can do to help.

Checking and assisting children to do their homework

Giving good support to children in their studies would really lift their spirit for learning. Show it with small gestures such as helping them with home assignments or projects. However, it is not advised to do every lesson for them and let them play. Do it together and help them with some tips and guidance in doing the assignments better. Give a constructive criticism if your child is not performing well, correct their mistakes at the beginning itself. It is not good to spoil their minds with ill words. Have some patience and give only constructive criticism if you notice any downsides. Make them understand what is right and wrong rather than simply blaming them.

A parent said: *I wish I can help my child at home but I cannot read.*

Another parent said*: let listen at the end we will find a way to help even if we cannot read.*

As they continue the discussion a teacher said*, giving good motivation is important for children to perform better with studies, so do not hesitate to reward them they come up with some good results in the tests. This gives them the spirit to perform well. However, keep a limit and it is not good to over shower them with gifts for an average performance which fades away their killer instinct.*

The head said: *Prepare children when it is their exams time, do not leave them alone with their lessons help them to prepare for the test with good guidance and support. You may even conduct mini tests at home before the actual test to lessen their exam worries and tensions. You may also give additional help with the lesson areas in which they are weak if you cannot do it find a private teacher or speak to one of the teachers to help.*

Teachers meeting parents and children once a while to advise them on the importance of education

4.6 Discussion of Results

The researcher noticed that schools experience some factors that hinder full parent participation in their children's education. Some of these factors are caused by the schools. For instance, the lack of parent involvement policy and homework policy and meeting times are generated by the school management practices. On the other hand, the parental level of education, unavailability of a real parent at home, parent working constraints, and distance from home to school and poverty are barriers that are not caused by the school personnel in any way (van Deventer & Kruger, 2009).

Teachers' voices concerning the role-played and barriers they experience when trying to involve parents in their children's education were presented in this chapter. In other words, this chapter presented the level of schoolteachers' awareness on parental role in their children's education and including its recognition. The perceptions of schoolteachers on parental role in education to improve involvement management techniques and the school personnel's experienced barriers when they try to involve parents in school matters were heard.

Research has indicated that great schools have effective partnerships with parents (Davies, 1996); therefore, school, family, and community partnerships are critical component in educating students. Parental involvement provides an important opportunity for schools to enrich current school programmes by bringing parents into the educational process. Increased parental involvement has been shown to result in increased student success, enhanced parent and teacher satisfaction, and improved school climate. To ensure effective parental involvement, schools may have partnership

programmes in place that continually develop, implement, evaluate, and improve plans and practices encouraging family and community involvement. Schools can encourage involvement in several of areas including parenting, learning at home, communication, volunteering, decision-making, and community collaboration (Hayes, 2012). Effective parental involvement programmes are built upon a careful consideration of the unique needs of the community. In order to build trust, effective approaches to parent involvement rely upon a strength based approach, emphasizing positive interactions. Though specifics may vary, all parent involvement programs share the goal of increasing parent school collaboration in order to promote healthy child development and safe school communities.

There must be mutual trust and respect between the home, school, and community. Partnership programmes within the school can train volunteers on specific ways and strategies to assist in the classroom or school. With this type of training, all volunteers will know the expectations and have a better understanding of the operations of the school (Elish-Piper, 2008). Schools need to attempt to involve numerous parents and community members in the education of learners through effective partnership programmes in an effort to express the importance of education. Finally, schools may implement involvement activities that concentrate on involving all parents. Administrators and educators must provide a welcoming and inviting atmosphere to make the school less intimidating and more comfortable for those parents who have negative experiences in the school (Epstein, 1995). Interactions between the school and home need to be more positive, requiring teachers to contact families throughout the year and not just when problems arise. It is may be beneficial for administrators and educators to attempt to involve all parents in the education of their children and make the educational experience more positive for everyone involved.

Parent teacher meetings happening once in a year is important for the children. The importance of parent teacher meetings is something we have to keep in mind as educators and parents (Mncube, 2009). We want all learners to thrive, but it takes the active participation of both parties for that to happen. If you're a teacher who has seen declining parent involvement over time or are feeling frustrated with trying to get through on email, pick up the phone. Scheduling an appointment can take just 15 minutes out of your day and could make a huge difference in how successful your learners will be academically down the line. And if you're a parent looking for more information about what's happening at school–ask us (the teachers) We'll answer any questions and help.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to sum up the entire study and make recommendations on the findings, focusing on how school personnel can improve parents' involvement strategies to enhance students' academic performance. The present study answered the following questions from the literature review, site observations and participants during the face to face interviews.

5.1.1 Main research question was:

The role of parents in the education of early grade learners: a case study in Asesewa Township?

The researcher addressed the main question by conducting a thorough literature review of past studies, which are related to the study topic. On the other hand, the relevance of the topic to the Ghanaian Schools was investigated. The school documents were scrutinised to investigate the extent to which the schoolteachers involve parents in their schools. The purpose of listening to parents and making observations was to get fresh information so that the researcher could make informed recommendations. It was expected that the participating schools and other readers would benefit from this study.

5.1.2 Sub-questions

What role can parents of Asesewa play in the education of their children?

This research sub-question was addressed by using information from literature and parents. Furthermore, parent-teacher perceptions on the role of parents in their schools were investigated. The evidence on the areas where parents play their role in these schools was scrutinised with the reading of parent-teacher meeting minutes, and SMC meetings minutes. The researcher attended and visited parent-teacher meetings in order to get a real picture of what was happening in these schools regarding the phenomena of parental involvement.

1. How do the school personnel manage parents in their schools? This question was addressed by reviewing literature on how other researchers recommend ways of managing parents in their schools. The research parents' views were taken into consideration in this regard. The school documents gave the researcher an idea of how the school personnel, in participating schools, manage parents in their school; which is crucial for producing quality education.

2. What are the barriers to parent involvement in the selected schools? The researcher addressed this question by using the face-to-face interview schedule, wherein each parents was asked the same questions. As stated in the above question, parents, teachers and SMC meetings were attended; the researcher was able to observe the same level of unmentioned barriers during the interview sessions.

5.2 Summary of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the role of parent in the education of the early grade learners at Asesewa in the Upper Manya Krobo district in eastern region.

Specifically, the study sought to identify the roles parents of Asesewa play in the education of the early grade learners, perceptions of teachers and parents on the role of parents in the early grade learners' education and how these roles be played effectively by the parents of Asesewa. A qualitative research approach was utilised, employing research methods which included face-to-face interviews, reading school polices and going through parents' meeting minutes. The study focused on two primary schools that were purposively selected to participate in the study.

5.2.1 Key Findings

1. Parents involvement in parent-teacher meetings are significant to encourage parental participation in their children's education and parents or families can assist in student's homework.

2. Teachers perceive that parent have a responsibility to participation in their children's education and parents or families can assist in student's academic work.

3. Parental education, school culture and socio-economic status can enable parents play their roles in the education of their wards

5.3 Study Recommendations on the Findings

5.3.1 Recommendation 1: Designing strategies to attract parents to render voluntary services at school.

The schools should attract parents to render volunteering services at school for the benefit of children and to save school finances. This could be done by:

- The schools should conduct a small investigation on the skills of their parents and ask for volunteering at school; for example on school maintenance.

- Organising workshops to develop skills of parents who are unemployed so that those parents can help the school as and when needed.

- Organising parent clubs to work at school as and when needed.

- Asking interested parents to participate in school trips, visits, fieldwork etc. There should be a system which records the parents' feedback and opinions.

5.3.2 Recommendation 2: Designing strategies to support parents at home

The schools should support parents at home in creating a conducive learning environment. This could be done by:

- Connecting with families during home visits and assigning homework that requires family participation.

- Visiting parents' homes to check the student's home environment and situation.

- Organising parent workshops for parents to learn how to support the students' homework.

- Planning events and workshops that bring families into the school.

- Organising parent workshops on the content of the school syllabus namely; Maths Clubs after school hours to develop parent knowledge on the school content.

- Showcasing what students are learning and accomplishing.

- Having a functional Alumni Association to stay connected with the school.

- Communicating with parents is very important; schools must keep the parents informed of their children's progress.

The need to create a cohesive environment where management and parents can work together for the betterment of the school is important. For this, the role of the school management committees through parents' involvement should strengthen; hence open the doors for parents. Some other initiatives may include:

- Being clear about what's needed and create a structure that supports those needs.

- Establishing a cumulative list of volunteer activities and paying attention to the number of hours and time of day required to complete an activity; this could help the school management.

Lastly, schools should encourage parents to motivate students' performance and give support on students' homework. This could be done by educating parents on the expected practices adopted from a self-determination theoretical perspective:

Developing parents to know and support learners' learning interests;

- Parents should work with children to establish personal learning goals,

- Parents should explain why learning a task can be valuable to the child,

- Parents should give a child a reward either with things they like most for getting good marks (meaning Outstanding Achievement of 80-100%) in the assessment,

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5.3.3 Recommendation 3: Designing strategies to improve home-school communication

The schools should improve home-school communication. The most important strategy schoolteachers can use in general to improve parental involvement in schools involves developing good working relationships with the parents of the relevant children and keeping them informed of all relevant and appropriate issues in a timely fashion. This necessitates excellent communication skills and trust-building processes, such as a genuine and deep understanding of the parent's needs as well as the child's needs. Nevertheless, developing a mind-set favourable to parent and family partnership, as opposed to mere involvement is essential. In other words developing proactive, two-way communication practices helps and developing mutual trust is central to all of this.

The school should issue school programmes in the beginning of the year. For example, dates of the meetings, times and venues.

The school should ask for parents' contact numbers and keep them in each class list. This will help when a teacher wants to inform a parent about parent-teacher meetings. Teachers can phone or use a Short Message System (SMS) to inform a parent about the progress of a child at school since some students do not give parents their school letters.

- The schools should work closely with parents. For example, this is done in School B; teachers identify underperforming students and call their parents to school. This kind of intervention should be done in School A as well.

Communicating often about the need for and importance of parental involvement.

- Schoolteachers should constantly contact parents and keep them informed about the progress of the school and their children in the school.

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The communication with parents should not only be on the negative side but should also stress on the positive things the child is doing in the school.

- Parents could be invited once every month for a chat with their children's teachers and school management team on the progress of the school. Parents should be provided with refreshments during these meetings.

- Also establishing a strong Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) to supplement the school governing body. This parent-teacher association should meet monthly with refreshments served to boost parental involvement in schools.

5.3.4 Recommendation 4: Training of parents serving on the school governing body

The schoolteachers should capacitate parents serving in the school governing bodies to be able to make a contribution to the strategic direction in the school. This could be done by:

- Organizing workshops on the roles and responsibilities of the school governing body.

- The school principal should provide the school governing body members with departmental circulars and minutes on their expected role at school.

5.3.5 Recommendation 5: Development of parent involvement policy

The schools need to adopt their parent involvement policy and communicate it to all stakeholders in the school. The Ghanaian constitution and other legal imperatives on education in Ghana and the school context should be consulted when designing this policy. For instance international literature on parent roles or involvement plan.

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5.3.6 Recommendation 6: Development of homework policy

The schools should develop a homework policy in reference to the format of the Education Homework Policy. After the SMC has adopted it, they should present it to parents and learners. This policy should clearly state the role of parents in learners' homework. The sanctions for non-compliance should also be clearly stated in the policy and make it known to every stakeholder in the school. Furthermore, schoolteachers should develop documents that list activities that parents could do with the children outside of the school; for example visiting places of importance, which could improve student engagement in the school. A side effect of this could be a better parent-child communication compared to the command and control structure that results when students do homework under parental supervision.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

In future, the researcher may investigate a topic to explore and discuss perceptions of learners on their view of expected roles parents should play in their education, using only learners as participants.

5.5 Conclusion

There is substantial evidence to suggest that parents in this study want to play a role in their children's education. However, parents did not know the appropriate ways to use when trying to involve themselves school. Therefore, parent involvement strategies are lacking; although each school has its unique way of doing things. These schools manage parents in various and unique ways. The popular areas where parents are involved in are: participating in school management committee, parent visiting school, playing some of their functions as stipulated in GES. Parents in these schools play the academic and non-academic role on school activities. Some of the roles the parents play which are techniques and utilised by the school are: Inviting parents to school meetings,

inviting parents to portfolio day where they come to school to observe the work done by their children, attending school meetings, contributing to school funding on a volunteer basis, and forming part of the school committees. For example in the school A fundraising committee, the events organising committee is good. Moreover, some parents in school B monitored learners' homework.

The parent-school partnerships awareness in participating schools raised the role of parents in their children's education as emphasised in this study, parental role techniques or management programmes utilised by school personnel when attempting to involve parents, and the community in schooling were acknowledged, including recommendations on the areas for development on school personnel. Likewise, the voices of teachers were heard about their observation and their suggestions on the solution to the existing problem of the lack of parent involvement strategies and effective ways to communicating students' homework policy were acknowledged. This study focused on the parental role perspective in education: legal, management and parent as the educator role perspective in education could add value on the existing knowledge and in how the school environment and home or parents affect the performance of students at school. The researcher noticed that most parental involvement studies focus on the importance and barriers of parent role in education. Therefore, the researcher regards this study as adding value to existing literature on the role of parents in their children's education. In inclusion, the researcher as serving as a teacher post attained vast knowledge by conducting this study. Therefore, conducting this study was also for the researcher's personal information enriching journey on how the school personnel can deal with parents in their schools to improve their education. This study served as a revelation to the researcher on the importance of parents in education, parent-teacher partnership in education and school-community collaboration

in education. The researcher is now able to make and manage change in school management for the purposes of improving the school curriculum outcome.

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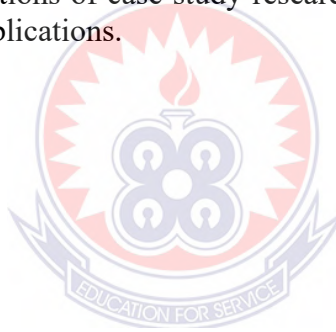
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Interview questions for parents

Parenting

1. What are your expectations with regards to your child's education?

2. Is your child aware of your expectations?

3. Do you have discussions with your child about education, and his/her interests?

4. Do you find education to be important for your child? Do you belief your child is aware of that?

5. What do you belief parents can do in order to prevent their child from dropping out of school before graduating from grade 12?

6. What is your opinion of parental involvement in their child's education?

7. Do you consider yourself to be involved in your child's education?

8. How?

9. Do you monitor your child's school work? If so, how?

10. Do you monitor the way your child spends his/her time outside of school? How do you monitor that?

11. Do you make sure that your child goes to bed at a reasonable hour on school night?

Communication

12. How often each month does the school, on average, contact you?

13. How often each month, on average, do you contact the school?

14. What is the main reason for this communication? (behavior of your child, his/her homework)

15. What do you think of the school communicating you?

16. Do you have a good relationship with your child's teachers?

17. Does the school communicate to you your child's progress adequately?

18. Are you aware of school policies and programs?

19. If your child has a problem at school, do you find the school responds to it effectively?

20. Do you feel like the school is trying to reach out to you as a parent and to develop a partnership with you?

Volunteering

21. Do you volunteer at school? If so, how and doing what?

22. Do you participate in school events? If so, what events?

23. Do you do any fundraising for the school? If so, how?

24. Do you find that you as a parent are welcome at school?

Learning at home

25. Do you find it important that your child does his/her homework?

26. Do you emphasise to your child that he/she does his/her homework?

27. What is your attitude towards your child's homework? Do you find it too much or too little?

28. Do you assist your child with his/her homework?

29. Do you monitor your child's homework? Do you make sure he/she does its homework?

30. Are you aware of all the subjects your child is learning at school?

And what he/she is learning in each subject?

31. Do you have discussions with your child about his/her school, classwork and homework?

32. Are you aware of how your child is as a learner? Does he/she work hard?

33. Is it important to you that your child learn at early grade? If so,

why?

34. Do you and your child discuss together his/her aspirations of going to school? Do you encourage your child to think of going to school?

35. Do you expect your child to go to complete school?

Which level?

36. Do you try to gain information about what is available to your child, education vise? If so, where do you look for that information?

Decision-making

37. Do you participate in any parent association at school?

38. Do you feel that parents' voices are heard at school with regards to school decisions?

39. Have you ever communicated with other parents at school, where you discuss issues or concerns about the school? And where you share your experiences?

Collaborating with the community

40. Through the years, have you taken your child to visit museum? Or

41. do you encourage such visits?

42. Are you a member of any community association? (scouts, any sports teams, neighborhood associations, etc)

Other questions

43. What is your attitude towards the school? between the scale 1 – 5 where 5 is very positive.

44. What is your educational level?

45. What is your current job situation?

APPENDIX B

Interviews questions for school head teachers and teachers.

1. How do you motivate the participation of parents on learner's education in your school?

2. What academic role do parents play to improve learners' education at school?

3. What activities do parents participates in your school?

4. What kind of academic support do you get from the parents of your learners?

5. What means of communication, does your school utilize when communicating with parents of learners?

6. How does your school utilise community resources for the benefit of teaching and learning?

7. How do you attract parents to work as volunteers for the benefits of their school?

8. What are the actual functions of the school activities in which parent participate in your school?

9. How do you support parents on their children's homework?

10. In what way/s do parents are involved in decision making in your school?

11. What are the causes of lack of parental participation on school activities?

12. How do overcome barriers to parental participation on your school activities?