

Parental Involvement in the Junior Secondary Schools and its Effects on Teachers' Job Dissatisfaction

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Abstract

The study examined perceptions and cultural beliefs held by parents on their involvement in the education of their children. It focused on deterrent experienced by these parents towards being involved and the beliefs and feelings held by teachers on the methods to engage these parents in their children's learning. The participants consisted of teachers who were teaching in junior secondary school. Data collection was achieved through the use of questionnaire and open-ended interview questions. Teachers completed the questionnaire and participated in interviews. The results of this study indicated that parents were less involved in their children's education, hence the high level of teacher's dissatisfaction. The findings revealed that teachers were highly dissatisfied with parents and involvement in administration and management of education at the level of community junior secondary schools.

Keywords: Parental involvement, Teachers' job dissatisfaction, community junior secondary schools, school climate.

Introduction

Parents' involvement does not happen in a vacuum. The parents' role in teaching and learning is especially important because it is a reliable guide to teachers' level of satisfaction. This matter requires an examination of the concept of parental involvement and how teachers interpret and apply it at the school level. Teachers need to develop skills for effective integration of parental involvement for them to improve their level of satisfaction. To improve parental involvement, the national policy on education suggests the training programs for both parents and teachers to identify and eliminate discrimination and stereotyping in all educational settings. Such programs must increase respect, understanding, acceptance and sensitivity towards individuals and groups in a diverse society in order to promote parents involvement in the affairs of the school.

This will promote the academic achievement of their children. The National Commission on Education of 1993 believes that parents and other community members have valuable role to

play within the public schools. The proper use of parents is essential for the preservation of quality education for children. Parents should be properly trained as determined by needs of the local school system and by state statutes to promote the teachers commitment to their work. The training of parents should be for a sole purpose of eliminating misconceptions of the parents concerning teachers who are seen as child abusers, so as to create a rapport between the groups and reduce unnecessary tension which may influence teachers to satisfaction level.

Parents as partners should also embrace training programs, which are aimed at improving relationships which will encourage children to learn better. Parents' involvement in the education of their children should highlight parents visits to the school, as much so that schools should have a coordinated relationship. To summarise this, the encouragement of parents involvement in ways that reduce the teachers frustrations and dissatisfaction must not be taken for granted. Parents' involvement is aimed at helping children to learn better, learn responsible behaviour and succeed in school. Parents' involvement is seen as a way of strengthening partnership without challenging teachers' roles in education. It would be unrealistic to expect any other course of action from teachers, if parents' involvement can encourage criticism of their roles. At the same time parental involvement will be incomplete if parents cannot question or criticise teachers' unprofessional actions when carrying out their duties. Parents working for schools or who try to influence termination of incompetent teachers are just as involved as parents who wants to preserve the status quo in public schools. The education policies acknowledge the important role that parents can play in education as they advise parents to help their children to learn.

Children at a young age, regardless of their ethnic background, are driven by their curiosity to explore, learn and understand the world around them. Parents are their children's initial teachers, as they are the ones who provide children with their first learning experience and with the answers to their first questions. Parents from diverse groups hold a vision of their children being successful throughout their education and life endeavours. For this vision to become a reality it is vital that parents from all cultural backgrounds continue to participate in their children's learning experiences at home and at school.

Literature Review

It is essential that schools consider individual parent differences in education, income, social networks and positions of power when attempting to engage parents in school related activities (Giles, 1998). It is also essential for teachers to strive to enhance the involvement of parents from culturally diverse backgrounds. In an attempt to involve these parents, teachers must take the time to explore the values, personal beliefs and expectations of the parents in their classrooms (Flett, Conderman & Lock, 2001). Despite the abundance of literature on the benefits of and barriers to parental involvement in school, there is an absence of literature that examines the deterrents experienced by parents to being active participants in their children's education. Existing literature also does not explore the cultural beliefs held by parents with regard to education. It is necessary to explore the barriers or deterrents experienced by members of all cultures, in order to gain a better understanding of the different cultural perspectives and beliefs held by about education and parental involvement. This will also show how parental involvement influence teachers' level of satisfaction with their profession. Although everyone is for more parental involvement, there is no consensus on what it means. Parental involvement means parents' support for what teachers do. According to Bradley, Johnson, Rawl and Dodson-sims (2005), parents' participation has strongly been linked to students' success, yet in urban schools parents often are uninvolved resulting in teachers' job dissatisfaction. Parental involvement is concerned with parent engagements in learning activities mostly, although, not exclusively in the home. The involvement is not limited to actual learning tasks. Coleman (1998) said that it includes the notion of the "curriculum of the

home”, the “patterns of habit formation and attitude development that prepare the child for academic learning and that sustain the child through the years of schooling” (Redding, 1992, p. 34).

This is the parent’s contribution to the student’s willingness and readiness to learn which can reduce the level of teachers’ job dissatisfaction. The changing demographics of students in public schools have been a catalyst for re-examining the role of parents in the 21st century in order to influence teachers’ satisfaction level. Many writers have acknowledged that in order for teachers to effectively attend to the needs of students, parents need to be culturally competent and culturally responsive (Evans & Carter, 1999; Paisley & McMahon, 2001). It is important to note, however, that the role of teachers is not just to work with students. Teachers also must be multicultural competent to work with parents for the benefit of students’ academic and development success.

According to Haar (1999; 2000), everyone agrees that for better or for worse in the teaching profession, parental involvement plays an extremely significant role in the education of their children. Hardly a week goes by without an article encouraging parent’s involvement or citing the benefits of having parent’s participation in their children’s education, being published as this will be a moral boost to teachers. Many studies have strongly linked parent participation to improved student achievement, teacher motivation, accountability and attendance (US Department of Education, 1994; 1995; Samaras & Wilson, 1999). Yet in Africa, parents often are not involved and this has influenced teachers to neglect students work and this has created dissatisfaction among the teaching fraternity (Bodgan & Biklen, 1992; Gardner & Miranda, 2001; Troutman, 2001).

Moreover, Abrams and Gibbs (2002) in their study of parent-school relationship found that African parents are often more alienated from schools and this was found to cause frustration among teachers. Further, several studies have revealed that parents who question or challenge the authority of teachers and administrators or who do not mirror middle class norms often are made to feel unwelcome with the educational system (Roddock & Hopkins, 1985; Harry, Rueda & Kalyanpur, 1999; Samaras & Wilson, 1999). Government and teachers advocate parent involvement as a way of raising the level of student’s achievement and teacher motivation. Clearly many parents help their children succeed in school and many more could do so if they believed that they could help their children learn better as this could influence the satisfaction of teachers.

Although moments of inclusion occur when parents are encouraged to participate in school activities such as parent-teacher associations, interactions with parents often do not occur outside these traditional invitations and this can be a source of frustration for teachers. Gardner and Miranda (2001) have contended that this break in communication between the schools and parents prevents the two stakeholders from understanding the requirements and expectations of the two environments (home and school) where the student must function and this can frustrate teachers in their performance.

According to Bernak and comely (2002), schools should formulate parent groups as for a to discuss their children’s education and their concerns regarding school personnel and resources. Through the sharing of experiences and ideas, parents can become empowered to collaborate with school officials in implementing change at local, state or local levels for students, reduce teachers’ level of dissatisfaction. In addition, by attending these meetings, school personnel could better understand the common issues and challenges that confront parents.

Statement of the Problem

A growing body of literature supports the importance of school personnel understanding and appreciating the unique strengths and contribution of parents. African parents have the difficult role of orienting their children toward an environment that is restrictive and hostile towards students. Parents influence in education is key to the level of teachers' satisfaction. The truth is parents in Botswana do not exert more influence in their children's intellectual development than is commonly realized in developed countries. In fact, more than three decades of research shows that parents have greater influence than any other factor.

It has been realized that for parents the right to learn is curtailed by the obligation to attend school. According to the National Commission on Education (Botswana, 1993) it seems many children in Botswana schools feel that they are forced to go to school and that parents seem to be a distance away from what is happening in the school. According to Mokete (1997) and Maphorisa (1987) the lack of concern by parents in the running and management of schools is worrisome, as a love for studying is an acquired taste, not an instinctive preference. This lack of concern by parents has a greater impact on teachers' level of satisfaction about their teaching job. The habit of studying is formed in childhood and a child's taste in reading is formed in the right direction or wrong one while he/she is under the influence of parents and they are directly responsible for shaping and cultivating that taste.

The failure by parents to have influence in their children is a source of concern as it is reflected by the uncompromising stance taken by teachers to find ways of forcing parents in coming to check on their children's welfare or academic performance during school open days. This has resulted in teachers' level of satisfaction in their profession being negatively affected. Failure by parents to talk to children about their academic performance is a sign that parents influence in schools is wanting. The problem this study is trying to contribute a solution to is low levels of teacher's job satisfaction in secondary schools and the reluctance of parents to be involved or support the students learning process.

It is important to acknowledge that sometimes the education level of most parents in Botswana plays a critically role in their children's academic performance, which translates into teachers' level of dissatisfaction being high. It is also clear that parents make critically contribution on teachers' level of satisfaction in their work place. If public schools are to improve performance then parental involvement must be worked upon so that at home parents consistently monitor and organize their children's time at home, checking the assignments given to students and discussing performance in schools.

Purpose of the Study

The problem of parental involvement in education in Botswana has an impact on student's performance needs and resulted in teachers being disgruntled with their profession. Parental involvement has a positive or negative influence on teacher performance and commitment. The purpose of the study was to examine and evaluate the experiences of teachers toward parental involvement and toward parents being seen as active participants in their children's education. The other purpose was to determine the feelings held by teachers regarding methods to engage parents in their children's learning in the classroom. The other purposes includes to find out causes and emerging issues that makes parents to participate or not to participate in the education of their children, to identify key reasons why parents are reluctant to be involved in school activities and to explore the factors that influence parents to shun to be identified with schools where their children are studying.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

1. What beliefs and feelings do teachers hold on ways to engage parents in their children's learning?
2. Do teachers perceive parents as active participants in their children's education?

This is done through testing the following null hypotheses.

1. The level of community support has no significant influence on teachers' of job dissatisfaction.
2. The involvement of parents in school has no significant influence on the level of teachers' job dissatisfaction.

Significance of the Study

Investigating the issues influencing parental involvement in schools might have multiple benefits to teachers and students. The study highlights the specific factors influencing parent's involvement in the education of their children and how this affects teacher's level of satisfaction. This study also will reveal the outcomes that may enable the researcher to identify factors influencing parental involvement and further explore their bearings on teacher's level of job satisfaction.

The study will be of significance to a variety of interest groups in particular teachers and students. It is crucial to find out the impeding factors influencing parents' involvement in education of their children and how this affect the commitment of children to excel in their studies. This will cause schools to establish properly directed educational data for use by school administrators and teachers as they implement the curriculum, and this may improve the level of teachers' job satisfaction. It is of great importance/value to carry out this study now, since students' performance in schools is a source of concern for the society, parents and government, hence parents look down upon the education acquired from schools and this has put a lot of pressure on teachers which had direct bearing on their level of satisfaction.

It is hoped that the findings will be useful in schools developing effective strategies and policies that will help management in understanding better how to bring on board parents in order to have effective schools and improve the academic performance of both students and their teachers, and in effect enable them to reduce the growing unhappiness of all stakeholders on the roles played by parents to influence the teachers' level of job satisfaction. Such packages may be useful to parents in terms of developing proper attitudes towards the education of their children and thereby reduce the high rate of non-participation in their children's academic performance.

Data Collection

Data collection was achieved through the use of a questionnaire to individual participants. Questionnaires were distributed to teachers. The questionnaire was designed with a combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions. The format of the close-ended questions offered a series of choices to be selected from, and the format of the open-ended questions allowed teachers to provide their own responses. Teachers from the selected schools were invited to participate in the study. Questionnaires were distributed to teachers to solicit information. The questionnaire provided valuable information regarding the perceptions held by teachers on the level of parental involvement.

Results of the Study

Hypothesis 1

In the null form, this hypothesis states that level of community support has no significant influence on teachers' level of job dissatisfaction.

Testing this hypothesis involved statistically comparing the mean level of job dissatisfaction across the three groups of teachers with different levels of perception of community support for teachers. A one-way analysis of variance was done to compare these (see Table 1). This table displays the results of the one-way ANOVA showing the number of teachers with different levels of perception of community support and their mean level of job dissatisfaction.

The results revealed that the mean level of job dissatisfaction for teachers who perceived low level of community support was 21.78 (Std. Dev. = 1.60); for those who perceived average level of community support it was 22.07 (Std. Dev. = 2.13); and for those who perceived high level of community support it was 18.70 (Std. Dev. = 2.94).

Comparison of these means through ANOVA gave an F-value of 35.02, which was higher than the critical F-value of 3.00 for 2 and 252 degrees of freedom at 0.05 significance level.

Table 1: One-way ANOVA of influence of perception on the level of community support on teachers' level of job dissatisfaction

Perceived level of community support	n	Mean	Std. Dev.
Low	113	21.78	1.60
Average	81	22.07	2.13
High	61	18.70	4.23
Total	255	21.14	2.94

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p<
Between groups	478.483	2	239.241	35.02*	.000
Within groups	1721.713	252	6.832		
Total	2200.196	254			

*Significant $p < .05$; critical $F = 3.00$; $df = 2$ & 251

This result led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This means that the level to which teachers perceived that community support is available to the teaching profession significantly influences the level of job dissatisfaction among teachers in junior secondary schools in the South Central Region of Botswana. Basing on the sizes of the mean levels of job dissatisfaction by the three groups, it could be said that according to teachers' perception, the higher the level of community support, the lower the level of teachers' job dissatisfaction. Following from the significant overall F-value there was the need to determine which of the three groups of teachers differ significantly from each other in terms of their level of job

dissatisfaction. To do this post-hoc comparison of the group means using a multiple comparisons, LSD analysis was carried out and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Multiple comparisons LSD Analysis of influence of the level of community support on teachers' level of job dissatisfaction

(I)Level of community support	(J)level of community support	Mean difference (I-J)	Std error	t-value	p<
Low	Average	-.295	.380	-.776	.438
	High	3.073*	.415	7.405*	.000
Average	Low	.295	.380	.776	.438
	High	3.369*	.443	7.605*	.000
High	Low	-3.074	.415	-7.405*	.000
	Average	-3.369*	.443	-7.650*	.000

* The mean difference is significant at 0.05

The analysis revealed that teachers who perceived the level of community support in teaching to be high showed a significantly lower level of job dissatisfaction than those who perceived such support to be low ($t = 7.605$) and to be average ($t = -7.650$). Comparisons of other groups did not yield significant results.

Hypothesis 2

In the null form, the hypothesis states that the involvement of parents in a school has no significant influence on the level of teachers' job dissatisfaction.

The testing of this hypothesis involved comparing the mean level of job dissatisfaction across the three groups of teachers with different perceived level of parental involvement. The one-way analysis of variance was done to compare these means (see Table 3).

The results from the analysis gave an F-ratio of 56.341, which was seen as higher than the critical F-value of 3.00 given 2 & 252 degrees of freedom at a significance level of 0.05. This observation led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This shows that there is a significant difference in the teachers' level of job dissatisfaction among teachers with different perceptions of parental involvement.

Table 3: One way ANOVA of influence of perceptions on level of parental involvement on teachers' level of job dissatisfaction

Perceived level of parental involvement	n	Mean	Std Dev.
Low	107	22.23	1.25
Average	92	21.72	1.81

High	56		18.09		4.38
Total	255		21.14		2.94
Sources of variations	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	p<
Between groups	679.831	2	339.916	56.34*	.000
Within groups	1520.365	252	6.033		
Total	2200.196	254			

*Significant $p < .05$; critical $F = 3.00$; $df = 2$ & 252

The results show that those teachers who said there was high level of parental involvement were the least dissatisfied while those who said there was low or average parental involvement were highly dissatisfied. Judging from the sizes of the mean level of teachers' job dissatisfaction by the three groups, it could be said that according to teachers' perceptions, the higher the level of parental involvement, the lower the teachers' level of job dissatisfaction tends to be.

Following from the significant overall F - value there was the need to determine which of the three groups of teachers differ significantly from each other in terms of their level of job dissatisfaction. To do this, a post-hoc comparison of the groups using the least significant difference (LSD) multiple comparisons analysis was done (see Table 4).

This analysis showed that teachers who perceived high level of parental involvement showed a significantly ($t = 10.232$) lower level of job dissatisfaction than those who perceived low ($t = -1.479$) and average ($t = 8.721$) parental involvement. Comparisons of other groups did not produce significant results.

Table 4: Multiple comparison LSD analysis of influence of level of parental involvement on teachers' level of job dissatisfaction

(I) Level of parental involvement	(J) Level of parental involvement	Mean difference (I-J)	Std error	t-value	p<
Low	Average	.516	.349	1.479	.141
	High	4.144*	.405	10.232*	.000
Average	Low	-.516	.349	-1.479	.141
	High	3.628*	.416	8.721*	.000
High	Low	-4.144*	.405	-10.232*	.000
	Average	-3.628*	.416	-8.721*	.000

* The mean difference is significant at 0.05

Discussion of Results

The results indicate that teachers are highly dissatisfied with the involvement of parents in education of their children. The result has shown that parents rarely come to school even

when officially invited for such consultation meetings. The study revealed that very few parents come to school for these consultations with teachers and this negatively contribute to the current bad behaviour of students. Teachers revealed that parents are only concerned when their children fail the final examinations; hence pass the blame to teachers.

This shows that there is a significant difference in teachers' level of job dissatisfaction among teachers with different perception of parental involvement. The results show that those teachers who said there was high level of parental involvement were the least dissatisfied and those who said there was low or average parental involvement were highly dissatisfied. Judging from these results it can be concluded that according to teacher's perception the higher the level of parental involvement the lower the teacher's level of dissatisfaction tends to be.

One teacher said: "schools must create a non-threatening environment that can facilitate a two-way conversation and trust between parents and teachers". This comment indicates that schools have created threatening set up which does not facilitate communication between the teachers and the parents they serve. This lack of confidence on the part of the teachers/parents, and in some cases poor understanding of exactly what is it that each part is supposed to do has led the parents to minimal support or being involved in school management. However, according to expectations of the partnership policy that is brought by the child, one can argue that discussions of students' academic performance and discipline all warrant parents to be supportive of teachers.

Although teachers argue for more parental involvement, Haar (1999) agrees that for better or for worse, parental involvement plays an extremely important role in the education of their children. Teachers also revealed that there were benefits in having parents participate in their children's education. In Botswana, (Botswana, 1993) education leaders, teachers and educational organizations advocate for parental involvement as a way of raising the level of student achievement. Teachers mentioned that those parents who show interest in their children's education help them succeed in school and noted that many more would do so if they believed that they could help their children learn more. The result has revealed that parental involvement does not happen in a vacuum.

Handmaker (2005) noted that while teachers may be thoroughly engaged in the classroom, they are often ambivalent about their relationship with their students' parents. First and foremost is the fear, founded or not, that a group of angry parents could descend on the administration and have teachers heckled out of their classrooms to answer to some charges.

This feeling of vulnerability runs deep. Many teachers get into the profession because they were themselves successful students. While this makes them good at sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm for learning with students, it does not serve them well when faced with criticism from parents. Teachers may not be used to criticism and tend to take it personal, thus increasing their level of dissatisfaction.

Teachers may resent criticism coming from parents, who are older than they are, who have jobs that carry much more cultural status than theirs, and whose incomes enable them to afford a lifestyle that most teachers in community junior secondary schools can only imagine. This may be a source of frustration and teacher alienation towards parents.

Bernak and Comely (2002) indicated that parents are also vulnerable and highly anxious about their children's experiences in the schools. In these experiences most conflicts between parents and teachers could be avoided if both sides communicated early and often. If this communication is weak as indicated by this study teachers and parents' involvement creates animosity, hence increase teachers job dissatisfaction. This agrees with Gardner and Miranda (2001) that a break in communication between teachers and parents prevents the two

stakeholders from understanding the requirements and expectations of the two environments (home and school) where the students must function.

Teachers appreciated the fact that parents were encouraged to participate in school activities, this often does not occur outside the traditional invitations. According to Bernak and Comely (2002) schools should formulate parent groups for them to discuss the children's progress reports with the teachers, as this could empower parents to collaborate with the teachers in implementing change at school level for the students. Bernak and Comely continue to say parents' attendance of meeting with teachers could give them a common understanding of issues and challenges faced by the teachers when handling the students. According to Abrams and Gibbs (2002) parents are often alienated from school by the manner in which the teachers accept them in the schools. If this relationship is weak the level of teacher job dissatisfaction in relation to parental involvement will be high.

The result has shown that parents were not keen in their children's education and discipline. This may be due to the fact that parents see academic performance and discipline of their children as the duty of teachers. Redding (1992) indicated that partnership between parents and schools to promote children's education is very weak in most schools in developing world and this has created animosity between teachers and parents, hence the dissatisfaction of teachers.

The study found that lack of commitment by parents to the education of their children was worrisome and frustrating to teachers. The respondents revealed that some parents never visited the school for the whole time their children were in the school, thus some children completed their study without the parents ever having met the teachers. Teachers indicated that parents show very little interest in their children's academic work. This attitude of parents seems to be common especially from parents of those children of poor academic performance. This has been a source of frustration for teachers. According to Mokete (1997) most parents in Botswana are uneducated and do not want to show their lack of understanding by visiting schools or being involved in school activities, which are aimed at improving students performance. These findings agree with Maphorisa (1987) that efforts are made to win parents to be involved in the discipline of their own children was frustrating to teachers.

The study also revealed that the low levels of parental support was very high indicating that teachers perceived it as negatively impacting on their level of job dissatisfaction. Teachers were worried by the support they get from parents. This contributed significantly to their level of job dissatisfaction in the region. It seems teachers are in need of support from parents as this was seen as a way to develop interaction between the two parties, hence instill discipline among students. The teachers valued this interaction so much as it exposes the parents to what is happening in schools.

The teachers' perception is that parents of children where the schools are located have abdicated their responsibilities of partnership in the education of their children. Parental support in schools is worrisome as parents just drop their children at school when they are admitted and disappear for good. Some parents refuse to come to schools for meetings with teachers concerning their children, but cry foul when action is taken against their children. It is a challenging and a daunting task for teachers to bring the parents into schools so that they can appreciate the work teachers do. This agrees with Haar (2000) that parents and teachers need to develop effective ways to integrate the parents into the school activities.

The research findings by Haar (2000) suggested that parents support and attitudes have a significant impact on the job performance of teachers and also the academic performance of students. Parents and teachers need to work together to provide an atmosphere that is conducive to teaching –learning process. It must be noted that education offered in public schools has been drawing a great deal of political and media attention, and the picture that has

been painted is filled with problems and failures contributing to a negative public perception, hence the need of parents to be involved in these schools to assist in their children's education. Teachers noted that this negative public perception has a greater influence on the discipline of students.

Conclusion

The findings from this study reveal that the teachers were frustrated by lack of parental involvement in schools. They expressed the importance of parental involvement, as well as, their dissatisfaction with the level of involvement. It seems from teachers perception that parents appeared unaware of the perceived importance of their involvement in the children's learning and unaware of the level of dissatisfaction experienced by teachers.

Successful parent-teachers partnerships were not being established due to the different views on education held by both teachers and parents. It is necessary for teachers, administrators and parents to work together to establish clear communication and create effective partnerships. Teachers as well as parents need to be aware of the benefits of parental involvement for school and students. Schools and parents must also work together to overcome barriers that play a role in parents becoming active participants in their children's education. It is impressive that discussions to involve parents occurs around issues of understanding the importance of parental involvement, parents ability to understand their contribution and be comfortable to participate in all activities at school level. Grasping a better understanding of parental involvement will lead to successful parent-teacher partnership.

Personal relationships among and between teachers and parents influence almost everything else that goes on in schools. Productive relationships with parents are vital resource for teachers, yet this is the area that teachers in the survey ranked as least satisfying. An effective teacher needs to be able to work well with parents. Teachers report a very unsatisfying relationship with parents. Teachers in this study indicated that parents cause them the most stress in their job, though they acknowledged that working with parents is the most critical component of effective teaching.

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