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DEPARTMENT OF FOUNDATIONS MANAGEMENT AND CURRICULUM STUDIES

A study into the effectiveness of the strategies used in fostering positive learner engagement and motivation in ECE. A case study of Mahlabezulu Primary School.

BY

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THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE BACHELOR OF EDUCATION DEGREE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AT MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY.

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APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have supervised/read and recommend for the acceptance, a research project entitled: A study into the effectiveness of the strategies used in fostering positive learner engagement and motivation in ECE. A case study of Mahlabezulu Primary School. This was submitted by Patricia Sibanda in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Education Degree in Early Childhood Education (BECE) (Midlands State University).

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DECLARATION

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DEDICATION

This research dissertation is dedicated to my father Mr C Chisembwere , An exemplary man whose counsel, encouragement and love have been the fuel that has driven me since day one.

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This dissertation would not have been possible without the astute guidance and supervision of Dr T.T Mugodzwa for whom I am greatly grateful. I am sincerely appreciative of the efforts and input that my family has devoted into my education since day one, the struggles have been many but we have weathered them all.

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ABSTRACT

Motivation is a necessity so that learning becomes a continuing, productive, interesting and enjoyable process. However it has been observed that ECE learners lack motivation and drive towards their school work and as such they suffer academic performance lags. Many reasons can be attributed to this; teachers have therefore tried to come up with measures to ensure that the levels of motivation are improved; however some of these measures have met limited success. This research project therefore sought to investigate the effectiveness of the motivational techniques used by teachers to foster positive engagement in ECE learners at Mahlabezulu Primary School. The challenges presented by students who struggle to connect with curriculum learning in school is not only a Zimbabwean problem but is a contemporary issue that confronts education systems globally and for that reason this researcher drew up the back ground of the study to discuss this state of affairs. The researcher then went on to review literature related to the strategies used in improving learner motivation and fostering learner engagement. The work of other scholars was observed and analysed, the researcher presented a logically structured representation of the concepts, the variables and relationships involved as well as the theories involved in motivation and learner engagement. The researcher focused on Maslow's hierarchy of needs as well as Pavlov's learning theory and Skinner's behaviour modification mode. The author then drew up a procedural plan for the fieldwork and that plan included the use of questionnaires, interviews and participant observations to harvest data. The researcher followed a qualitative research paradigm which utilised the case study method. The data collected from the field showed that the strategies currently being used by the school were moderately effective due to a lack of resources in the school as well as the lack of parental involvement in addressing the issue. Furthermore the issue of hot sitting was a prickly issue as it was identified as the chief contributor to poor motivation among ECE learners. To conclude the study the researcher made vital recommendation some of which included the need to invest in infrastructural development at the school and the need for teachers to give more control to ECE learners in the learning process as well as the need to challenge learners through extension work.

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LIST OF ACCYRONYMS

ECE : Early childhood education

TIC : Teacher in Charge

UNESCO : The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the research project. It puts the study into perspective by highlighting the background of the study, the aims and the objectives of the study as well as the significance of why the project was undertaken to begin with. Furthermore it identifies the limitations encountered during the inquiry and it also shows the geographical and conceptual delimitations of the study. The chapter will also focus on the research aims as well as the research questions which prompted the study.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Motivating learners is the cornerstone to any successful educational system. Educational psychology holds that motivation is a major concept in most theories of learning, and as such no meaningful learning will take place if learners are not motivated. A well-crafted curriculum, a highly learned teacher force and the best textbooks money can buy will count for nothing if learners' motivation is not given the attention and the importance it requires. This point is cleverly articulated by Brophy (2004) who says that there are three things to remember about education. The first one is motivation. The second one is motivation. The third one is motivation.

Identifying the importance of motivation and learner engagement is easy, but actually coming up with sound strategies that will help foster positive learner engagement and improve motivation in learners is not so straight forward. Teachers need to carefully come up with techniques and ways to connect with and inspire their learners. It is against this backdrop that this research project was undertaken.

Maintaining high levels of motivation and positive learner engagement at any level of education is never easy; however this task is even more difficult when dealing with infants in ECE suggests Mouly (2000). Having taught infants for the past 18 years this researcher concurs with the scholar's sentiments, this researcher battles with motivating learners to work to their fullest potential. Educators and teachers alike have lamented over the issue of motivation. At the pre-research phase ,teachers at this researcher's host school have been overheard lamenting saying statements like : "this year I have the laziest of pupils" , "my class lacks inspiration I tell you" , "I can't deal with these kids , they are always tired and uninterested" , "these pupils are unresponsive , I just can't get through to them" . Teachers are sometimes left baffled by learners' lack of drive and motivation. They battle with the task of what they have to do to motivate these learners to trigger a positive response.

Neubeck (2000) suggests that poor motivation is a problem that all care givers struggle with. Looking through the lens of a parent, poor motivation in infants can be seen. As a parent this researcher can recall my infant son bringing up every form of excuse not to go to school on some days. "I don't feel like going to school", "I'm too tired to go to school", "school is boring" and many other excuse that he can come up with. It's never unusual for an infant to want to stay at home and be away from school once in a while but it speaks volumes on the child's level of motivation if the excuses are too frequent. It points toward a child who lacks motivation .The parent has the duty to motivate the child in his/her capacity as parent but the rest of the duty of motivating lay with the teacher who spends most of the day with the child at school say Tuckman and Moneti (2011).It is therefore crucial that schools come up

with effective strategies to improve motivation and foster positive engagement in ECE learners.

The signs and symptoms of poor motivation in learners are numerous and varied. Conversation with fellow teachers has revealed numerous behaviours that show learners' lack of motivation. Some teachers have reported of learners bunking school, some hiding in toilets during lessons to avoid class, some hide books and deliberately lose their pencils to avoid writing, some pretend to be ill to avoid being troubled by the teacher, sleeping in class is another symptom, making noise while important concepts are being taught, unwillingness to try when given tasks, reluctance to raise hands when being asked questions and some pupils even refusing to speak when required to by the teacher. This researcher can recall on one particular occasion when a grade one pupil simply confessed that he hates school and I shouldn't bother him. This incident has occurred to many teachers as well. According to Dembo (2004) one of the most difficult aspects of becoming a teacher is learning how to motivate your students. It is also one of the most important. According to Gage and Berliner (2012) students who are not motivated will not learn effectively. They won't retain information, they won't participate and as suggested by Ray (2012) some of them may even become disruptive in the classroom. Which brings about the questions, what can be done to better motivate our learners?, what is being currently done by teachers to address this current state of affairs?, is what is being done enough to motivate these learners and what should be done to adequately address this phenomenon.

Further effects of poor motivation manifest in the form of truancy and even school drop outs. While school drop outs were more common in secondary school learners the problem is not unusual in primary school goes these days. In an enlightening article written by Condrón (2000) entitled *When Kids Don't Care*, the author posits that learners are losing the desire to learn and the interest in schooling earlier than in yesteryears. The said author attributes this to poor teaching methods, adverse school environments and lack of confidence in the school system among some of the reasons for this. Mahlabezulu Primary school being located in the high density townships of Bulawayo has pupils who have been socialised by the urban ideology that migrating to South Africa is their sole option and that education is not of primary importance. Some learners as young as grade 1 are convinced that their destiny lies outside of education. This brings about the question, how does a teacher craft a motivational strategy that will be effective to keep a child who has been socialised to this misinformation.

The challenge of lack of motivation in learners is not unique to Zimbabwe; it is a problem that is common world over. According to UNESCO (2004) 5% of all school dropouts are due to psychological factors that include negative attitudes towards school, lack of confidence in the school system and boredom. Griggs (2010) offers more reasons, he posits students may be unmotivated for these following reasons : they may feel that they have no interest in the subject, find the teacher's methods un-engaging or be distracted by external forces. It may even come to light that a student who appeared unmotivated actually has difficulty learning and is need of special attention.

Behaviourist psychologist McLeod (2014) articulated that it is rare to find an unmotivated pupil when they arrive in the first few months of elementary school but as they grow up and move forward to upper grades their passion for learning and school frequently seems to shrink and dwindle. The excitement that was there when they arrived will almost naturally diminish as they grow up. In some instance parents have to come dragging their children screaming and shouting to school. Dragging their child to class, parents and guardians sometimes feel the need to coerce them to learn. This brings us to another aspect of this phenomenon that inspired this study – the role of corporal punishment.

Since the abolishment of corporal punishment, some teachers have been left clueless on how to motivate their learners. The coercive technique of corporal punishment was the only way they knew how to keep their students engaged and motivated. Former Minister of Primary and secondary Education Dr Lazarus Dokora castigated the practice of corporal punishment where the sight of a teacher carrying a beating stick is almost normal in many primary schools. It is believed by some that the only way to communicate and engage with infants to do their work is to coercively motivate them. Dembo (2004) notes with disgust that the use of corporal punishment is the only way some teachers know how to engage their learners. The abolishment of corporal punishment thus is viewed by some teachers as a negative, they feel they have been disarmed and have been left toothless in their quest to motivate their learners. Which raises the same research questions, what strategies have ECE teachers been using to motivate learners since the abolishment of corporal punishment and how effective have they been.

While motivating students can be a difficult task, the rewards are more than worth it. Motivated students are more excited to learn and participate. Simply put, teaching a class full of motivated students is enjoyable for teacher and student alike. Some students are self-motivated, with a natural love of learning while some do not have this natural drive. It is from this knowledge and background that this research is undertaken.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It has been observed that ECE learners lack motivation and drive towards their school work and as such they suffer academic performance lags. Many reasons can be attributed to this; teachers have therefore tried to come up with measures to ensure that the levels of motivation are improved, however some of these measures have met limited success. This research project therefore sought to investigate the effectiveness of the motivational techniques used by teachers to foster positive engagement in ECE learners at Mahlabezulu Primary School.

1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The study aims to analyse the effectiveness of strategies used by teachers in fostering positive learner engagement and motivation in ECE learners.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To identify the strategies used by teachers in fostering positive learner engagement and motivation in ECE learners.
- To examine the effectiveness of the said strategies.
- To explore the reasons behind the failure of these strategies.
- To come up with recommendations on amendments that could be made to improve the strategies being employed by teachers.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Primary question

This research was guided by the following primary research question: How effective are the strategies used by teachers in fostering positive learner engagement and motivation in ECE learners ?

Sub questions

In addition to the primary research question, the following critical sub questions were addressed during the research project:

- What are some of the strategies and techniques used by teachers to improve learner engagement and motivation?
- Why have some of the motivational strategies that have been employed by teachers failed?
- What challenges do teachers face in implementing motivational strategies?

1. 6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The researcher hopes the findings of the research project will contribute new knowledge and new perspectives to the existing body of knowledge on learner motivation in ECE. ECE is the gateway to the rest of the child's education, a child who develops negative attitudes towards school and school work at the ECD stage will most likely grow up with the same attitudes and poor motivation. It is therefore significant that this phenomenon be investigated to ensure that the early childhood education stage is one that fosters positive attitudes.

The researcher also hopes the findings of the research coupled with the prescribed recommendations will help teachers to amend and improve their existing strategies and programmes on fostering learner engagement and motivation.

Furthermore it is the researcher's hope that by adding new perspectives to the study and arming teachers with the right tools , the research project will ultimately help the learners who struggles to maintain positive engagement during lessons and who underperform in their school work due to being poorly motivated .

Since knowledge is an on-going process of acquiring new information, the findings gained from the study can be used to further knowledge on learner motivation and engagement. Moreover I will use these findings to further my knowledge in my practise and become a better teacher.

1.7 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research was confined and limited to Mahlabezulu Primary school in the Mzilikazi District of the Bulawayo Metropolitan Province.

Conceptual Delimitation

The study primarily focused on those motivational techniques and strategies that the teacher can directly influence in his/her capacity as educator. Those aspects of learner motivation that pertain the role of the parent/ guardian that the teacher cannot directly influence were given secondary importance.

1. 8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.

The research was limited by time; the researcher had to juggle the research project demands and school responsibilities as well as the duties of being a teacher. To address this limitation, the researcher ensured that time was managed well and avoided the situation where the research was rushed and thus quality compromised.

Findings in Mahlabezulu Primary school may not be the general representative results for the whole district. However the researcher addressed this limitation by maintaining objectivity and due care to ensure the findings are generalizable to most schools.

Owing to their immense workloads and work commitments, the researcher failed to engage all the subjects as desired .However to mitigate this limitation of accessibility, the researcher ensured that teachers were approached and engaged early in the term before the subjects' workloads increased.

1.9 ASSUMPTIONS

- It was that assumed the participants answered the interview questions in an honest manner.
- It was also assumed participants had a sincere interest in participating in the research and did not have any other motives, such as pushing their own personal agendas.
- It was further assumed the proctored instruments used gave the intended and accurate findings.

1.10 SUMMARY

This chapter was a preamble to the problem. It covered all the preliminaries of the research i.e. the aims, the objectives, significance of the study, delimitations as well.

The next chapter will review related literature on the subject.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with reviewing literature related to the strategies used in improving learner motivation and fostering learner engagement. The chapter consists of what other scholars have observed, argued and concluded relating to the phenomenon. The researcher will present a logically structured representation of the concepts, the variables and relationships involved. The works of authors, scholars and other researchers as well as works of academics past and present will be cited. The researcher will utilize various texts, journals and relevant publications as well as utilize relevant models and theories to help bring understanding to the phenomenon.

2.2 MOTIVATION IN EDUCATION

It is paramount that the researcher defines and outlines the types of motivation . Motivation is defined as an internal drive that activates behaviour and gives it direction and thus the term motivation is concerned with the processes that describe why and how human behaviour is activated and directed” (Ray 2011.). Mouly (2000) defines motivation as an internal state or condition that activates behaviour and gives it direction, the same author further goes to expand and articulates motivation as the desire or want that energizes and directs goal-oriented behaviour. Mouly (2000) provides an additional component in his definition and he defines it as follows, motivation is the arousal, direction, and persistence of behaviour. From the numerous definitions it can be seen that motivation entails something that supports someone to do something. A strategy, a stimuli or an internal process are

components that affects or influences one to do something with greater purpose. So in other words motivation is the fuel that drives the learner to act and function according to the requirement and expectations of the school curricular .Motivation is thus one of the most significant factors in education that determines if the learner reaches their goals and potential in the learning process. Without the provision of this fuel no proper learning can occur.

2.3 TYPES OF MOTIVATION.

There are two broad types of motivation i.e. intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation; these shall be explored in greater detail.

Motivation can come from within or without and that is why motivation can be categorized in to these two categories. Intrinsic motivation refers to an inherent interest in pursuing a topic i.e. learning for learning's sake. (Mwamwenda 2001). These individuals find a subject enjoyable and they naturally desire to learn mastery of it. According to Mouly (2000) intrinsic motivation involves behaviour that is driven by internal rewards. In other words, the motivation to engage in behaviour arises from within the individual because it is naturally satisfying to the individual. This point is echoed by Jones and Jones (2000) who express that intrinsically motivated activities are ones for which there is no apparent reward except the activity self , people seem to engage in the activities for their own sake and not because they lead to any reward .The internal factors might include needs, interest, and enjoyment .

There are various practical ways that a teacher can help promote intrinsic motivation in ECE. A review of numerous literature yielded the following ways:

a) Provide learning goals.

Research has shown that when teachers give learners a goal, students experience a boost in self-efficacy and internal motivation. By providing clear learning goals at the beginning of class or before an activity, infants may be more intrinsically motivated to work toward those goals. Gage (2012) also posits the same point by suggesting that ECE teachers should set goals for the learners and outline them clearly so that students know exactly what is expected of them. Furthermore he suggests that teachers should make it clear to students that success is not guaranteed, but is instead likely if they are willing to put forth a quality effort. Teachers should thus define effort to the students as a factor that is completely controlled by each student's willingness.

b) Create a student-centred classroom.

When students are involved in their own learning, they are more intrinsically motivated so suggests Gage (2012). It is therefore important that an ECE teacher allows students to have a say in the course where possible and try to incorporate an active learning activity regularly.

c) Creating engaging lessons.

Mouly (2000) suggests that ECE teachers should refrain from delivering boring and uninteresting lessons to their learners. ECE teachers should create lesson plans that whet the appetite of infants .Mouly (2000) further goes on to say that teachers should introduce a topic and give learners enough information, in an engaging manner, to help them realize that it may

be personally rewarding and interesting to further explore the topic. This strategy will help encourage students to take on assignments because they want to know more, instead of feeling required to do so just to pass.

d) Communicate value in uninteresting activities

It is unlikely that all activities or all lessons are interesting for every pupil. Some lessons can be naturally boring and uninteresting for some infants. Some pupils will show little motivation when it comes to such lessons. Frager (2006) suggests pupils who are not motivated can have a negative effect on the motivation of other pupils the class and even on the motivation of the teacher. Hence, it becomes important to think about how to handle these students or how to motivate these students to engage in the expected behaviours. To make the expected behaviour of these students self-determined, a teacher could communicate the value of doing these uninteresting activities to the students .This means providing rationales for engaging in the said lessons. For example, for students who are not interested in Mathematics as a subject, the ECE teacher could explain how it is relevant and important in functioning in everyday life. The teacher could provide the learners with the scenario that a person who can't count will have trouble in counting money and they could be cheated when they buy from the store or the tuck-shop. The teacher could motivate pupils by telling them learning to read will help the infants assist their parents in tasks at home. When the learners understand the value of learning various subjects they will autonomously choose to study it and show greater desire. Frager (2006) argues that shifting their motivation towards the self-determined motivation,

rather than it being controlled by the teacher's expectations will result in more permanent learning due to a more self-determined motivation.

e) Promote a mastery goal, rather than a performance goal.

If students are motivated to gain mastery, rather than simply aiming for a performance goal, they are more likely to invest more effort into their own learning. Therefore ECE teachers should try to foster in students a goal of becoming fluent in English, rather than having them focus on passing the subject. In addition it is suggested by Gage(2012) that teachers especially at elementary or infant level should de-emphasize grades or pass marks and emphasize the intrinsic rewards of learning.

f) Have high, but realistic expectations for pupils.

Twinning (1999) argues that teachers' expectations can have a powerful effect on students' performance. The author notes that standards should be set high enough to challenge students and motivate them to do their best without being so high that students feel they are unattainable. If students believe achievement is within their grasp, they will work toward that goal. It is therefore important for ECE teachers to follow the syllabus and not teach things that are too demanding for infants as that will lead to frustration and demotivation in the learners.

g) Encourage learners to accept more responsibility for their learning

ECE teachers should encourage learners to accept more responsibility for their learning so suggests Frager (2006) .Having responsibility for their own

learning has been shown to stimulate students' motivation (Willis et al. 2002). Ways of encouraging students to accept more responsibility for their learning are ending the lesson with further questions to be discussed in the next lesson and giving time for pupil feedback.. Active participation of students in learning sessions transfers some of the responsibility for learning from the teacher to the pupils making the learning more autonomous.

h) Provide optimal challenges and extension work

Teachers should provide optimal challenges during the teaching session, e.g. give the students small topics for preparation and presentation in groups. This not only helps the students feel autonomous and competent in their learning but also helps them to practice other softer skills (e.g. presenting to an informed audience) which are of value to them in the long run. Gage (2012) suggests that initially learners should not be forced to take part in these activities, but participate out of their own accord. As more infants participate the other will begin to feel the need to participate as well. The idea here is to provoke a response intrinsically.

Extension work is also vital in fostering motivation. Some learners do not feel challenged enough and thus tend to grow disinterested in the whole learning process. The ECE teacher should therefore take note of the brilliant and over-achieving learners and always keep them challenged so as to ensure their fire for school does not die.

Extrinsic motivation is the opposite of intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation according to Jones and Jones (2000) refers to a desire to pursue a subject for reasons outside of the individual, such as rewards, grades, parental or instructor approval, etc. These individuals are motivated to learn a subject not because they want to learn it, but because learning the material will get them good grades, need to pass an exam parental praise, or because jobs in that field pay well; all of which are external rewards. Extrinsic motivation is thus influenced by external factors. An extrinsic reward provides a tangible incentive for students to do a specific thing.

While that can be seen as a negative, extrinsic motivators more readily produce behaviour changes and typically involve relatively little effort or preparation (Mwamwenda 2000). Furthermore, efforts at applying extrinsic motivators often do not require extensive knowledge of individual students as compared to intrinsic motivation.

The knowledge and study of extrinsic motivation is important in helping the ECE teacher craft a motivation strategy in his or her classroom. A review of numerous literature revealed the following ways in using extrinsic motivation in creating a motivational strategy in the classroom;

a) Grades and grading system

According to Ray(2011) ,grades are the most prevalent example of a formal extrinsic motivator used in schools .An ECE teacher can use grades and a grading system to provide a representation of either the accomplishment of a task or the quality of a performance and also act as an incentive for later benefits .Ray (2011) argues that grades have only a symbolic meaning and thus they only represent something of value (e.g., quality work, scores on a

test, assignments completed, etc.), and have no inherent value. Thus he argues that grades become more effective when they are clearly related to a meaningful outcome. This is why grading systems that incorporate more authentic measures such as performance assessment as they will be more motivational. Grades act as an incentive , as infant learners progress in their grades have the effect of creating future opportunities. ECE teachers should therefore ensure every single exercise or task given to pupils is graded so as to cultivate that culture of seeking accomplishment in pupils.

However ECE teachers should ensure they place the right emphasis on testing and grading. Tests should be a means of showing what students have mastered, not what they have not. Neubeck (2000) suggests teachers should avoid grading that overemphasises very high standards for each and every learner but should give everyone the opportunity to achieve the highest individual standard as infants differ in their academic talents or gifting.

b) Rewards and merit system.

Another common extrinsic motivational strategy, used at ECE level, is to give merits, tokens, stars and other prizes to pupils when they perform a desired behaviour at the expected level. According to Twining (1999) these extrinsic rewards act as concrete representations that something of value has been accomplished. Therefore they are anticipated to act as the reinforcement in the process of operant conditioning.

ECE teacher should thus find appropriate reward systems and Twinning (2008) suggests that a good reward takes some thought and creativity on the teacher's part. The author suggests that not all reward will motivate pupils. To figure out other possible rewards, a teacher could brainstorm some ideas and consider asking the class for ideas. Sweets, stickers, a small toy, extra break time, and extra art time are some extrinsic rewards that can be used by ECE teachers.

However, this strategy has its fair share of disadvantages .Extrinsic motivators like these can often distract students from learning properly. Furthermore, besides being challenging to devise appropriate rewards, teachers need to escalate the rewards over time to maintain a certain effect level and that is not always sustainable as these extrinsic motivators typically do not work over the long term. Once the rewards or punishments are removed, students lose their motivation. This point is shared by Gage (2000) who believes extrinsic motivators are counterproductive as research indicates that extrinsic rewards can have a negative impact on intrinsic motivation.

c) Teacher Motivation

Among extrinsic factors, the teacher is probably the most powerful source of motivation for pupils, argues Jones and Jones (2000). The personality, skill, attitude, sex, age and even the attire of the teacher are all very important factors in determining whether students perform or not. Teachers must be conscious of the powerful impact that they can have on their students and make every effort to ensure that they impact positively rather than negatively

on the young minds entrusted to their care. Twinning (1999) calls teachers life shapers, destiny shapers and they must be prepared to undertake the task which has been put into their hands. The same author suggests pupils are motivated by teachers who show that they are concerned about their well-being, that they have answers to life's questions , that they can rise to challenges, that they can be mothers, fathers and friends.

2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research is informed by motivational theories and learning models. The two fields of study will provide the framework to explore this study. The motivational theory that will be reviewed is Maslow's theory of motivation, the learning theories to be reviewed are Pavlov's classical conditioning theory and Skinner's learning theory.

2.4.1 Maslow's theory of motivation

Maslow's theory finds relevance in this particular study on the motivation of ECE learners. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory in psychology comprising a five tier model of human needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid. The diagrammatical representation is shown below.

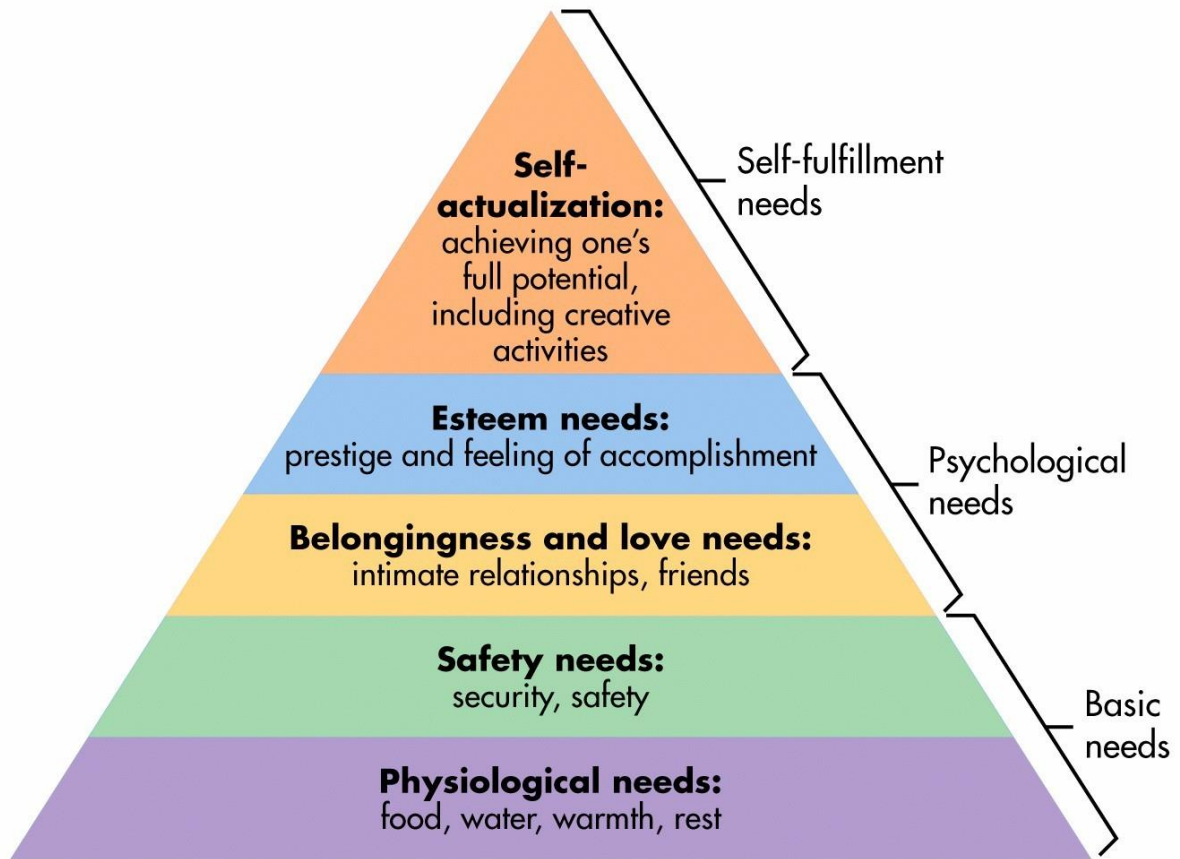


Fig 2.1 - Source : Hoffman(2009)

Maslow stated that people are motivated to achieve certain needs and that some needs take precedence over others. In other words Abraham Maslow suggested that before individuals meet their full potential, they need to satisfy a series of needs. Our most basic need is for physical survival, and this will be the first thing that motivates our behaviour. Once that level is fulfilled the next level up is what motivates us, and so on.

The physiological needs are said to influence the motivation of people when they are unmet. Also, the need to fulfil such needs will become stronger the longer the duration they are denied. For example, the longer a person goes without food, the hungrier they will become and the more they will act out of the expected behaviour.

One must satisfy lower level basic needs before progressing on to meet higher level growth needs. When a basic need has been satisfied it will go away, and our activities become habitually directed towards meeting the next set of needs that we have yet to satisfy. This brings us to the safety needs.

Once a person's physiological needs are relatively satisfied, their safety needs take priority and dominate behaviour. In the absence of physical safety – due to hostility, family violence, childhood abuse, etc. people may experience stress or trauma (Coon ,2007).In the lack of economic safety these safety needs manifest themselves as poor motivation .This level is more likely to be found in children as they generally have a greater need to feel at par with their peers. Safety and security needs include personal security, financial security, health and well-being, safety net against accidents/illness and their negative impacts.

After physiological and safety needs are fulfilled, the third level of human needs is interpersonal and involves feelings of belongingness. Coon (1977) postulates that this need is especially strong in childhood and it can override the need for safety as children have a longing to be recognised and accepted. Neglect, shunning, ostracism can adversely affect the individual's ability to form and maintain emotionally significant relationships and function fully. According to Maslow, students need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance among their social groups i.e. classroom. Plainly put by McLeod (2014) humans need to love and be loved. Many people especially children become susceptible to loneliness, social anxiety, and depression in the absence of this love or belonging element and they cannot function to their fullest capacity.

The next level of needs is esteem needs, this includes confidence, self-esteem, achievement and respect. Plainly put, these are the pupil's needs to feel good about themselves and the need to be recognised for their achievement. As McLeod (2014) puts it all humans no matter how young have a need to feel respected and low self-esteem or an inferiority complex can lead to psychological imbalances such as depression and can hinder the person from obtaining a high level of motivation.

The last level of Maslow's model is self-actualisation. Ray (2011) defines self-actualization as a state in which people are at their very best. Alternatively McLeod (2014) defines self-actualisation as the desire to accomplish everything that one can, to become the most that one can be.

There are numerous implications of this theory in educational circles and the ECE classroom in particular. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs can provide teachers a reminder and framework that our students are less likely to perform at their full potential if their basic needs are unmet.

Lloyd and Beard (2001) argue that at times it can be confusing to apply theory into the practical realities of a classroom. The author posits that teachers may have a limited influence on the home lives of learners. However, once they enter the school, teachers have the opportunity to assess student needs and then work to adapt the instruction to meet their needs.

The questions every ECE teacher should ask are; are any infants entering the classroom without their physiological needs met? Are learners getting all of their basic physical needs met? Teachers should thus ensure all basic needs are met first before any learning takes place otherwise any efforts to engage the infants will be futile. To support the learner's physiological needs, the ECE teacher can ensure

that all pupils have access to water in their classrooms. Water buckets are a simple solution and there are many benefits of hydrated students which include lessened fatigue and greater metabolism and alertness (Neubeck,2000). Other practical measures include the teachers ensuring the classroom is highly ventilated and air conditioned .Teachers should ensure that in winter ,the ECE classroom is warm enough and during the summer terms that the classroom is not too hot as this may cause learners to feel fatigued and may sleep. Ensuring that learners are well fed is another important aspect that the teacher has to take care of. An ECE teacher should check that all his/her pupils bring a lunch box to school and if there are cases where some learners are not bringing lunch boxes teacher should ensure that he/she engages either the parents/guardians or the school authorities on the issue which could involve a school eating programme . Sometimes the teachers are the main culprits in infringing on the pupil's basic needs. Some teachers punish deviant pupils by banning them from going to break-time and order them to remain in detention during break while others go and refresh and eat. Such measures are counterproductive as they will mean that the said pupil will become too hungry and too fatigued for the rest of the day which affects motivation.

Another important strategy is given by Jones and Jones (2000) who posit that to support the learner's physiological need to rest , the teacher should ensure that if a student is in desperate need of sleep then they should be allowed to take a short nap at school. This is especially crucial in ECE. If not, research indicates that sleep-deprived students learn less and may even disrupt the learning of others.

A great idea for a teacher will be thus to ensure that he/she maintains a check list where he/she ticks on the effectiveness of the main basic needs of food, water, sleep, oxygen, and warmth being met in in his/her classroom.

When the ECE teacher ascertains that all basic needs have been met, then the next step is to see if the safety needs are met as well(Hoffman, 2009). The key questions to ask are; how safe and secure does the infant learner feel in their home? What about in the school, and specifically in the classroom?. A good ECE teacher will thus provide a safe secure classroom and learning experience suggests Aggarwal (2005). Teachers are again the main culprits in the infringement of this right. Teachers use harsh tones while teaching and some always carry around a beating stick. This according to Hoffman (2009) is again counterproductive in trying to motivate learners, especially infant learners. Learners tend to associate school with pain and beating and thus tend to grow negative feelings towards school work, the teacher and the overall learning process. Another aspect of safety that affects learners motivation is the existence of bullies in the classroom or around the school suggests Griggs (2010). If learners feel threatened by fellow pupils then he/she will start showing negative feelings toward school and poor motivation. A pupil could start bunking school and if they do come to school they could start looking distant and losing concentration during lessons as they think about what could happen to them at the gate when school is over. A good ECE teacher should therefore keep a close eye on the social lives of his learners and ensure that they are not being bullied by peers in ECE or the older pupils in the upper grades.

The next phase of the hierarchy as highlighted earlier is love and belonging. A teacher should ensure that these needs are adequately met (DeCarvalho, 2000). The teacher should ask the following questions; Do all students have a feeling of love and belonging in the classroom? Does each student feel that they belong to a group? Do they have strong relationships with their peers? A teacher should thus cultivate socialisation in his/her classroom through using group work and other

learning activities that ensure the interaction of pupils. The ECE teacher should thus ensure that both the introverts and the extroverts are engaged during the learning process. Hoffman(2009) posits that all learners should feel like the classroom has a family or close-knit feel and thus the teacher can achieve this by actively making sitting arrangements that encourage conversation and putting students in groups where they feel supported. Other implications as suggested by McLeod (2014) include positive teacher personality: empathetic, considerate & interested in the individual learner, patient, fair, able to self-disclose, positive attitude and be a good listener. The teacher could use one-on-one instruction as this is important when dealing with infants., teacher should get to know students their likes, dislikes, concerns and be available for students in need and be supportive .

Having met the love and belonging needs the teacher should ensure the esteem needs are met as well (Hoffman 2009). The questions to ask are; do all students feel good about themselves? Is the teacher giving positive verbal feedback to support their self-esteem? Do they believe that their peers think positively about them?. Practical steps to ensure that these needs are met are to ensure that teacher provides positive feedback like “well-done”, “very good” and “good girl” or “good boy” when pupils do well. Mwamwenda (2001) suggest that teachers should also stop using nicknames that are degrading and embarrassing when addressing infant learners. ECE teachers have often been guilty of giving their pupils nicknames that affect them negatively, names like ‘big-head’, ‘dander-head’, ‘shorty’ and numerous others. While teachers feel this is just joking and fun, psychologists like Alberto and Troutman (2003) feel it bruises some pupils’ esteem.

Lastly self-actualization. According to Hoffman (2009) if pupils have all of the previous stages met, they can achieve and function at their full potential. The

scholar suggests that ECE pupils should be given a degree of autonomy in the class and freedom to explore & discover on their own. The scholar believes ECE learners should be allowed to express themselves creatively in order to cultivate intrinsic motivation. He further suggests that teachers make learning meaningful and connect to real life situations to enhance learner engagement.

2.4.2 Classical conditioning

Founded on the works of one Ivan Pavlov (1976), a Russian physiologist and scientist, classical conditioning was the principal type of learning to be postulated among the behaviourist models.

A brief background and overview of this body of work is that Pavlov was studying the digestive system of dogs and became intrigued with his observation that dogs deprived of food began to salivate when one of his assistants walked into the room. He began to investigate this phenomenon and established the laws of classical conditioning. While studying the role of saliva in dogs' digestive processes, he stumbled upon a phenomenon he labelled "psychic reflexes." (Kazepedis ,2005). While an accidental discovery, he had the foresight to see the importance of it. Pavlov's dogs, restrained in an experimental chamber, were presented with meat powder and they had their saliva collected via a surgically implanted tube in their saliva glands (Coon,2007). Over time, he noticed that his dogs who begin salivation before the meat powder before it was even presented, whether it was by the presence of the handler or merely by a clicking noise produced by the device that distributed the meat powder.

Fascinated by this finding, Pavlov paired the meat powder with various stimuli such as the ringing of a bell. After the meat powder and bell (auditory stimulus) were

presented together several times, the bell was used alone (DeCavarhlo ,2000). Pavlov's dogs, as predicted, responded by salivating to the sound of the bell (without the food). The bell began as a neutral stimulus (i.e. the bell itself did not produce the dogs' salivation). However, by pairing the bell with the stimulus that did produce the salivation response, the bell was able to acquire the ability to trigger the salivation response. Pavlov therefore demonstrated how stimulus-response bonds (which some consider as the basic building blocks of learning) are formed.

In technical terms, the meat powder is considered an unconditioned stimulus (UCS) and the dog's salivation is the unconditioned response (UCR). The bell is a neutral stimulus until the dog learns to associate the bell with food. Then the bell becomes a conditioned stimulus (CS) which produces the conditioned response (CR) of salivation after repeated pairings between the bell and food. The process is shown below.

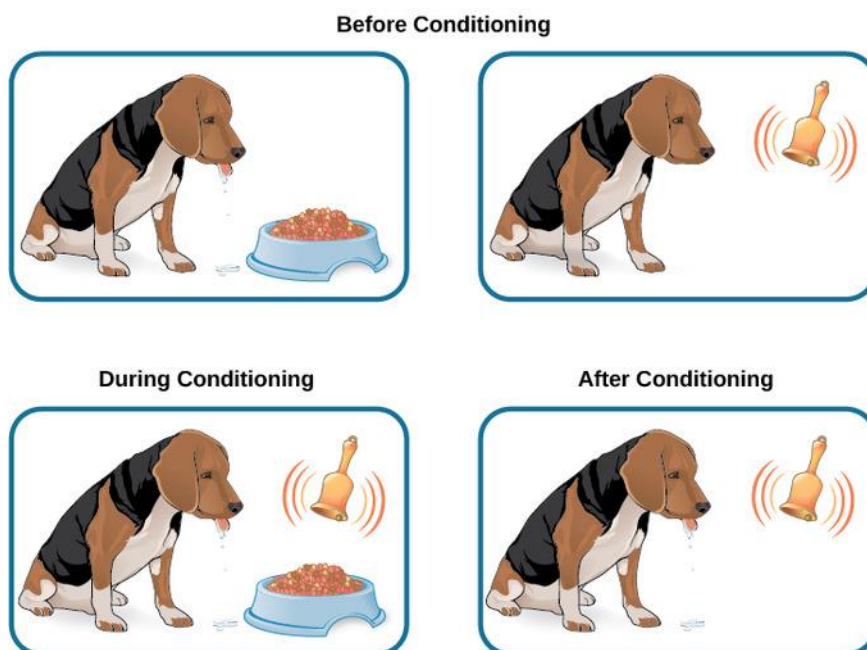


Fig 2.2 Classical Conditioning - Source : Coon(2007).

The major propositions of Pavlovian conditioning are that any behaviour can be taught, learnt and modified through interaction with the environment. Classical conditioning emphasizes the importance of learning from the environment, and supports nurture over nature. Coon (2007) makes mention of that everything from speech to emotional responses were simply patterns of stimulus and response. Furthermore the theory posits that, the environment has the ability to shape the behaviour and internal mental state such as thoughts, feelings, emotions do not explain the human behaviour. These bold claims provide a framework on which intervention strategies to tackle pupil motivation .The behaviouristic approach examines how motives are learned and how internal drives and external goals interact with learning to produce behaviour. The theory in its claim that the faculties of emotion and thought are circumstantial in manipulating behaviour brings about the idea that the school environment can be tailored to promote greater learner enthusiasm and motivation.

According to classical behaviourist theorists schools and classroom can be tailored to make pupils excited about school. This can be done through manipulating or conditioning the stimuli to elicit desired responses pupils by building positive associations.

As an ECE teacher, one will want to foster a situation where learners get to acquire positive attitudes toward the teacher and the various subjects. While initially learning activities will be neutral stimuli, but over time the teacher and how they teach can become conditioned stimuli that elicit emotions or conditioned responses of interest and joy, evoke behaviours such as studying and asking questions, and even arouse physiological responses of comfort and naturalness (Hoffman, 2009).

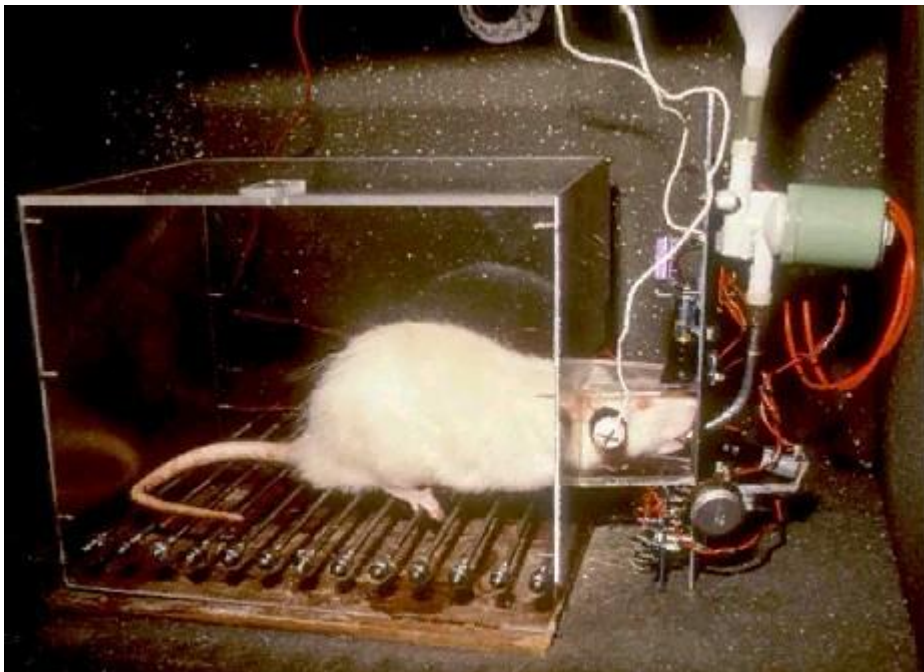
Learning theorist Kazepedis (2005) postulates that classical conditioning processes go on in classrooms all the time and the teachers' role is to be aware of the classical conditioning paradigm and use it to build positive associations between the teaching activities and learning. In classical conditioning, a neutral stimulus gains the ability to provoke a response as a result of being paired with another stimulus that already causes that response. Coon (2007) suggests that ECE teachers should build positive associations about their lessons, whenever learners think of school they should associate it with fun, enjoyment, safety, excitement and rewarding experiences. Teachers are encouraged to use a variety of student-active teaching activities as these activities directly engage students in the material and give them opportunities to achieve a level of mastery.

2.4.3 Skinner's model of behaviour modification

The work of Skinner was rooted in a view that classical conditioning was far too simplistic to be a complete explanation of complex human behaviour McLeod (2013) He believed that the best way to understand behaviour is to look at the causes of an action and its consequences. He called this approach operant conditioning.

Skinner (1953) in Coon (2007) studied operant conditioning by conducting experiments using rats which he placed in a '*Skinner Chamber*'. Operant conditioning chambers according to McLeod (2013) are small environments designed to contain an animal subject. They are generally structured to block external light and sound in order to prevent distracting stimuli from interfering with experiments. The box ensures behaviours are conditioned appropriately and rewards are timed correctly. The purpose of the Skinner box was to analyse animal behaviour by detecting when an animal has performed a desired behaviour and then

administering a reward, thus determining how long it takes the animal to learn to perform the behaviour. If the goal of the box is to teach a rat to press a lever, for example, pressing the lever might cause food to fall out. The rat will likely only push the lever accidentally at first, but eventually it will learn food appears when it does so. Then the rat will begin to perform the behaviour independently. It is from these experiments that Skinner (1953) posited his thoughts. The experiment is shown below



Source : Lloyd and Beard (2001)

Skinner himself never proposed a model of motivation. Other writers have taken his ideas on learning and adapted them to controlling the behaviour of students in schools. This sub-section will explore Skinner's ideas on behaviour modification. According to Neuberger (2000) the operant conditioning theory seeks to understand the concept of learning so as to improve the effectiveness of those who are tasked with controlling the learning of others. The study of this concept thus enables educators make inferences concerning the process of learning believed to be the cause of behaviour. The operant conditioning theory condition states that behaviour

can be modified or changed by controlling the learning process. Skinner's operant conditioning theory was based on 4 principles which are reinforcement, punishment, shaping and extinction ,Ferster (2007). It is the systematic analysis of these that will help educators come up with effective methods to help learners.

The role of reinforcement in learning was founded on the work of Thorndike (Barnyard et al,2009) where in his law of effect posits that behavioural actions are acquired when the consequences are agreeable but not learned when the consequences are disagreeable. Skinner divided reinforcement into two categories which he termed negative reinforcement and positive reinforcement. In positive reinforcement he said this is where a behaviour is strengthened by providing a consequence an individual finds rewarding (Watson, 2009).

From a preliminary analysis of the above it is noted that both of the above may work in making sure that students do well in class and also behave in class either to get the rewards or to avoid the work. This is a very useful tool for teachers in making the classroom more productive. However it should be noted that the haphazard application of these principles is what may in fact be the problem rather than the absence of these suggests Watson (2009). As earlier discussed reward systems and other extrinsic motivators have numerous disadvantages. In order to avoid continuous reinforce which Thorndike (1943) in Borich and Tombari (2000) thought was unsustainable he came up with a method of reinforcement which he termed the reinforcement schedule.

In the reinforcement schedule he identified four methods namely fixed ratio, fixed interval, variable ratio and variable interval . It is a closer look at these that we can fully understand the implications of reinforcement in learning. In the fixed ratio

schedule he stated that this is when reinforcement occurs only after the behaviour has occurred for a specified number of times. According to Myers (2005) in the fixed interval schedule a reward is given after a constant amount of time, given that at least a wanted behaviour has been exhibited once. Myers (2005) further posits that the fixed ratio reinforcement tends to create a dependency syndrome among the recipients, where the students might end up working just for the rewards rather than enjoy the work. The removal of the reward at any time may result in significant drops in the performance and the same applies to all the other reinforcements, and this could be blamed for failed intervention strategies in many schools.

Another principle in the operant conditioning theory is punishment. Griggs (2010) defines punishment as stimuli that seek to diminish the strength or the probability of a response preceding it. The author further alludes that not only does it comprise the administering of unpleasant stimuli but also the withholding of stimuli may be experienced as punishment. The effectiveness of punishment is often questioned because it may cause emotional reactions that harm the learning process. It is also because intense punishment is questioned from a legal and moral point because they conflict with humanistic principles, and individuals differ in their reactions to and the interpretation of punishment. Several factors have to be considered in the administering of punishment.

Firstly, as posited by Myers (2005) The more intense the punishment, the more effective it is. It is highly unlikely that a student will perpetuate his/her sluggishness and lack of drive if the consequence is an unpleasant and intense punishment. However the danger of intense punishment is that it will cause associated conditioned emotional reactions which in the long term may have far more reaching implications than the behaviour that was originally punished. Therefore in order to

ensure that punishment achieves the desired result, teachers have to employ consistency in their punishments rather than intensity Sharp (2002) . The more consistent the punishment, even though it is light the more effective it is.

The deeper a pattern of behaviour is entrenched as a habit the less effective the punishment will be and people adapt to punishment and lessen its impact. The implication on educators in the classroom is that, to make punishment effective it should be followed by positive reinforcement or reward for an alternative response. In this way behaviour is shaped so that not only does a student learn what not to do but also what to do in a given situation. ECE teachers should thus aim to encourage more than they punish.

Another important aspect of Skinner's theory was that of shaping. Shaping as defined by Dembo (2004) is the methodical reinforcement of measured improvement en route to the desired behaviour. Skinner in his theory argued that instead of rewarding only the target or desired behaviour those tasked with facilitating learning should involve the process of reinforcing any successive approximations of the target behaviour. By rewarding the behaviour that gradually presses toward the ultimate standard the pupil is expected to reach .Shaping can be used on demotivated learners to achieve behaviour modification in the ECE classroom. Shaping of these pupils will involve teaching the student to demonstrate a desired behaviour or task by reinforcing successful approximations of the behaviour. According to Brophy (2004) through the use of reinforcing desired behaviours the student will increase the desired behaviour and eliminate or change the undesirable behaviour.

According to Thompson (2002) the technique of shaping begins with identifying behaviour that the student needs to learn or change. The target behaviour should be

clearly identified so that as the shaping technique is implemented only the desired behaviour is reinforced. Each step of the shaping technique should bring the student closer to the final desired behaviour. All adults who are involved in shaping should be clearly trained on which behaviour to reinforce and which behaviours to ignore so suggests Coon (2010). As the small steps are shaped and reinforced, the student behaviour will change or become what was identified as the original desired behaviour.

However it is important to not let the process of shaping breed mediocrity warns Dembo (2004). Partial reinforcement if not correctly implemented by the teacher could lead to learner mistaking the rewarded behaviour for the desired behaviour. Brophy (2004) suggests that all adults who are involved in shaping should be clearly trained on which behaviour to reinforce and which behaviours to ignore. As the small steps are correctly shaped and reinforced, the pupil's behaviour will change or become what was identified as the original desired behaviour. Another way Dembo (2004) discouraging pupils from settling for the lesser behaviour is to create clear distinction between the reward for partial compliance of behaviour and total compliance.

A further important contribution made by Skinner (1951) in McLeod (2014) is the concept of extinction. Extinction refers to the process of no longer providing the reinforcement that has been maintaining a behaviour. Skinner contends that by eliminating the reinforcement, a weakening or even total disappearance of behaviour can be observed. Gage and Berliner (2012) postulate that when operant behaviour that has been previously reinforced no longer produces reinforcing consequences the behaviour gradually stops occurring and this is crucial in crafting any reward and reinforcement system in the ECE classroom. It is documented that Skinner stumbled

upon the concept of extinction by accident. While the rat was pressing the lever in the Skinner box the pellet dispenser accidentally jammed. What he observed was that the rat had gone on pressing although no pellets were received, eventually the rat's behaviour of pressing the lever started to fade and eventually it disappeared or grew extinct so to say.

The concept of extinction entails the unlearning of behaviour or rather the learning of new behaviour. This is particularly important in the classroom practice. As teachers we have often made a consistent observation that most trouble makers in the classroom are merely attention seekers and yet we often reward or reinforce these rascal behaviours with attention. However as educators we can choose to ignore these attention seeking behaviours much the same way Skinner ignored the lab rat pressing the lever and eventually the behaviour will fade away and die.

McLeod (2013) contends that for extinction to work a person (teacher) should do it consistently. Consistency will ensure that resurgence does not occur. Resurgence is when behaviour reappears again after it has gone through extinction. A child's attention seeking behaviour should be given zero tolerance for it to be totally extinguished.

As observed in the experiment ,a large part of extinction is built on the premise of ignoring. However, that does not sometimes work well in a classroom setup. For example, a teacher could choose to not reinforce a troublesome child's behaviour or the bullying tendencies of some boy in class and choose rather to extinguish those behaviours through extinction. While eventually the behaviour will fade away there is need for the teacher to note that while the process that is extinction is allowed to take place other children may be adversely affected by the other child's noisy

behaviour which goes unpunished by the teacher and some child will have to endure the bully while the teacher turns a blind eye toward the bully's behaviour as the teacher allows extinction to take its course. Thus, a clever teacher should know when to allow extinction and when to exercise reinforcement or punishment.

2.4 SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the views of scholars and academics in addressing learner motivation. The chapter also addressed theoretical frameworks on which this study is being done. The next chapter will put a lens on the research methodology.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will focus on the manner in which the actual research was conducted. The population, sample and data collection instruments will also be discussed in this section. The ethical considerations will also be covered.

3.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is the conceptual structure within which a research is conducted. It is the logical sequence in which the study is to be carried out, and it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measuring and analysis of data (Leedey, 2004). In this study, the researcher employed an exploratory research design to determine the effectiveness of the strategies used in fostering positive learner engagement and motivation in ECE

This study was conducted in the form of a case study. A case study as defined by Labovitz and Hagedorn (2001) is an in depth study of a particular situation rather than a sweeping statistical survey. The same author further elaborates that a case study is a method used to narrow down a very broad field of research into one easily researchable topic. Another definition of a case study is attained from Leedey (2004) who defines a case study as the research design that seeks to investigate a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

From the two scholarly definitions it can be said that a case study design is a research method involving an up-close, in-depth and detailed examination of a subject of study and it seeks to understand a real-life phenomenon in depth with the purpose of describing in-depth the experience of one person, family, group, community, or institution on a certain phenomenon and in this case that issue under the spotlight is the investigation of the effectiveness of the strategies used in fostering positive learner engagement and motivation in ECE.

There are numerous reasons why the case study was the research design of choice and they shall be outlined. Firstly the nature of data involved in this study is largely qualitative and as such it warrants a case study. Furthermore the nature of the subject is rather conversational in nature; it therefore requires a qualitative approach that will involve direct observation and interaction with subjects in order to get their opinions and perspectives on the topic at hand.

Another reason for the choice of this approach is that it allows for a multi-faceted exploration of complex issues in their real-life settings. According to Sullivan (2001) case studies are crucial in explaining, describing and exploring events or phenomena in the everyday contexts in which they occur and furthermore they help to understand and explain causal links and pathways resulting from a new policy initiative or strategy made by the particular case school i.e. Mahlabezulu Primary School. This point is reinforced by Leedeey (2004) who emphasizes that the case study approach is particularly useful to employ when there is a need to obtain an in-depth appreciation of an issue, event or phenomenon of interest, in its natural real-life context. Seeing that motivation and student engagement are dynamic and complex phenomenon affected by numerous variables the context in which they occur is very important. Mahlabezulu Primary School's real-life context (setting,

teachers, learners, school policy etc.) have an influence on the results and findings and whether or not they can be generalized to similar settings to this research and as such a case study instead of an experimental design is preferred.

3.3 POPULATION

A research population is defined by Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) as the total number of subjects within a given area as relevant to the subject under study. Borg and Gall (1996) define it as a precisely specified group of cases from which a researcher studies a sample and to which the results from the sample are generalized. In other words this is a pool of possible participants from which our sample will be taken from. Our case school Mahlabezulu Primary School is located in the high density of suburb of Tshabalala under the Mzilikazi District in the province of Bulawayo Metropolitan in Zimbabwe. The school has a total teaching staff of 34 teachers of which 14 of those teachers are early childhood educators. From the 14 Early Childhood teachers there are 4 grade two teachers, 4 grade one teachers, 4 ECD (B) teachers as well as 2 ECD (A) teachers.

The non-teaching staff at the school who will be pertinent to our study comprise the Teacher in charge (TIC) who handles all issues pertaining the affairs in the ECE department, the other subjects are the school head and the school deputy head. The total population of non-teaching participants is 3.

The total population entails 17 possible participants.

Overleaf is summary of the population involved in this study:

	Number of teachers	Number of Non - Teaching staff involved in study	Total Population
Grade 1	4	-	4
Grade 2	4	-	4
ECD (A)	2	-	2
ECD (B)	4	-	4
Admin	-	3	3
TOTAL	14	3	17

Table 3.1 –Summary of population: source -self

3.4 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

A research sample is a representation or a portion of the total population (Creswell 2003). Another definition taken from Forster (2000) states that a sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties is studied to gain information about the whole population.

Instead of using a sample this research used purely a census. A census as defined by Ghauri (2005) is a well-organised procedure of gathering, recording and analysing information regarding the members of the population .A census is thus an official and complete count of the universe, wherein each and every unit of the universe is included in the collection of data. Another scholar Chiromo (2009) notes that under this technique, the enumeration is conducted about the population by considering the

entire population. The teacher population consists of merely 14 subjects and the non-teaching staff has only 3 units and as such the researcher had enough resources and enough time to access them all. This in turn eliminated all the disadvantages associated with sampling and bring reliability to the study.

3.5 INSTRUMENTATION

The researcher made use of the following research instruments : the questionnaire, interviews and participant observation.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaire were administered to the ECE teachers .A questionnaire is a means of eliciting the feelings, beliefs, experiences, perceptions, or attitudes of some sample of individuals. As a data collecting instrument, it could be structured or unstructured.(Cooper and Schindler 2003). An alternate definition is given by McMillan and Schumacher (1993) who define the questionnaire as a very concise, pre-planned set of questions designed to yield specific information to meet a particular need for research information about a pertinent topic. There are numerous reasons why this instrument was chosen:

The questionnaire greatly reduces the time taken to ensure that every individual is asked the same questions compared to a face to face interview. Multiple responses can be acquired at the same time (Ghauri 2005)

Also the uniformity of questions is an advantage. Each respondent receives the same set of questions phrased in exactly the same way. Questionnaires may, therefore, yield data more comparable data than information obtained through an

interview. This instrument has also been chosen because a lot of information from a large number of people can be collected within a very short time and it is economical in terms of money and time

There is also standardization in questionnaires as noted by Kvale (2007). If the questions are highly structured and the conditions under which they are answered are controlled, then the questionnaire could become standardized and such are the questionnaires this researcher designed.

However while the advantages are blatant, there are a few disadvantages of using this instrument. Firstly, respondent's motivation is difficult to assess, thus affecting the validity of response. The researcher has no control over these aspects, making it difficult to assess validity completely (Best and Khan,2014).

Another major disadvantage of the questionnaires is the inability to probe responses. Questionnaires are structured instruments. They allow little flexibility to the respondent with respect to response format. According to Sullivan (2001) they often lose the "flavour of the response" because respondents often want to qualify their answers but questionnaires are too rigid when compared to interviews.

However despite the drawbacks, the advantages far outweigh the negatives, so for practical reasons this researcher still adopted this instrument for this research venture.

3.5.2 Face to Face Interviews

Face to face interviews were conducted to draw information from the teacher in charge (TIC) as well as the school head and deputy.

Face to face interviewing is a type of qualitative research that combines immersive observation and directed one-on-one interviews. (Kellinger, 2009). The technique involves using a brief semi-structured interview, framed around a question, to systematically collect information on a specific topic of interest from a community or population.

There are a number of advantages that justified the use of Interviews. Firstly the researcher used this interview technique to acquire an in-depth understanding of the perceptions teachers and administrators have on the said phenomenon. The researcher was able to connect better with the subject as compared to impersonal instruments like the questionnaire. The interviews were especially crucial and fit for purpose when dealing with schools heads and TICs as they are often busy and have limited time to spare for less important issues like filling in questionnaire for a research they have little use of.

Face to face interviews were also suitable because they also allowed the researcher to acquire information in a conversational and non-confrontational manner, allowing crucial information to be shared. Furthermore the interview had the added advantage of being able to capture attitudes of subjects in a way that other impersonal instruments like questionnaires cannot do.

Interviews have their share of drawbacks though. The interviewees may feel intimidated by the interviewer and the questions which probe into their lives and their thoughts on the subject. This may make them falsify information.

The other disadvantage is that the interviewees may not give accurate information because they may be uncertain what the interviewer will use the information for, even if assurances are made that the information is for research purposes only.

3.5.3 Participant Observation

Participant observation according to Borg and Gall (2006) refers to a form of sociological research methodology in which the researcher takes on a role in the social situation under observation. The social researcher immerses him/herself in the social setting under study, getting to know key actors in that location in a role which is either covert or overt, although in practice, the researcher will often move between these two roles.

This researcher is a teacher at the school in which the research was conducted. This therefore meant that the researcher easily assumed the role of participant observer and was able to study pupils and the teachers in their natural settings. The advantage of this technique is that those being observed were able to easily alter their behaviours to suit the researcher's observations and thus the researcher could see for herself without respondent bias.

As with other qualitative methods, participant observation can often help explain quantitative findings by providing the contextual meaning behind other data (Bernard, 2006). This was what the researcher managed to achieve by observing the pupils and the teachers in their natural settings, even the non-verbal information such as body language could be acquired and attitudes were observed.

Furthermore this method afforded access to the "backstage culture"; it allowed for this researcher to richly detail descriptions in chapter 4. Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (2007) add that it improves the quality of data collection and interpretation and facilitates the development of new research questions or hypotheses. In other words it has flexibility as it allows for an open mind where a researcher can follow up different directions/ideas if something interesting occurs, as Ghauri (2005) puts it, - it

give new insights and brings about answers to questions the researcher wouldn't have had the sense to get to ask initially .Thus observation helped in the crafting of the interview questions and inspired some of the questions asked in the questionnaires.

There are however limitations to using this instrument. Several researchers have noted the limitations involved with using observations as a tool for data collection are largely to do with ethical issues. Kvale (2001) notes that participation observation raises serious ethical difficulties as it is more or less deceiving people to gain info without their knowledge. However to counter this, this researcher ensured anonymity of subjects was maintained throughout the research process.

3.6 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Validity is the ability of a measuring instrument or research study to measure what it claims to measure (Leedy2004). Validity is concerned with whether the instrument covers the domain or items that it supports (Fraenkel and Wallen ,2006)

To ensure validity of the face to face interviews the researcher carried out a pilot test to test the instruments. The questions were asked to colleagues and a few selected respondents. The applicability of the questions and the appropriateness of the questions were then evaluated determined from these pilot tests and where questions need to be adjusted, they were altered accordingly.

The same technique was used for questionnaires. The researcher drafted a questionnaire and was distributed to a controlled population of the same categories

as the interview. The questionnaire was then modified to suit the levels desired levels.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Taking into account that the majority of the subjects in the research are teachers ,the researcher acquired permission from the school . Written approval was acquired from not only the school but also the ministry of education and this is communicated in Appendix C and D.

To protect the identity and the potential sensitivity of acquired information the researcher will not use name or any form of identification for the participants of this research. All the information acquired was only used in this research for academic purposes.

Where primary and secondary sources were used in the research, they were properly acknowledged and cited. The literary works of various scholars was cited and a complete list of bibliography and references was made at the end of the research.

3.8 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

In this study, questionnaires were employed to collect information from the teacher respondents. The questionnaires were hand delivered to each respondent, the respondents given between 2 – 10 days to respond to the questionnaire this was to cater for the teacher's busy schedule and work commitments.

Interviews were done with the teacher in charge as well as the school head.. Interviews lasted between 15- 20 minutes , this amount of time is justified by the need to collect enough usable data to aid better analysis. The researcher used a note pad to record responses as none of the interviewees allowed the researcher to use a recording device in the form of a smartphone to capture responses.

Lastly the researcher made use of participant observation to acquire some data from the case school. Throughout the research process the researcher carried a note pad and pen to record any information concerning the subject that was under study.

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS PLAN

Data analysis is a process that implies editing, coding, classification and tabulation of collected data (Kothari, 2004). Most of the data in this study took up a qualitative nature. Meaning most of the data presentation will be mostly in narration and story form. The data was compartmentalized into themes in chapter 4 based on the research questions that were formulated in chapter one of this project.

3.10 SUMMARY

This chapter looked at the research design, the research instruments, their validity and reliability as well as the population and sampling procedures to be used in the research. It also looked at the ethical considerations to be made if the research is to have credibility and eliminate problems associated with confidentiality and appropriateness.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the presentation and analysis of the data obtained from the field work. The investigation was aligned with the research questions as well as the issues covered in the literature review. Primary data was obtained through semi-structured face to face interviews as well as questionnaires, furthermore the researcher utilised observations to get in-depth information and validate some of the information given in the interviews and questionnaires.

4.2 RESPONSE RATE (QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEWS)

As already highlighted, self-administered questionnaires and face to face interviews as instruments of collecting data were used. The response rate was overwhelming and this researcher was able to harvest enough data to facilitate interrogation and analysis. In the preceding chapter that covered research methodology it was settled that this research will make use of a complete census of the ECE teachers at Mahlabezulu primary school. From the 14 ECE teachers that were targeted by the study all subjects managed to adequately answer and return the questionnaire in the stipulated time frame they were afforded. Meaning the response rate was 100 %. However the same cannot be said about the administration staff subjects. This researcher sought to interview 3 subjects, that is; the school head, the deputy school head and the teacher in charge. However due to unforeseen circumstances the deputy school head could not fulfill his obligation to attend the interview and thus the

researcher had to interview the school head and the teacher in charge only. The response rate with this category of subjects was thus 67%.

The composition of the questionnaire and interview response rate is illustrated by the table below:

Table 4.1 Showing response rate of questionnaire and interviews

Category responses	Number of questionnaires distributed	Number of questionnaires completed and returned	Face to face interviews administered	Face to face interviews not administered	Response rate %
ECE teachers	14	14	-		100%
Administration	-	-	2	1	67%
Total	14	14	2	1	83.5%

Source: self

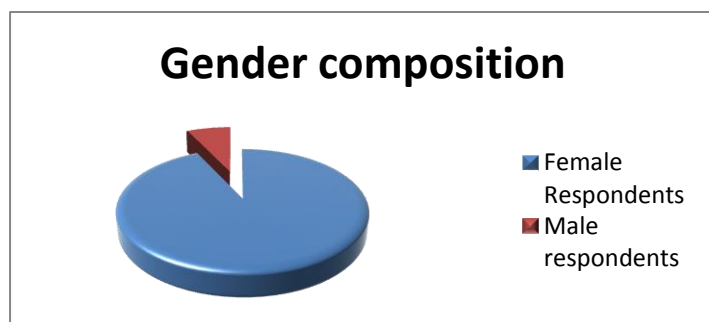
As shown from the above table, the data collection had a very high response rate with most of the targeted respondents being highly cooperative and supportive and this will go a long way in maintaining validity and reliability of this research project. According to Pearson (2006) an acceptable response rate to a field research must be at least 40% for reliability and credibility to be maintained. Given that this research garnered an average response rate of 75%, the researcher felt that it was far much acceptable and went on to analyze the collected data as follows.

4.3 PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

4.3.1 Gender Composition

Among the 14 participants who participated in the study, thirteen (13) of them were females who constituted 93% and only one (1) of the total participants was male who constituted the remaining 7% as shown in figure 4.1. The study revealed that the school was in agreement with the notion or philosophy that ECE pupils show better motivation when they are being taught by female teachers as opposed to male teachers whom young learners feel can be threatening, intimidating, unapproachable and menacing in their look and demeanor and as such are not always ideal in the early grades. Further interrogating of the school heads and teacher in charge revealed that the hiring of more female teachers in ECE was not coincidental but rather it was deliberate and measured. The school heads said they made precise and specific staffing requests to the public service commission as well as the human resources department of the Ministry of primary and secondary education about their preference of having more female teachers at ECE instead of their male counterpart due to the afore mentioned reasons.

Figure 4.2 Gender composition



Source : Field study

4.3.2 Educational Status

Educational status was very important to the research as part of the assumptions where that the level of education had an effect on the competences and attitudes of teachers towards learner motivation. The study revealed that most of the participants had their highest level of education being a Diploma in education , however some were in the process of advancing their education. This is shown in fig 4.3

The relevance of this to the study is that all the participants are well educated, they have adequate knowledge judging from their educational qualification, and hence they are not only able to provide insightful answers to questions requested of them in terms of the research instrumentation but they are also capable and well equipped to create and carryout a motivation strategy in their individual classes.

Table 4.2 Educational Qualification

Highest Educational Qualification	
Level	Frequency
"O" Level	0
"A" Level	0
Diploma	13
First Degree	1
Masters and Higher	0

Source: Field study

4.3.3 Teaching Experience

The study revealed that seven (7) of the fourteen (14) of the teachers had teaching experience of 6-10 years, while a mere two (2) of them had between 1-5 years of experience. However of interest was that five (5) of them had over 10 years of experience, which meant that a healthy percentage of the teachers at the case school are very experienced in the field and their vast experience can be called upon to impart their acquired knowledge over the years to guide their less experienced counterparts on the ways to motivate infants. Observations made by this researcher revealed that the classes belonging to these experienced teachers showed better motivation and the cases of poor learner engagement were no as pronounced as those in their less experienced colleagues. From this observation it was found that there is a correlation of some sort between teacher experience and learner motivation.

None of the respondents had less than one year teaching experience. This was greatly advantageous to the research as the participants possessed adequate experience to be able to give credible and informed responses.

Table 4.3 Teaching Experience

Teaching Experience (No. of years)	
No. Of Years (Range)	Frequency
Less than One year	0
1-5 years	2
6-10 years	7
10+ years	5

4.4.4 Teacher traits

As was seen in chapter two that the teacher is probably the most powerful source of motivation for pupils and for that reason the field study set out to seek the traits of the teacher and the possible influence they have on the learners' motivation. The personality, attitude, sex, age and even the sociability of the teacher were observed and recorded as they are very important factors in determining whether learners perform or not. It was observed that most teachers at the case school exhibited friendly and pleasant character traits that made them approachable and sociable to the young learners. This researcher carefully observed the interactions between teachers and learners and could safely say that learners never showed a sense of fear or apprehension toward their teachers.

4.4 PERCEPTIONS ON HOT SITTING

One of the questions asked during data collection sought to uncover the respondents' perceptions and insights on the aspect of hot sitting at ECE. Mahlabezulu has a strict regime of hot sitting which sees even ECD pupils learning in the afternoon and as such the researcher wanted to find out if this had any bearing on the motivation of learners. The research uncovered that hot sitting was indeed a factor that contributes to poor motivation and poor learner engagement. Of the fourteen (14) ECE teachers asked the response was unanimous with all fourteen (14) respondents alluding that hot sitting indeed has a negative influence on a learner's drive to learn and participate during class.

One respondent while responding on the issues said that she noticed that when learners come during the afternoon session, they already come tired as they are

children who will naturally wake up and engage in various playing activities before they come to school and by the time they get into class at around 10:30am they are exhausted and will struggle to concentrate and participate during lessons. One respondent went further to suggest that some of the learners will go to the extent of falling asleep during the lessons. Another respondent who clearly was against hot sitting for ECE learners noted that the task of trying to get the learners' attention and keeping them engaged is especially difficult during first and third terms which happen to be the summer terms when the temperatures are soaring high and concentration is difficult. The respondent mentioned that mathematics was probably the most affected subject as grade one and two pupils struggle to follow proceedings when the sun is hot and the respondent suggested that if motivation and the levels of engagement in learners are to be addressed then the school has to abolish hot sitting. These sentiments triggered this researcher to forward the question of hot sitting to the school head and the teacher in charge. The school head noted with helplessness that despite acknowledgement that hot sitting was indeed part of the problem, little can be done to scrap it as in her own words "hot sitting is here to stay, teachers should just have to make sure they find a way to make it work". When this researcher further interrogated the school head what those ways were the school head mentioned that teachers should strive to create more engaging lessons, they should strive to use appealing and interesting media in the class and that teachers should use fun and interesting teaching methodologies. Luckily all these 3 aspects had been identified earlier in the study as being crucial in fostering better motivation and as such they shall be viewed closely.

4.5 TEACHERS' ABILITY TO CREATE ENGAGING LESSONS

Teachers ability to create fun and engaging lessons for the learners has been a recurring theme throughout this research study, as early as the background of the study in chapter one and the reviewed literature in chapter two it was speculated that teachers are in some degree a part of the problem . This researcher thus sought to find out if doing enough to create enjoyable and exciting lessons that would arrest the attention of the infant learner and keep him/her motivated to learn and participate. To do this, this researcher was allowed by the teachers at the school to attend a few lessons being carried out at ECE, a total of four class room were visited frequently over a 2 month period. This researcher as an observer attended a total of 12 lessons and from the observation it was seen that most teachers were delivering very engaging and exiting lessons. This conclusion was arrived at not through mere guess work but through the observation that teachers were always using well-crafted learning media, as well as using games and songs. Most of the teachers were indeed staying true to the prescribed ways of how ECE learners should be taught as most of them seemed to follow the ECE motto that says – we learn through play. The classes were abuzz with songs and games which showed that teachers at the school are moving on the right track. However observation revealed one negative that seemed to permeate in all their lessons and that negative was that teachers were using weak and poor lesson introductions. According to Hoffman(2009) a teacher who fails to capture or arrest the attention of the learner at the beginning of the lesson will most definitely lose him/her . This was what was witnessed during the observed lesson; while overall the lessons were fun and solid the introductions seemed to border between ordinary and uninteresting and ran the risk of losing these young learners who thrive on fun. Furthermore teachers were asked on the

degree of learner involvement during lessons and the results showed that all confessed to placing learner centred teaching techniques at the top of their preferred modes. During the lesson observations this was found to be true as the teacher demonstrated the ability to let pupils get involved as much as was possible.

4.6 REWARD, REINFORCEMENT AND PUNISHMENT SYSTEMS USED

It was important to find out the reinforcement and punishment system being used by teachers as this was one of the secondary research questions asked at the beginning of the research study. Various modes of reward systems were mentioned by the respondents, some were common among all respondents while others were innovative systems only used by individual teachers. The results are tabulated below.

Reinforcement System	No of teachers using said strategy
Verbal rewards only	0
Written reward (stars, tokens ,comments) only	0
Material rewards only	0
Verbal rewards and written rewards	11
Verbal reward and material reward	1
Written rewards and material rewards	1
Written rewards + verbal + material reward	2

Table 4.4 – (Source Field study)

The study revealed that 79% of the teachers at the school used a combination of verbal and written reward systems. None of the respondents said they use one

method exclusively but rather preferred to use one with the other. Eleven (11) out of the 14 respondents said they preferred to use verbal with written rewards mainly because those are the most easy to administer methods and they have no financial implications. Praising children verbally or with a smile or high five as well as using positive remarks like very good and excellent work were said to be enough . However 29% of the respondents said they use some form of material reward to go with verbal or/and written rewards. Material rewards mentioned by respondents included sweets, pens, exercise books and merit badges. The respondents said they felt an addition of material reward as a form of extrinsic reward helped build drive and competition among learners which helped them to not only build their enthusiasm but also helped them to ultimately perform better in class. These respondents were of the belief that material reward systems help establish a positive classroom environment and can be beneficial for all learners .The teacher in charge as well as a majority of the ECE teachers however argued against these material reward systems and said they felt they are only short-term fixes that encourage entitlement and a dependency. The teacher in charge put forward her thoughts and sentiments in the form of a question, “what happens when the teacher fails to get the money to purchase the sweets, pen or whatever he/she is rewarding these children with” .

Besides the reward systems the punishment systems used were studied. Teachers were asked what their strategy was on dealing with pupils who hide books and pencils to avoid work and those who playing truant as well as those who sleep in class and those that refuse to participate in class activities. Respondents came up with a wide range of strategies. When asked about those learners that hide writing material to avoid work, Twelve (12) of the fourteen respondents mentioned that

involved the parents or guardians of the learner. The teachers admitted to seeking the aid of the parents and they mentioned that such required the home to assist as well and thus they sometimes call the learners' parents to assist when the problem persists. The other two respondents said they focus on the learners more closely and monitor them more intensively. One of these respondents said " I watch them with an eagle eye, I make sure they know I'm watching their every move, I keep their books and pencils for them until they change their behaviour"

The teachers were asked on their perceptions on the value of corporal punishment .i was refreshing to know that all teachers felt that corporal punishment has no place in the school setup especially in ECE.

4.7 ABILITY OF STRATEGY TO ADDRESS PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS.

This researcher took a hard and careful look at the school and its ability to meet the physiological needs of the learners. To determine the school's ability to meet the learners' physiological need the researcher cross-examined the classrooms, the feeding scheme at the school, the break time allocation, the ventilation in the classrooms, the warmth in the classroom as well as the availability of water sources.

The results of the observation are summarised overleaf

Aspect	Physiological need	Comment
Break-time allocation	Rest	<p>Learners' physiological need for rest is satisfactorily being met , break time is 30 minutes and enough for infants to rest and replenish. And according to the school head there is a rule at the school that no teacher is allowed to punish any learner by withholding his/her break time. This is good because any punishment that withholds a child's physiological need is counterproductive and will lead to further demotivation.</p>
Class population	Ventilation	<p>The classes are overcrowded which means that there is risk of learners getting uncomfortable and that affects their motivation negatively. All classes have more than 40 learners in a 50m² area, meaning learners can grow increasingly uncomfortable.</p>

Feeding scheme	Food	The school has a healthy feeding scheme that ensures all ECE learners are fed adequately and don't have to struggle to concentrate because of hunger. The school has a consistent program that feeds ECE learners every day, the diet includes sadza and chunks, sadza and cabbage , sorghum porridge as well as samp
Infrastructure	Warmth	The classes are well build, despite being overcrowded most classes are in good condition able to shield the learners from harmful whether elements. Of concern is one of the grade 2 classes which have three broken windows that could threaten the motivation of learners during cold days.
Drinking points	Water	There are enough water points at the school which helps address the learners need for refreshment. However there is a slight cause of concern because there are no water points provided inside each class as

		all points are outside. Without being too critical the school is doing reasonably enough in that regard.
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Table 4.4 (Source- Field Study)

4.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the presentation and analyses of the data obtained from the field work.. The data were analysed in relation to the research objectives. Analysis of the results was based on the data obtained from both primary and secondary data sources and comparison to some results of scholars who did research on the similar studies. The next chapter will focus on the recommendations and conclusion.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter will show the summary in relation to the findings of the research study, conclusions made pertaining to the research objectives and problem statement and the recommendations to be provided to various stakeholders. Ultimately this chapter will address and answer all the research objectives and research questions that were formulated in chapter one.

5.1 SUMMARY

This research project was carried out due to the need to address the diminishing motivation among ECE learners at ECE. The study was focused on Mahlabezulu primary school in the Mzilikazi district in the Bulawayo metropolitan province. This researcher noticed that ECE learners were demonstrating behaviours that were indicators of poorly motivated learners. These indicators or symptoms included lack of participation during lessons, reluctance to raise hands during class, failure to write or complete their work properly, avoidance of work, truancy and lazy tendencies. This researcher took it upon herself to undertake an investigation or inquiry that would uncover why learners are continually exhibiting these types of behaviour as well as to find out what the school is doing as an intervention to address the issues of motivation and learner engagement.

To begin this venture the background of the study was defined, the context from which the study was being done was comprehensively set out and communicated.

The researcher then went on to articulate the research questions that would guide the research study. Furthermore this researcher defined the delimitations of the study , geographically the research was confined and limited to Mahlabezulu Primary school in the Mzilikazi District of the Bulawayo Metropolitan Province and conceptually the study primarily focused on those motivational techniques and strategies that the teacher can directly influence in his/her capacity as educator. Those aspects of learner motivation that pertain the role of the parent/ guardian that the teacher cannot directly influence were given secondary importance. The research also encountered some limitations that were beyond the researcher's control. Firstly the research was limited by time as the researcher had to juggle the research project demands and university obligations as well as the duties of being a teacher. Another limitation was that owing to their immense workloads and work commitments, the researcher failed to engage all the subjects or target respondents as desired. The researcher failed to get an interview with the school's deputy head. However this was not detrimental to the research as the interviews with the school head and teacher in charge went on as planned.

The researcher then went on to review literature related to the strategies used in improving learner motivation and fostering learner engagement. The work of other scholars were observed and analyzed, the researcher presented a logically structured representation of the concepts, the variables and relationships involved as well as the theories involved in motivation and learner engagement. The researcher utilized various texts, journals and relevant publications as well as utilized relevant models to help bring understanding about the phenomenon. The works of authors, scholars and other researchers as well as works of academics past and present

were cited. The review of literature also helped as a guide in the preparation of research instruments.

Questionnaires, interviews and observations were used to gather information in the field. Face to face interviews were conducted to draw information from the teacher in charge (TIC) as well as the school head. Questionnaires were administered to the ECE teachers. The researcher made use of a census as opposed to a sample and the census constituted 17 respondents. The field study took about two months and the response rate from the said field study was very overwhelming with 87% of the instruments successfully administered. In the same section the researcher covered other aspects of the research methodology and procedures involved in conducting the study and the researcher further outlined the plan specifying the sources and types of information appropriate to the research questions. It also included the time factor involved, the overall field study lasted about two months .The section also focused on the research design and methodology employed considering the relative merits in the context of the study and it also involved mapping out the plan for data analysis and presentation .The data analysis used narrations and themes to report the findings from the field. There was also use of tables and smart art as well as charts to communicate some of these findings.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

In the first chapter of this research undertaking ,it was alluded that this research was to be guided by the following research question: How effective are the strategies used by teachers in fostering positive learner engagement and motivation in ECE learners? , What are some of the strategies and techniques used by teachers to improve learner engagement and motivation? , Why have some of the motivational

strategies that have been employed by teachers failed? What challenges do teachers face in implementing motivational strategies? The answers to this crucial question will now be answered.

What are some of the strategies and techniques used by teachers to improve learner engagement and motivation?

Teachers use a wide variety of strategies to address motivation and learner engagement in schools. Most favour the use of verbal and written merits when they want to foster positive learner engagement in their learners. It was discovered that some teachers go out of their way to provide material rewards in the form of sweets and pens to mention but a few. However the school authorities castigated the use of this method as they felt it was not sustainable in the long-term and it stood the risk of creating a dependency and a sense of entitlement among learners. Some teachers indicated they also enter into partnerships with the parents and guardian of the learners in their bid to address poor motivation. These teachers found it necessary to engage parents as part of the solution as they felt that most aspects of poor motivation arise at the home not at the school.

Why have some of the motivational strategies that have been employed by teachers failed? What challenges do teachers face in implementing motivational strategies?

It was uncovered that many strategies fail because of the structural factors challenges faced at the school. The first issues had to do with hot sitting, the issues of hot sitting was attributed to many failed strategies. It was discovered that teachers felt that even if they tried to make their lessons as interesting as possible through good lesson planning and use of interesting media in the class as well as greater

involvement by learners, all this counted for little if the issue of hot sitting was not tackled because learners were coming to school tired and they had to battle to concentrate when the temperatures souged in the later part of the day.

Lack of resources was also uncovered as a drawback to strategy implementation. The overcrowding in classes meant that learners' comfort was compromised and that posed a threat to motivation. Beyond that the sharing of textbooks as well as the large teacher to learner ratio meant that learners struggled to interact with both the teacher and the limited texts.

Another challenge noted was that lack of parental involvement. Greater parental involvement or rather the lack of it was uncovered as a major stumbling when trying to alter the infant's behaviour.

How effective are the strategies used by teachers in fostering positive learner engagement and motivation in ECE learners?

The ultimate goal and purpose of this research was to answer the primary research question on the efficacy of the strategies being used at the school. The findings from the research were that the case school was making great strides in addressing the issues of motivation and learner engagement. The school administration was committed to supporting their ECE staff with regards to this matter; the ECE teachers likewise demonstrated the drive and the desired ambition to address this issue. All teachers at the school were found not only to be qualified enough to carry out their mandates as motivators but they are also experienced enough to understand the issues pertaining the motivation of learners it can be thus concluded that the teachers as well as their administrators are well informed and capable of implementing motivational interventions and strategy .

Despite the problem of overcrowding in classes it can be concluded that the infrastructure at the school is capable and effective enough to address the physiological needs of learners that would otherwise pose as a demotivater if they were not taken care of. Furthermore the school administrators acknowledged that there is need to build more infrastructure and improve on the existing infrastructure to support the motivation of learners. Such acknowledgements by the school show that the school's strategy is sound and will be effective in addressing the phenomenon.

It was highlighted in the literature review and emphasised throughout this research project that crucial to any motivational strategy is that the teacher has to be accessible as well as approachable for learners to be motivated to connect with him/her and learn properly. It was noted that the teachers are the single most important cog in the motivation strategy as they are the most influential person in the classroom. Having said so the teacher's attributes in this regard were assessed and it can be concluded that the teachers at the school are generally accessible and learners are free and liberated around them.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study makes recommendations as follows:

Be interested in the learner's lives.

Teachers should show greater involvement in their learners' lives beyond the academic relations and outside the classroom. A large contributor of poor motivation is due to factors at home. As the research has concluded that the school's strategy is

generally good and the school factors have contributed little to poor motivation, there is now therefore a need to shift focus to the factors outside the four walls of the classroom. There is possibility that abuse and bullying are contributors, it can be speculated that poor self-esteem and poor character traits on the part of the learners are a factor. A background study of each learner will thus be essential in understating the learner better and creating a strategy that addresses what the child is going through. If the learner knows that the teacher cares then they too will start to care about their school work because of that empathy shown by the teacher. While teaching, the teacher can call them by name, to show endearment and affection. The teacher should also keep content relevant to their lives as much as possible, keeping examples during lessons as close to real life as possible will motivate learners to listen and participate due to the sense of belonging that will be created through this .Furthermore being accessible motivates learners to initiate more questions and be more open in what they have to say in class.

Challenge learners

There is an assumption that learners are lazy that is why they lack motivation, however sometimes they lack motivation because they are not challenged enough.

Learners who feel like their expected classwork is far too below their capabilities will disengage from the proceedings during a lesson and not bother raising their hands , maybe even yawn and sleep or seek to amuse themselves by engaging in deviant and disruptive behaviours. ECE teachers should thus strive to challenge learners by giving class activities that are just a bit above the learner's current ability and stretch their minds and their longing for a good challenge by attempting harder topics.

Give learners more control

Learner involvement should go beyond group work and learners saying out answers but should also involve learners getting a chance to create their own personal choices in the class room. Establishing their own rights is a very resourceful motivational technique, a teacher could ask learners about which subject they want to learn first on some days, while some would feel this is wrong because a teacher has to follow a timetable this writer will argue that there is no harm in involving learners once in a while in deciding what they want to learn .There is little to be lost in slightly deviating from the timetable once in a while but there is much to be gained in allowing a bit of learner autonomy.

Building of new classrooms

This recommendation is directed at the school administrators. There is need to build more classrooms to facilitate for the abolishment of hot sitting as well as the depopulating of ECE classrooms which clearly are the two major contributors to poor motivation at the school.

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Appendix A

Teacher Questionnaire



My name is Patricia Sibanda and am a student at the Midlands State University. I am studying towards a Bachelor of Education Degree in Early Childhood Education. Part of the requirements of my studies requires I conduct a research project in an area of my choice. Therefore, this questionnaire is a research instrument intended to capture the research data from you as an experienced person in the teaching field and your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Please be assured that the research is purely an academic undertaking thus; no part of information sought will be used for non-academic purpose. I guarantee anonymity and confidentiality.

RESEARCH BRIEF

It has been observed that ECE learners lack motivation and drive towards their school work and as such their academic performance has suffered. Pupils manifest this lack of drive and motivation through lack of participation in class, playing truant, hiding books, failure to write homework and numerous other negative ways. Teachers have tried and continue to try to come up with measures to ensure that the levels of motivation are improved however some of these measures have met limited success. This research project therefore seeks to investigate the effectiveness of the motivational techniques used by teachers to foster positive engagement in ECE learners at Mahlabezulu Primary School.

Before answering the questions please take time to read through the few guidelines provided below:

Instructions and Guidelines

- Tick on the most appropriate answer.
- Use black / blue ink to complete the answers
- You may only tick on one response per question.
- When you have done with completion of the questionnaire please safely keep the questionnaire and this researcher will come and collect it from you at a time convenient for you.
- The questionnaire consists of 23 questions which could take you hardly 20 minutes to finish answering.

For an inquiry on any aspect of the questionnaire you feel is unclear or difficult and where you may need further clarification please, contact me at:

Mobile: 0776449232 or E-mail: patriciachisesibanda@gmail.com

Questions

Personal Information

1) Gender: Male Female

2. What educational qualification do you possess?

Diploma in Education

Degree in Education

Other

3. Working experience (*please, tick the appropriate box*):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>	Between 1 – 3 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	Between 4 – 6 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	More than 6 years

4. Have your superiors (TIC, Head, Deputy Head, Education officer) ever addressed you on the need to address the aspects of poor learner motivation in the school?

Yes

No

5. Looking back at your teacher training at the teacher college you attended, can you safely say the curriculum you were administered covered enough content about learner motivation.

No it didn't dwell much on this topic

Yes it did, but moderately so

Yes it did, the curriculum was comprehensive in covering this topic

6. How often do you give merits to pupils who do well in class activities?

Daily

Weekly

Fortnightly

Monthly

Yearly

7. What type of reward system do you use for pupils after every class activity ?

Verbal rewards

Written rewards (stars, tokens , comments)

Material reward Specify

8. What is your strategy in dealing with learners who do not raise their hand in class when being quizzed?

9. What is your strategy in dealing with learners who hide books, pencils and other material in a bid to try and avoid writing ?

10. What is your strategy in dealing with learners who sleep or doze off during lessons?

11. What is your strategy in dealing with learners who bunk lessons?

12. How well do you know the background of the learners that you teach?

Fairly well

Hardly

I'm knowledgeable and well-informed

13. What is your student to textbook ratio in you class?

14. How many learners do you have in your class?

15. How best can you describe your classroom?

Very spacious and comfortable

Has a reasonably workable space

Crowded

16. What is your view on hot sitting for ECE learners?

17. What is your most favoured mode of teaching?

Groupwork

Teacher exposition

Pair work

Learner presentations

Other Specify

Please, circle the number that you feel most applies :

1=I strongly agree 2=I agree

3= I am indifferent 4= I disagree 5 = I strongly disagree

QN	Statement	Options				
18	I believe learner motivation is a problem at this school.	1	2	3	4	5
19	I blame poor learner motivation on lack of resources at the school	1	2	3	4	5
20	I attribute the problem of poor motivation to poor teacher support from the school and the ministry of education	1	2	3	4	5
21	I blame poor motivation on lack of parent involvement in their child's education					
22	I believe corporal punishment has a place in the classroom	1	2	3	4	5

23. What other factors not noted in the above questions do you attribute to poor motivation in the modern learner?

24. What role do you think the teacher can play in improving learner motivation.

The End – Thank you .

Appendix B



Interview guide



Interview questions

1. Poor learner motivation is a problem that is top of the issues affecting schools at the moment , what do you attribute this lack of motivation and drive in the modern learner ?

2. What measures are in place at this school to deal with poorly motivated learners?

3. Are the measures you have mentioned exhaustive?

>If answer is **NO** allow interviewee to proceed and avail more.

>If answer is **YES** proceed to the next question.

4 Do you believe your staff is equipped with the necessary skillsets to implement programs and strategies that are designed to improve learner motivation.

5. What programmes are in place to equip teachers with the required skillsets in dealing with poor motivation.

6. Do you think the ministry of education is doing enough to assist schools in creating highly motivating schools?

- 7.** If no, What assistance would you require?

- 8.** How often do you have consultation days or teacher parent conferences?

- 9.** Do you consider hot sitting a big contributor to poor motivation?

- 10.** What recreational activities and programs do you have for ECE learners?

- 11.** On a scale of 1-10 [1 being negative and ten being positive] how do you rate the effort and attitude of your subordinates in responding to poor motivation that may be seen in learners.?

- 12.** In your own words, what are some of the reasons behind the failure of intervention strategies and programs used to improve learner motivation?

- 13.** What could be your recommendations to improve learner engagement at motivation?

The end

Appendix C



MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY

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Gweru
Zimbabwe

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Fax: (263) 54 60233/60311

FACULTY OF EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS, MANAGEMENT AND CURRICULUM STUDIES

8 March 2018

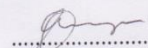
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

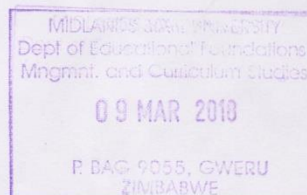
The bearer.....SIBANDA PATRICIA R166751B.....is a
B.Ed/MED/PGDE student at this University. She / He has to undertake research and
thereafter present a Research Project in partial fulfilment of the degree programme.

In this regard, the university kindly requests both your institution and personnel's
assistance in this student's research endeavours.

Your co-operation and assistance is greatly appreciated.

Thank you


.....
Dr. C. Manyumwa
(Chairperson – Educational Foundations Management and Curriculum Studies)



Appendix D

all communications should be addressed to
"The Regional Director"
Telephone: 09-69511/69942
Telegraphic: "SCHOLASTIC"
Telex: 50531 MPSEM ZW
Fax: 09-77027



Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
Bulawayo Metropolitan Province
P.O. Box 555
Bulawayo
Zimbabwe

27 MARCH 2018

SIBANDA PATRICIA
MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY
GWERU

RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH: EFFECTIVENESS OF THE STRATEGIES USED IN FOSTERING POSITIVE LEARNER ENGAGEMENT AND MOTIVATION IN ECD. A. A CASE STUDY OF MAHLABEZULU PRIMARY SCHOOL.

With reference to your application to carry out a research on the above mentioned topic in the Education Institution under the jurisdiction of the Bulawayo province permission is hereby granted. However, you should liaise with the head of the Institution /School for clearance before carrying out your research.

It will also be appreciated if you could supply the Bulawayo Province with a final copy of your research which may contain information useful to the development of education in the province.

J Mukonyora
J MUKONYORA
For: **PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR
BULAWAYO METROPOLITAN PROVINCE**

DEPUTY HEAD
MAHLABEZULU GOVT. PRY. SCHOOL
08 MAY 2018
P.O. BOX 5131, NKULUMANE
BULAWAYO, TEL: 09-481263

MINISTRY OF PRY & SEC EDUCATION
D.S. IMZILIKAZI DISTRICT
BULAWAYO METROPOLITAN PROVINCE
28 MAR 2018
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