

Leveraging Parental involvement in the Education of their Children as a Conflict Resolution strategy in selected Secondary Schools, Zambia

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Abstract: This study explored parental involvement in the education of their children as a conflict resolution strategy in the Kafue district of Lusaka province in Zambia. 28 participants were purposively engaged within a qualitative research methodology to generate evidence. Key among the findings revealed that factors that affected parents' involvement in education of their children at school were negative attitude, lack of understanding and financial constraints. Similarly, when school authorities are not communicating effectively with parents, it created a vacuum of information which all stakeholders needed. A challenge in some situation was distance, sometimes distance becomes a hindrance for parents to participate in the affairs of the school. Distance to the school was one other contributing factor that affected parents' involvement in education of their school going children. Thus, the study recommends among others that, Parents should provide their children with basic needs such as food, shelter and clothes, learning materials like exercises books adequate academic and moral attention, unconditional love and the opportunity to develop responsible citizenship. Equally, Teacher should demonstrate friendliness, respect and recognition of parents of students registered in secondary schools in order to encourage them to get involved in school activities. Further, Education policy makers are urged to develop a parental involvement policy in secondary schools to guide practice.

Key Words: Parental Involvement; Children; Education; Conflict Resolution; Zambia.

I. CONTEXT

This article is an extract from the principal researcher's Master of Science in Peace Leadership and Conflict Resolution dissertation. The Masters programme was offered by the University of Zambia (UNZA) in collaboration with the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) and had been running since 2014 (Manchishi, Simui, Ndhlovu & Thompson, 2020; Simui, 2018; Simui, Kasonde-Ngandu, Cheyeka, Simwinga and Ndhlovu, 2018; Simui, Kasonde-Ngandu, Cheyeka & Kakana, 2018).

It is argued that parental involvement in their children's education is an important ingredient in improved learner achievement and building democracy in the schooling system, as well as in the wider society of most developing countries Zambia inclusive. In some schools in Zambia, parents are not yet playing their full roles as governors mandated by legislation a situation which has led to conflicting interactions

between the parents. In most cases, there is unclear-cut involvement of the parents in the school affairs of their children. This in turn makes it difficult for the education system to produce a learner who is holistically equipped emotionally, psychologically, physically as well as intellectually (MOE, 2011). It is not known how parental involvement in the education of their children act as a conflict resolution tool, and to fill this gap, the study was conducted to explore the extent to which parent's involvement in the education of their school going children serves as a tool to conflict resolution.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the extent to which Parents' involvement in the education of their children serves as a tool to Conflict Resolution in selected schools in Kafue District of Zambia.

Research Objectives

The following objectives guided the study:

- i. Describe ways in which parents get involved in their children's education so as a tool to conflict resolution.
- ii. Explore challenges involved in parental involvement in the education of their children.
- iii. Explore strategies that are applied to harness parental involvement in the education of their children

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the spheres of influence theory propounded by Epstein (2009). The theory explores six types of parental involvement; parenting at home, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community. The focus of Epstein is on what parents do in schools and home that can fit into the goals of the school. This study focused on how parents are involved in the pupil's education as a tool to conflict resolution in selected schools of Kafue district. This study focused on how parents are involved in the education of their children. Based on this theory by Epstein each type of parental involvement is expected to result in different skills for students and parents for instance, communication should lead to awareness of students' progress and action needed to maintain or improve

grades, understanding of school policies on behaviour, attendance and other areas of school conduct. And for parents' communication should result in understanding school programs and policies, monitoring and awareness of children's progress and responding effectively to student's problems.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of studies have identified parental involvement as one among many factors which can promote students' educational success. Parental involvement refers to caregivers of children that is parents and guardians becoming involved in their children's learning, both in and out of school. It involves parents reading to their children, checking homework daily, discussing children's progress with teachers, voting in school committees/boards, helping the school to set challenging academic standards and becoming an advocate for better education in communities. Students need to know that their parents have a vested interest in their success. Parental involvement can be a major component of school improvement and planning (Owolabi, 2016).

The involvement of the parents in the education of their children is a sign that the parents have some aspects of Civic Education skills within and among themselves. As noted by Muleya (2019; 2018; 2017a; 2017b; 2016; 2015), Machila et al (2018); Bergersen & Muleya, (2019); Magasu et al, (2020); (Mupeta & Muleya, 2019); Muleya et al (2019) Civic Education raises the level of awareness and builds up Civic knowledge, Civic skills, Civic values and possibly Civic dispositions in people. In this sense, we can argue that the involvement of the parents in the education of their children could mainly be due to their enhanced attributes of civic knowledge, civic skills, civic values and civic dispositions.

However, Dempsey and Sandler (2015) in a study carried out Chicago revealed that invitations to involvement from important other are often key motivators of parents to become involved. These invitations may be particularly significant for parents whose role construction is relatively passive and whose sense of efficacy is relatively weak. Invitations from important others at school may contribute significantly to more active parental beliefs about personal role and increasingly positive beliefs about personal role and increasingly positive beliefs about the effect of ones actions. Sanders and Sheldon (2016) observe that focusing on such a partnership may, in addition, help to improve their academic achievement. Thus better behaviours of student help to improve their academic achievement.

Marcon (2018) investigated over sixty studies in the United States of America regarding the effects of family involvement on student achievement. In order to measure the effects of parental involvement higher grade and test scores, increased homework, completion, improved school attendance, more positive attitudes. Fewer discipline problems increased high school completion rate, decreased school leaving rates and greater participation. In post – secondary education were

assessed. It was found that parental involvement contributed positively to these outcomes from early childhood through to high school level of education.

Maria (2015) revealed that parents or guardians know that children's ability to learn and served in school can be harmed when their children are excluded from the classroom or punished in another way. When this happens, the most important thing a parent or guardian can do is to become involved as they know their children better. Birch and Ladd (2015) in a study on the relationship between school environment and indiscipline among pupils in selected government high school in Kitwe district found that there were many acts of serious indiscipline among pupils in high schools both the pre and post importance eras in Zambia.

Similarly, Williams et al (2016) reported that 16% of parents were wary of overstepping some unwritten mark in their relations with teachers. Parents' evening was a particularly well documented site for creating parental frustration and confusion. According to Akpan (2014) a study on the involvement of parents in school discipline conducted in Nigeria showed that parents to some extent were involved in school based management practices. The findings revealed that parents were highly involved by working with school authorities to maintain school discipline. This parental involvement could be possibly explained due to effective home school relationship and the creation of invitational school environments by school principals to motivate parents to participate in school management.

Chindanya (2017) in Zimbabwe identified two types of school based involvement namely school communication which involves contact between parents and school personnel aimed at sharing information that includes child' progress establishing good relations between teachers and parents as well as discussing emergent problems and school participation which involves volunteering for school activities and attending school functions as well as participating in school governance. This study is critical to promoting governance in schools and also the provision of quality education through the help of parents. However, it does not state clearly how this initiative has helped to resolve conflicts in between parents and the school authorities leaving a gap to be filled up by this study.

Canon (2018) revealed that pupil suspensions are chosen by school authorities and the teachers are therefore exogenous to parental choice a consequence of pupil misbehaviour. Without parental involvement, the amicable solutions never come to fruition as certain elements are not dealt with fully especially those that parents could easily arrest regarding their children upbringing, environment and influence that those have on the pupils in school. This clearly indicates why there are frequent conflicts between parents and schools in that some gaps are created when parents are not fully involved in the education of their children. Hence the need for this study to bridge the gap so as to allow for the resolution of conflicts.

The study by Hughes, Gleason & Zhang (2018) in Namibia found that there was no formal platform for parents at school such as parent associations where they can discuss with one another, issues they may have regarding the school and collectively bring those issues before the school board. Nor is there a platform for parents to have an input in decision making that affects students. According to Epstein et al (2009), schools need to include parents when it comes to any decision about the students and their education. By being included in this way makes parents to become involved with their children's educational issues. Hence, the study to explore how parents were involved in education of their school children so as to resolve conflict which arise as a result of non-engagement of parents.

Studies done on parent involvement found that teachers wanted more parent involvement particularly in academic areas and felt that more administrative support for parents involvement is needed. Similarly, Murphy (2015) asserted that parents wanted to be involved in meaningful ways and not just called in when their children were in trouble. This is an informative study as it shows the low levels of parent involvement limited to only disciplinary issues of their children which is quite dangerous as it may serve as a recipe for conflicts. Hence this study endeavors to bridge this gap so that the involvement of parents can be with the aim of resolving conflicts.

Todd and Welphine (2016) pointed out that, when studying the education production process, a reasonable assumption is that the inputs are subject to choices made by parents and schools. This then entails that both parents and schools have to play a part in the discipline of the pupils in schools which calls for effective and constant parent involvement in school affairs. Though Flynn 2007 states that administrators and teachers may not fully understand the importance of parental involvement and the effects of parental involvement on student achievement. Often teachers, believe parents do not support the school and do not discipline children when there has been a problem at school. This study shows the levels of non- appreciation on the part of teachers to the roles played by parents and this in itself tells us why there has been conflicts between the two major primary parties. Hence the needs for this study so as to help provide solutions to resolve these conflicts.

There are many factors that affect parent involvement in education of their children in school. A study by Lawrence-Lightfoot (2016) reveals the complexity of parent involvement issue due to positive correlation between parent involvement in education and pupil achievement. Due to this reason, educators are trying to increase both the number of parent involved and the level of their participation. Further, Feuerstein explored several school variables which he thought to influence parent's participation in their children's education. According to Lawrence-Lightfoot (2016) found many types of parent involvement, including monitoring home work are not easily influenced by educators. But he

reports that parent volunteerism and participation in Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTO) can be increased when teachers make substantial efforts to contact parents. This study shows a clear way to go as far as parental involvement is concerned but does not state how this can necessitate conflict resolution.

According to a study done by Miti (2016) on parental involvement in their children's school discipline at Petauke boarding school it shows that parents were not fully involved in the discipline of their school going children and other school related issues of their children. The findings revealed that the school involved parents through the use of PTA general meetings, counselling, open days, news- letters, and phone calls and call out letters and report forms. However, the findings revealed that even when such media were in place in very few parents were fully involved in school affairs and more importantly in instilling discipline in the school going children. Teachers and parents respectively join hands to mould the children. However, the study did not indicate how this negative attitude or low involvement of parents has had impacted on resolving conflicts between themselves as parents and the school thus this study attempts to bring to light how parental involvement can act as not only as a disciplinary mechanism of their school going children but also as a tool to conflict resolution.

According to a study by Lindle (2018), conducted in Sweden, on parental involvement in schools, school systems were very complicated and hard to comprehend by some parents. Majority of parents felt excluded from education system due to lack of understanding of schools complicated system, values and guiding policies and principles. This had a negative impact on the school- community relations. Therefore this study seeks to give solutions to these unfriendly solutions by showing ways on how parent's involvement can be enhanced to act as a conflict resolution tool.

Low self-esteem and having not been successful in school might be one of the factors inhibiting parental involvement in the education of their children. A study by Daniel (2017) found out that many parents suffer from low self-esteem while others did not experience success in school themselves; therefore they lack the knowledge and confidence to help their children. And Laban (2017) reveals that lack of involvement is embarrassment due to parents' failure in school. Parents who did not experience success in school might view the school negatively and might feel intimidated by the language and avoid any meaningful communication with school management. Parents may feel they are contacted by the school it is usually just to deal with some sort of problem or when something is wrong. When they contacted, they are sometimes talked to and blamed for incidences and spoken to by staff in a business-like fashion (Olanuji, 2017). This critically analyzed does not help resolve conflicts that might arise between parents and schools hence the need for this study to try and show how vital is parental involvement to resolving conflicts.

According to Henderson and Beria (2016) parental involvement in school can be challenging, particularly when the families are economically disadvantaged or do not use the school's official language as their primary language. Parental involvement might be hindered by low income level, high transportation costs, chronic health conditions or conflicts with work schedules, and some cultural norm where questioning teachers. Therefore, there is need for a study to show how parent's involvement can help resolve conflicts between them and the school authorities on issues concerning their children.

In addition to language barrier some parents' cultures encourage them not to become too involved in school and feel to do so is disrespectful (Horvatin, 2017). There may be cultural issues that conflict with dress code restrictions cultural issues may also prevent families from participating in school activities and some parents may perceive the school as an exogenous institution which should be left alone to operate. However, this can create conflicts thus the need to show how crucial parental involvement is to not only the success of the school but also the way to resolve conflicts

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study was guided by a qualitative approach using a Narrative design, to elicit information within the research problems at hand (Yin, 2018; Orodho, Cohen and Morrison, 2017 & Kombo, 2015).

Participants

In this study, 28 participants took part in their various capacities as school managers, school deputies, teachers and parents from four schools in Kafue District.

Sampling procedure

The researcher used purposive sampling which is a non-random technique. According to Etikan et al (2015) purposive sampling is a non-random technique where the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of their knowledge endowment and experience.

Instruments

Interview schedules were used for data generation from the Head of schools, teachers and students. This enabled participants to provide their views on the extent of parental involvement in the education of their children.

IV. FINDINGS

The question was asked if the parents were involved in disciplining of their children at school as a way to resolve conflicts between them (parents) and the school authorities who by virtue of their position are supposed to administer punishments, out of the 28 parents, six parents said that they were involved whenever their children had disciplinary cases

at school, while the majority 22 said they were not involved. The parents, however, said there were only involved through general meeting, open days and through report forms. Teacher's responses were common in all the focus Group discussion. Parent C wrote that:

One day at the school during the Parents Teachers Association general meeting the head teacher emphasized to all parents that we had a role to play to ensure that our children's behaviour was well checked even at home (Parent C, 2019).

In addition, when asked on the necessity of parents getting involved in disciplining of their children at school as a way to deal with conflicts, fourteen of the twenty (20) parents indicated that it was necessary while two wrote that it was not necessary for parents to participate in disciplining of their children. Parent A wrote.

It is necessary for parents to be involved in the disciplining of our children because there will be continuity of disciplining from home to school and it should start from home to school. Children are encouraged when they see parents are involved at school (Parent A, 2019).

It was therefore noted that involving parents in their children discipline helps instil discipline in the pupils even when they are away from home. Regarding attendance of parents in school meeting, some parents indicated that their attendance was not good. Most parents did not see any value.

Factors affecting involvement of parents in the education of their Children

Parents expressed their concerns regarding their involvement in the education of their children at school. When asked to explain the factors that affected their involvement in the education of their children at school. Parents indicated that some teachers showed unwelcoming attitudes towards them. For example the parents mentioned that they were looked down upon by some teachers due to low education levels. To this effect one male parent noted that,

The school does not inform us of any good things our children do at school but all we hear are the wrongs done by our children. Such as your child was found drunk at the classes during prep time instead of him being in class studying (Parent H, 2019).

Parents indicated there was lack of communication between teachers and parents while others said that male teachers took advantage of the female children by involving them in things that are not educative such as having an affair with them and make it difficult for the parents to assist in discipline of the children. Parent C observed that,

Sometimes the school does not communicate what they do to the children or what punishment they give but only communicate when they have reached a stage of suspending or expelling the child while sometimes we just see a child come home with an expulsion letter form a situation which

contributes greatly to conflicts between parents and school authorities (Parent C, 2019).

While another Parent D wrote that:

Some male teachers take advantage of school girls by having sexual affairs with them which makes us as parents lose trust in the school (Parent D, 2019).

Another contributing factor that was raised among the parents' involvement in the education of their school going children was distance to the school. Some parents revealed that, long distance between the school and their homes was a challenge for them not to be involved in the education of their school children. This was linked to financial constraints of some parents hence making it difficult for them to visit the school when they were called over for their children school performance or disciplinary issue. Participant Z observed that,

Sometimes we think through about the movement at school is very far. We think of transport money, food on the way just to hear your child had issues at school. We fail to come to school and leave that in the hands of teachers and the head teacher (Parent Z, 2019).

It was further explained that most parents are farmers who depended on farm produce making money once a year after they had sold their products to the Food Reserve Agency and made sure that whatever money they have it was used on buying farm inputs for the next season instead of them attending to school issues.

Some parents expressed lack of understanding regarding the process of discipline at school one of the key way to parental involvement in the education of their children. Parent A indicated that:

We are not involved in disciplining our children due to lack of understanding as the school does not explain fully what the parents ought to do regarding the discipline of children at school.(Parent A, 2019).

The lack of understanding became a prominent factor contributing to parent's inertia in getting involved in discipline of the school going children. On the other hand, three parents wrote that some teachers were not welcoming there by creating a gap between what parents could put in to help. Parent E said,

Some teachers here at school think we are not educated they would say look at her she thinks her child is well behaved when not. Such sentiments are very demotivating to us as parents.

Some teachers turn their back on us when we visit the school thinking we have come to quarrel over the children. (Parent E, 2019).

A parent indicated that:

The school administration is not receptive to us parents as they would rather keep us waiting for a long time before attending to us. That is a sign of not being welcome because

we come from very far places to be kept waiting for a long time (Parent B, 2019).

Unwelcoming teachers and administration were perceived a hindrance to the involvement of parents in disciplining their children, hence, parents keeping a distance and leaving issues with the school to handle on their own.

Parents' involvement in the education of children at school

Out of the 28 teachers, 27 teachers indicated that parents were involved in the education of their school going children through the use of PTA executive and general meeting phone calls open days, newsletters and counselling. Only one teacher raised the issue of call and letters sent to parents when their children were found wanting. One participant indicated that:

When some children's behaviour is getting out of hand for example, boys and girls kissing, having an intimacy affairs excessive beer drinking and smoking, spending time out of the school without permission, we teachers tend to phone their parents and ask them to intervene. However, it is not all the issues that parents are involved in certain cases such noise making and absenteeism were sorted out by teachers themselves and the administration (Teacher school Orange, 2019).

A question was asked, if parents were involved to go to school whenever their children had disciplinary cases and if it was necessary for parents to participate in disciplining of their children at school. Out of the four teachers, one wrote that parents were allowed to go school and discuss the problem of their children which they were facing while three teachers indicated the school did.

Factors Affecting Involvement of Parents in the education of their children

Teachers' responses on what they thought were the factors that affected their involvement in school of their children at school. When asked what they thought were factors that affected parent's involvement in their children's school, the following were the responses, parents negative attitude, poverty, lack of knowledge about secondary schools and distance to certain selected secondary schools among other issues. Teachers indicated that negative attitude towards getting involved in their children school especially discipline which has a bearing on conflict resolution. The finding showed that of the four teachers, three of them indicated that the parents have negative attitudes towards getting involved in the issues of their school going children. Teacher (School Black) wrote:

Some parents are difficult to advise because their children dictate to them what should be done and not following what they are supposed to do this goes to what type of parenting the child receives at home.(Teacher, Sch Black, 2019).

Many parents were unable to provide some scholastic materials like exercise books, pens and pocket money to their

children. They even lacked food due to some natural hazards such as droughts in many areas of the district (Kafue).

Lack of time and resources such as money among parents and teachers was a challenge; many parents were working on farms for their daily income, and they were not ready to waste time and money for school. Daily commitments and responsibilities made it difficult for parents to cope with students' academic activities. (Teacher School Yellow, 2019).

Another teacher at School Orange) cited:

Long distances from home to and from school affect student's daily attendance; many parents were unable to attend academic meetings held at school or attend calls made by teachers and administrators at school due to long distances between home and school and this led to truancy behavior among students (Teacher School Orange, 2019).

Low students' readiness to learn is a challenge in parental involvement in the education of their children's, because majority of the students are adolescent, an age that children demand more freedom to explore life events. Since many parents lacked parenting skills, many children were engaged in a number of bad behaviours such as not attending lessons and others taking drugs and alcohol in order to gain confidence. The finding also revealed that, some parents do not attend school meetings when they are called to discuss the conflicting issues of their school going children they felt it was the responsibility of the school to discipline the children. The aspect of distance also came out when teachers were asked in the questionnaire. The teachers indicated that some pupils come from very far places and towns around and as such many parents could not afford travelling to the school when there was an issue.

V. DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to explore parental involvement in the education of their children as a tool to conflict resolution. Findings from the present study demonstrated that increased parent involvement, defined as the teacher's perception of positive attitude parents have toward their child's education, teacher, and the school, was significantly related to academic performance (Hughes, 2018). Further, parent involvement was related to the resolution of conflicts, a variable not accounted for in the previous researches.

Drawing from the study, it was revealed that parents were involved through PTA general meetings, open day, telephone calls, newsletters, calls out letters and through report forms consistent with Simui, Mhone & Nkhuwa's (2011) in parental involvement in selected schools within Zambia. The findings revealed that the parents were involved in education of their children at school. Parents were invited at school to see their children's academic performance and hence interact with teachers who share experiences of their children not academic work but behaviour as well which has a bearing on the resolution of conflicts. The findings were in line with a study in Japan and United States of America by MacKinnon (2018)

that in relation to communication between the school and home several channels are used such as regularly scheduled parents- teacher's conferences, the use of newsletters, circulars and even telephone and internet. During the open days or school visitation, parents, teachers, and the school authorities have an opportunity to see through what hold children at school in terms of performance and behaviour. Such gatherings in school were very important for parents to attend as they were given chance to express freely on what and how they could also help the school administration in resolving conflicts that erupt between school authorities and pupils as well as parents and the school.

Despite parents being involved through meetings, parents indicated many issues discussed concerned results of the children and not disciplinary matter where parents were full involved keeping pupils discipline is a matter that needs concerted efforts from both the parents and the teachers for the betterment of the future generation and indeed the resolution of conflicts among key stakeholders. It is argued that pupil indiscipline may be in many forms among them; absence from class or school, use of bad language, untidiness, improper dressing beer drinking immorality with fellow pupils and teachers. In addition, indiscipline is a precursor to a disabling learning environment a vice that needs to be checked and uprooted to create an enabling inclusive learning environment Simui, Kasonde-Ngandu, Cheyeka, Simwinga & Ndhlovu, 2018; Simui, Kasonde-Ngandu & Nyaruwata, 2017; Simui, Thompson, Mwewa, Mundende, Kakana, Chishiba & Namangala, 2017 and Simui, 2009). These if not well checked may build of wrong character in pupils. It is therefore paramount that erring pupils were punished in order to correct the bad behaviour and avoid the occurrence of conflicting interactions between school authorities and the parents when it comes to issues of disciplining pupils.

The primary attribute was that discipline a key component in the education of the children at school was very important hence the need for all stakeholders to be involved in maintaining sanity at school. Parents are key partners in the affairs and more important the discipline of their school going children. They help in encouraging and telling them the value of education and urge them to behave well even when at school. School is a second home for the children and that's where they spend most of the time than at home. Birch and Ladd (2015), affirmed to the fact that a number of factors contributed to indiscipline among pupils in school which include background factors, psychological such as cognitive and personal trails, biological factors such as the premenstrual syndrome in girls besides school- based factors. Some of factors were said to be outside the school, while others factors or issue within the school. Hence, advocating the involvement of parents in education their school going children a move which ultimately reduce conflicting relations between school authorities and the parents.

The factors that affected parents' involvement in education of their children at school teachers added parents' negative

attitude, lack of understanding and financial constraints. We teachers who are supposed to receive and give a warm welcome to guests at school are the ones who are unwelcoming is a concern. The school authorities, the school board and the teachers need to sit down and improve how they welcome parents at school because parents are patterns in the development of not only the school but the resolution of conflicts in school. Similarly, when school authorities are not communicating effectively with parents, it creates a vacuum of information which all stakeholders need to know. Communication is very important in any organization for smooth running of the institution without which the system may collapse. It is for this reason that many schools are making frantic efforts in developing better communication system with parents.

Parents felt that there was lack of communication between parents and teachers. Parents reported that teachers did not consult them when the child committed an offence, the type of disciplinary action to be given to their children and parents were not involved in the disciplining of their school going children. Though teachers mentioned that parents were informed depending on the offence committed by their children some cases were dealt with by the school without parents' consent. This is in line with Epstein (2017) who indicated that lack of adequate communication between teachers and parents influenced the level of involvement of parents. Communication is important in involvement of parents in their children school discipline. There is need for both parents and teachers to promote involvement of parents. This according to the scholar would help resolve conflicts between parents and school authorities.

A challenge in some situation was distance, sometimes distance becomes a hindrance for parents to participate in the affairs of the school. Distance to the school was one other contributing factor that affected parents' involvement in education of their school going children. Some parents relatively stay very far and have to consider the expense when travelling from faraway places. Issues of financial constraints come in. However, where there is proper planning distance is not a factor, schools always have a schedule of activities availed to parents immediately school open they are informed of all activities of that particular term of the year and when will be required to visit the schools. However, when there is an issue concerning misbehaviour of their children school authorities have no option but summon the parents to schools. This is vital as it eventually help reduce conflicts between parents and school authorities when it comes to issues of disciplining their children.

The findings from the research revealed that parents only got involved in the children school discipline by participating in decision making process in the school through the PTA meeting or when called upon by the school authorities. This is in line with Hill (2016) who showed that when called upon parents planned together with the school authorities in disciplining of school going children and this is supported by

Epstein et al (2009) who indicated that decision making activities allows parents to contribute ideas regarding school plans and policies towards the disciplining of their school going children. It is for this reason that most disciplinary problems encountered can be resolved if parents were actively involved in decision making. Effective communication is important in the disciplining of school going children and poor communication with the parents may result into indiscipline among the children. It is indicative from the above that such involvement of parents can indeed help in resolving conflicts between parents and school authorities.

The findings are in line with other scholars like Marcon (2018) who revealed that family factors potentially limit parental involvement in education of their children. Parental education level, maternal depression, and single parent status on general involvement were affecting participation of children in school differently. It was argued that parent's view of their role as a teacher and their degree of comfort in communicating with teachers were in part a reflection of their own education experience. A poor or limited personal education left the parent lacking in vision or confidence or competence in supporting their own child. Single parent status placed limits, especially in respect of time available, to support the child educationally. Mental depression was explored as a risk factor because depression was associated with a general lack of motivation, energy and confidence and depressed people elicit negative responses from others.

The research finding had also shown that involvement of parents in their children school education was important to parents. The commonly noted reason for this was that children became more disciplined. Discipline continued among children from home to school. The study also revealed that parents felt appreciated and recognized by the school when they were involved in their children school and this positively contributed to the resolution of conflicts between them (parents) and the school authorities. Grolnicle (2015) revealed the lower Social Economic Status families may find access to involvement more difficult than do higher Social Economic status families because. However the assumed negative attitudes of parents are primarily due lack of understanding and lack of parent's involvement in school programmes. Entwisle and Hayduk (2016) state that teachers and parents may be in conflict for not understanding their roles where parents tend to criticize teachers on simple issues due to lack of understanding. This is frequently a source of teachers stress and burn out. After all, the teacher's legal role has always been in loco parentis, a Latin word meaning having the same responsibility for a child as a parent has. The bottom line is the parents have primary responsibility for educating their children. Educators simply offer parent their professional service educating their children. For this reason it is important to guide families into understanding teacher's role as a provider of professional service, and also to use their professional to establish co-partnership with parents.

This notion is supported by Holbein (2017) states that a school has a cordial relationship among the students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the community as a whole. The relationship would help schools create a climate that fosters the development of the whole child (Eliadou, Lo, Servio & Simui, 2007). In addition, a harmonious relationship would build trust and promote respect. At a time when schools are being urged to solve many of society's problems, community links are imperative. Community outreach programs should be developed that will provide supportive and nurturing homes, schools and community environment in which the academic needs of students are effectively addressed. Epstein (1995) in his spheres of influence theory advocated for a collaboration between the school and the community which helped in harmonizing the relationship thereby helping on the pupil's discipline in school. Eccles and Harold (2017) suggested that parents should monitor the after-school activities of their children and that they should control pupil's behaviour and check pupils' academic progress so as to optimize their academic performance. This move contributes to the resolution of conflicts between parents and school authorities as parents tend not to feel left out.

Birch and Ladd (2015) reveal that the most important invitation to involvement come from three sources: the school in general, school climate, teachers, and students, invitations generated by positive school climate are significant because they suggest strongly that parents are welcome at school and that their involvement is important, expected and supported. Invitations from teachers are important because they underscore the value of parent's engagement in the child's learning and the power of parental action to affect student learning. Qualities of the school environment, including schools structure and management practices may enhance several aspects of parent-school relationship, including parent's knowledge that they are welcome in the school that put together will enhance a conflict free relationship between school authorities and parents. The more parents are involved in a lot of school activities the more their attitudes change positively and they become part and parcel of education of their children both at home at school and reduce on conflicting interactions with parents.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study found that parents were not fully involved in the education of their school going children. The findings revealed that the school involved parents through the one-off P.T.A general meeting, counselling, open days, newsletters, phone calls, and call out letters and report forms. In addition, it was revealed that even when such fora were available, very few parents were fully involved in school affairs and more importantly in instilling discipline in the school going children. The study further revealed that some parents felt that some teachers' attitudes towards them were not welcoming, distance to the school and lack of understanding affected their involvement in the education of their school going children. On the other hand, some parents

themselves generally had negative attitudes towards issues of their school going children as they did not turn up for meetings and activities when called upon by the school authorities. Finally, the findings suggested that involving parents in decision making was a strategy to facilitate maintenance of discipline of the school going children and a way to reduce conflicts among them and parents in selected Secondary Schools.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the fore-going,

- i. Parents should provide their children with basic needs such as food, shelter and clothes, learning materials like exercises books, pens and instruments including calculator, adequate academic and moral attention, unconditional love and the opportunity to develop responsible citizenship.
- ii. Parents should make follow up of their children's daily school attendance and assist them in their homework and related assignments so that they don't get confrontational when their children fail to perform to their expectation.
- iii. Teachers and administrators at ward level should educate students and parents on the importance of pursuing secondary education using various means. For instance, holding public meetings to insist on parental involvement especially in students' academic activities.
- iv. Teacher should demonstrate friendliness, care of, warmth, respect and recognition of parents of students registered in community secondary schools who come to school in order to encourage them to get involved in school activities.
- v. Teachers and other educational stakeholders should motivate parents and their student through praise, providing certificate of appreciation for effective involvement in academic activities, rewards and announcing names of parents with good records as active school participants.
- vi. Education policy makers should prepare a parental involvement policy in community secondary schools which would state clearly the key functions of parents for students registered in community secondary schools and their roles in students' academic activities.
- vii. Teachers should make sure that, parents are informed and involved more in school activities including academic issues of their children and other issues in decision making. This will build transparency, and hence increase their morale, motivation, and accountability in participating in school activities.

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