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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS, MANAGEMENT AND

CURRICULUM STUDIES

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE TEACHING

AND LEARNING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

BY

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at finding out the challenges and prospects about parental involvement in teaching and learning at Early Childhood Education level. The study employed a qualitative research approach and adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study consisted of ten schools in Hyde Park North cluster under Khami District in Bulawayo Metropolitan. A sample consisted of eighteen participants from three primary schools who were purposively chosen. The participants included three teacher in charge from the selected schools, six Early Childhood Education teachers and nine Early Childhood Education parents of which there were three from each school. Questionnaires, interviews and observation were used to collect data for the study. The study revealed that parents are involved in children's education in the selected schools. However, there were challenges that hindered parental involvement such as work and financial constraints, negative attitudes of both teachers and parents, language and culture. As a result these challenge hindered effective parental involvement in schools. Though there were challenges in involving parents in Early Childhood Education, the study recommended that there is need to invite parents to school meetings in order to educate them on the importance of working together with the school for the benefit of the learner. Programmes such as consultation, graduation, toy making sessions and sporting activities should be employed as a way of engaging parents in school programmes. The study also recommended that teachers need to improve their communication with parents regarding activities taking place in schools.

DECLARATION

I declare that the research entitled "Challenges and prospects of parental involvement in the teaching and learning in Early Childhood Education" is my work that has not been submitted for any degree in any other university. All the sources that have been quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Mlilo Sikhangezile...................................2 November 2017

Signed   ....

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Name   ....Mlilo Sikhangezile

Signature.................................

Date   02 November 2017

RELEASE FORM

 I certify that the following student Mlilo Sikhangezile student number R15071B was under my supervision.

I further certify that she has fullfilled all the requirements that I set before her as the supervisor.

I hereby release the student without reservation to submit her research project for marking.

Name of supervisor.................... Mrs M Mukoni

Signature   ....

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my husband Gift Mlilo and our children Mandlenkosi Mlilo and Ntombikayise Mlilo for their support while I was at the university. Thank you for your prayers, encouragement and patience.

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CHAPTER 1   INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter intends to situate the study into its context by outlining the background of the study first. This is followed by the statement of the problem, research objectives and questions. In addition, the delimitations and limitations will be looked into. The chapter concludes with a definition of terms.

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Early Childhood Education was made possible in Zimbabwe by the support of international bodies such as the Jomtien conference of 1990 and the Dakar conference of 2000. The Nziramasanga commission of 1999 and other circulars in the ministry of education have contributed to the introduction of Early Childhood Education in the education sector in Zimbabwe.

Before independence in Zimbabwe, Early Childhood Education was accessed by whites and few privileged families. It was after independence that crèches and play centres were found all over Zimbabwe. Caregivers from communities were handpicked to baby sit these children in a way involving them in their education.

Through the Jomtien conference of 1990 and Dakar conference of 2000 Zimbabwe signed for the provision of education for all including learners from zero to six years. Also the Nziramasanga commission of 1999 recommended that education should be accessible to all especially the zero to six years. The introduction of Early Childhood Education had challenges in that it lacked resources such as trained personnel, infrastructure as well as learning materials thus calling for parental involvement in schools.

In 2005 early childhood educators were trained in various institutions such as United College of Education and Joshua Mqabuko Polytechnic so as to equip teachers with skills of working

with parents and young children. The secretary's circular number 14 of 2004 called for the establishment of Early Childhood Education hence the need to involve parents in sourcing and providing indoor and outdoor play equipment. Communities need to be involved in toy making production, building infrastructure as well as developing the play centre.

Considering the above information, there is evidence that parents need to be involved in their children's education in various ways for learning to be effective.From the researcher's observation, parental involvement is of great importance in the education of the child. This is so becauseparents are seen as children's educators at a tender age at home and they are responsible for the education of their children. However, there seemed to be lack of parental involvement in Early Childhood Education in Khami District schools in Bulawayo. This was seen by the turnout of parents to early childhood activities such as cleaning and developing the centre. Probably educators found it hard to involve parents in the education of their children. Misconceptions and attitudes about being involved in children's education have made the researcher to find out more on the challenges and prospects of parental involvement in teaching and learning at Early Childhood Education.

A study by Bridgemohan at the University of South Africa in 2001 on "parental involvement in Early Childhood Development in Kwazulu Natal", has revealed that parental involvement in children's education provides numerous positive outcomes for elementary learners. Bridgemohan study is similar to the current research under study as it looked at benefits of parental involvement, barriers to parental involvement as well as strategies for involving parents in their children's teaching and learning.

Research findings have found out that parental involvement have a great positive influence on the achievement of young learners. Henderson and Mapp (2002) say, children earn higher grades and develop a positive attitude towards school if the family and school work together.

In support Hui-Chen, Huang and Masson (2008) say, parent's attitude to their children's education do affect academic achievement in a positive way. This means parents should work in collaboration with the school so as to have a positive achievement in children's learning. If parents become involved in their children's learning at an early age, the more profound results and the longer lasting effects (Mullis, Mullis, Cernille etal 2004). The current Early Childhood Education setting in Zimbabwe calls for the involvement of parents for the full development of an Early Childhood Education learner. According to Sheldon (2001), successful children have strong academic support from their involved parents and homes. In Early Childhood Education, parental involvement yields better development and education to the child. Mullis etal (2004) further goes on to say, parental involvement is strongly influenced by the family, social class, maternal level of education, material deprivation, maternal psycho- social health and single patent status and by family ethnicity.

It is therefore against this background that this study will assess the challenges and prospects of parental involvement in the teaching and learning at Early Childhood Education in Khami District schools in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Schools in Hyde Park North in Khami district have found it challenging in involving parents in teaching and learning of early childhood learners. The turnout of parents in school activities leaves one with questions that need to be answered.This leads to failure to develop and appropriately equip play centres in the schools. Some schools still have no infrastructure that is suitable for the early childhood learners. The ECD time books that they are supposed to use are not bought in time. This challenge makes it difficult to implement and achieve the intended goals of the curriculum. For example some concepts which need books will be delayed to be taught affecting their development of cognitive and psychomotor skills. This

has made the researcher to look deeper on the challenges and prospects of parental involvement in the teaching and learning in Early Childhood Education.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the parents and teacher's perceptions about parental involvement.

2. To establish the barriers that constrains parental involvement.

3. To solicit for the strategies that can enhance effective parental involvement.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are parents and teacher's perceptions about parental involvement?

2. What are the barriers to parental involvement?

3. What strategies can increase the involvement of parents in teaching and learningin Early Childhood Education?

1. 5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will benefit school heads and ECD teachers as they will get a deeper understanding on benefits of parental involvement to teachers, learners and parents. Teachers will know the barriers to parental involvement and know how to go about with the challenges. The study will also be beneficial to teachers as they will know the strategies of involving parents in teaching and learning. The study will make parents realise how important they are towards the academic achievement of their children at school.

1. 6 ASSUMPTIONS.

While carrying out the study, the researcher had a number of assumptions. The researcher assumed that the teachers and parents involved have children in ECD A and ECD B classes at school of study.

1.7 DELIMITATIONS

The study was carried out in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province. It was carried out in three primary schools in Hyde Park North under Khami district. These were Babambeni Primary, Malindela Primary and Amaswazi Primary schoolsThe participants were three teacher in charge, six teachers and nine parents. The research was carried focussing on ECD A and B classes of the selected schools. The study involved parents of ECD pupils selected for the study and their teachers. The researcher chose this because it is located in heavily populated areas which draws participants from different background making it possible to come up with generalisations on the findings of the study. The study was carried out over a period of one year. The focus of the study was on the Challenges and prospects of parental involvement in the teaching and learning in Early Childhood Education.

1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Since the research targeted schools in Hyde Park North that are far apart, the researcher encountered challenges of moving from one school to the other. Therefore, the researcher gave herself schedules of visiting the schools and then visited one school per day. Also there was no enough time to carry out dataas there were other co-curricular activities that the researcher was committed to. To overcome the challenge, the researcher had to travel to the participants during lunch hour to carry out the study. The researcher had a challenge of going to the library to get books that had information related to the study, she therefore made use of the internet to look for related information

1.9. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

1.9.1 Parental involvement- According to Kirma (2012), parental involvement refers to a partnership whereby schools and parents support each other in stimulating children's curiosity, motivation and development. Of the same view is Whalley (2007), who says parental involvement occurs when there is an ongoing reciprocal, strength based partnership between families and their early childhood education programmes. In this study parental involvement is seen as a process whereby the school, teachers work in collaboration with parents to take a collective action and generate solutions to common problems.

1.9.2 Early Childhood Education- Early Childhood Education according to Morrison (2011), is a stage in human development that constitutes children in the zero to eight year age range. Echoing the same sentiments are Beach and Rhinehart (1989) who view Early Childhood Education as the development programme for children from zero to eight years. In this study Early Childhood Education is the teaching and learning of children from zero to eight years. The education is aimed at developing the child in all the domains that is physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

1.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter looked at the background of the problem and research questions. Significance of the study, assumptions, delimitations and limitations. Also definition of terms was done. The next chapter is going to focus on literature review.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is going to focus on literature review on the challenges and prospects of parental involvement in the teaching and learning in Early Childhood Education. The chapter sought to find out the parents and teachers perception about parental involvement. Barriers to parental involvement were highlighted. Also strategies of involving parents in early childhood teaching and teaching were analysed.

2.1 WHAT ARE THE PERCEPTIONS ABOUT PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT?

Teachers and parents have agreed that parental involvement is essential at Early Childhood Education level. Parents want their children to learn hence the need to contribute to their children's teaching and learning and they are more willing to be involved. Mapp (2002) believes that though researchers and educational leaders believe parental involvement is significant, parents and teachers also agree that it is important. In concurrence teachers believe that the success of learners in schools is enhanced if parents are involved in the teaching and learning situation. Philips cited in Henderson and Berla (1994) reports that educators believe students excel in their academic performance if parents enrich the learning process, build and strengthen the home school relationships.

A study by Penelope Odum Herrel in 2011 at th East Tenesse State University on " parent perceptions and teachers perceptions" revealed that family and community involvement in the educational process has a great impact on the success of learners. She said for effective parental involvement, there is need for a stronger and more unified approach on strategies   to enhance parental involvement and assist educators, community members and families in working in collaboration to encourage learner's academic success. Herward and Orlanky (1982) are of the view that parents and teachers who work collaboratively build up a strong team. Therefore good teacher parent relationship is of great significance to the educator,

parent and the learner. Collaboration between home and the school is made strong if teachers involve parents in the teaching and learning situation. Teachers also believe that if parents are involved in school activities, there are likely to participate in the life of the school and they may also assist in the learning of their children at home for example in homework.

Parents are willing to assist their children in school as long as they are invited to do so. This will make them feel respected and valued in the learning atmosphere. Finders and Lewis (1994) say parents want to feel trusted and comfortable in school setting. Hoover-Dempsey etal (2005) say parents like to become actively involved in their children's education if they are involved. Therefore teachers should create a friendly artmosphere and show respect to parents. It is therefore observed that collaboration between home and the school is of paramount importance for the educational success of the learner. Therefore, the researcher worked with parents in finding out the challenges and prospects of parental involvement in their children's learning.

2. 2. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT?

Though parental involvement might be of beneficiary, there are barriers that may hinder its effectiveness. A study by Horvatin at the university of Wisconsin-Stout in (2011) on "Perceived barriers to parental involvement in schools" found a number of barriers in involving parents in schools.Through her study, language, cultural understanding conflicts, financial and work related constraints, unwelcoming atmosphere, attitude, lack of time and money were some of the barriers she cited. The previous study looked at barriers in involving parents in schools while the focus of this research is on effectiveness of parental involvement at Early Childhood Education level.

A study by Bridgemohan on " Parental involvement in Early Childhood development in Kwazulu Natal" in South Africa in 2001 revealed that factors such as family structure, societal factors, poverty, pandemic HIV/AIDS as well as illiteracy can hinder the effectiveness of parental involvement. The previous study is similar to the current study in that it looked at parental involvement in working with young children, barriers on parental involvement and strategies in involving parents were highlighted. The previous study used qualitative approach design which this study borrowed. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), the researcher used the qualitative method as it uses different qualitative techniques and data collection methods to social interaction aimed at describing this interaction in terms of the meanings that the participants attach to each. Thus through observation, interviews and questionnaires, the researcher was able to gather information on barriers of parental involvement. The previous study concluded that not all schools involved parents to the same extent. She then recommended for strategies in involving parents to their children's education.

Hoover and Sandler (1997) say, some parents believe that getting a child to school is their utmost role and such parents will not be available for any form of involvement as their beliefs have overtaken their responsibility. In this study the parents's beliefs hindered the effectivectiveness of parental involvement. Brown and Haylock (2004) say parental involvement in school programes is not regarded as important in some cultures. For example some cultures do not value the importance of health as a result they are not involved in health awareness check up in school. Thus making it difficult for the school to emphasise on the importance of taking these youngsters to clinics since the parents will not be available for such education programmes.

Teachers found it difficult to assist learners whose parents were not involved in their education. The researcher found out that some learners had not paid their school fees, had no

learning materials and other school requirements. This was so because of the financial constraints that the parents encountered.Rogan and Grayson (2003) are of the view that material resources such as textbooks, crayons and other equipment used in the learning process are of beneficial to the learner. If parents fail to provide financial support in order to access learning materials the intended goals of the curriculum will not be met. Thus the challenge may be overcome by sources financial support from organisations such as BEAM and Capernaum to assist those learners with challenges in paying fees.

Horvatin found that though children seem to benefit from parental involvement in the school, there were some barriers to getting parents more involved as this will help boost academic performance of learners. Work commitment is also regarded as a barrier to parental involvement. According to Ascher (1988), burdened by low-income, inflexible working hours and language barriers, some parents are unable to attend school activities and fail even to participate in their children's on regular basis. Working parents find it difficult to attend school programmes since they will be devoted to their work. These functions are carried out during the week while some parents will be at work thus making it difficult to attend even if they are willing.

Negative attitude i.e experienced in schools thus hindering parental involvement in schools. Brown and Haylock (2004) indicate that negative assumptions about parent's attitude make communication in schools difficult. As a result these attitudes of parents and teachers constrain the effectiveness of parental involvement. Wherry (2009) says schools provide a welcoming atmosphere that will make them feel respected by parents and the community at large. Therefore, there is need for teachers to create a friendly atmosphere in school where parents may feel welcome. Teachers should also accept the ideas and contributions regarding the education of the child from parents. Many at times teachers regard parents as not being knowledgeable about teaching young children yet they forget that these parents know their

children better than them. Thus there is need to fill these gaps for effective parental involvement to be enhanced.

Language also hinders the effectiveness of parental involvement as it slows down the process of communication in schools. Flynn (2007) is of the view that parents may be intimidated by language and the staff thereby avoid communication with the school. For example, if the parent does not understand the language spoken by the teacher, they find it difficult to attend school programmes as they may feel embarrassed. Therefore, there is need for teachers to cater for individual differences and use the language that is understood by all. Also because of their illiteracy, some parents may not see the value of education as a result they do not participate in school activities that may be helpful to the learner.

Culture is also regarded as a barrier to parental involvement. According to Brown and Haylock (2004), in some cultures there is no tradition of parental involvement in school programmes. In this study the researcher observed that due to their cultural backgrounds, some parents were not involved in their children's education since they did not attend some events at school such as sporting events and health awareness campaigns.

2.3 WHAT STRATEGIES CAN BE USED TO INVOLVE PARENTS IN THEIR CHILDREN'S TEACHING AND LEARNING?

Early childhood educators need to involve parents in all teaching and learning activities so as to utilise the skills and practices possessed by parents in caring for learners. Strategies such as inviting parents for toy making sessions, resource persons, establishment of outdoor centres, community outreach, giving children homework needs to be employed so as to make them feel respected and honoured.

Ladner at the University of Tulsa in (2003) looked at the "Parents and teachers perceptions of parental involvement". In her study, she cited some of the strategies of increasing parental

involvement. She concluded that educating current teachers and prospective teachers on the importance of parental involvement is the best method for getting successful parental involvement. In this study the researcher realised that teachers need to be educated on what parental involvement entails for it to be effective. In the Zimbabwean school settings, teachers are trained at various institutions so as to equip them with skills and strategies for successful teaching and learning in Early Childhood Education.

Giving children homework is one of the strategies of involving parents in their children's learning. Battle-Bailey (2004) says, interactive homework is not only said to increase parent involvement but also student achievement. As children are given homework they are likely to be assisted by their parents thereby becoming involved in their children's learning activities.

Parents can also be involved in toy making sessions. Teachers need to utilise skills possesed by parents so as to have enough toys and play materials for young children. This then calls for a welcoming atmosphere in the school so that parents will cooperate whenever they are called to assist in the teaching and learning. Since the early childhood class rooms are composed of learners from various cultural backgrounds, there is need to accommodate all learners in the learning situation. Parents can be invited as resource persons in the classroom. The educators can invite knowledgeable parents to the classroom to make presentations on areas that she or he is not well versed in. This in a way gives a solution to the barrier of language and cultural beliefs since parents from different cultural backgrounds will be invited to make presentations.

Qualitative methodology used by Ladner is being borrowed by the current researcher on her study. The previous research conclusion was that schools should bring parents and teachers together for meetings and discussion to help both groups understand what parental involvement entails. Therefore the researcher needs to study more on strategies of involving

parents in schools and put into practise the suggested strategies by Ladner so as to come up with concrete meanings on the effectiveness of the strategies.

2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter looked at literature review on challenges and peospects of parrntal involvement in the teaching and learning in Early Childhood Education. The chapter tried to answer questions on perception of parents and teachers about parental involvement, barriers to parental involvement as well as strategies of involving parents in their children's teaching and learning. The next chapter will focus on methods used in collecting data.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter research design, population, sample will be explained. This helped the researcher to have valid information on what is happening on the ground. Instruments for collecting data, their advantages and disadvantages will be cited. Summary of the chapter will be given.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Chawawa (2000) defines a research design as the systematic and objective analysis recording of controlled observation that leads to the development generalisation principles or theories resulting in prediction and possibility ultimate control of events. According to Cresswell (2012), a research design may be referred to as specific procedures involved in the research process which are data collection, data analysis and reporting. Therefore in this study, a research design explains how data will be carried out. In this study, the researcher is going to use qualitative approach. The study then employed the descriptive survey design Dworetzky (1988) says a descriptive survey is a technique in which questionnaires and interviews are the key elements in generating information. The researcher chose this design as she made use of questionnaires and interviews in gathering information. A descriptive survey was employed as it is an appropriate way of obtaining information about beliefs and attitude of respondent. According to Borg and Gall (1999) the survey is aimed at obtaining information that can be analysed to extract patterns and make units. Thus the respondents are exposed to a set of questions and the data collected from the sample was generalised to a larger population.

3.2 POPULATION

Population is defined by Borg and Gall (1989) as members of real hypothetical set of people, events or objects to which generalisations can be made of the research results. In this study

population refers to the largest group of individuals where information will be obtained from.The population of this research is made up of ten schools in Hyde Park North in Khami District. The target population were teachers,teacher in charge as well as parents. Then from this population the researcher identified the sample.

3.3 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

Best and Khan (2003) define a sample as a small proportion of the population selected for observation and analysis. Manhein and Rich (1999) define a sample as a small group of cases drawn from and used to represent the large group or whole population. Therefore in this study a sample means part of the population used to get information representing the entire population. In this study random sampling was used. The sample in this study is made up of teacher in charge, ECE teachers and parents Teacher in charge

The teacher in charge is responsible for the running activities in the infant department. Thus he or she interacts with parents during meetings on regular basis. Thus he or she knows the concerns that parents raise regarding the education of their children. Therefore they were automatically sampled as they are the ones responsible for the infant department.

ECD teachers

Two teachers from each of the three schools were selected for the study. Simple random sampling was used as it provided participants equal chances of being selected for the study. The researcher designed cards with a "Yes and No". For those who picked the "Yes" qualified for the study. These teachers were chosen because they interact with learners and their parents on daily basis. Therefore they had adequate information when it comes to parental involvement. Therefore they are important when it comes to Early Childhood Education.

ECD parents

Three parents from each school were purposively chosen making a total of nine parents in the study. "Yes and No" cards were designed for parents to pick and for those who picked the "Yes" cards were included in the study. The simple random technique gave equal opportunities of being selected to parents. Parents as the child's first educators have adequate information regarding the education of their children.Parents also interact with teachers on daily basis as they accompany their children to school, during meetings, school programmes therefore they had adequate information with regards to parental involvement.

Three primary schools in Khami District will be used in collecting data. Eighteen participants will be used comprising of ECD teachers, teachers in charge and parents. This study is going to use random sampling. The researcher chose random sampling as it offers participants equal chances of being selected. The researcher designed cards with a "yes" and "no". Teachers and parents of Early Childhood Education learners picked the cards.Those who picked the cards with a "yes" are the ones who participated in the study. The researcher chose this small group so as to gain a deeper understanding of participants's understanding of the study. The researcher employed the use of purposive sampling in obtaining data from ECE teachers and parents. According to Bernard (2012) purposive sampling includes elements selected for specific characteristics and eliminates those who fail to meet these criteria. Thus the researcher chose this technique to enable her to gain a deeper understanding or the participants.

However, purpose sampling may be biased. That is the researcher may lack the skills of defence when it comes to alleviating possible biasess. Bernard (2012) points out that the idea that a purposive sample has been created based on the judgement of the researcher is not a good defence when it comes to alleviating possible researcher biases. However irrespective

of the disadvantages remained suitable for the study since the subjects are selected on the basis of the researcher's judgement of their typicallity.

3:4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Research instruments are important in a research as they affect the reliability of collected data. Kerlinger (1965) says an instrument plays an important role in a study. This study made use of questionnaires, interviews and observation as methods of collecting data.

3.4.1. QUESTIONNAIRES

According to Whitley (2001), a questionnaire is a document consisting of question items that solicit opinions. Sophie (2013) says, a questionnaire is a set of printed and structured questions with a choice of answers devised for the purpose of a survey or established study. In this study a questionnaire is a document containing questions to be answered by the participants in a research.The questionnaires were given to ECD A and B teachers of the selected primary schools. Closed and open ended questions were given to the respondents. Close questions are easy to complete. They are so easy to analyse and interpret. However closed questions restrict participants in expressing their views. In curbing the challenge, open-ended questions were also included on the questionnaire so as to give respondents more room to explain themselves.

According to Smith (2008), questionnaires provide a permanent verifiable record of data collected. In this study the completed questionnaires were kept for future use. Another advantage of questionnaires revealed in this study is that respondents were free to express their views on paper than one on one respondent. Questionnaires are cheap to use and does not require a lot of skills. They allow for anonymity since the respondents are not going to write their names on them.

However questionnaires according Chikoko and Mhloyi (1995) have some limitations in that some respondents may withhold information because they do not wish to give it for some reason. Some participants did not complete few sessions on the questionnaires. However the researcher made general findings using the provided information. Questionnaires are rigid as they do not allow the respondents to express views, attitudes and emotions. To minimise this challenge, this research used open ended questions so as to give respondents more room to express themselves. Despite the demerits that were raise, questionnaires still remain a good instrument in data collection. This is so because they can be used to generate information within a short period of time. Through the use of questionnaires, the researcher was able to gather the required information within a short period. They are designed in a manner that keeps the respondents focused on the subject. Questionnaires are a practical way of collecting data as they can be targeted to groups of choice in various way. They also gather vast amount of data on any subject.

3.4.2. INTERVIEWS

According to Maxwell (2005), an interview is an efficient and valid way of understanding someone's perspectives. In support Orodo (2004), views interviews as set of questions that are asked by an interviewer when interviewing respondents. Therefore in this research, an interview is regarded as a verbal communication between the researcher and the participant for the purpose of collecting data for a research. Interviews were administered to parents of the Early Childhood Education learners. The researcher chose to make use of interviews with parents because it was an efficient way of generating information from illiterate parents.

According to Gall, Gall and Borg (2007), structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews are some of the types of interviews that can be used when collecting data. In this study the researcher chose to use structured interviews.

Silverman (2000) says structured interviews are verbally administered questionnaires in which a list of predetermined questions is asked. In this research structured interviews is regarded as an interview whereby the researcher sticks to the questions which have been prepared in advance by the interviewer. Therefore the researcher stuck to the questions that have been planned without deviating from them. According to Haralambos and Holborn (2004), in structured interviews, the questions are just read out to the interviewee and the interviewer is not allowed to deviate from the predetermined questions.

The researcher chose to use structured interviews as a method of collecting data so as to generate information from illiterate parents in the study. The planned questions were read out to participants without deviating from the predetermined question. Face to face interviews enabled the researcher to capture the respondent's non-verbal responses such as frowns, exclamations, smiles and body movements so as to help in checking the sincerity of the verbal contributions from the respondents. The interviewer can seek clarification from the participant on issues that needed clarity. The researcher recorded the interview sections for future reference in analysing data. According to Gall and Gall (2007), audio recording provides a complete verbal record which can be studied thoroughly and can speed up the process.

However interviews according to Maxwell (2005) allow for limited responses from the participants and are therefore of little use if depth is required. Interviews require the skill which the researcher may not have thereby making it difficult to capture all the information. Therefore, the researcher maintained a good rapport with the interviewees. Also open ended interviews open ended interviews can generate too much data which can make data analysis difficult to make Regardless of the state limitation, interviews remained the best suitable data collection instrument for this study as the interviewer can seek clarification from the respondents on unclear issues. Collected information was recorded for future use. Interviews

increases mutual understanding and co-operation between the interviewer and the interviewee. In this study, the researcher was able to know more about the participants during the interview process.

3.4.3. OBSERVATION

Smith (2008) spells out that observation is another method of collecting data that can be used by an individual or individuals to collect first hand information on programmes, process or behaviours being studied. In this study the researcher observed the behaviour of parents and teachers at Babambeni primary school as a way of collecting information. The researcher observed parents during consultation days, sporting activities and also their turn out during cleaning routines of the centre. Also class registers were observed to see how parents are participating in fees payment. The researcher also observed the contribution of parents in buying ECD Time workbooks that are used by learners during the learning process.

Finn and Jacobson (2008) say observation method does not rely on people's willingness to provide information. The researcher observed participants in their natural setting and recorded what she saw without bothering participants with questions. Chikoko and Mhloyi (1995) say observation provides good opportunity for identifying unanticipated outcomes. Since the participants were observed unknowingly, they acted naturally and their true behaviours were observed. This method helped the researcher in getting an understanding of the behaviour of participants.

However, Stringer (2007) points out that observation requires a lot of time consuming and expensive. Thus the method became a challenge to the researcher as she had to wait for an event to happen. Barbie (1979) says observation of the past cannot be studied. This made it difficult for the researcher to revisit the behaviour that was done some time back. Despite the challenges cited above, observation still remains the method of collecting data. This is so

because participants will be expressing themselves in various situations and activities. Therefore data collected through observation may be more real and true.

3:6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The researcher was given a letter from the faculty of education at Midlands State University which allowed her to conduct a research in the ministry. The letter was taken to Bulawayo Metropolitan Province to ask for permission to collect data in Khami district schools. The province gave the researcher a letter granting her permission to collect data in the selected primary schools at Hyde Park North cluster under Khami district. The researcher then visited the schools and asked for permission from the school heads to collect data from their schools. The pilot study was conducted at Babambeni primary school with infant teachers. After they completed drafting the questionnaires, the teachers sat and analysed whether all questions were completed. Amendments to irrelevant and difficult questions were made. After the pilot study, the attitude of some of the teachers about parental involvement change. This was seen as some of them began valuing the presence of parents in their classes. The researcher then made appointments with the participants. The purpose of the study was explained and the researcher had to seek concent from the participants. Participants were assured of confidentiality and their rights to privacy. The questionnaires and interviews were administered in person.

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3:7 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Bryman (2012) is of the view that, in a qualitative researh to ensure trustworthiness there is need to consider credibility, transferability, confirmability as well as dependability. In support are Guba and Lincoln (2005) who say credibility, transferabilty, dependability and confirmability are the key area of trustworthiness. In this study trustworthiness therefore means the extent to which findings provide the value of the information collected.

Therefor, ensuring trustworthiness, the researcher took notes on the responses of the participants during the interview process and a summary of the most important findings emerged from the process was read to the participants so that they confirm whether the information was in accodance of what transpired during the process. Again the researcher followed the laid down procedures of conducting a study that was being dependable to the supervisor by constantly interacting with her. The researcher also kept records of the research and stored recordings of the individual interviews done and the final draft for the verification by any interested person.

3.8.ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Denscombe (2007) says, there is need for ethical approval before the start of any research in any field. In carrying out the research, the researcher got a letter from the faculty of education at Midlands State University validating the research. The letter was then used in approaching the Bulawayo Metropolitan Province so as to be given permission to conduct a study in Khami District schools in Hyde Park North. The researcher produced the clearance letter from the province to the schools where data was to be collected. Also the researcher informed the participants on the nature of the study. Participants were also assured of confidentiality. Informed consent from participants was also considered. To reduce being recognised, the names of participants and schools remained anonymous.

3:9. DATA ANALYSIS

Kothari (2006) says data analysis is the process of organising the collected data for example into categories. Therefore, in this research data analysis is a process where the researcher works with collected data and makes its meaning clearer. The aim of data analysis is to organise collected data into different categories. Data analysis began immediately after the collection process to see whether there was no missing information. In this research, the

completed questionnaires will be inspected to determine their level of acceptability. Descriptive statistics will be used in analysing data as it provided quick analysis between the variables. Demographic data of participants was analysed using tables, pie charts, bar graph and a histogram graph. This was done so as to identify relationship among the characteristics of participants. On perception about parental involvement, barriers to parental involvement as well as strategies that can be used to enhance effective parental involvement, the researcher used content analysis so as to compare words used in the answers of participants. Also responses from interviews was analysed and integrated with the responses from questionnaires views of teachers and teacher in charge. These responses were also analysed using graphs and tables.

3.10. DATA MANAGEMENT

The completed questionnaires were filed and kept in a safe place so that no one will temper with them. Data was also kept on a computer and a password was used to lock the data so that people will not have access to the information. A back up in the form of a flash was used so that the information will be retrieved in case the computer gets lost or crashes. Moreover the information was kept on the researcher's email address.

3:11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter looked at research methodology. It included research design, population, sample and sampling procedures. Data collection instruments, procedures, data analysis, validity and reliability and ethical considerations were looked at. The next chapter will be concerned with data analysis, presentation and discussion.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is going to focus on data presentation, analysis and discussion. Data which was collected through observation, interviews and questionnaires will be presented. Data was collected in respect to perception of teachers and parents on parental involvement, barriers to parental involvement and strategies that can be used to enhance effective parental involvement.. The chapter will be presented under two sections, that is, the first section is on data presentation and analysis, and the second section will be on discussion of the data. Findings will be presented in bar graphs, pie charts as well as frequency distribution.

4. 1. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Data is presented under two categories that is, demographic data of respondents and responses of respondents to research questions.

4.1.1. Demographic data

Demographic data of participants help in providing adequate information with regards to challenges and prospects of parental involvement in teaching and learning at Early Childhood Education level. Demographic data establish characteristics of the respondents. To establish the general characteristics of the respondents involved in this study question 1 to 5 were included in the questionnaire for teachers, TICs as well as question 1 and 2 in the interview guide for parents.Data collected established the gender, age, professional qualification and experience of the respondents. Table 4:1 below gives a summary on gender of TICs, teachers and parents in the study.

Table 4:1Gender of teachers, TICs and parents in a sample

GENDER	TIC	%	TEACHERS	%	PARENTS	%
MALES	0	0	1	17	4	44
FEMALES	3	100	5	83	5	56
TOTAL	3	100	6	100	9	100

From the statistics provided above, it shows that there were more females than males who participated in the study. Of the 3 (100%) TICs all were females. The study indicated that out of the 6 teachers who participated in the study 5(83%) were females while there was 1(17%) male. The study revealed that of the nine parents in the study 5(56%) were females whereas 4(44%) were males. The study indicated that the views of both males and females were taken into consideration. Description on the qualification of teachers and teacher in charge is analysed below.Figure 1 below represents the professional qualifications of TICs and teachers.
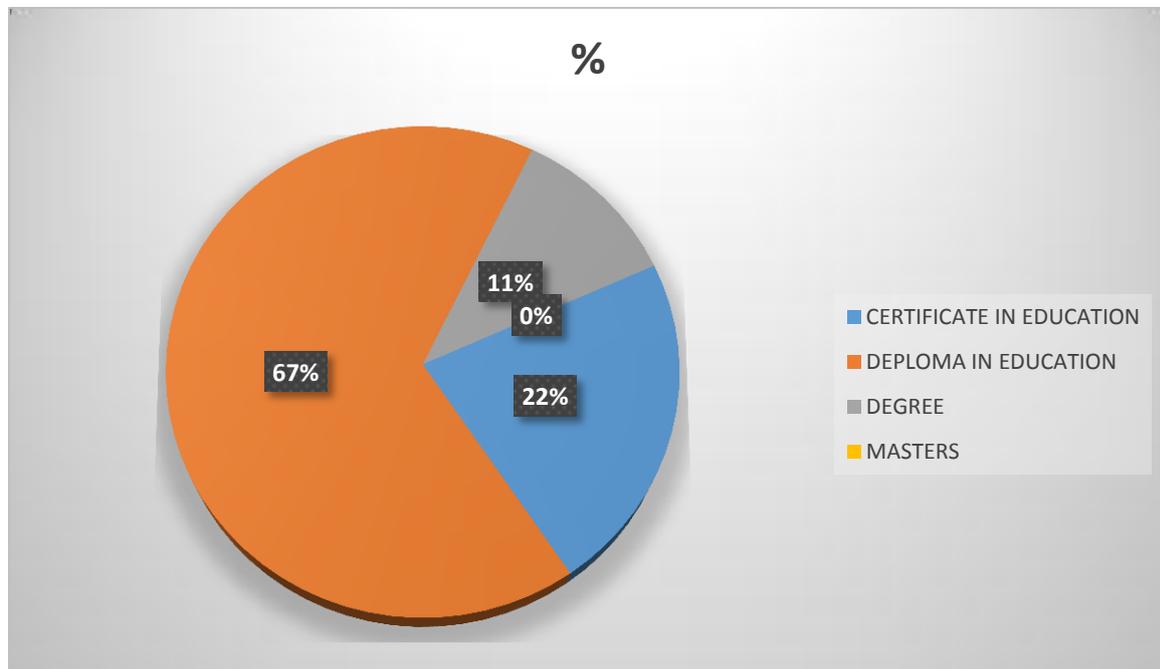
Figure 1: Distribution of TICs and teachers by professional qualifications

The pie chart above indicates that the majority of the respondents are qualified teachers who hold a diploma in education. 6 (67%) have a diploma in education, 2 (22%) have a certificate

in education, 1(11%) hold a degree in education and 0 do not hold masters degree. From the statistics above, it is clear that all the TICS and teachers in the study have a qualification in the teaching profession as advocated by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe. The next figure is going to give the statistics on the experience of teachers in the teaching profession. Figure 2 below represent the teaching experience of both TICs and teachers in the study.
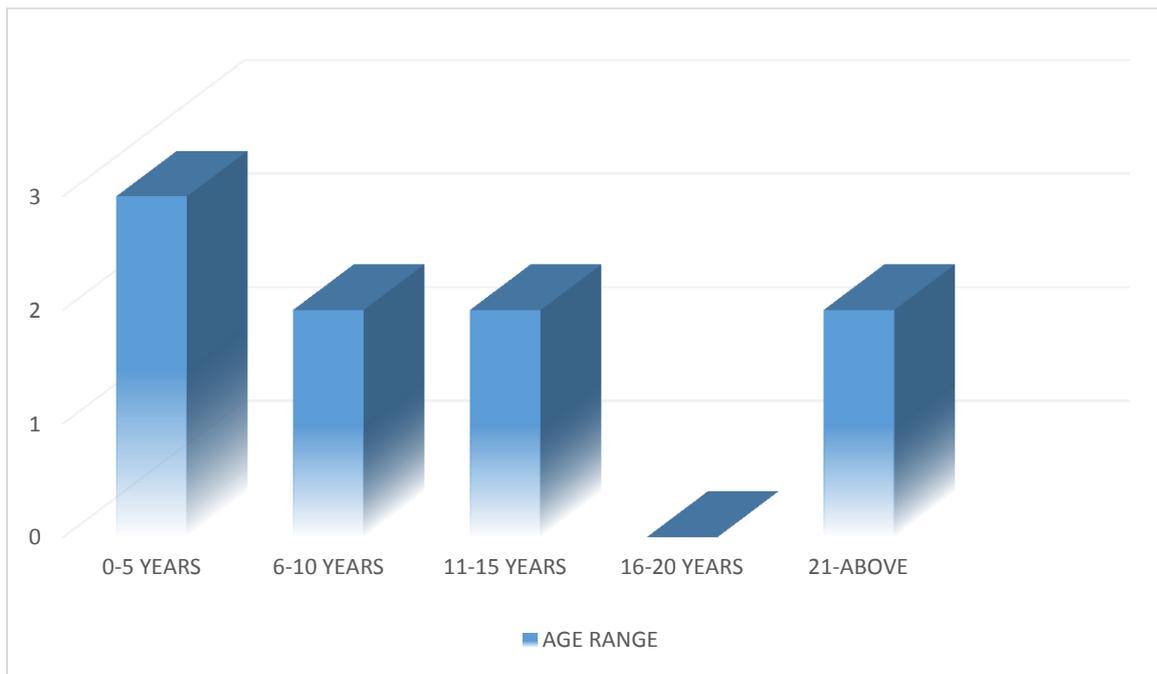
Figure 2: Distribution TICs and ECE teachers by teaching experience.

From the graph above, it can be shown that 3(34%) of the teachers who participated in the study fall within the 0-5 years range while 2 (22%) are within the 6-10 years range. Another 2 (22%) have been in the teaching profession for about 11- 15years, 2 (22%) were in the range of above 21 years. The presented data indicates that the teachers in the study have interacted with parents during their stay in the teaching profession hence are capable of providing adequate information on the challenges and prospects of parental involvement in the teaching and learning at Early Childhood Education level. Description of parents and teachers by age is displayed on the following table.Table 4:4 below presents the age range of TICs, teachers and parents in the study.
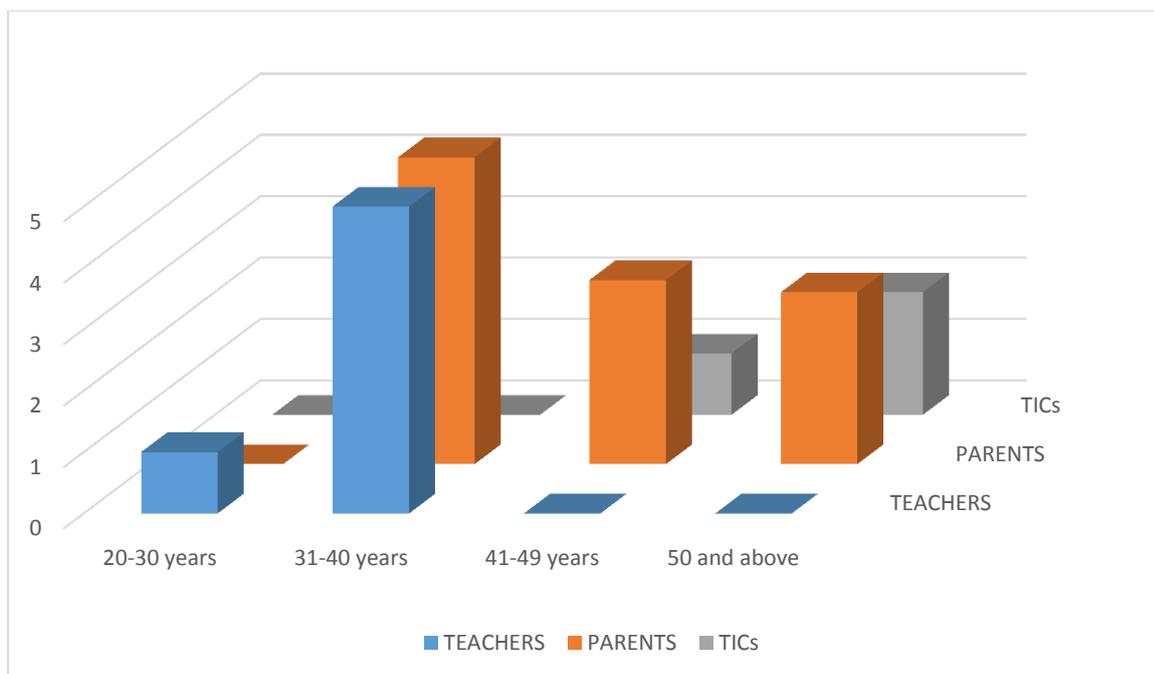
Figure 3: Age range of TICs, teachers and parents

Figure 3 above indicates that 5(83%) of teachers were between 31- 40 years of age and 1(17%) was in the range of 20- 30 years. The statistics indicates that of the nine parents who were interviewed in the study, 5(56%) were in the range of 31-40 years then 3 (33%) fall between 41-50 years of age while 1 (11%) was above 50 years of age. Among the TICs who participated in the study 2 (67%) were above 50 years of age while 1 (33%) was in the range of 41- 49 years of age. This implies that all participants in the study are mature enough to provide truthful information and are capable of encouraging and supporting one another for the successful implementation of parental involvement in the teaching and learning situation at ECE level.

4.2. REPONSES TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Having outlined the biographical data of the participants, the next section focuses on responses given by participants. These responses are based on the following research questions: perception of parents and teachers about parental involvement, barriers to parental involvement and strategies that can be employed by the school in promoting parental involvement in teaching and learning at ECE level.

4.2.1. PERCEPTION OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS ABOUT PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING AT ECE LEVEL.

In addressing this research question, the study wanted to find out about the perception of parents and teachers about parental involvement in the teaching and learning situation at ECE level. This information was important as the study wanted to find out the views of participants about parental involvement. In coming out with the findings question 6 to 8 on the questionnaire for teachers and teachers in charge were used whereas question 3 to 6 in the interview guide for parents wereincluded. The following themes emerged from the study

Theme 1: The concept of parental involvement

In responding to the question on perception about parental involvement, TICs, teachers and parents had their own views. One teacher viewed parental involvement as the process of engaging parents in all school activities. One of the parents said parental involvement is when the school and home work together towards the education of the learner. On the same note, a teacher viewed parental involvement as helping learners with homework, paying school fees, buying uniforms and learning resources for the learners. The given responses indicated that most of the participants knew what parental involvement entails. The responses indicated that parental involvement in children's learning was of great importance.

Theme 2. Impact of parental involvement

The study wanted to find out the impact of parental involvement in children's education. In responding to the above question, most participants revealed that when parents are involved in their children's education, learners are capable of doing well academically. One of the teachers said parental involvement assist teachers and parents in working in collaboration. As they work together teachers will get to know about the learner's developmental milestones from parents who are the first teachers to the learner.

Parental involvement help in moulding the behaviour of learners by both teachers and parents. For example when the learner plays delinquency of if he or she is bully, the school and the home will discuss and come up with measures on how they can assist the child. Another view on impact of parental involvement from the TIC was that it helps in developing the school, building more infrastructure, buying teaching and learning resources and also assisting learners with homework thus reinforcing concepts that were learnt at school.

One parent said when they involved in their children's learning, they feel respected and their self-esteem is boosted as their views are taken into consideration in the day to day running of the school. Parental involvement helps parents in knowing what role to play in their children's education. It also help both teachers and parents in knowing how to respond to different needs of learners and how to take care of them when they arise.

Theme 3 ways in which s parental involvement in school activities can be achieved

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

- EXELLENT — 55%
- GOOD — 28%
- AVERAGE — 17%
- POOR — 0%
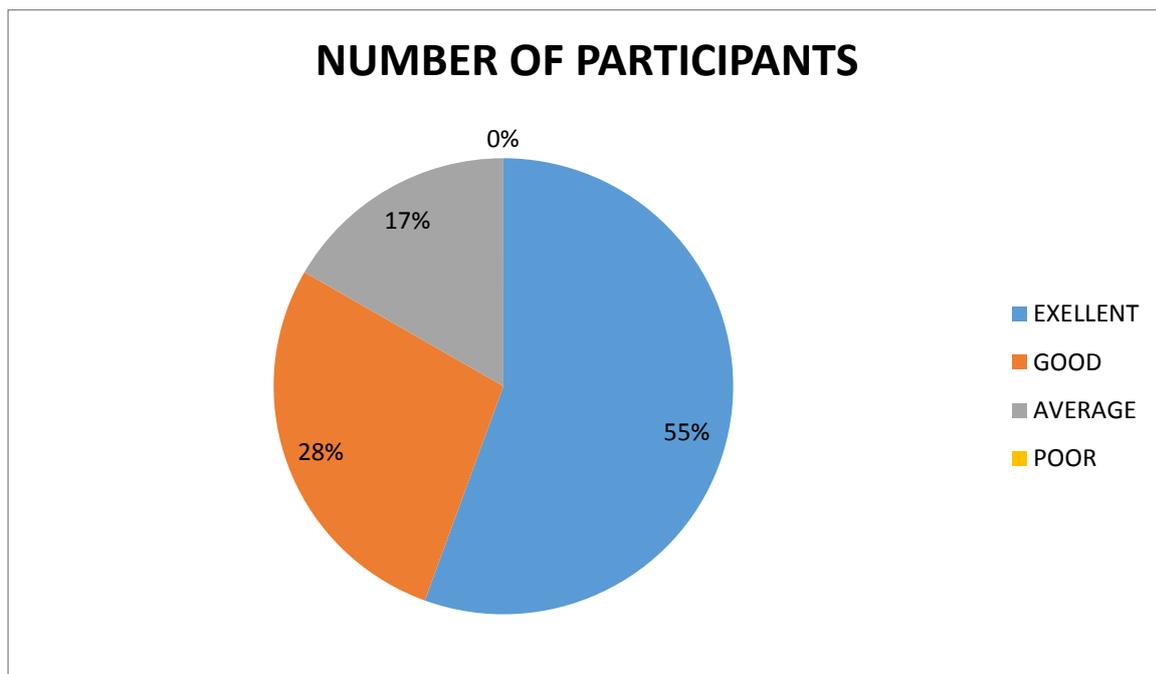
Figure 4 Paying school fees

The table above indicated that about 10 (55%) of the participants indicated that it is excellent to involve parents in paying school fees for their children. Another 5 (28%) of the participants indicated that it was good to involve parents in paying school fees for learners for the smooth running of school teaching and learning. The other 3 (17%) agreed that it was good to involve parents in paying school fees for their children. From the above responses, it is important for parents to pay school fees for learners as it will assist in buying the teaching and learning materials for leaners. Paying school fees is also important in running the school programmes such as sports days, graduations, paying workers as well as building more infrastructure as these require funding in order for them to be successful.

NO. OF PARTICIPANTS

EXCELLENT ■ GOOD ■ AVERAGE ■ POOR

0%
5%
17%
78%
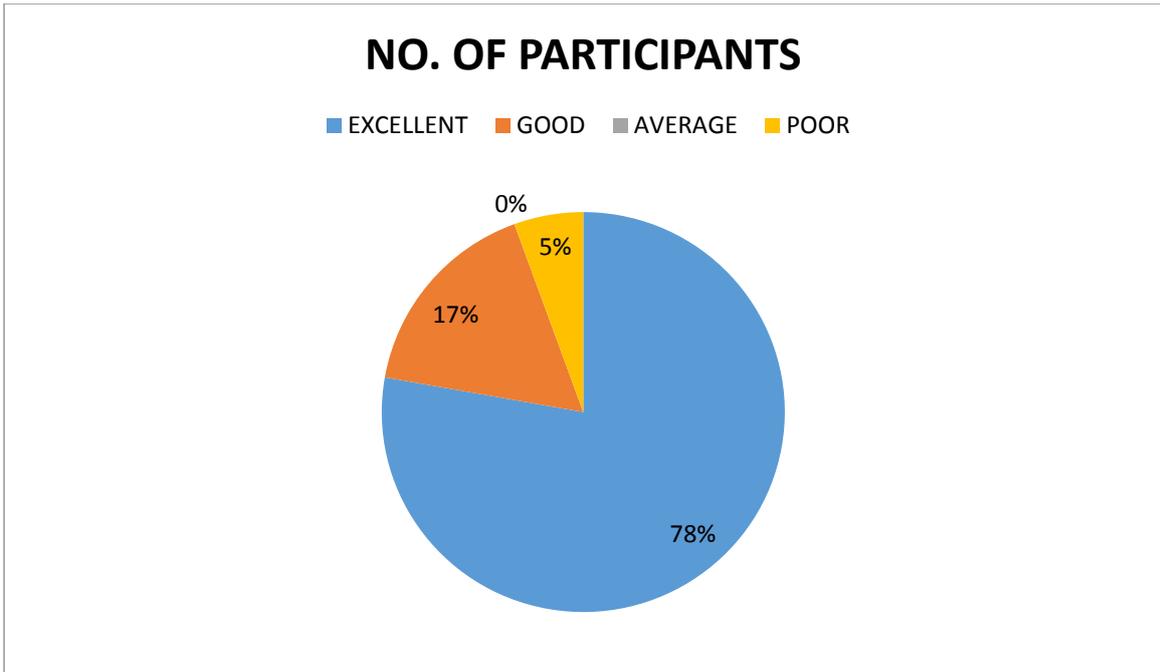
Figure 5.Assisting with homework

The Figure aboveindicates that 14(78%) of the participants said it was excellent that parents be involved in assisting their children with homework. The other 3(17%) said it was good to assist learners with homework. Of all the participants 1 (5%) indicated that assisting learners with homework was a poor idea. This was due to illiteracy of the participant who said helping learners with homework was going to lead them astray. Some parents believed that it was the teacher's duty to assist learners with all the learning expectations. Some parents felt they could not do well in assisting learners with homework as they have other commitments such as work and business commitments. However, the collected data above indicated that when the teacher and the home work together, learners are bound to have positive outcomes in the learning process. When parents assist learners with homework, they are likely to reinforce the concepts learnt at school.

NO. OF PARTICIPANTS

■ EXCELLENT   ■ GOOD   ■ AVERAGE   ■ POOR

17% 0%

83%
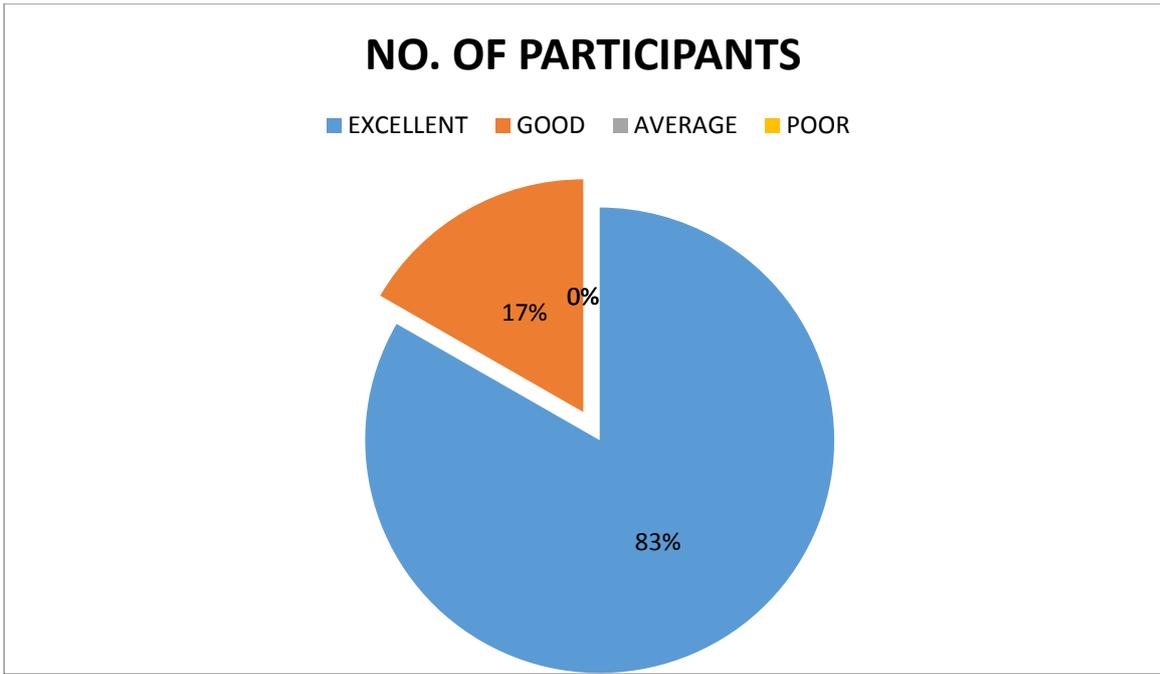
Figure 6. Helping in school projects and learning materials

In responding to the effectiveness of parental involvement in school projects and learning materials, 15 (83%) of the participants agreed that it was excellent that parents be involved. The other 3 (17%) of the respondents stated that it was a good idea to involve parents in school projects and providing learning materials. This then implies that parents can be involved in school projects such as developing the play centre, feeding and gardening as this will enhance holistical development of learners. Parents can also be involved in toy making

sessions, this will help provide adequate materials for learners. Involving parents in school projects and provision of learning materials will help in utilising the skills that parents possess.

4.2.2. BARRIERS TO PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Under this section, the researcher to find out the challenges that hinder parental involvement in Early Childhood Education teaching and learning. TICs, teachers and parents gave their own views regarding to barriers to parental involvement. To come up with responses question 9 to 12 in the questionnaire for teachers and teacher in charge were included and question 7 to 10 in the interview guide of parents.

Theme 1. Financial and work related constraints

The study wanted to find out whether financial and work commitments hindered parental involvement. The table above showed the responses given by TICs, teachers and parents. Parents strongly agreed that due to financial constraints, they fail to assist learners in their education. Some of them said they are failing to pay school fees and provide funding to school requirements such as buying books, paying for school functions thus making it difficult to provide full support to the learners. Due to work related constraints, some parents leave early for work and come back late at night tired making it difficult to assist learners with homework. Also parents find it difficult to attend parents meetings at school, consultation and sporting activities because of work commitments. They fail to attend these school activities since most of them are done during the week when they will be at work.

TICs and parents indicated that financial constraints makes it difficult to work with parents. This implies that if parents fail to provide funding for learners, it makes it difficult to work as there will be no learning resources. Some of these parents if they don't have money they don't even to bother to come to come school and at times they absent the learners. Also due to financial constraints, parents fail to provide exercise books, pencils and crayons making it difficult to achieve the set goals of the curriculum.

Theme 2 Negative attitude

The researcher sought to find out how negative attitude of both teachers and parents hinder parental involvement. Parents indicated that because of the negative attitude they get from teachers, they find it difficult to come and assist in school activities. They indicated that teachers look down upon them as parents with the view that they don't have the knowhow regarding the teaching and learning. As a result teachers do not involve parents effectively in teaching and learning. Parents said teachers do not take their views into consideration and that makes them draw back when it comes to getting involved in school activities.

On the other hand, teachers feel that it is difficult to work with parents because of the negative attitude they get from them. Teachers said some parents believe that getting their children to school is their utmost role. Such parents will not be available in any learning activities for their children. Some parents think they know better than teachers, as a result they impose of influence their views thereby affecting teaching and learning activities in a negative way which is not compatible with the curriculum.

Theme 3 Culture

The researcher wanted to find out how culture hinder parental involvement. Responses from some of the parents indicated that because of some of their cultural beliefs, they fail to participate fully in school activities. For example, for those parents whose beliefs do not match the school calendar may fail not to miss their ceremonies there by hindering parental involvement in the teaching and learning of pupils.

Teachers indicated that because of different cultural beliefs of learners in the classroom, some parents do not participate fully in school programmes. This is seen during health awareness campaigns, some religions do not believe in hospital medication. Thus on the day when there are health check-ups in school such parents withdraw their children from school. Thus making it difficult to find against infectious diseases as the school and the home do not work in collaboration. The teacher finds it difficult to educate parents on such matters. From the responses gathered, it is evident that culture is a barrier to effective parental involvement.

Theme4 Language

From the responses given by parents, language hinder them from coming to school because they find it difficult to communicate with teachers. For example, parents who find it difficult to communicate in English or using the language of the teacher may avoid contact with the school teachers as they feel embarrassed.

From the participant's responses, it is evident that language has a negative impact on parental involvement as there will be no understanding between teachers and parents.

4.2.3. Strategies that can be employed by the school to enhance effective parental involvement

This part of the study focuses on the employment of various strategies that can be employed by the school to enhance effective parental involvement. The strategies include assisting learners with homework, inviting parents to toy making sessions, consultation, ECD graduation, parents meetings as well as sporting activities. In establishing the responses of the participants question 13 to 15 in the questionnaire for teachers and teacher in charge were included then question 11 to 13 in the interview guide for parents were also used.

Theme 1 Assisting with homework

The study sought to find out how assisting learners with homework will enhance effective parental involvement. All the TICs and teachers in the study indicated that giving children homework makes it possible to engage parents in their children's learning. That is through giving homework, parents become involved in their children's learning. It will also help improve communication skills among parents and teachers as it will give parents the opportunity to ask questions where they have difficulties.Parents also indicated that if they assist their children with homework, they also come to know the concepts being taught making it easy for them to know what kind of learning materials to buy. The above responses from participants reflect that giving children homework on daily basis help improve effective parental involvement as parents also play a part in teaching and learning situation.
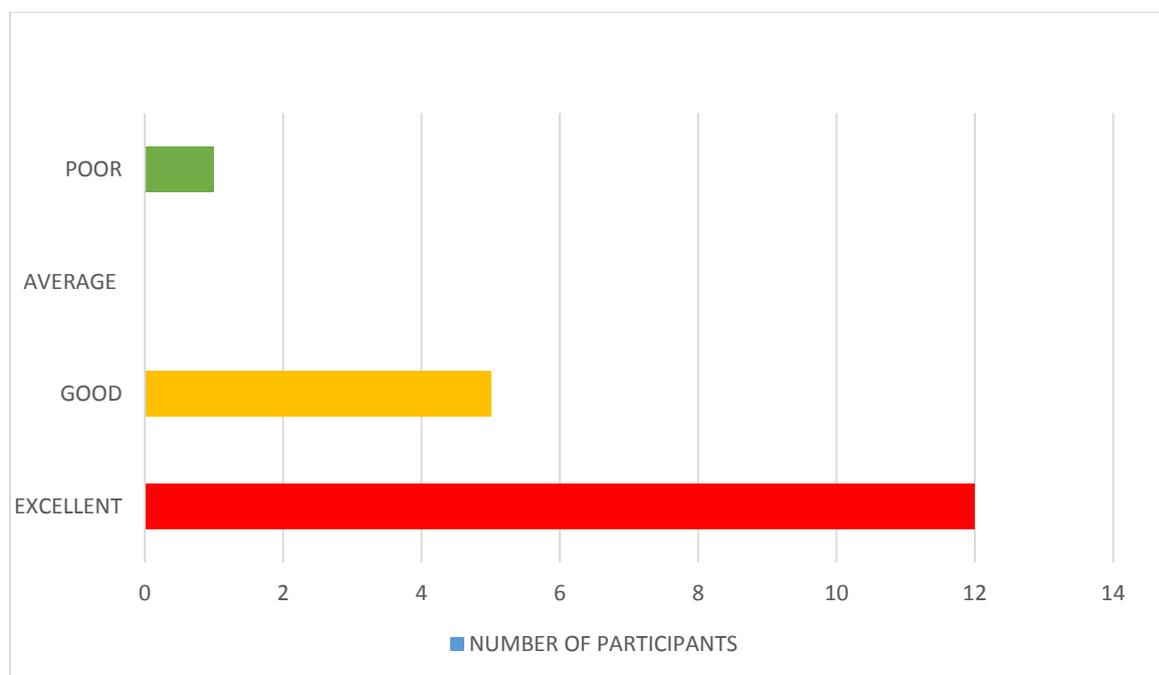
Figure 7 Responses of parents to consultation, graduation, parents meeting and sporting activities

The above figure indicates that 12(67%) of the responses agreed that it was excellent to invite parents to consultation, graduation, parents meetings and sporting activities so as to enhance parental involvement. Another 5(28%) said it was a good idea to involve parents in various school activities inorder to promote parental involvement. On the other hand 1(5%) said involving parents in school activities was a poor idea that will not yield positive results in the teaching and learning situation. The reasons may vary, it can be because some parents

have some other commitments that may hinder them to be involved in various school activities. Some other reasons may be because of financial constraints. The above responses revealed that involving parents in consultation, graduation, parents meetings and sporting activities may help yield positive results in the learning situation.

The study wanted to find out any other possible strategies that can be employed by the school in enhancing effective parental involvement. Participants gave their varied responses.

Parents indicated that there is need to improve communication relations between teachers and parents as this will help parents in getting involved in their children's education. Parents said teachers can make use of communication books, letters or phoning them informing what is going to take place in schools as this is very essential to both teachers and parents.

Teachers also suggested that holding community outreach programmes may also help improve parental involvement in school. Some of the parents need to be educated on the importance of parental involvement in children's education. They said parents can also be invited to be resource persons in the learning situation. This will make them feel important and valuable contributors in the learning situation thus parental involvement will be enhanced.

From the participants' responses, it is evident that inviting parents as resource persons, having community outreach programmes as well as having good communication relations with parents will help improve parental involvement. Also if parents views and ideas are taken into consideration in the learning situation, they will feel the need to participate in their children's learning.

4:3 DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

The researcher seeks to discuss finding of the study as guided by the research questions. The discussion of findings is centred on perception of teachers and parents about parental involvement, barriers to parental involvement as well as strategies that can be employed by the school in enhancing effective parental involvement. The discussion of findings is done reffering to the responses from questionnaires and interview with reference to literature reviewed.

4.3.1 PERCEPTION ABOUT PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The results under this section were discussed under the concept of parental involvement, impact of parental involvement, effectiveness of parental involvement in fees payment, assisting learners with homework as well as helping in school projects and learning materials

The study wanted to find out if TICs, teachers and parents knew what parental involvement meant. The findings from the study indicated that most of the participants understood the concept of parental involvement. It also revealed that parental involvement plays a pivotal role in teaching and learning at Early Childhood Education level.The study is in relation to what is said by Mapp (2000) that though researchers believe that parental involvement is significant, parents and teachers also agree that it is important. All interviewed parents appreciated the concept of parental involvement in schools.

The study found out that when parents are involved in their children's education there is high chances of earning positive outcomes. This is in line with Henderson and Mapp (2002) who say children earn higher grades and develops a positive attitude towards school if the family and school work together. Phillips cited in Henderson and Bella (1994) concur that educators believe that students excel in their academic performance if the parents enrich the learning process. Thus the home and the school need to work in collaboration in order to yield positive results. The findingsfrom teacher's responses indicated that if parents support the school by paying school fees, it will be easy to achieve the intended goals of the curriculum in teaching and learning set up. TICs and teachers indicated that learning becomes better if fees are paid on time. Thus paying of fees was an excellent idea to be used.From the findings, it was revealed that if learners are assisted with homework by their parents, there are high chances of reinforcing the learnt concepts.Teachers revealed that learners understand concepts better when parents and caregivers assist them in home work. This is supported by Brown and

Haylock (2005) who say parents work as aides in tasks asignedto learners such as assisting learners with homework. Children enjoy learning when parents are involved in their learning.

It emerged from the findings that parents can be involved in school projects such as developing the ECE play centre for the total development of the learner. The circular number 12 of 2005 concurs that School Development Associations which is composed of parents need to play an important role in developing and promoting all ECE programmes at their respective schools. Therefore, it is an excellent idea that parents should be involved in implementing school projects and providing learning materials.

4.3.2 BARRIERS TO PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Barriers to parental involvement are going to be discussed under this section. Barriers such as financial and work related constraints, negative attitude, culture and language will be discussed

The study revealed that financial and work related constraints hinderered parental involvement. This is in line with Ascher (1988) who say burdened by low income, inflexible working hours and language barriers, some parents fail to attend school activities thus making it difficult to be involved in their children's learning. It emerged that due to lack of financial resources, parents fail to pay their fees on time thus making it difficult to run planned school programmes effectively. Lack of financial resources lead to parents failing to buy exercise books, pencils, crayons and even fail to support learners in school activities that require funding. Findings also revealed that working parents find it hard to get involved in school activities such as parents meetings, consultation, feeding and even sporting activities due to their commitment to work demands.

Findings revealed that negative attitude of both teachers and parents hinder parental involvement. Teachers revealed that the attitude of parents towards them makes it difficult to

work with. They said some parents only bring their children to school and do not make any follow up regarding the learning. Parents indicated that teachers look down upon them with the belief that they do not know anything pertaining to teaching of children. As a result parents have withdrawn themselves in school activities.

It emerged from the findings that culture is a barrier to parental involvement. Due to various cultural beliefs, some parents do not attend school programmes for example, health programmes as their beliefs does not allow them to visit health institutions. Thus making it difficult to implement parental involvement.Responses from the interviews with parents revealed thattheir cultures do not support parental involvement especially on health issues. Literature review from Brown and Haylock (2004) say in some cultures there is no tradition of participating in school programmes and do not encourageparticipation of parents in school activities.

The findings revealed that language makes it difficult for the school and home to work in collaboration. Parents felt embarrassed to attend school programmes because of the language that will make it difficult to communicate with teachers.

4.3.3 STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE EFFECTIVE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

This section is going to discuss strategies that can be employed by the school to enhance effective parental involvement. Assisting with homework, inviting parents for consultation, graduation, parents meetings and sporting activities emerged as some of the strategies.The findings revealed that if learners are given homework on daily basis, chances are high that parents will assist them as a result parental involvement will be enhanced. This is supported by Battle- Bailey (2004) who says interactive homework is not only said to increase parental involvement but also student achievement. Thus from the findings giving children homework help increase parental involvement.

The findings alsorevealed that inviting parents for consultation days help improve effective parental involvement as they get the opportunity to discuss about their children's progress at school. Involving parents in school activities help improve results of learners. Parents need to attend graduation and sporting activities so that they come to know of the benefits it has to learners. It also emerged that inviting parents to meetings will give them an opportunity to air out their views with regards to learning. It also helps them in knowing the planned programmes in the school.

Findings also revealed that there is need to improve communication skills between the teacher and parents because some parents are not involved in activities since they do not know the programmes and proceedings of the school. The findings of the study concurs with Wherry (2009) who says administrators and teachers should encourage rrspectfull two way communication between the school and home.Teachers also indicated that the community need to be educated on the importance of getting involved in children's learning through community outreach programmes. Parents can also be invited to be resource persons in the classroom so that they understand how important they are in schools.

4:4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter focussed on data presentation, analysis and discussion on challenges and prospects of parental involvement in Early Childhood Education. Data came from TICs, teachers and parents through observation, questionnaires and interviews. The findings revealed that parental involvement is important in the teaching and learning situation at ECE level. The next chapter focuses on the summary of the major findings of the study, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives an overview of the findings based on the following research questions: perception of teachers and parents to parental involvement, barriers to parental involvement and strategies that can be employed to enhance parental involvement at Early Childhood Education level. Conclusions drawn from the findings will also be given. The chapter is also going to suggest recommendations based on the findings from TICs, teachers and parents.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The study sought to investigate the challenges and prospects of parental involvement in teaching and learning in Early Childhood Education level in three primary schools in Hyde Park North cluster schools in Khami District under Bulawayo Metropolitan Province.

Data was collected from eighteen participants comprising of three teacher in charge of the sampled schools, six Early Childhood Education teachers and nine parents of the E.C.E going children. Questionnaires, interviews and observations were used as a method of collecting data. Questionnaires were given to Early Childhood Education teachers and teacher in charge from the sampled schools whereas interviews were administered to parents whose children attended infant classes.

Tables, pie charts, bar graphs and histogram were used in analysing data being supported by a brief explanation of the findings. Since the study was dependant to participants to truthfully report on occurrences in their schools, the information not known to the participants may not have been touched in the study. In overcoming the challenge, the researcher made follow up on instruments to sought out clarification so as to enhance accurate findings. Time also became a challenge in collecting data since the schools were busy with their day to day programmes and activitie. The researcher then made efforts to make appointments with participants in advance.

The study revealed that most of the participants had knowledge about the concept of parental involvement. This is so because they were able to explain the concept of parental involvement in their own understanding. The researcher also established that parental involvement is important in children's learning as it motivates them learn. This was so because their parents provided them with the appropriate resources such at books, crayons, paying of fees. These helped in improving the academic progress of learners in a positive way.

Findings also revealed that paying of school fees is of great importance as it assists in the smooth running of school programmes. It was noted that if fees are paid on time it helps learning become easier and help in achieving the intended goals of the curriculum.

The findings also established that if learners are assisted with homework by their parents, there are high chances of reinforcing the learnt concepts. It was revealed that learners enjoy learning most if their parents are involved in the education.

It was established from the study that if parents are involved in school projects they contribute to the total development of the learner. Hence parents need to be involved in school projects and provision of learning materials.

It was revealed that lack of financial resources hinder parental involvement. This is so because parents fail to provide funding thus making it difficult to implement the ECE programmes. If funding is not provided on time development becomes slow. The findings also revealed that working parents find it hard to attend to school programmes due to their commitment to work. Failure to attend school meetings and consultations results in failure to the learner.

The study established that negative attitude of both teachers and parents hinder effective parental involvement. Negative attitudes from teachers demotivate parents to participate in school programmes.The findings revealed that due to diversity of cultures, it is difficult to implement effective parental involvement in schools.It emerged from the study that language is a barrier to

parental involvement as it makes it difficult for communication to take place between teachers and parents.

From the findings, it emerged that if learners are given home work on daily basis, parental involvement will be enhanced as learners will get the opportunity to be assisted by their parents in the learning situation.The study revealed that parents meetings, consultation, graduation and sporting activities are essential in children's education therefore the need to involve parents for these programmes to be successful. It was found out that these activities help parents in knowing the proceedings of the school and the benefits it has on learners.

5:2 CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the study was on challenges and prospects of parental involvement in teaching and learning at Early Childhood Education. Based on the findings the following conclusions were made:

~ Parental involvement is of great importance in the teaching and learning of ECE learners. It help improve positive results in learners and motivate them to learn.

~ Though parental involvement is important in children's learning, there are barriers that hinder the implementation of effectiveness parental involvement in schools. These are financial and work related constraints, negative attitude, culture and language.

~ The participants in the study suggested strategies that can be employed by the school for effective parental involvement. These are assisting learners with homework, inviting parents for consultation, parents meetings, graduation as well as sporting activities that take place in schools.

5:3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the presented research findings and conclusions, the following recommendations can be made:

5:3:1 Recommendations for practice

- There is needed to come up with programmes by the government and schools stating the importance of parents in the teaching and learning situation at ECE level.

- Workshops for TICs and teachers on how to involve parents in school activities should be given.

- The school administration should come out with measures to assist parents with financial constraints so as to accommodate all children in the education system.

- School authorities and teachers should source funding to assist learners who have difficulties in paying school fees for example, BEAM, Capernaum, camfed.

- Teachers to improve their communication channels with parents regarding activities taking place in the school.

- The school should take into consideration the views from parents regarding the education of their children.

5.3.2. Recommendations for further study

- It is recommended that the government should revise the policy on free education for all so that Early Childhood Education learners can get the chance to learn without worrying them about fees. The government to put the ECE programme in place in teaching the parents about their value and the role they play in the education system.

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RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

I am a student at Midlands State University studying for a bachelor in Early Childhood Education degree. I am carrying out a research on the "Challenges and prospects about parental involvement in the teaching and learning in Early Childhood Education" in Hyde Park North Primary Schools in Khami District Schools under Bulawayo Metropolitan Province. You are requested to respond to all questions below. All the information given will be sincerely kept private and confidential. It is for academic purpose only.

SECTION A

Personal details

1. Sex   Male ☐   Female ☐

   Age 20-30years ☐   31-40years ☐   41-50years ☐   above 50years ☐

2. Qualification

Academic

O'level ☐   A 'level ☐   any other ☐

   Professional

   C.E ☐   DipEd ☐   Degree ☐

3. Experience in teaching

   0-3years ☐   3-5years ☐   6-10years ☐   10years and above ☐

SECTION B

What are parents and teacher's perceptions about parental involvement?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

6. What is your understanding about parental involvement?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

7. What is the impact of parental involvement in your class?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

8.How would you describe parental involvement in teaching and learning activities at ECE level?

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
Fees Payment				
Assisting with home work				
Providing learning materials				
Helping in school projects				

SECTION C

What are the barriers to parental involvement?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

Negative attitude

9. How does negative attitude affect parental involvement in school?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

Financial and work related constraints

10. What is the impact of financial and work related constraints on parental involvement in school?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

Culture

11. How does the cultural background and beliefs of parents hinder effective parental involvement in school?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Language

12. In what ways does language hinder parental involvement in school?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………

SECTION D

What strategies can increase involvement of parents in teaching and learning in Early Childhood Education level?

Assisting with homework

13. How do you think giving children homework is a good strategy of involving parents?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Establishing outdoor play centres

14. How effective is the involvement of parents in establishing outdoor centres and why?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………

15. How is the turnout of parents in Early Childhood Education programmes?

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
Consultation Days				
Graduation days				
Sporting activities				
Parents meetings				

Research questionnaire for Teacher In Charge (T I C)

I am s student at Midlands State University studying for a bachelor in Early Childhood Education Degree. I am carrying out a research on "Challenges and prospects of parental involvement in the teaching and learning in Early Childhood Education" in Hyde Park North Primary Schools in Khami District Schools under the Bulawayo Metropolitan Province. You are requested to respond to all questions below. All the information given will be sincerely kept private and confidential. It is or academic purposes only.

SECTION A

1. Sex   Male   ☐   Female   ☐

2. Age

   20-30years   ☐   31-40years   ☐   41-50years   ☐   above 50years   ☐

3. Experience is school as a Teacher In Charge

   0-5 years   ☐   6-10 years   ☐   11-20 years   ☐   above 21 years   ☐

4. Professional qualifications

   CE   ☐   DipEd   ☐   Bed   ☐   Degree   ☐

   Any other   ☐

SECTION B

What are the teacher's perceptions about parental involvement?

5. What is your understanding about parental involvement?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………

6. Justify the need to involve parents in ECE programmes in your school.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………

7. How would you describe parental involvement in ECE activities in your school?

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
Fees payment				
Assisting with home work				
Providing learning materials				
Helping in school projects				

SECTION C

What are the barriers to parental involvement?

Negative attitude

8. How does negative attitude of parents hinder effective parental involvement?

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

Financial and work related constraints

9. In what ways do financial and work related constraints hinder parental involvement in schools?

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

Culture

10. How does the culture of parents constrain effective parental involvement in ECE settings?

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

Language

11. Does language hinder effective parental involvement?, explain?

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

12 Comment on challenges faced by parents in ECE activities

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Negative attitude				
Unfriendly atmosphere				
Financial constraints				
Cultural background				

SECTION D

8. Suggest five possible strategies that can improve parental involvement in your school.

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………

………

………

Interview guide for parents.

SECTION A

1. Sex   Male ☐   Female ☐

2. Age

    20-30 years ☐   31-40 years ☐   41-50 years ☐   above 50 years ☐

SECTION B

What are parents and teacher's perceptions about parental involevent?

3. What do you understand about parental involvement?

4.In your own view why do you think it is necessary that you should be involved in school activities?

5. How do you assist teachers and learners in the teaching and learning situation?

6. How does your involvement in school activities affect your child's performance?

SECTION C

What are barriers to parental involvement?

Negative attitude

7. How does the school or teacher negative attitude hold you back in getting involved in school activitie?

Financial and work related constraints

8. How does lack of financial resources and work related constraints lower your participation in pupil's learning and school activities?

9. Comment on the challenges that you face as parents in getting involved in children's teaching and learning

	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	disagree
language				
Unfriendly atmosphere				
Cultural background				

10. What are some of the challenges that hinder your participation in ECE activities?

SECTION D

What strategies can increase involvement of parents in the teaching and learning in Early Childhood Education?

Assisting with homework

11. How do you think assisting your child with home work can strengthen collaboration between the parent and the school?

Establishing outdoor centres

12. How effective is the involvement of parents in establishing outdoor centres and why?

13. How is theturnout of parents in Early Childhood Education programmes?

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
Consultation days				
Graduation days				
Parents meetings				
Sporting activities				