

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

A brief summary of the study is presented in this chapter. As is vital, a reflection on the major findings of the study is provided, as well as the recommendations in order to improve the current situation regarding parent involvement in the education of the child.

6.2 SUMMARY

The first chapter serves as a blueprint of the research project. It sets out an introductory motivation why the research was carried out, defines the aims of the research, explains how the data was collected, which population was involved and stipulates the headings of the chapters. In this way, the chapter guides the readers concerning what is contained in the research project.

In Chapter 2, a theoretical basis of the field of the investigation is made. A theoretical background of the nature and scope of parent involvement in education in general is explained. Various reasons, advantages and disadvantages of parent involvement in the education of the child are advanced. It was unequivocally indicated by the literature study that parents as the main stakeholders have both the obligation and right to determine the direction of their children's education. Parental rights in education are not absolute but imply that parents and educators have to work jointly in the interest of the child.

It was also shown that parent involvement in the affairs of their children has been initiated by God. Parents are bound by the baptismal vows they take in order to ensure

among others that the child will be loved, cared, taught cultural issues, be brought closer to God through scriptural reading and prayers and be disciplined. It is on these fundamental grounds that parents should be afforded the chance in a school to ensure that their children are well brought up.

Secondly, parents have to be involved in school activities so that they can ensure that the education that was initiated at home is continued at school. Because parent involvement is a worldwide phenomenon, parents in South Africa should also feature prominently in education of their children. This objective has been identified by the State hence numerous statutes that have been passed to facilitate the maximum parent involvement in school activities.

Chapter 3 focused on parent involvement in South Africa. The role of the parents in the education of the child is explained.

The identical structure is critically evaluated, always referring to the education system policy, the education system administration, the school system and the supportive services.

The various operations of parents as group and parents as individuals are explained . Three levels of parent involvement viz. micro-, meso- and macro-educational levels receive attention.

An orientation to the empirical research was presented in Chapter 4. This covered the aspect of instrumentation which included the search for appropriate measuring instruments. The relevant measuring instrument for this research project was the construction of a questionnaire. The pros and cons of the questionnaire as a research instrument were also indicated. A conclusion was reached that, notwithstanding its

disadvantages, the questionnaire was most suitable to answer the purposes of the research with the understanding that its disadvantages would be eliminated when administering this instrument in the field.

The population involved in the investigation was also described in this chapter. It was said that educators and parents in the Potchefstroom district of the North West Province formed the population from which the sample was selected. Since the sample consisted of two independent groups, the most suitable statistical techniques chosen consisted of frequency analysis and computation of means.

The choice of the above statistical techniques allowed comparisons to be made between the two groups of respondents. As explained in the chapter, comparisons were necessary due to the differing views of educators and parents concerning the extent of parent involvement. Lastly, the method of presenting and analysing results was explained.

Chapter 5 presented the results of the empirical investigation. First to be indicated were responses pertaining to personal and school details of the respondents. This formed a well of information from which reasons for responses could be drawn. Using a frequency analysis, a comparison was made between the educators and parents with regard to the perception on the extent of parent involvement in the education of their children.

6.3 FINDINGS

This section deals with the findings of the research aims in order to indicate how each aim was achieved. A stipulation of the findings follows.

6.3.1 Findings resulting from literature study

Findings with regard to literature study on the nature of parent involvement in the education of their children is as follows:

- The family as a primary educational unit should ensure that children receive good education. The parents strive to influence the life and actions of a child so that he or she can later become a responsible citizen. Because parents have the interests of children at heart, they have to ensure that they develop, care for, love and discipline them so that order can be attained.
- Because the family is also a religious institution, Christian parents have the obligation of linking all their daily life to their religion. Parents will therefore ensure that their children are taught in the religion of their choice.
- Parents as primary educators have the right and obligation to feature in curricular and extracurricular activities. In their involvement, they should also acknowledge the operational areas of the school and the contribution each party has made in education. By doing so, they will ensure that the education of the non-adult is not unduly disturbed
- Because parent involvement is a worldwide phenomenon, the South African approach should be redefined so that it can be enhanced. Parents as individuals and in groups should be encouraged to get involved in school matters that affect the future of their children.

6.3.2 Findings resulting from the empirical survey

With regard to the empirical survey on parent involvement in the education of children, the following findings were made:

- Parents failed to get involved in school activities due to lack of time. This factor of time could be ascribed to the school and home programmes that clash.
- Some schools especially those in a low socio-economic status areas have high learner populations. The educators in such schools do not have adequate time to draw parents' attention to school issues and it may be that they are preoccupied with other matters that do not concern parents.
- It has clearly indicated in this study that parents have various misconceptions about the education of their children. Parents have come to believe that school education is the sphere of educators and thus that their presence as parents could be regarded as an intrusion. Parents also believe that they do not have to feature in school activities because the school is a place concerned only with children.
- It became apparent in this study that most parents do not see discussing their problems with the school as being meaningful. This misconception has come about as a result of parents' conviction that the school educators are adequately qualified to handle all educational affairs without parental assistance.
- Parents in low socio-economic status fail to attend school meetings due to the fact that they are afraid to come to school because they think that they may be asked to contribute financially or otherwise.

- In this research study, it became evident that the major difference between high pass rate schools and low pass rate schools is the high school population and low socio-economic status of the area.
- In high school population and low socio-economic status areas parents become insensitive to information they receive from schools and do not want to feature in school activities, because they think that by so doing they will be intruding in the educators' sphere of influence.
- The majority of educators and parents from high pass rate schools and low pass rate schools indicated that parents do not get involved in the education of their children because the State is looking after the education of their children or tries to meet parents' educational obligation halfway. This results in parents shifting the educational duty that they have towards their children on to educators and government.
- This study revealed also that parents do not see the need to be involved in the education of their children because they expect their children to be taught at school by the adequately qualified educators.
- In this way parents are divorcing themselves from their rightful obligation of determining the direction of education together with the school and they thus do not see the value of being involved in children's issues.
- One can conclude that there is a major difference between high pass rate schools and low pass rate schools as far as school population (learner intake) and low socio-economic status of the area is concerned, where such a problem is currently found in low pass rate schools.

- The high school population and low socio-economic status of the area in which the schools are situated have an impact on the results of the school, and it is also found that parents do not get involved in the education of their children.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations constitute an important aspect of this research. It is hoped that the recommendations in this research will appeal to those who are concerned with the involvement of parents in the education of the child.

6.4.1 Recommendation 1

Parents should be trained by school principals and educators in school matters, especially about their rights and obligations towards the education of their children.

Motivation

Very little is being done by the school principals and educators to disclose to parents what they have to do and how they should feature in school activities. It is not surprising that most parents are not aware of the nature, purposes and organisational structure of the schools. If parents are not shown the need to get involved in school affairs, they will continue to shun the school and all its programmes.

6.4.2 Recommendation 2

School principals should ensure that they engage in participative and consultative management style when dealing with parents

Motivation

Most serious problems principals and educators currently experience are to a great extent influenced by the manner in which principals and educators handle parents. Decisions on policy matters, the school mission and goals are decided by schools without the direct parent involvement. Principals and educators regard the representative body (PTA/PTSA) as the mouthpiece of parents and thus ignore the multitude of parents who should be given the latitude of being part of the problem-solving and decision-making at the school.

6.4.3 Recommendation 3

The Department of Education should encourage the establishment of parent associations.

Motivation

Parent associations offer opportunities for collaboration, enhancement and empowerment of parents in the nitty-gritty issues about the education. Parents will again be able to bargain at the highest level of government and thus be instrumental in the formulation and adoption of educational policies in Education Councils and governing bodies at school.

6.4.4 Recommendation 4

The research was conducted to determine the extent and scope of parent involvement, to determine the reasons for lack of parent involvement in the education of their children in the North West Province in the district of Potchefstroom and to explore the perception of educators and parents towards parent involvement.

A study in this research merely provided a theoretical and practical introduction to many other possible avenues which can be investigated in parent involvement in the education of the child. It is recommended that further studies be conducted to:

- Investigate ways in which parent involvement in the education of the child can be enhanced.
- Evaluate how parents can be motivated to take the leading role in the educational affairs of their children.
- The importance of the positive relationship between home and school as institutions, which determine the child's educational development.
- The academic background of a parent and its influence on the education of the child.
- Parent-educator contact and its significance to education.

6.5 FINAL REMARKS

An attempt has been made in this chapter to summarise all relevant issues that have been discussed in the previous chapters.

The recommendations flowing from the findings of the investigation have been suggested.

It is hoped that recommendations made in this research will contribute to a more sound and scientific method of parent involvement in the education of their children.

Finally, a few fields of further research have been recommended.