

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF
PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN
IN THE MAKAPANSTAD CIRCUIT
OF THE FORMER BOPHUTHATSWANA**

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Romans 16:27

"To the only God, who alone is all-wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever! Amen."

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation, *Parental Involvement In The Education of Primary School Children in Makapanstad Circuit of the former Bophuthatswana*, is my own work. It is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of Education at the University of Bophuthatswana, Mmabatho. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.

MOLEFE SOLOFELANG KGASOE
March 1995

DEDICATION

To the Almighty, God, my personal saviour.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the reasons why the parents of primary school children in the Makapanstad Circuit of the former Bophuthatswana were not as involved in the formal education of their children as they wished to be.

From a review of literature, it has been shown that parents have long been interested in the education of their children, even though their involvement has not been organised. It also became quite clear that parental involvement in education began to be organised in the 1970's and 1980's. Parents and teachers began to work together for the benefit of the child. Parental involvement was facilitated through the formation of parent education movements, school councils, parent advisory councils, career development programmes and parent-teacher councils. Different studies have shown that there is a need for parental involvement in education since (1) parental involvement raises the academic achievement of children, (2) it improves attitudes and performance of children in the school, (3) it helps parents understand the work of the school and builds healthy and productive school-community relations.

By means of an empirical investigation, carried out in the Makapanstad Circuit among the parents of Std 4 pupils and primary school principals, it could be concluded that both parents and teachers want the best possible education for their children. A lack of principals and teachers trained in involving parents

in education, ignorance and illiteracy amongst parents, the fact that both parents and teachers lack the time and the Department of Education system of school councils, account for the lack of effective parental involvement in the education of these children.

CHAPTER ONE

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Relationship between the home and school

According to Katz (1992:14), "both parents and teachers want the same thing for children, the best possible education". This assertion was supported by Bastiani's (1986:5) research on the relationship between the home and school. According to him, the relationship between the home and the school has been an important concern to politicians, professionals and parents alike. Bastiani stated that politicians may have been interested in reducing expenditure on education, getting value for money and making schools more accountable to the consumer. In addition, he viewed parents as an important lobby and a key sounding board for educational proposals. He further stated that professionals in the education service consider the influence of parents upon their children's educational achievements as crucial. Bastiani further stated that, the 1980's have seen progress in combating the notion that the education of children was not really the business of parents and the subsequent tendency for there to be very limited contact with their children's school. He concluded that by being more organised, parents have been able to exert pressure on schools and the education system to recognise parental rights and expectations and to become more responsive to their needs and interests (Bastiani, 1986:5).

1.2 Different views on parental involvement in children's education

According to Bond (1973:4), parents of different socio-economic classes and groups are genuinely concerned about their children and their future. The perennial cry among them is, "We want our children to have a better deal than we had". As Bond suggested, this was a very positive statement on which teachers could build strong relationships with parents. In supporting the importance of parental involvement in education, Mittler (1982:7) acknowledged that the partnership between parents and the school should involve a full sharing of knowledge, skills and experience in helping children to develop effectively. He further elaborated that a commitment to this partnership should rest on the assumption that children would develop and learn better if parents and teachers worked together on a basis of equality rather than either party working in isolation.

Rotter (1986:5) emphasized that research has established that children enter school with different skills and learning styles. The source of these differences has been traced to environmental, behavioural and genetic factors. Despite differences in the extent to which the environment has played a role, it appears that the most influential

factor in the learning process is the home environment. His research also revealed parental involvement to be an effective means of maximising learning. In short, a positive parent-teacher relationship has the potential to be the single most educationally valuable event for the child during his school years.

In another study, Frederick (1990:7) found that involving parents in education was one of the most productive and effective ways of enhancing children's performance in their school work. He further argued that when parents were provided with opportunities to take a sincere and active role in education, school performance improved and children's attitude towards their studies became more positive. In his survey to determine the benefits of parental involvement in education, Bauch (1990:13), highlighted that parental involvement improved pupils' achievement, changed parents' attitude towards education, reduced school failure and drop-out rates and improved school attendance among children.

According to Colletta (1977:1), three improvements occurred when parents and schools worked together: (1) the self-concept of both children and parents improved, (2) children's motivation accelerated, and, (3) they achieved better. Supporting the idea put forward by Colletta, Katz (1992:15) stated that there was no doubt that for a successful learning process to take place, co-operation

should exist between parents and the school. He concluded that everybody involved in education should realize that the home could be a rich source of support both for teachers and children.

1.3 Research on parental involvement in education

Contemporary research on parental involvement in education has revealed that parental involvement promotes children's education in many ways (Kelly, 1974:15). Parental involvement ranges from the successful participation of parents in discussion groups (Bank and Brooks, 1971) through to the instructing parents on educational issues relevant to their pre-school and school-age children (Coppa and Shubert, 1962), and to their functioning as teacher aides in the classroom (Calvert, 1971). According to Rice (1970), a variety of other types of involvement have convinced many educators that constructive parental involvement is necessary for the effective operation of schools and that only through extensive parental involvement can schools function effectively as educational institutions.

The findings of a study carried out by Lopate (1970:48) indicated that when parents of school children were involved in education, their children tended to achieve better results. He suggested that their enhanced achievement might have been due to less of a distance

between the goals of the school and those of the home and to the positive changes in teachers' attitudes resulting from a greater sense of accountability when the parents are actively involved in their children's education. He further stated that children may also achieve more because they developed an increased sense of control over their own destiny when they saw their parents actively engaged in decision-making in the school.

1.4 Parental involvement in special education

Parental involvement in special education has also been shown to be effective. In speech pathology, parents have been successfully trained to facilitate the therapist's task. In two separate studies by English (1972) and Sommers (1964), mothers trained in basic speech correction methods were able to improve significantly their children's acquisition of articulated sounds. Connor (1970:10) suggested that parents should be responsible for their children's activities and they should hold realistic goals regarding their education. As Hawkins (1966:40) reported, in the area of emotional disturbance, direct parental involvement in behaviour modifications had proven successful in some studies. Woody (1968:48) elaborated that findings in most studies have led educationists to believe that extensive parental involvement should be considered as an essential treatment procedure for emotionally disturbed children. Several other studies

showed that parents could be successfully involved in facilitating the remedial instruction of their learning disabled children (Phillips, 1962). Shatter (1957) and Studholme (1964) also noted that involvement of parents in counselling, especially on practical aspects of child management, significantly improved the reading achievement of disabled readers.

1.5 Importance of parental involvement in children's education

Why should teachers take time to work with parents when they need to focus on children? The answer is that children's performance depends on the parent-teacher relationship. Owing to the considerable amount of research that affirms the impact of parents in the education of the child, and the strong public interest in self-help activities, teachers are realizing that it is vital to work in partnership with parents (Rich 1982:19). The importance of parental involvement in education will be discussed under the following subheadings: (1) classroom benefits of parental involvement, and (2) benefits of parental involvement for teachers.

1.5.1 Classroom benefits of parental involvement

According to Rich (1967:21), for children to achieve in school, they needed family involvement and reinforcement. He further stated that as a result of parental involvement in education, the attitudes of pupils towards

their teachers and education improved, as did their sense of well-being. He also found that parents' understanding of children's school work and various aspects of the functioning of the school resulted in invaluable support in educating children. Moreover, Rich realised that parental involvement in education, created a harmonious working relationship between the school and community and provided a forum for preventing problems. He further stated that beyond the classroom walls the home and family lay the basis for and expand and extend the work of the school.

1.5.2 Benefits of parental involvement for teachers

Parental involvement programmes help teachers receive higher rating from parents. In his study on parental involvement in education, Epstein (1984:53) found that parents who participated in involvement programmes tended to be more positive about teachers' interpersonal skills and rated teachers higher in their overall teaching ability. It was concluded that teachers who worked with parents were considered more efficient than those who remained isolated from parents. Rich (1987:65) suggested that there was an important correlation between student achievement, attitudes and behaviour and teachers who made parental involvement part of their regular teaching practices. Teachers also benefited from parental involvement when parents served as supporters, helpers,

teachers, authors and managers.

1.5.2.1 Parents as supporters

According to Stacey (1991:41-42), parents could act as supporters at school. In most schools, social events were considered as an important part of school activities. Such events could create good opportunities for parents and teachers to come together and to be part of the school community. He suggested that when the school organizes social events such as parties, concerts, festivals, and fund-raising functions, parents should be involved right from the beginning of such social gatherings. To create a conducive situation for effective parental support, he recommended the community-based approach and that parents' involvement should be an extension of their children's experiences.

1.5.2.2 Parents as helpers

Tizard (1981:187) asserted that parents should be enlisted to help the school in many areas. To achieve this objective, he suggested that schools should use a community-based approach which would both involve parents and teachers. To involve parents as helpers effectively, he proposed that teachers, too, must reciprocate. Teachers should also be actively involved in the community by, for example, offering adult education, taking part in community services and

helping in after school services. He further suggested that parents be invited to the classroom to tell children stories especially in their mother tongues, to listen to children read, and to cook or sew with small groups of children. Whenever parents are at school, teachers should also be involved. Another advantage of involving parents is that it also provides them with educational opportunities. He concluded by recommending that parents could also be involved in setting up and running school libraries. Although school libraries are meant for pupils and teachers, the lending of books could be extended to parents, thereby raising their interest in children's books and even teaching them something themselves.

1.5.2.3 Parents as teachers

An investigation carried out by Stacey (1991), demonstrated that the relationship between parents and child and parents' ongoing role in the child's development qualifies them as teachers at home. Stacey further suggested that parents could become teachers at home by becoming involved in reading schemes, by sometimes marking school work and by helping the child, where necessary, with homework. His study also recommended that teachers should work with parents, so that the learning experience of the child could be continued at home. Parents should be given the opportunity to extend their knowledge

through meetings and discussions of how children learn. They should be made to feel that they are party to the education of the child (Stacey 1991:46-47).

1.5.2.4 Parents as authors

According to Tizard (1988:199), parents' varied cultural and educational backgrounds could be used to enrich the curriculum of the school. The school could request parents to write books for children in their mother tongues. However, teachers could help parents by suggesting possible themes for their writings. Apart from enriching the curriculum, children would find such materials interesting. Materials written by parents could be read to children by teachers or parents themselves. According to Tizard, these writing activities would create a positive point of contact between parents and teachers and demonstrate to parents that the school recognizes and values the family experiences of its pupils.

1.5.2.5 Parents' contribution to the management of the child's behaviour

Wolfendale (1992:15) found that the successful management of the child's behaviour depended on parent-teacher partnerships. According to him, the parents' commitment and insight combined with the teachers' training and cumulative school experience

could contribute effectively to the management of the child's behaviour. Wolfendale realized that parental involvement in managing children's behaviour was beneficial both at school and at home, because parental presence at discussions regarding the planning of school policy on discipline and behaviour management constituted preventive measures of a positive nature and parents had complementary skills and experience that could contribute to school discipline.

1.6 Parental involvement in the former Bophuthatswana's education system

A survey, carried out under the auspices of the former Bophuthatswana government (Popagano 1986:92), revealed that parental involvement in the education of the child played a vital role in the indigenous system of education. The young child received his or her introduction to language as an instrument of communication at the mother's knee. The child also learnt the names of foods, utensils and objects in the immediate home environment. As the child grew, the parents introduced him or her to the world beyond the homestead. This informal type of education continued until adulthood. It was further revealed that in rural areas, parents were responsible for raising money to build schools. In some instances, the government provided the school with buildings and facilities and parents were

responsible for the maintenance of school buildings. Parents were also responsible for the payment of school fees and the buying of books. In some schools, parents, on voluntary basis, helped to arrange educational excursions and extra-curricular activities.

In response to the recommendations made by the National Education Commission, commonly known as the Popagano Report, the Department of Education provided for parental involvement in education by means of the school council system. The report suggested that every school in the country should have a school council. Such school councils comprise eight members elected from the community, and work together with the school principal on school matters. The Department of Education is responsible for setting out the functions, duties and responsibilities of the school council. Some of the main functions of the school council are: (1) the erection and maintenance of school buildings, (2) the appointment of teachers, and (3) the maintenance of school discipline.

Although parents in the former Bophuthatswana have involved themselves in their children's education, one could ask whether their involvement in their children's formal education has been enough to make an effective contribution towards their formal education. Over time, this researcher observed that in his community parents tended not to be satisfied with the extent of the opportunities afforded to

them by school authorities to participate in their children's formal education. Hence, it was felt that there was a need to explore to what extent the claim of some parents was valid.

1.7 Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to determine the reasons why parents of primary school children in the Makapanstad Circuit of the former Bophuthatswana are not as involved in the formal education of their children as they wish to be.

1.7.1 Questions to be answered by the study

To achieve the aim of this study as set in paragraph 1.7, the following questions were asked:

Are parents not involved in the formal education of their children because:

- (1) of their attitude towards education?
- (2) of a lack of knowledge of the importance of their participation?
- (3) they consider their participation as an interference in school affairs?
- (4) they consider their participation as a waste of time?
- (5) they lack the techniques, skills and know-how to

contribute to their children's education?

- (6) of the principals' attitude towards parental involvement in education?
- (7) of a lack of support and encouragement from teachers?
- (8) of limited interaction between the schools and parents?
- (9) school authorities believe parental involvement interferes with the running of the school?
- (10) of the present system of school committees in schools?
- (11) of some other reasons?

CHAPTER TWO

2 REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

Literature relevant to the objectives of this study is covered under the following subheadings: (1) brief history of parental involvement in education, (2) need for parental involvement, and (3) effects of parental involvement on education.

2.2 Brief history of parental involvement in education

2.2.1 *Introduction*

Interest in parental involvement has grown rapidly in the past decade and will continue to receive support in the future (Jones 1983:19). Various opinion polls also suggest that parents are willing and desirous of becoming involved in education (Elam, 1978:19). Research which links parental involvement in education to student academic achievement continues to proliferate (Henderson, 1981:30).

2.2.2 Pre historic parental involvement

Berger (1983:12) has written that since the first

semblance of civilization, family groups and parents have been involved in the rearing of children. For the first primitive cultures to survive, human beings had to develop the means to obtain food and water and to provide for protection from harsh weather and predators. According to Berger, children accompanied their parents on food forays and in this way they learnt to hunt, fish, produce crops, and gather wild foods. In addition, parents taught their children how to operate both as members of the family group and the society at large. Children were also valued as they were the future that would carry on the traditions of the culture, as well as provide for the basic needs of the group in their turn. Berger has further emphasized that society's important customs, rules, values and laws were learnt and internalised by children so that they could function within their cultural groups. In short, this process of socialization took place in all groups, primitive or developed, and informal teaching and socialization were necessary ingredients for human development.

According to Frost (1966:8-12), primitive education aimed at transmitting from the adults to the young, unchanged beliefs, practices and attitudes that had stood the test of time and that had proved successful in the environment in which the group's ancestors had lived. He asserted that the pressures of the group as well as the need to survive and to be accepted were powerful incentives to

learning. The most important educational agency in any culture was the family which provided both formal and informal education. Frost added that parents generally taught their children by acting as role models which the children followed instinctively. They also taught children directly by telling stories, showing things and praising them when they conformed. He emphasized that the family was the most important teaching agency in any society and that during prehistoric times, just as today, the first teachers were parents.

2.2.3 Parental involvement in education in recent years (1960's - 1980's)

In his research, Berger (1983:30) discovered that the parent education movements of the 1970's and 1980's gave rise to today's programmes of parent education, participation and involvement. He also found that these developments occurred both in the private and public sectors with churches, schools, clubs as well as state and private agencies rallying for parental involvement in the education of their children. According to him, during the 1960's parents began to question school programmes and their own involvement with schools and teachers. He observed that forced integration and mandatory parental involvement became issues confronting schools and parents. He found that without parental cooperation, schools were powerless to find appropriate

solutions to problems they encountered with children. It became imperative for parents and schools to work together in a partnership to make the educational system work, and parents began to show an interest in participating in the education of their children. Consequently, during the early 1970's, parents were included in school councils, advisory councils, career development programmes, and the education of children. Berger's study showed that in 1972, programmes for involving parents in education of the child were launched. These programmes that emphasized the concept of a partnership between parents and the school were developed and funded by the state. Such undertakings reflected Berger's belief that it was only through the joint efforts of parents, school and state that a lasting change in education could be affected. He concluded that in order to achieve, children needed love, consistent guidance and an enriched and responsive environment made possible by the involvement of parents in education. Berger further reported that much of the research done in the 1970's reflected the importance of bonding and early-child parent interaction. He pointed out that many publications covering subjects ranging from child-rearing practices to education for parenthood, dominated the era. According to him, the result was that by the end of the decade, schools, the government, social agencies, and families had developed a great interest in educational programmes and support systems for children and parents.

He stated that one of the most important and positive insights gained was the fact that parents were concerned about the future of their own children. Berger concluded that parental involvement was not new to society and that its importance was increasing. According to him, parental involvement in education is not a panacea for all the ills of society, but it is one component that can ameliorate some of these problems and is crucial to the education of the child.

2.3 The need for parental involvement

The process of parental involvement in education is not a new one. It has been practised in one form or another since the dawn of time. Specifically, in educational circles parental involvement gained widespread acknowledgement following the publication of the Plowden Report in 1967 (Torkington, 1986). Torkington's analysis of this report revealed that in the 1980's parental involvement received a great deal of attention from all sectors of the community for the following reasons: Firstly, debates and disputes in the field of education had drawn parents' attention to what was going on in schools. Secondly, in many cases governmental authorities required schools to include parent representatives in their administration. Thirdly, Torkington (1986) reported that in most countries legislation on the education of children with special needs required parental involvement in the

assessment of such children and in the planning of educational programmes for them. Lastly, research was indicating the advantages of involving parents in managing children's behaviour and in facilitating their development (Topping, 1986; Widlake and Macleod, 1984).

According to Bastiani (1986:7), the case for improving home-school relationships began with the view that effective education of the next generation requires us to recognise the needs, wishes and experiences of children in relation to their families. Bastiani emphasized that it was detrimental to schools to operate in isolation from the communities they served and the neighbourhoods in which they were located. Atkin et al (1984:8) reported that when parents understood what the school was trying to do, took an active interest in, and semifaced their children's efforts at school, the positive effect on their school work was both dramatic and longlasting.

According to Bastiani (1986:8), the prevailing opinion recognized that parents had rights and obligations with regard to their children's schooling. They were entitled to being consulted about, and to participate in, the education and development of their children. He further explained that there was a great deal that parents knew and could do to help their own children. This made parents a vitally important and potentially valuable resource to the school As Rotter (1986:5) puts it, "the most influential

factor in the learning process is the home environment".

Miller (1982:9) provided the following insights regarding parental involvement in education:

- (1) Growth and learning in children can be understood only in relation to the various environments in which they live which include their immediate family, peers, school, local community and society as a whole. Children can neither learn nor be taught in isolation.
- (2) Teachers and parents have similar goals for the child. The main concern both of teachers and parents is the child's learning.
- (3) Studies investigating the relative importance of the home and school on children's intellectual and educational achievements, tend to suggest that the influence of the home is comparatively greater in the early years and that children who come from homes where parents take an active interest in their child's education are likely to demonstrate higher scholastic achievements. Stacey (1991:38) listed five roles that parents could play at school: (1) that of supporters at social events, (2) that of learners of what their children were learning and doing at school, (3) that of helpers in classrooms, (4) that of teachers at home and, (5) that of policy-makers on the education of

their children. Rich (1987:12) suggested that parental involvement:

- (1) raised the academic achievement of children,
- (2) improved their attitude toward school, and
- (3) created a school - community relationship based on ongoing problem-prevention.

According to Kelly (1974:3), education is primarily a parental responsibility. McCandles (1967) claimed that,

"the right of parents to be involved in their child's education is a responsibility which often was sadly neglected. When parents shirked this responsibility they jeopardized the educational future of their child. They did not realize that their demonstrations of interest or disinterest in their child's learning of values about education and its relative worth, profoundly affected their child's attitudes toward the educational process" (In Kelly, 1974:13).

According to Lynch (1976:6), the influence of background factors such as living conditions and parental attitudes are crucial to the development of children and their ability to profit from learning situations in the school. Lynch (1976:6) noted that recent research into the performance of children in selective and comprehensive schools, strongly indicated that educational success depended on the support the child received from home. He

also found that in the process of the intellectual development of the child, the social development of the home took on a central role. According to him, parental involvement at school is a crucial step in the education of the child, and from a social control point of view, improved parent-teacher relations and dialogue between parents and teachers contribute towards the discipline of the child.

2.4 Methods of parental involvement in education

According to Welch (1986:3), the primary elements for an effective working relationship between the school and parents are communication and cooperation. He further suggested that open and honest cooperation and communication between the school and parents about the education of their children, result in better programmes. Welch cited the following methods of encouraging communication and cooperation: (1) establishing open-lines of communication, (2) promoting teacher-parent co-operation, (3) organising parent-teacher conferences and (4) promoting home-based parental involvement.

2.4.1 Open lines of communication

According to Bailard (1970:4), "good communication is clear communication. The more we listen to what the other person wants to tell us, the more likely we are to

understand him. If we give him a chance to present himself and his problem in his own way, we will gain enough understanding to communicate with him."

According to him, lines of communication between the teacher and parent should be established as soon after the school year commences. He further stated that by establishing these lines of communication, both the parents and teachers become aware of each others' feelings, thoughts and expectations (Welch, 1986:5). According to Stacey (1991:83), the manner in which the teacher gives messages and convey ideas, and the way the parent receives them, has a tremendous effect on what happens to the child. She discovered that communication not only consisted of words, but was influenced by where it took place, non-verbal cues and the way certain words were used. She also recommended that parents and teachers should develop the following skills to communicate effectively between each other:

- (1) Paying attention to, showing an interest in, and understanding and reflecting on what was being discussed. (She also noted that the act of paying attention has a physical and mental dimension.)
- (2) Showing an interest in everything they discussed.
- (3) Making sure that both parties have understood whatever has been discussed in order to centre their concentration.
- (4) Reflecting on what has been discussed to show that

both parties have heard.

- (5) Having the leader of the discussion give a summary of his or her main points.

2.4.2 Promoting teacher-parent cooperation

As Welch (1986:11) suggested, teachers should establish good relationships with parents if they wish to make significant educational progress with their children. Similarly, parents should establish good relationships with teachers if they wish their children to obtain maximum benefit from the educational process. He provided the following guidelines for teachers and parents to follow in promoting a cooperative working relationship:

- (1) make every child a winner,
- (2) work to build up the child's positive self-concept,
- (3) set aside time for the child,
- (4) always remember that a teacher is a professional,
- (5) avoid making excuses for a child's inappropriate behaviour or problems,
- (6) remain calm, patient and objective during meetings,
- (7) support each other.

2.4.3 Organising parent - teacher conferences

According to Welch (1986:12), parent-teacher conferences are short-term purposeful exchanges between a child's

teacher and his or her parents. Rotter (1986:20) stated that conferences are usually parent or teacher initiated, although there may be times when the student or another adult initiates the meeting. Welch also provided the following reasons for calling the conference: (1) to obtain and/or convey information, or (2) to solve a problem experienced by the child, teacher or parent.

2.4.4 Home-based parent involvement

According to Rich (1987:73), research has consistently shown family background to be among the most important influences predicting a child's performance in school. He also found that parents could help their children's academic success through exercising control over the children's leisure time by curbing television viewing and encouraging children to do their homework, read and converse.

2.4.4.1 *Television*

According to Rich, television viewing is not necessarily detrimental to learning. Children can learn vocabulary and, depending on the programmes watched, can also learn about their surroundings. However, Rich warns that problems occur when television viewing becomes excessive to the extent that it becomes the primary source of out-of-school

knowledge and interferes with more productive ways of spending time. Rich's findings are also supported by Elkin (1986) who discovered that television fostered a learning process built around rapid but brief presentations of information rather than sustained concentration on material required for an in-depth understanding of topics. Elkin claims that the rapid presentation of material on television is much too fast for the information processing abilities of young children, thus it amplifies their attention limitations and has a negative impact on their reading ability in later life. This argument is further supported by Postman (1986:64), who argues that television with its emphasis on visual scenes to provide information and its frequent commercial breaks discourages the development of sustained and critical thinking skills.

2.4.4.2 *Reading*

According to Rich (1987:74), reading is basic to all learning. Using working-class parents and their children, Hewison (1980:29) found that children whose parents listened to their reading at home, demonstrated significantly higher reading performances than children whose parents did not listen to their reading. In his studies, Tizard (1982:89) found significantly greater gains in reading performance in

those children whose parents listened to their reading at home daily compared with a group who received extra tutoring in school and with a non-interventional control group.

In his research on children's reading habits, Rich (1987:75) suggested that:

- (1) Children should spend more time in independent reading. According to him, independent reading is associated with gains in reading achievement. He recommended that parents should encourage children to read independently for a minimum of two hours per week.
- (2) Parents should support school-aged children's continued growth as readers. Rich discovered that parents of children who became successful readers, monitored their children's progress at school. They bought their children books, took them to libraries, encouraged reading as a free time activity, and placed reasonable limits on such activities as television viewing.

2.4.4.3 Homework

Homework has been found to provide children with additional study opportunities (Rich, 1987:75). Walberg (1984) estimated that homework could have three times the effect that socioeconomic status has

on learning. Rich (1987) reported that when low ability children did one to three hours of homework a week, their marks usually became as good as those of average-ability children who did not do homework. Similarly, when average-ability children did three to five hours of homework, their marks usually equalled those of high-ability children who did no homework. He suggested that parents should actively encourage their children to do their homework.

2.4.4.4 *Conversation*

According to Rich (1987:76), where parents take an interest in their children's school activities and talk about them, this seems to enhance their children's achievement at school. Rich observed that reading instruction based on conversational skills improved children's performance at school. According to him, to succeed in reading, children need a basic vocabulary, some knowledge of the world around them, and the ability to talk about what they know. He stated that conversing with children about the world around them, helped them to reflect on past experiences and on what they saw, did and read about. He also suggested that family routines such as regularly scheduled meals, provide opportunities for family interaction and discussions that promote learning. In other research, Benson (1980) noted that

in the case of families of a low socioeconomic status, the children of those families who ate meals together seemed to demonstrate improved school achievement.

2.5 Effects of parental involvement on education

2.5.1 Early intervention of parents in education

According to Morris (1978), parents are the child's first teachers and the home is his first classroom. To him, the relationship between the parent and child, especially during the child's early years provides an invaluable educational basis. Morris (1978) discovered that the involvement of parents in the education of their children was based on the belief that if parents were supported in developing knowledge, skills and abilities related to parenting and that if families were involved in meaningful interaction with their children, then the long-term effects of education would be the increased performance of children in the school setting, the enrichment of their daily lives and ultimately more involved and self-fulfilled parents. Morris also assumed that, as a result of the enrichment of the lives of children and families, society as a whole would benefit as a generation of children reared by knowledgeable and interactive parents themselves in turn became good parents.

According to Herman (1990), most of the educational research that was done during the 1960's dealt with how children learnt and the conditions under which they learnt best. He further stated that some of the research focused on the importance of the early years prior to entry into school, on the development of intelligence and on future achievement. In one of the researches carried out in this area, Bloom (1964:88) concluded that when a number of longitudinal studies were compared with one another and allowances were made for the reliability of the instruments and the variability of the samples, a single pattern clearly emerged. Both the correlation data and the absolute scale of intelligence development made it clear that stability of measured intelligence increased with age. According to him, both types of data suggested that in terms of intelligence measured at age seventeen, about 50% of its development took place between conception and age four, about 30% between age four and eight, and about 20% between eight and seventeen.

According to Hunt's (1964:362-63) view of the conceptual development and the evidence derived from (1) animals learning to learn, (2) neuro-psychology, (3) the programming of electronic computers to solve problems and (4) from research into the development of intelligence in children, it would appear that intelligence should be conceived as intellectual capacity based on central

processes hierarchically arranged within the intrinsic portions of the cerebrum. These central processes are approximately analogous to the strategies for information processing and action with which electronic computers are programmed. With such a conception of intelligence, the assumptions that intelligence is fixed and that its development is predetermined by the genes are no longer tenable. In the light of these considerations, it appears that the counsel from experts on child-rearing practices of long ago, to keep children dormant while they grow and to avoid excessive stimulation, was highly unfortunate. Further, in the light of these theoretical considerations and the evidence on the effects of early experience on adult problem-solving animals, it is no longer unreasonable to consider it feasible to investigate ways in which to govern the encounters that children make with their environments, especially during the early years of their development, to achieve a substantially higher adult level of intellectual capacity.

Finally, Hunt drew the following conclusions from his observations. Firstly, the period of most rapid intellectual growth occurs from birth to the age of eight or during the period the child spends in the home environment. In other words, according to him what children are to become intellectually is determined long before they enter school. He suggested that this

conclusion leaves us with no alternative but for the school to work hand-in-glove with parents to provide an enriched home environment and stimulating experiences for the child. His second conclusion was that teachers and parents should look at the intelligence of the child in terms of developmental stages. According to him, this means that at birth the child possesses a broad ranging capacity for intellectual development and that while heredity fixes the range of intelligence, it is the environment which determines the extent to which the intellectual potential of the child is or is not developed. Hunt suggested that as this interrelationship between heredity and environment is crucial, then a concerted effort is needed to provide all children with the best environment possible. To make this a reality, he suggested that programmes should be designed to help parents to become aware of and provide for an optimal environmental setting for supporting the child. Hunt's third conclusion was that what happens to the child early in his life will have a life-long impact and effect upon his behaviour and achievement at school. His research revealed that early learning and the effects of early experiences are difficult to change or replace. According to him, what happens to the child early in life will determine how the child will view the world and how he will behave intellectually, emotionally and psychometrically. This means that the time for an optimal learning environment is early in life. Hunt

suggested that since most children are reared at home environment and that since children spend most of their time with their parents, parents should be involved in one way or the other in their children's education and every home should offer as good and as appropriate an environment as possible. In conclusion, Hunt's observations and conclusions showed the importance of parents and the home environment in the education of the child. Support, information, expertise and relevant programmes should be provided for parents to become effective partners in the education of the child.

2.5.2 Family background and education of the child

In examining factors related to inequality in education, Jencks (1972:254) arrived at the following conclusion:

"We found that family background had much more influence than IQ genotype on an individual's educational attainment. The family's influence depended partly on its socio-economic status, and partly on cultural and psychological characteristics that were independent of socio-economic level. The effect of cognitive skill on educational attainment proved difficult to estimate but it was clearly significant. We found no evidence that the role of cognitive skill was increasing. Qualitative differences between schools played a very minor role in determining how

much schooling people eventually got."

Commenting about the inability of schools to eliminate inequality in society, Jencks gave three reasons: (1) Children seemed to have been far more influenced by what happened at home than by what happened at school, (2) school reforms had little effect on those variables which affected a child's life, and (3) the influence of the school did not persist into adult life. Mayeske (1973:131), in his study of the role of the family in the educative process, concluded that the family background played a profound role in the development of achievement, not only by virtue of the social and economic well-being of the family, but also by virtue of the values its members held with regard to education, and the activities that parents and parental surrogates engaged in with their children to make these values operational.

In his investigation of the specific influence of the family environment on the psychological development of the pre-school child, White (1973:241-42) came up with three areas in which the family environment plays a role: (1) The capacity for receptive language, (2) the emergence of locomotor ability and (3) the social development of the child with an individual ability. As he puts it

"at this time of life, for most children, several important developments seem to coalesce and force a test of each family's capacity to rear children.

The primary burden in most cases falls upon the parent. In our studies we were not only impressed by what some children could achieve during the first years, but also by the fact that the child's own family seemed so obviously central to the outcomes. Indeed we came to believe that the informal education that families provide for their children makes more of an impact on a child's total educational development than the formal education system. If a family does its job well, the teacher can then provide effective teaching. If not there may be little, the teacher can do to save the child from mediocrity."

2.6 Summary

This chapter focused on a review of relevant literature. A brief history of parental involvement, the need for parental involvement, different methods of parental involvement, and the effects of parental involvement in education were discussed.

A brief history of parental involvement in the education of the child was traced from pre-historic times up until the 1980's. As Berger (1983:2) puts it, "during the pre-historic times, just as today, the first teachers of the child were parents". Since the parent is the child's first teacher, he should be involved in the child's entire

educational life. An overview of the history of education has shown that parents are an integral part of the life of the child. The success of the education of the child is dependant upon the successful involvement of his parents in his education.

The awareness of a need for parental involvement in education has been in existence for a very long time. Gordon (1968) uncovered a 1891 quotation that confirmed the long-standing need for parental involvement in education, "we labour as earnestly in the homes as in the kindergarten. The former is the starting point of all civilization, and, in the effort to elevate humanity, we should endeavour to strengthen and purify, as far as possible, the home." Studies by Topping (1986), Wildlake and Macleod (1984) and Torkington (1986) have shown the need for parental involvement in education. They recommended that regular and systematic home visiting be done by persons who are especially trained to teach the child. They also suggested that to connect the kindergarten and the home more closely, mothers' meetings should be instituted. The objects of these gatherings should be to give talks on the care of children, household duties and the responsibilities of motherhood.

The methods of parental involvement are varied, and those discussed are crucial to the success of parental involvement. Welch (1986:3) provided the following

methods, (1) open lines of communication, (2) promoting teacher-parent cooperation, (3) organising parent-teacher conferences and (4) homebased parent involvement. The effects of parental involvement in education as indicated by the literature reviewed, concerned early intervention of parents in education and the influence of family background on the education of the child. As already discussed, the child's early years are crucial in his educational life. The family background of the child is also important as revealed in studies by Jencks (1972), Mayeske (1973) and White (1973).

White (1973:241) concludes his argument on parental involvement in education by stating that "the primary burden in most cases fell upon the parent". It is therefore imperative that the school should work hand in hand with the parents to educate the child successfully.

CHAPTER THREE

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

An empirical investigation into the parental involvement in the education of their children is outlined in this chapter. The aim of the study is outlined in paragraph 3.2, while the population and sample are described in paragraph 3.3, followed in paragraph 3.4 by a discussion of the questionnaire used and interviews conducted. The research design is described in paragraph 3.5.

3.2 The aim of the research

The main aim of this research (see paragraph 1.2) was to determine the reasons why parents of primary school children in the Makapanstad Circuit of the former Bophuthatswana were not as involved in the formal education of their children as they wished to be.

3.3 Population and sample

3.3.1 Parents

Parents of all the standard 4 pupils ($N = 521$, see table 3.1) in the primary schools in the Makapanstad village

which fall under the Makapanstad Circuit of the former Bophuthatswana Department of Education constituted the population for this study. Out of a total of 521, 246 parents were randomly selected (see tables 3.1 and 3.2).

TABLE 3.1: Number of schools and total number of pupils constituting the population

SCHOOL CODE	NUMBER OF PUPILS
01*	70
02	112
03*	111
04	94
05*	75
06	59

TOTAL 521

- * Schools from which the sample for this study (see table 3.2) was drawn.

There were six primary schools in the Makapanstad village, with a population of 521 standard 4 pupils. Three primary schools with a population of 256 standard 4 pupils were randomly selected (see table 3.2).

TABLE 3.2: Schools and number of pupils drawn by random cluster sampling

SCHOOL CODE	NUMBER OF PUPILS
01	70
02	111
03	75

TOTAL 256

3.3.2 The primary school principals

All 50 principals of the primary schools which fall under the Makapanstad Circuit of the former Bophuthatswana Department of Education constituted the population for this study. Only 15 principals were randomly selected from the primary school principal register at the Makapanstad Circuit office.

3.4 Instruments

The following instruments were used:

3.4.1 The parents' questionnaire

The parents' questionnaire (see appendix A) consisted of 19 items designed to seek information relating to:

- (1) children's education

(2) parental involvement in education

(3) the extent to which parents should be involved in education

Examples of some items in the questionnaire are cited below:

(1) Do you think it is important for parents to be involved in the education of their children?

Yes/No

(2) How do you feel about any of the following statements? (Put a ✓ mark in the correct column)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Dis-agree	Strongly Disagree
Only teachers should be responsible for my child's education.					
My responsibility in my child's education is only to pay school fees.					
I should be involved in all aspects of my child's education.					
I am prepared to contribute in any way in the education of my child.					

(3) As a parent, are you prepared to use your free time to help and take part in any of the school activities?

Yes/No

- (4) Would you feel comfortable to leave all your child's school-work in the hands of teachers only? Yes/No

3.4.2 Interviews with Principals

Interviews with principals were conducted by the researcher to elicit information as to the following:

- (1) training of principals on parent involvement in education
- (2) the way schools involve parents in education
- (3) the principals' opinions about involving parents in education
- (4) school's initiatives in involving parents in education
- (5) principals' opinion about the former Bophuthatswana's system of education
- (6) teachers' opinions about working with parents
- (7) principals' suggestions on how to improve parental involvement in education

Some examples of interview questions and the principals' responses are cited below:

The researcher put the following question:

Did your professional training provide you with the skills of involving parents in education?

Majority of principals were not trained in the skills of involving parents in education.

The researcher put the following question:

How are parents involved in the education of their children?

Majority of principals mentioned parents' meetings only. However, some principals mentioned signing of homework books and helping during social events at school.

The researcher put the following question:

Do you think it is necessary to involve parents in the education of their children?

All principals responded positively to the question.

The researcher put the following question:

Which initiatives are taken by the school to involve the parents?

Majority of principals mentioned organisation of parents' meetings. Some principals mentioned signing of homework books, encouraging parents to visit the school and involving them in social events at school.

The researcher put the following question:

Do you think parental involvement can improve performance of pupils at school?

All principals agreed that parental involvement would improve performance of pupils at school.

3.5 Procedure

3.5.1 Questionnaires

The researcher visited the Makapanstad Circuit office to obtain permission to collect information from the Circuit's primary schools. Copies of the questionnaires to be completed by parents were given to std 4 pupils with the request that they should be taken home to their parents who should complete them and return them to the school. Two hundred and fifty-six copies of the questionnaire were returned whilst fifty-six were not returned. Seventy-one copies of the questionnaire were filled in incompletely whilst one hundred and twenty-nine were filled in completely (see table 3.3).

TABLE 3.3: Questionnaires issued, returned, not returned, filled in correctly and filled in inadequately

QUESTIONNAIRES	NUMBER	%
Issued	256	100
Not returned	56	21.8
Returned	200	78.1
Filled in correctly	129	50.3
Filled in inadequately	71	27.7

3.5.2 Principals' interview

Out of 50, 15 primary school principals were randomly selected for the interviews. The interviews with each principal lasted about 45 minutes and were conducted by the researcher. The actual collection of data took place between 17-21 May, 1993. The researcher asked the questions, and the principals were provided with the answer sheets on which to record their responses.

CHAPTER FOUR

4 DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

As mentioned in paragraph 1.7, the aim of this study was to determine the reasons why parents in the Makapanstad Circuit were not as involved in primary school education of their children as they wished.

To achieve this aim, the study attempted to find answers to the following key question:

Are parents not involved in the education of their children because:

- (1) of their opinions about education
- (2) of their lack of knowledge of the importance of their participation
- (3) they consider their participation as an interference in the school affairs
- (4) they consider their participation as a waste of time
- (5) they lack the techniques, skills and know-how to contribute to their children's education
- (6) of the principals' opinions about parental involvement in education
- (7) of lack of support and encouragement from teachers
- (8) of limited interaction between the school and parents

- (9) school authorities consider parental involvement as an interference in school business
- (10) of the Department of Education's system of school committees in schools
- (11) of any other reasons

4.2 Analysis of responses to items of the questionnaire

The data ~~were~~ derived from a combination of open-ended and closed questions. Frequencies and percentages of responses were calculated.

4.2.1 Distribution of parents in terms of their sex

Table 4.1 gives the distribution of 129 parents who completed the questionnaire.

TABLE 4.1: Distribution of parents in terms of their sex

	f	%
Males	55	42
Females	74	58
TOTAL	129	100

4.2.2 Education of parents who participated in the study

Table 4.2 indicates the frequencies and percentages of parents in terms of their level of formal education.

TABLE 4.2: Level of education of parents

	MALES		FEMALES		MALES & FEMALES	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Primary education only	16	29	37	50	53	41.0
Junior certificate	25	46	22	30	47	36.4
Junior certificate Primary	3	5	1	1	4	3.1
Matric	11	20	14	19	25	19.5
Total	55	100	74	100	129	100

The details in table 4.2 indicate that the majority of parents (males = 80%; females = 81%) did not reach matric level; only one fifth of them held a matric certificate.

4.2.3 Employment of parents who participated in the study

Table 4.3 provides the frequencies and percentages of parents in terms of three categories of employment.

TABLE 4.3: Distribution of parents by employment

	MALES		FEMALES	
	f	%	f	%
Employed	49	89	46	62
Self-employed	0	0	0	0
Unemployed	6	11	28	38
TOTAL	55	100	74	100

The information in table 4.3 demonstrated that the majority of parents (males = 89%; females = 62%) were employed; only 26.4% (males = 11%; females = 38%) were unemployed.

4.2.4 Opinions of parents on their involvement in children's education

Table 4.4.(a) provides the frequencies of responses in respect of the statement provided.

TABLE 4.4(a): Only teachers should be responsible for my child's education

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Males	5	10	0	18	22
Females	2	1	2	30	39

The frequencies of 129 responses of the above question are given in table 4.4.(a). From the above responses, it is clear that 72.7% of the males did not agree with the statement, while 93.2% of females did not support the statement. There were significant gender differences in respect of the responses to the above question. ($X^2 = 15.93$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 4.4(b) provides the frequencies of responses in respect of the statement "I should be involved in all aspects of my child's education".

TABLE 4.4(b): I should be involved in all aspects of my child's education

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Males	27	21	1	5	1
Females	50	24	0	0	0

The frequencies of 129 responses to the above statement are given in table 4.4(b). From the above responses, it appeared that 85.4% of the males agreed with the question, while all females, (100%) supported the question. There ^xwere significant gender differences in ^xrespect of the responses to above statement ($X^2 = 11.53$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 4.4(c) provides the frequencies of responses in respect of the statement "my responsibility in respect of my child's education is only to pay school-fees".

TABLE 4.4(c): My responsibility in respect of my child's education is only to pay school-fees

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Males	7	5	1	19	23
Females	3	1	1	35	34

The frequencies of 129 responses to the above question are given in table 4.4(c). From the above responses, it

is clear that 76.4% of males did not agree with the statement, while 93.2% of females did not support it. There was a significant gender-based difference in respect of the responses to the above statement ($X^2 = 8.52$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 4.4(d) provides the frequencies of responses in respect of the statement "Contributing in any way in the education of my child".

TABLE 4.4(d): Contributing in any way in the education of my child

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Males	23	26	0	1	5
Females	47	26	0	0	1

The frequencies of 129 responses to the above question are given in table 4.4(d). It was seen that 89% of the males agreed with the statement, while 98.6% of females supported it. There was a significant gender-based difference in the responses to the above statement ($X^2 = 9.30$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.05$).

4.2.5 Importance of parental involvement in education

Table 4.5 gives the responses of 55 male and 74 female parents to the statement "Parental involvement is important in the education of my child."

TABLE 4.5: Frequencies of responses in respect of the importance of parental involvement in education

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Males	32	20	1	1	1
Females	45	26	1	1	1

The frequencies of 129 responses to the above question are given in table 4.5. The majority of parents (males = 94.5%; females = 96%) agreed that their involvement in their children's education was important. There were no significant gender-based differences in respect of the responses to the above statement ($X^2 = 0.18$, $df = 4$).

4.2.6 Necessity of parental involvement in education

Table 4.6 gives frequencies of the responses of 55 males and 74 females to the question "Do you think it is necessary for parents to be involved in the education of their children?"

TABLE 4.6: Frequencies of responses in relation to the question: "do you think it is necessary for parents to be involved in the education of their children?"

	Yes	No
Males	52	3
Females	70	4

The frequencies of 129 responses to the above question are given in table 4.6. The above responses indicated

that a majority of parents (males = 94.5%; females = 94.5%) agreed that it was necessary for parents to be involved in the education of their children. Few parents (Males = 5.5%; females = 5.5%) disagreed with the question. There was no significant gender-based difference in the responses to the above statement ($X^2 = 0.0$, $df = 4$).

4.2.7 Reasons for parents who responded positively to item 4.2.6

Table 4.7 gives frequencies and percentages in respect of the reasons given for item 4.2.6

TABLE 4.7: Frequencies and percentages in respect of reasons given for item 4.2.6

Responses		f	%
i)	Parents understand their children better than teachers.	50	40.9
ii)	Children confide their problems in their parents rather than in teachers.	24	19.7
iii)	Parents are also teachers at home.	11	9.0
iv)	The discipline of the child is the responsibility both of the parent and the teacher.	17	13.9
v)	Parents pay for the education of the child hence they should be involved.	20	16.5

The responses given in table 4.7 demonstrated that the role of parents in the life and education of the child is very important.

4.2.8 Parents' ease in working together with teachers in the education of the child

Table 4.8 gives frequencies of responses of 55 males and 74 females to the question "Would you as a parent feel comfortable to work together with the teacher in the education of your child?"

TABLE 4.8: Frequencies of responses in respect of parents' ease in working together with teachers in the education of the child

	Yes	No
Males	53	2
Females	71	3

The frequencies of 129 responses in respect of the above question are given in table 4.8. From the above responses, the majority of parents (males = 96.3%; females = 95.9%) agreed that they would feel comfortable to work with teachers in the education of the child. Few parents (males = 3.7%; females = 4.1%) disagreed with the question. There were no significant gender-based differences in response to the above question ($X^2 = 0.015$, $df = 1$).

4.2.9 Reasons for parents who agreed that they would feel at ease to work with teachers

Table 4.9 gives frequencies and percentages in respect of the reasons given for item 4.2.8.

TABLE 4.9: Frequencies and percentages of reasons given for item 4.2.8

Responses		f	%
i)	The child is mine and his well-being, including his education, is my responsibility.	53	43.7
ii)	I am interested in getting first-hand information about my child's performance at school.	33	26.7
iii)	The child's education starts at home and the school is a continuation of the process.	21	16.9
iv)	My involvement in the education of my child brings me closer to his teacher.	17	13.7

The figures given in table 4.9 demonstrated the concern that parents had in the education of their children. They viewed their role in their children's education as not conflicting with the teacher's work but as a responsibility to be carried out.

4.2.10 Parents' use of their free time to help at school

Table 4.10 gives frequencies of responses in respect of using free time to help at school.

TABLE 4.10: Frequencies of responses in respect of using free time to help at school

	Yes	No
Males	49	6
Females	70	4

The frequencies of 129 responses are given in table 4.10. The majority of parents (males = 89%; females = 94.5%) were prepared to use their free time to help at school. Few parents (males = 11%; females = 5.5%) were not prepared to use their free time to help at school. No significant gender-based difference was noted ($X^2 = 0.709$, $df = 1$).

4.2.11 Reasons for parents who agreed to use their free time to help at school

Table 4.11 gives frequencies and percentages of reasons given for item 4.2.10.

TABLE 4.11: Frequencies and percentages in respect of reasons given for item 4.2.10

Responses		f	%
i)	To motivate my child in his/her work.	45	37.8
ii)	To help teachers and make their work easier.	25	21.0
iii)	To know what my child is doing at school and how he progresses.	20	16.8
iv)	To share ideas with the teachers.	29	24.4

Reasons given were geared towards helping in the education of the child.

4.2.12 Responses about leaving children's school work in the hands of teachers only

Table 4.12 gives the responses of 55 male and 74 female parents to the question "Would you feel comfortable to leave all your child's school work in the hands of teachers only?"

TABLE 4.12: Frequencies of responses in respect of leaving children's school work in the hands of teachers only

	Yes	No
Males	6	49
Females	5	69

The frequencies of 55 male and 74 female parents are given in table 4.12. The majority of parents (males = 89%; females = 93.2%) did not feel comfortable about leaving their children's school work in the hands of teachers only. Few parents (males = 11%; females 6.8%) felt comfortable about leaving school work in teachers hands only. There was no significant gender-based difference in response to the above question ($X^2 = 0.70$, $df = 1$).

4.2.13 Reasons for parents who felt uncomfortable about leaving children's school work in the hands of teachers only

Table 4.13 gives frequencies and percentages in respect of reasons for item 4.2.12.

TABLE 4.13: Frequencies and percentages in respect of reasons given for item 4.2.12

Responses		f	%
i)	I know my child better than the teacher	50	42.4
ii)	I want to know about my child's progress at school	35	29.6
iii)	I want to contribute to improving my child's success at school	33	28.0

The majority of parents preferred to be partners in the education of their children. Reasons provided expressed the deep-seated interest that parents had in the education of their children.

4.2.14 Responses to "who should initiate parental involvement in education"

Table 4.14 gives the responses of 129 parents to the question "Who should initiate parental involvement in education?"

TABLE 4.14: Frequencies of responses in respect of who should initiate parental involvement in education

	Parents	Teachers
Males	19	36
Females	15	59

The frequencies of 129 parents are given in table 4.14. The responses indicated that the majority of parents preferred teachers to initiate the process (males = 65.4%; females = 79.7%). Few parents (males = 34.6%; females = 20.3%) did not prefer teachers to initiate the process. There was no significant gender-based

difference in responses ($X^2 = 3.31$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.10$).

4.2.15 Reasons for parents who preferred teachers to initiate the process of parental involvement in education

Table 4.15 gives frequencies and percentages in respect of reasons given for item 4.2.15.

TABLE 4.15: Frequencies and percentages of reasons given for item 4.2.15

Responses		f	%
i)	Teachers have the experience of working with children.	45	47.4
ii)	Teachers have daily contact with pupils and they know about their progress at school.	25	26.3
iii)	Teachers are trained to do that work.	25	26.3

Respondents based their reasons on the training and experience that teachers had in working with children.

4.2.16 Making parental involvement more effective

Table 4.16 gives the frequencies and percentages for the 129 parents who responded to the issue of making parental involvement more effective.

TABLE 4.16: Frequencies and percentages in respect of making parental involvement more effective

Responses	f	%
i) Parents meetings to be called regularly.	98	75.9
ii) Teachers to become more open to the parents.	31	24.1

All respondents were eager to be involved in education. They wanted schools to play their part in calling them regularly and being open to them.

4.2.17 Reasons why parents are not effectively involved in education

Table 4.17 gives frequencies and percentages in respect of reasons why parents are not effectively involved in education.

TABLE 4.17: Frequencies and percentages in respect of reasons why parents are not effectively involved in education

Responses	f	%
i) Parents' lack of interest by parents in education.	16	12.3
ii) Parents not staying at home with children.	25	19.3
iii) Parents' lack of time.	16	12.3
iv) Ignorance.	20	15.5
v) Lack of contact between the school and parents.	5	3.9
vi) Failure of the school to educate parents about their role in education.	25	19.4
vii) Teachers not trained effectively on how to involve parents in education	10	7.8
viii) Illiteracy of parents	5	3.9
ix) Aged parents	1	0.8
x) Unco-operative pupils	6	4.8

The reasons given exposed a lack of effective involvement on the part both of parents and the school. Some respondents suggested a lack of cooperation on the part of children. The majority of reasons showed that parents or factors at home had a bearing on ineffective parental involvement. Some reasons indicated that a lack of effective involvement on the part of teachers contributed to ineffective parental involvement.

4.3 Analysis of the principals' interview

Interviews were carried out with the primary school principals in the Makapanstad Circuit. Frequencies and percentages were determined for each variable studied.

4.3.18 Distribution of principals in terms of their work experience

Table 4.18 gives the distribution of the 15 primary school principals who were interviewed.

TABLE 4.18: Distribution of principals by their work experience

5 - 10 Years	10 - 15 Years	15 AND MORE Years	TOTAL
4	3	8	15

4.3.19 Provision of skills in involving parents in education during training

Table 4.19 gives the frequencies of 15 principals in respect of receiving training as to parental involvement skills.

TABLE 4.19: Frequencies of responses to the question "did your professional training provide you with skills to involve parents in education?"

	Yes	No
f	0	15
%	0	100

None of the principals were trained in involving parents in education.

4.3.20 Ways in which parents are involved in education

Table 4.20 gives frequencies and percentages in respect of different ways in which parents are involved in education.

TABLE 4.20: Frequencies and percentages in respect of ways in which parents are involved in education

Responses	f	%
i) Parents' meetings only.	10	66.6
ii) Helping during social events at school and parents' meetings	4	26.7
iii) Parents not interested	1	6.7

In most schools, parents' meetings were the only form of involving parents in education (66.6%). Helping during social events was also practised at some schools (26.7%). Only one principal stated that parents were not interested in education (6.7%).

4.3.21 Necessity of involving parents in education

Table 4.21 gives frequencies and percentages in respect of responses on the necessity of involving parents in education.

TABLE 4.21: Necessity of involving parents in education

	Yes	No
f	15	0
%	100	0

All principals found it necessary to involve parents in education.

4.3.22 Initiatives of the school to involve parents in education

Table 4.3.22 gives frequencies and percentages in respect of responses about initiatives to involve parents in education.

TABLE 4.22: Involvement of parents in education

Responses		f	%
i)	Organising parents' meeting	7	46.7
ii)	Signing homework books	2	13.1
iii)	Involing paretns during social events at school	6	40.0

The schools used different techniques to involve parents in education. Popular techniques included having parents'

meetings and involving parents during social events. The signing of homework books and the encouragement of parents were also alternatives.

4.3.23 Advantages of parental involvement in education

Table 4.23 provides frequencies and percentages in respect of advantages of parental involvement in education.

TABLE 4.23: Advantages of parental involvement in education

Responses		f	%
i)	Knowing and understanding the needs of pupils.	8	53.3
ii)	Knowing problems at school.	7	46.7

The majority of parents felt that parental involvement created an opportunity for parents to know and understand the needs and problems of the child.

4.3.24 Reasons for the advantages of parental involvement

Table 4.24 provides frequencies and percentages in respect of reasons for the advantages of parental involvement.

TABLE 4.24: Reasons for advantages

Responses		f	%
i)	Problems are minimised in education	8	53.3
ii)	Learning becomes easier for the child	7	46.7

The survey on why parental involvement in education was advantageous emphasized that it helped to minimise problems and parental involvement made learning easier for the child.

4.3.25 Department of Education's System of parental involvement in education

Table 4.25 provides frequencies and percentages in respect of the Department of Education's system of parental involvement in education.

TABLE 4.25: Department of Education's system of parental involvement in education.

Responses		f	%
i)	Needs upgrading and more involvement of parents.	15	100

All respondents felt that the system needed to be improved and that parents should be more involved.

4.3.26 Suggestions

Table 4.26 provides frequencies and percentages in respect of suggestions for improving parental involvement in education.

TABLE 4.26: Suggestions for improving parental involvement

Responses		f	%
i)	Involvement of all educationalists in structuring education	4	26.7
ii)	New methods and techniques to be introduced	4	26.7
iii)	Communication to be improved between the school and parents	3	20.0
iv)	Parents to be educated about their role in the education of their children	3	20.0
v)	Co-operation between parents and school to be encouraged.	1	6.6

Most of the suggestions given called for the introduction of new techniques and methods that could improve parental involvement in education, and also called for the improvement of communication and co-operation between the school and parents.

4.3.27 Improvement of performance by parental involvement

Table 4.27 provides frequencies and percentages of responses to the question "Can parental involvement improve performance of pupils at school?"

TABLE 4.27: Improvement of performance by parental involvement

	Yes	No
f	15	0
%	100	0

All respondents agreed that parental involvement improves pupil performance.

4.3.28 Sharing the responsibility for the child with the parents

Table 4.28 gives frequencies and percentages in respect of responses about sharing the responsibility for the child with the parents.

TABLE 4.28: Sharing the responsibility for the child with parents

Responses	f	%
Very important	15	100

All respondents felt that it was important both for parents and teachers jointly to carry the responsibility of teaching the child.

4.3.29 Teachers co-operating with parents

Table 4.29 gives the frequencies and percentages in

respect of responses to the question "Are teachers co-operating with parents?"

TABLE 4.29: Teachers co-operating with parents

	Yes	No
f	15	0
%	100	20

All respondents agreed that teachers were co-operative.

4.3.30 Implications of introducing extended parental involvement in education

Table 4.30 provides frequencies and percentages in respect of responses about the implications of introducing extended parental involvement in education.

TABLE 4.30: Implications of extended parental involvement in education

Responses	f	%
i) Neglected areas should be attended to	4	6.7
ii) Parents' contribution in education should increase	4	26.7
iii) Pupils should benefit more	5	33.3
iv) Teachers should become more involved and as such would benefit from their relationship with parents.	2	13.3

The respondents felt that there would be an improvement in all areas of the development of the child. Parents, teachers and pupils would benefit from having co-operation with each other.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Findings

5.1.1 General findings

(1) Parents wish to be involved in the primary education of their children but are held back for a variety of reasons, namely, a lack of techniques, skills and know-how on parental participation in education, limited interaction between the school and parents, the present system of school councils, lack of time, ignorance, illiteracy and principals as well as teachers having limited skills in fully involving parents in education.

(2) Principals and teachers are supportive of parental involvement in education.

5.1.2 Findings pertaining to the questions of the study

Are parents not involved in the education of their children because:

(1) of their opinions about education?

Parents' opinions towards education were found positive (tables 4.2.4, 4.2.5 and 4.2.6). Parents'

opinions do not seem to be a reason for not being involved in the education of their children.

- (2) of a lack of knowledge of the importance of their participation?

Parents were found to be aware of their importance as partners in the education of their children (tables 4.2.6, and 4.2.7). A lack of knowledge of the importance of their participation in education does not appear to be a reason for not being involved in the education of their children.

- (3) they consider their participation as an interference in the school affairs?

Parents did not consider their participation as an interference in the school affairs (tables 4.2.8 and 4.2.9). Parents' consideration of their participation as an interference in school affairs is also not a reason for not being involved in the education of their children.

- (4) they consider their participation a waste of time?

Parents did not consider their participation a waste of time (tables 4.2.11 and 4.2.12). Parents' consideration of their participation as a waste of time does not seem to be a reason for not being involved in the education of their children.

- (5) they lack the techniques, skills and know-how to participate in education?

Lack of techniques, skills and know-how to participate in education, was found to be a reason

for parents not being involved in the education of their children. Parents' preference that teachers should be the initiators of parental involvement in education signifies a point worth noting (tables 4.2.16 and 4.2.17).

(6) of the principal's opinion?

The principals were supportive of parental involvement in education (tables 4.3.4, 4.3.6 and 4.3.10). Therefore this cannot be a reason for lack of parental involvement in education.

(7) of a lack of support and encouragement from teachers?

Teachers were found to support and encourage parental involvement in education (tables 4.3.5 and 4.3.12). Therefore lack of support and encouragement from teachers is not one of the reasons for lack of parental involvement in education.

(8) of limited interaction between the school and parents?

Interaction between the school and parents was found to be limited (table 4.3.8). The present system of school councils does not provide for enough interaction between parents and schools (table 4.3.5). Limited interaction between the school and parents is therefore one of the reasons for parents not being involved in the education of their children.

- (9) school authorities consider parental involvement as an interference in school activities?

It was found that school authorities do not consider parental involvement as an interference in the school activities (tables 4.3.4, 4.3.5 and 4.3.8). Therefore, one cannot regard it as one of the reasons for parents not to be involved in the education of their children.

- (10) of the present system of school councils.

The present system of school councils limits parental involvement in education (table 4.3.8).

- (11) of any other reasons?

Other reasons for limited parental involvement in education include lack of time, ignorance, illiteracy and a lack of trained principals and teachers who could involve parents in their children's education.

5.2 Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from the above listed findings:

- (1) School principals, teachers and parents have the same objective for children: the best possible education.
- (2) The following factors may largely account for the lack of effective parental involvement in the education of their children: (i) limited training given to principals and teachers, (ii) ignorance and illiteracy among parents, (iii) not much time available to parents and teachers,

- (iv) limited parental involvement in education of children.
- (3) Parents are fully aware that their involvement in education will contribute positively to the performance of their children.
- (4) Principals and teachers are supportive of parental involvement, and they actively encourage it.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations could be made in the light of the findings of this study:

- (1) The Department of Education should provide facilities to train principals and teachers in-service on how to involve parents in the education of their children.
- (2) Other relevant departments such as the Departments of Manpower and Health, and the Department of education should also organise programmes to educate parents about getting involved in educational matters.
- (3) The Department of Education should also make room for activities that may involve parents in designing the syllabi of different subjects.
- (4) The Department of Education should recommend to the Government to pass legislations which are favourable and conducive to parental involvement in education.

- (5) The curricula of Colleges of Education should cater for training teachers to promote parental involvement in education.
- (6) Schools should also be encouraged to design programmes to familiarize parents with the benefits of parental involvement in their children's education.

Finally, the researcher would like to point out that this research was the first of its kind in the Makapanstad Circuit; no similar research has been conducted before in this part of South Africa. It is therefore recommended that similar studies could be conducted in other areas of the Republic of South Africa.

5.4 Limitations

- (1) The instrument for collecting the data of this study was designed by this researcher. Although it served reasonably well in gaining the relevant information from parents, it is too early to be convinced about its validity.
- (2) Since the sample of this study was taken from only three primary schools in Makapanstad Circuit, the findings of this investigation are very limited for generalization purpose.
- (3) Not many studies had been conducted in South Africa to examine the role of parental involvement in promoting formal education. The researcher, therefore, had to depend on very limited relevant literature.

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APPENDIX A: THE PARENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN
MAKAPANSTAD CIRCUIT OF THE FORMER BOPHUTHATSWANA.

INSTRUCTIONS: (i) Please answer all questions.

(ii) The information provided will be kept in
confidence.

1. Indicate the following:

☐ Male

☐ Female

2. What is your highest level of education?

(i) Junior Certificate

(ii) Matric

(iii) Degree

(iv) Other (specify)

.....

3. What is your occupation?

(i) Employed

(ii) Self-employed

(iii) Unemployed

(iv) Other (specify)

.....

4. How do you feel about any of the following statements? (Put a ✓ mark in the right column)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Dis-agree	Strongly Disagree
Only teachers should be responsible for my child's education.					
My responsibility in respect of my child's education is only to pay school-fees.					
I should be involved in all aspects of my child's education.					
I am prepared to contribute in any form in the education of my child.					

5. Parental involvement is important in the education of my child.

☐	Strongly agree
☐	Agree
☐	Uncertain
☐	Disagree
☐	Strongly disagree

6. Do you think it is important for parents to be involved in the education of their children?

☐	Yes
☐	No

7. If "Yes" give 5 most important reasons:

- (i)
- (ii)
- (iii).....
- (iv)
- (v)

8. Would you feel comfortable to work together with the teacher in the education of your child?

☐ Yes

☐ No

9. Give reasons for your answer.

-
-
-
-

10. Are you prepared to use your free time to help and take part in any of the school activities?

☐ Yes

☐

No

11. Give reasons for your answer.

.....

.....

.....

.....

12. Would you feel comfortable to leave all your child's school- work
in the hands of the teachers only?

☐

Yes

☐

No

13. Give reasons for your answer.

.....

.....

.....

.....

14. Who should initiate parental involvement in education?

☐

Teachers

☐

Parents

15. Give reasons for your answer.

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

16. What can be done to make parental involvement in education more effective?

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

17. List any 10 reasons why parents are not effectively involved in education.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW WITH PRINCIPALS

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN
MAKAPANSTAD CIRCUIT OF THE FORMER BOPHUTHATSWANA.

QUESTIONS

1. For how long have you been the school principal?
.....
2. Did your professional training provide you with the skills of
involving parents in education?
.....
3. How are parents involved in the education of their children?
.....
.....
4. Do you think it is necessary to involve parents in the education
of their children?
.....
5. Which initiatives are taken by the school to involve the parents?
.....

6. What do you think are the advantages of involving parents in education?
.....
.....
7. Why?
.....
8. What are your feelings about the present system of involving parents in education?
.....
9. How can it be improved?
.....
10. Apart from other factors, do you think parental involvement can improve the performance of pupils at school?
.....
11. How do you feel about sharing the responsibility of the child with the parents?
.....
12. Do you think teachers are co-operative in working with the parents?
.....

13. What can be done to improve the present system of involving parents in education?

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

14. How do you feel about introducing extended, more involved parental involvement in schools?

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