

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE
COMMUNITY AND THE SCHOOL
IN A RURAL AREA**

by

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DEDICATION

To

My parents, who took care of my studies financially from the start to the level they could afford.



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ABSTRACT

The focus of this research is the relationship between the community and the High School in rural areas. The strenuous relationship is addressed as a contributory factor towards learners' poor performance at school. Rural areas constitute of several communities, which interacts with one another within a larger community. Particular attention is given to how several communities interact with the school in rural areas. It is the opinion of the researcher that every effort should be concentrated in bringing together all these communities and the school, to put into practice the concept of "*tirisano*".

The method used in this research is two-fold: Firstly it contains a literature study on the relationship between the community and the school. The researcher used this information to support his investigation and to make results based on factual information. Secondly, it contains information derived from the interviews. With the information derived from the interviews, the researcher was able to derive the respondents' opinions on why the relationship is strenuous.

The study recommends that learners should try their level best to improve this performance and to put the image of the school to where it belongs. Teachers should do the best job of teaching as possible and should involve other stakeholders like the church, business sector, political sector and the community at large.

The study further recommends that the concept of "*tirisano*" and "*ubuntu*" should be seen being effectively implemented by the community and the school in rural areas.

LIST OF TABLES

Figure 4.1: What learners said about themselves, teachers, parents and the community

Figure 4.2: What teachers said about learners, teachers and parents

Figure 4.3: What parents said about learners, parents and the community

Figure 4.4 What the church said about learners, community and the church

Figure 4.5 What the business sector said about learners and the community

Figure 4.6 What the political sector said about learners, teachers and the community



TABLE OF CONTENT

DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
LIST OF TABLES	v
TABLE OF CONTENT	vi

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.2	ORIENTATION AND RATIONALE	2
1.3	RESEARCH QUESTION	3
1.4	THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH	3
1.5	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	4
1.5.1	The relationship between the community and the school	5
1.5.2	Categories of the relationship	5
1.5.3	The government policies, documents and acts pertaining to the community and school relationship	6
1.6	THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	6
1.7	LITERATURE REVIEW	7
1.8	DELINEATION OF THE STUDY	7
1.9	CONCEPT CLARIFICATION	7
1.10	ETHICAL CONSIDERATION	8
1.11	CONCLUSION	9

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE OVERVIEW

2.1	INTRODUCTION	10
2.2	RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY	11
2.3	CATEGORIES OF THIS RELATIONSHIP	13

2.3.1	Learners	13
2.3.2	Teachers	14
2.3.3	Parents	16
2.3.3.1	At home	17
2.3.3.2	At school	17
2.3.3.3	In a community	17
2.3.4	Religious community	18
2.3.5	The business community	18
2.3.5.1	Advantages for learners	18
2.3.5.2	Advantages to teachers	18
2.3.5.3	Advantages to business	19
2.3.6	The political community	19
2.3.7	GOVERNMENT POLICIES, DOCUMENTS ACTS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY	19
2.3.8	Learners	19
2.3.9	Parents	21
2.3.10	Religion	21
2.3.11	Politics	21
2.4	CONCLUSION	22



CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1	INTRODUCTION	23
3.2	THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHOD	23
3.3	PROTOCOL	25
3.3.1	Relationship with respondents	25
3.3.2	Informed consent	26
3.4	SAMPLING	28
3.4.1	Population	28
3.5	THE DATA	29
3.6	CONCLUSION	30

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1	INTRODUCTION	31
4.2	GAINING ENTRY	31
4.3	DESCRIPTION OF THE SETTING	31
4.4	DATA COLLECTION PROCESS	32
4.4.1	Learners	34
4.4.2	Teachers	36
4.4.3	Parents	38
4.4.4	The church	39
4.4.5	The business sector	40
4.4.6	The political sector	40
4.5	CONCLUSION	40

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, FUTURE RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES, STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

5.1	INTRODUCTION	44
5.2	CONCLUSIONS	44
5.2.1	About learners	44
5.2.2	About teachers	46
5.2.3	About parents	48
5.2.4	About the community	49
5.2.5	About the church	50
5.2.6	About the business sector	52
5.2.7	About the political sector	52
5.3	RECOMMENDATIONS	52
5.3.1	About the learners	52
5.3.2	About the teachers	53
5.3.3	About the parents	54

5.3.4	About the community	55
5.3.5	About the church	55
5.3.6	About the business sector	56
5.3.7	About the political sector	56
5.4	FUTURE RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES	57
5.4.1	The impact of ethnicity in rural schools	57
5.4.2	The impact of unemployment of parents in rural schools	57
5.4.3	The role played by churches from the teacher's perspective	57
5.5	STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES	57
5.5.1	Strengths	57
5.5.2	Weaknesses	57
5.6	CONCLUSION	58
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	59
	THE INTERVIEW	63



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The research paper focuses on the relationship between the community and a high school in a rural area. The research will be conducted in Buxton area. Buxton is one of the rural areas of Taung, in the North-West Province, where predominantly black people are residing. The area came into being as a result of mining of lime by the Northern Lime Makers Company (Norlim). The company supplied lime for cement, agriculture and gold processing. The original workforce was mainly the Tswana people from the Taung area, as well as the Basotho and Xhosas from Herschel in the former Transkei. The mine is now closed.

Due to the background of apartheid, the community of Buxton is made up by different ethnic groups such as the Tswana, Sotho and Xhosa groups. The ethnic groups occupied places within a community, which are ethnically defined. The area is torn apart into ethnic groups. Although the community is divided along the lines of ethnic groups, they managed to join hands and build a high school in the area. The high school admits children from the area of Buxton and from other feeder schools in the nearby areas. It is this high school and the Buxton community which are the primary focus of this research paper.

With the dawn of democracy in South Africa, the community and the school were expected to form an effective partnership. Other stakeholders such as church leaders, business people and political leaders should be taken on board because they are operating within the framework of “Tirisano” (working together) (Asmal: 1999 – 5). Both the community and the school have to work together in preparing children to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

In the first chapter of this research paper a broad orientation and a rationale regarding the research problem will be given. The orientation and rationale will focus on the experienced problems that call for research. The research question is then stated and it is the question that will invite various members of the community and the school to respond. The aim of researching the problem is also articulated.

1.2 ORIENTATION AND RATIONALE

The research is conducted because the situation between the community and the high school in Buxton requires an exceptional response. The children's performance at school seems not to be in accordance to the expectations of both the community and the school. As a result of this bad performance, the school was trapped. The school became trapped when the grade twelve final results were below an average of forty percent. This is below the expectations of the Department of Education. The school managed to move out of the trap zone, but the stigma remained. The school blamed the community for expecting more than what is realistic. The community on their part again blamed the school for their children's poor performance. The relationship between the community and the school became strenuous.

The research is therefore conducted to explore the relationship between the community and the high school in a rural area, because it seems to have an impact on children's performance at school. The South African Schools' Act emphasised that there should be an effective partnership between parents, educators and learners. All these stakeholders should work together harmoniously to strengthen the community and school relationship (SASA 1999:21).

The researcher feels that this has been a much neglected area in terms of research in rural areas. Most parents in rural areas do not have steady jobs, they do migratory labour. They spend most of their time away from home. Ainsworth (2001:119) states that in areas where most adults have steady jobs, thus fosters behaviours and attitudes that are conducive to success in both school and work, therefore children in such

advantaged areas are more likely to value education, adhere to school norms and work hard because that is what they see modeled for by adults. In rural areas, most parents are non-literate. As a result they have shifted their responsibility to the school although it was not on purpose but as a result of little knowledge they have on education. The school on its own cannot achieve much but can make a difference. The principal factor is the low performance by learners, which makes the relationship between the community and the school to be regarded as a thorn in the flesh.

From the above statements it is clear that a conducive environment has to be created to pave the way for the school and the community to be able to work together. Batey (1996:11-23) suggests the following ways as means of promoting a good relationship:

- extend an invitation to parents;
- empower all parents; and
- blend diverse interests.

The study further investigates how the community of Buxton could provide a conducive environment in which their children can be educated.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION



From the above statements it is also clear that the relationship between the community and the school is a problem in rural areas. The concept of “tirisano” (working together) is still immature; therefore it is not effectively implemented. Therefore, the research question can be formulated as follows:

- Why is the relationship between the community and the school in rural areas strenuous?
- What should be done to improve it?

1.4 THE AIMS OF THIS RESEARCH

The following aims will be looked at in order to work towards a solution for the above stated problem:

- 1.4.1 The researcher will by various means and methods investigate the strenuous relationship between the local school and the community in a certain rural area, in order to understand the phenomenon of tension and strain that cause the different parties involved not to work together;
- 1.4.2 Once the causes of the tension and strain between the community and the school are isolated and identified, it will be categorised, analysed, and described so that it can be understood by everybody and that efforts can be implemented to try and solve the problem(s) leading to the tension.

The following objectives are put forward to structure the study and work towards the solution of the problem:

- A literature overview will be done in order to find out what various authors' views are concerning the community and the school, and more specifically, about the relationship between the two institutions;
- Government policies, acts and documents will be looked into to find possible ways of dealing with the issue at hand;
- Interviews will be conducted with different stakeholders to find out how they view the role of the community and the school;
- Data gathered from both the above mentioned methods will be analysed and described in order to clarify the findings;
- From the insight thus gained, the researcher will come up with conclusions and recommendations as to how to go about guiding both the community and the school to solve their communal problem.

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Henning (2002:202) a complementary aspect of theoretical framework is that it anchors one's research in the literature. It is in the literature where there will be production and the interpretation of knowledge. The researcher will include the following:

1.5.1 The relationship between the school and the community

The school is an institution established to meet the academic needs of the community that operates in a social and cultural context (Serote, 2001:4). Together with other institutions such as the home and the church, the school can achieve its objective of educating the children, but on its own, the school cannot function effectively and properly.

The universal role of the school is to educate. Education in rural areas is regarded as a means of bringing about change for the betterment of individuals in a community. All communities in the new South Africa want their voice to be heard, to participate fully in political, economic and social life of the nation. The school, therefore, should provide the rural population with the instruction that will enable them to achieve all these.

A community is a group of people living together and united by shared interests (Longman 1989:202). The interest of the community of Buxton is to enable their children to receive education, which is relevant to a rural way of life and work. This can only be realised when parents in the community know what their school is doing to assist them to realise their goal. The community and the school have to work together since they have a common interest.

The home is the first institution where children receive their education. Children in the family learn some norms and values that have to be carried throughout all the stages of their lives. This lifelong learning can only be possible when there is a partnership between the home, community and the school.

1.5.2 Categories of the relationship

There are several communities within the larger community of Buxton. These communities interact with one another and with the school. They are:

- Learners
- Teachers
- Parents
- Religious community
- Business community
- Political community

1.5.3 The Government policies, documents and acts pertaining to the community and school relationship

The South African Schools' Act of 1997, explains the representation in the governing body of the school. The Labour Relations Act (Act no. 66 of 1995) gives teachers their right as employees to be part of decision-making in the school. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) is the ultimate act, to which all the laws and institutions are subject



1.6 THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher will use the qualitative research methodology since there is more information to be gathered orally and written about the school and the community. Schurink, et al (1992:14) explains qualitative research as a way of collecting data, which will allow the richness of the subject to come to its fullest consequence in the categorisation and description of the findings. The researcher will use the interview as a method of collecting data.

In order to get participants/respondents, the researcher will use purposive sampling or judgmental sampling. According to Bless (1995:54) the strategy is used to select units that are judged to be typical of the population under investigation. Merriam (1992:61) emphasises that the participants in purposive sampling must include individuals who can offer the most relevant information to the problem being researched. As a result of this the following participants will be chosen:

- Parents from the community
- Educators
- Learners
- Members from religious groups
- Members from the business sector
- Members from a majority political group

After being collected the data will be analysed. The researcher will use coding to allow themes to emerge naturally, and then categorise the themes. Categorising in this procedure refers to the summary of concepts into generic concepts and to the elaborations of the relations between concepts and categories.

1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

A representative literature overview will be undertaken to present a proper background against which to investigate the problem at hand. The findings from the literature will also serve as basis or cornerstone in the process of triangulation of the data in order to establish validity and reliability of the research.

1.8 DELINEATION OF THE STUDY

The research consists of five chapters

CHAPTER ONE

Chapter one is the introduction to the study. The introduction to the study explains the orientation and rationale, the research question, the aim of the research, the theoretical framework, the research methodology, literature review, concept clarification, ethical considerations and the conclusion of the chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

In this chapter the literature will be reviewed. The relationship between the school and the community will be explained. The categories of the relationship and the Government policies will be clearly outlined.

CHAPTER THREE

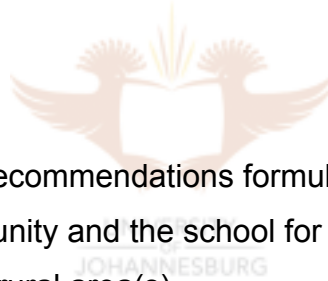
In this chapter the theoretical framework for research method will be explored. Hereafter the interviews will be conducted.

CHAPTER FOUR

The findings and results will be described and discussed, classified and categorised in order to clarify and to come to some understanding of the problem that initiated the research in the first place.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions will be made and recommendations formulated in order to improve the relationship between the community and the school for the good of everyone involved in this (and hopefully, even other) rural area(s).



1.9 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

Relationship -	A connection between people
Community -	A group of people living together in one area
High School	A site or facility where children of not lower than Grade 10 up to Grade 12 is educated
Rural area	An underdeveloped (backward) area as compared to urban area
Respondents	All participants who will take part in the interview
Orientation -	To be familiar to a new situation
Rationale -	A fundamental reason
Research -	Serious and detailed study to discover new facts or

		information
Aim	-	Purpose or intention
Methodology	-	A practical branch of philosophy that deals with methods, systems and rules for the conduct of research
Sample		A small, separate part showing the quality of the whole
Data	-	Information to be used as a basis for discussion
Analysis	-	A statement of the results
Recommendation		Advice or suggestion
Conclusion	-	An ending of an opinion based on reasoning

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The researcher will abide to the rules and regulations as laid down by the ethical committee of the University of Johannesburg. The following ethical measures will be applied:

- Participation by respondents will be voluntary and informal
- A consent form will be given before the interview
- Participants will be assured of anonymity and confidentiality
- The benefits of participants will be clearly stated
- Participants will be protected against harm and will be given an opportunity to withdraw from the research at anytime without penalty.
- The results will be made available to participants should they desire it.

1.11 CONCLUSION

In this chapter a broad orientation and a rationale regarding the research problem were given. In chapter two the literature will be reviewed.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE OVERVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

It has been indicated in chapter one that the school and the community in rural areas are expected to form an effective partnership. According to the South African Student Dictionary (1996:697) “partnership” means a relationship in which more than one person work together as partners. Partners contribute something of value to a relationship with the aim of making a profit. In the field of education the profit is better education for all learners. The community and the school as members of the partnership in education are to ensure that the school provides a good education. The partnership in rural areas includes parents, teachers, learners and members of the community (Potgieter, 1997:8-9). For an effective partnership there should be good teamwork among members. According to Warner (1997:82) when the community and the school work together, they have an excellent chance of raising a child with the necessary qualities. In similar vein, he states that the home, school and the community supplement one another. If one falls down the job, the two that are remaining can fill in, if two falls down, the one left has no chance to make a difference. In rural schools, teachers and learners are in the same difficult situation together, with the community pointing clearly to what is wrong and saying little about what is right.

The High School in Buxton is a community school. It was built by the community for the children of Buxton and the children from the nearby villages. The school is more than just a place where teachers teach and children learn (Warner 1997:78). It is a place where the community holds its social events and other things. It is an integral part of the community and therefore the community has a strong interest in it. There is a close link between the community and the High School in Buxton. The researcher therefore, feels that the school is historically connected to the community. Through a literature

review, the researcher will explore the relationship between the community and the High School in a rural area.

In this chapter the following aspects will be dealt with:

- The relationship between the school and the community will be investigated as it is described in literature;
- Categories of this relationship will be identified and described;
- Government policies, documents and acts on the relationship between the school and the community, as it is prescribed and presented by the authorities will be scrutinised, described and incorporated in an effort to get a picture of the ideal situation.

2.2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY

Many authors and researchers commonly agree that the relationship between the community and the school starts from the family (home). Berger (1987:25) emphasises that the prime educators were the family even before schools were developed. The education of children was the primary responsibility of parents who were teaching children certain knowledge and skills for survival. In a similar vein Lemmer and Van Wyk (Gogolo, 1998:2) confirms this when saying: "...only fifteen percent of a child's working life from birth to sixteen is spent in schools, of the remaining eighty five percent much is spent in the home and influenced by the family. Whether we like it or not, for better or for worse, parents do educate their children and it makes sense for the two educationally important groups of adults involved in the educational process, parents and teachers, to cooperate".

By virtue of rearing children, teaching them communication skills and social skills, parents are regarded as natural and first educators. They should therefore, be incorporated in the decision-making process in the schools their children attend (Sehloho, 1998:9). After being involved, parents and the school become partners in the education of children. The relationship between parents and the school is cemented by

the commitment they have towards their children. Both parents and the school want children to receive a better education. The nature of the commitment and the degree of the commitment will determine the effectiveness of the relationship.

Michel (1997:69-71) asserts that today's parents are not always positive towards the school. Their negative feelings about the schools come from misunderstanding educators and the school. Warner (1997:86) also emphasises that parents who don't know how to parent, blame the school when things go wrong for their children. This indicates that although parents are regarded as having positive attitudes towards the school their children attend; there are parents with negative attitudes towards schools their children attend. It has been indicated that the child's first teacher is a parent. If that parent does not do a good job, the teacher's job as a professional becomes harder. According to Berger (1981:98) to such parents, the school should be a support system, working cooperatively with them rather than any agency, which view them (parents) as failures.

The concept of "tirisano" (working together) among the African families is not new. It has long been applied among families and community members. The concept came into being as a result of "ubuntu", which according to Dekker (1989:466) is a spiritual idea, which directs the life experience of Africans. It encompasses values such as humanness, reliability, honesty, courtesy, respect for authority and various other positive norms. The concept of "tirisano", since applied in schools in rural areas, is still immature. Therefore it is not effectively implemented. Once it can be applied from African and educational perspective, it can ease tensions and strenuous relationships.

Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1996:272) defines the word "community" as people living in a particular area, considered as a unit because of their common interest. The Buxton community is a rural community, which is not very prosperous and has some handicaps as a result of its geographical position. The interest of the community in rural areas is to enable their children to get an education, which will enable them to face challenges of the twenty first century. Carl (2000:222) emphasises

that each community have specific needs and aspirations and provisions should be made for each. The needs and aspirations of the community when academically inclined will be met by the school. This can be achieved when there is an effective relationship between the school and the community. In the context of this research, the word “community” denotes any people, individuals, or groups living in Buxton and surrounding villages whose children attend High School in Buxton. Since a school is a community school, it belongs to them. Michel (1997:22), contrary to the above description, defines the word “community” as a psychological and sociological idea. The word when used in education, translates into meaning more communicating and involving others in the several communities of a system of communities. This indicates how the school interacts with other communities within the same geographical area.

There are several communities within the larger community of Buxton. The communities interact with one another and with the school. It is the interaction of the communities and the school, which is the primary focus of this research.

2.3 CATEGORIES OF THIS RELATIONSHIP

Sergiovanni (1994:220-223) asserts that the schools on their own can be regarded as communities, since they consist of learners, parents and educators. The common thing between them is that they share the same idea on education. Their commitment towards a common goal makes them to work as a team; therefore, to develop a relationship among themselves. The school should also have a relationship which extends outside to the political, business and religious communities.

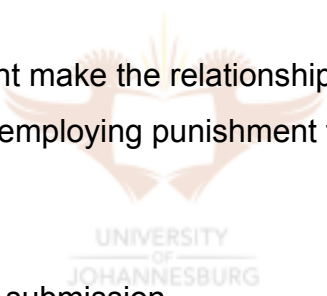
2.3.1 Learners

The most constituents of the school are learners. The community builds the school for them to receive a good education. The communities are interested in what happens to these investments. The school should therefore develop a satisfactory relationship with the learners. By so doing, the school will be automatically striving to build a good

relationship with parents. Kindred (1976:105) indicate that an impressive number of parents in every community form the judgment of a school from the comments that are made by learners. They hear learners discussing their teachers, homework and the rules of their school and almost everything in the school system. No school can expect to enjoy the confidence and support of the community unless the comments of most pupils are favourable to the system.

The handling of discipline plays a major role in establishing satisfactory or unsatisfactory relations with learners (Kindred, 1976:106). Competent teachers understand the normal behaviour of High School learners at different stages of growth in their development, and they make an allowance for these in their planning. By so doing, they are able to prevent situations from arising that would call for disciplinary action.

Teachers who are less competent make the relationship between learners and teachers to be strenuous. They do so by employing punishment for slight mistakes. They usually do the following:

- 
- Reduce marks for late submission
 - Prevent participation in extra-mural activities
 - Detain the whole class for mistakes of one or more members
 - Convert a study period to punishment by giving extra work.

Learners dislike teachers who treat them in this way. If learners are not happy, it will show by means of rebellion to authority. This will ultimately make the community aware of the unjust treatment their children receive from the school. This will create a wedge between the community and the school.

2.3.2 Teachers

Regardless of the position held in a school, teachers have certain responsibilities towards the community. The teacher-community relations according to Kindred (1994:69-70) are:

- Do a good job in carrying out daily work.

If teachers are doing a poor job of teaching, the image of the school in the community will likewise be poor. The learners will be the ones to pay a high price by performing weakly. This results in a strenuous relationship between the school and the community. Teachers have an obligation to do the best job of teaching as possible, this is what schools are all about and the community understands this very clearly.

- Know the school system.

Responsible administrators should keep all the employees informed about the school system by providing them with information. Each employee in turn should make an effort to learn more about his place of employment. When an employee (teacher) is unable, or unwilling to provide information to a citizen or a member of the community about the school, the image of the school suffers. In rural areas, teachers are expected to explain why learners are performing below the standard.

- Know the community.

It is a general obligation of all teachers to know the community in which they are working. On the same note it is still the obligation of members of the community to know teachers who are teaching in their community. Teachers sometimes live in another area and feels that it is not important to be familiar with the community that supports the school.

The teacher is a frontline interpreter of the school system through daily contacts with members of the community, particularly learners. Berger (1981:98-99) emphasises that teachers should love children and show interest in them. By so doing, parents will be on their side. As surrogate parents, teachers should do as good a job as possible. The backbone of any school-community relation is the teaching done in the classroom.

Teachers should therefore work constantly for good relations with learners, parents and the community. Teachers in a school should work cooperatively with colleagues. Schools can attain or hold confidence of the community even if there is an internal discord. Successful schools and teachers have learned that they must live in some degree of harmony if they are to gain the support of the community and maintain educational effectiveness.

2.3.3 Parents

The parents are the largest representation in the school governance, which means they have potential of making the relationship between the community and the school effective. The effective relationship between the community and the school boost learners' performance at school. This can be achieved when parents are literate. In rural areas most parents are illiterate; therefore, this has a contribution to the ineffectiveness of the relationship between the community and the school (Shilote, 2000:10). On the same note, he acknowledges that parents have the experience of the school committees that consisted of the principal and a group of parents who governed the school before the new dispensation. Their knowledge and experience can be used to build a strong relationship between the community and the school.

According to Dekker (1994:169-172) educational objectives are derived from how society views life. Christian parents would have to be trained to educate and support their children in terms of keeping the promises they made at baptism. When parents' participation is encouraged, such practices should be taken into cognizance. When such practices are accommodated by the school, parents on the other hand will support the school.

Formation of a parent group is an advantage to the school-community relationship. Parents can get to know one another and a healthy attitude and loyalty towards the school can be cultivated. The purpose of parents group is to unite parents when their interests and those of their children are an issue. The formation of such groups also

assists parents to elect the most capable and informed representatives who will best serve the parents interests (Dekker, 1994:171). Parents in rural areas should ensure that their representatives are not elected according to the attitude they have against the school. Negative attitudes result in the strenuous relationship between the community and the school.

According to Warner (1997:51) there are certain ways in which a parent can contribute in the education of a child.

2.3.3.1 At home

- Read with their children together as a family
- Schedule daily homework times
- Monitor out of school activities
- Communicate positive values and character traits, such as respect, hard work and responsibility
- Monitor the use of TV wisely
- Express high expectations and offer praise and encouragement for achievement

2.3.3.2 At school

- Ensure that high school learners are offered and enrolled in challenging courses
- Keep in touch with the school instead of waiting until a problem arises
- Use community resources

2.3.3.3 In a community

- Counseling and drug abuse

- The clergy or priests can assist learners to deal with grief as a result of a classmate or a parent death
- As members of certain denomination, they can adopt needy learners

2.3.4 Religious community

Dekker (1995:464) indicates that Christianity was virtually the state religion in South Africa during the pre-democratic era. Although the freedom of religion was guaranteed by the 1993 constitution, some schools and communities still have an underlying Christian character. The Churches in rural areas could play an important role if allowed to participate in decision-making process by reinstating the culture of respect for authority according to the Bible.

Van Schalkwyk (1991:152) defines the Church as a community of believers who belong to God on the basis of their common faith. The school, in order to have an effective relationship with the community should accommodate on equal basis different beliefs and practices of different denominations.



2.3.5 The business community

According to Van Schalkwyk (1991:131) there should be a sound partnership between the business community and the school.

2.3.5.1 Advantages for learners

- Academic work, which relates to the demands of the working world
- Stimulation of interest in a subject or career
- Motivation
- Use of industrial resources

2.3.5.2 Advantages to teachers

- Use of primary up to date materials in classrooms
- Attending education-based courses with business contributions

2.3.5.3 Advantages to business

- Educated and well prepared workers
- Use of the school facilities
- Direct economic benefits from educational institutions that buy goods and services in their local communities

2.3.6 The political community

The political community plays an important role in the transformation of schools and the democratisation of schools. Dekker (1996:461) explains that the South African education should be linked to the modernisation theory. Modernisation theory holds that a modernising institution such as the school will lead to modern values and economic development. The rural communities are mostly backward in terms of development, therefore, they wanted to change and improve their standard of living. These can be achieved when the school and the political community works together for the benefit of learners and the rest of the community.

2.4 GOVERNMENT POLICIES, DOCUMENTS, ACTS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY

The government has a stance in matters relating to learners, teachers, parents, religion and politics.

2.4.1 Learners

South African Schools Act (SASA) (Act No. 87 of 1997), accommodates learners in matters relating to their school and community. Section 11 indicates that learners in Grade 8 and higher must establish a Representative Council of Learners (RCL). The duty of the RCL is to elect the learners who must serve on the School Governing Body (SGB). One of the functions of the SGB is to encourage parents, learners and members of the community to offer voluntary services to the school. The representatives that forms the SGB are partners with different roles to play, but are all expected to contribute to an effective partnership of schools and the community.

Most parents in rural areas seems to be unemployed, they depend on migratory labour, which pays them a minimum living wage. In most instances, they are unable to pay school fees for their children. This seems to be one of the factors, which makes them to alienate themselves from schools their children attend. The South African Schools Act, Section 5(3) allow learners to be admitted even when they cannot pay or has not paid school fees. The act enables parents to participate freely in the education of their children.

Educators in rural areas are working in situations where learners' performance is always an issue. The community expects their children to pass. Thus forces educators to screen learners and admit only those who are better achievers. The South African Schools Act, Section 5(2) states categorically clear that, no test should be set for learners to determine whether they should be admitted in a school or not. All learners have equal chances of being admitted in a school. Educators, learners and parents have to work cooperatively to maximise individuals' performance. Educators should not rely on talented learners only. According to Scott (2000:67-69), people are equally talented and therefore equally capable of benefiting from education, but some make less effort than the others. In order to improve learner's performance, educators should rely on this principle, instead of screening learners.

The South African Schools Act, Section 7, ensures that learners have an equal opportunity to attend religious observances according to their faith. The School Code of

Conduct should accommodate this. Learners therefore, may not be forced to attend any religious gathering, particularly if it is against their will. Learners should participate in the formation of the school Code of Conduct. They should know the Code of Conduct of their school and must obey the rules of the school.

To ensure that learners' rights are not trampled upon during the disciplinary hearings, the South African Schools Act, Section 8(5) states that learners involved in disciplinary hearing must be given a fair hearing. That means their side of the story should also be heard.

2.4.2 Parents

According to the White Paper (1995:11), parents have the primary responsibility for their children's education. They have the right to be consulted by the school on matters pertaining to their children's education. The South African Schools Act includes parents as stakeholders and other members of the community near the school. According to the Quality Assurance document there should be communication and collaboration between parents and the school.



2.4.3 Religion

The South African Constitution and Bill of Rights Act No. 108 of 1996, allows the freedom of religion, belief and opinion. The religious communities can assist the school in religious matters that hinder or promote high performance such as drug abuse and adoption of needy children.

2.4.4 Politics

The constitution and the Bill of Rights Act No. 108 of 1996 changed the daily life in South Africa for every citizen. Every South African has the right of affiliation to any political organisation of his/her choice. Politics in the community has a direct bearing in

the community-school relationship. When politics is used within the framework of the constitution, it can benefit the community and the school in bringing them to work as partners in the education of children. As a result, this can improve the learners' performance.

2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the relationships, which exists within the school and impacts the community and the relationship between the school and different communities outside the school. In chapter three the theoretical framework for research method will be explored.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of chapter three of this research is to explore the theoretical framework for the research method. The researcher will use the qualitative research method as a way of collecting data. Of importance to this study is the interview, which will be conducted with several respondents from each of the groups of people involved in the education of children. This qualitative research study will be based on the following themes:

- The qualitative research strategy
- The collection of data
- Sampling
- The interview method
- Protocol
- Conclusion



3.2 THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STRATEGY

This research is concerned with the relationship between the community and a high school in a rural area. The qualitative research strategy was chosen as the best approach since the research is about human behaviour. Slavin (1992:66) asserts that human behaviour is significantly influenced by the setting in which it occurs. Qualitative research uses the natural setting as the direct source of data. Sprinthall et al (1990:100) also point out that qualitative research methods are used systematically to gather data, which is purely descriptive and therefore not numerical. On the same note Slavin (1992:65) also indicates that the product of qualitative study is a thick description, not a report with tables and figures. In order to qualify the choice of the qualitative method as

the best method, the researcher deems it fit to point out some fundamental distinctions between qualitative and quantitative research methods:

The quantitative method uses data that are derived from the scientist's perspective using numerical definitions of terms (Sprinthall et al 1990:101). On the other hand Slavin (1992:65) asserts that qualitative research uses the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher as the key instrument of data collection. In this research, the researcher is an educator that has spent ten years working in a high school and has spent five years living in the community of Buxton. Slavin (1992:66) explains that qualitative researchers feel that action can best be understood when it is observed in the setting in which it occurs. The setting has to be understood in the context of the history of the institution of which they are part. Qualitative research is influenced by human behaviour, which in turn is influenced by the setting in which it occurs.

Quantitative methods gather numerical data whereas qualitative research methods are purely descriptive. The respondents will be interviewed in this research. This is to enable them to present an accurate description of what is being researched. The findings would be derived from data collected through direct observations of respondents' behaviour and from the interviews. The researcher would record their responses on tape if they have agreed on the use of a tape recorder. Slavin et al (1992:62) asserts that gestures and jokes do the talking in the conversation as well as the special words we use and to which those around us respond. The researcher will be cognisant of interpersonal situations, which provide data towards the research study. The researcher will follow every clue that might unlock a more comprehensive understanding of what is being studied. Slavin et al (1992:67) emphasises that description succeeds as a method of data gathering when details face accounting. The researcher, therefore, would take nothing as given as he will ascertain that no statement escapes scrutiny.

The reliability of qualitative data is more difficult to establish and may of course be affected by the biases of the researcher. Even when it is established, it is lower than the reliability of quantitative measures. The researcher will abide to the ethical standard. No attempt shall be made to manipulate data to support the researcher's position.

In quantitative research, the researcher's philosophical point of view is "neutral". The viewpoint of the persons observed or whose behaviour is measured is not considered. On the other hand, the standpoint of the qualitative researcher is more typically humanistic. It is humanistic because the participants' perspective is considered, as it exists in the circumstances and environment. It is a holistic approach and is designed to answer general questions (Sprinthall et al, 1990:102). In a sense, the human point of view or the human experience is seen as more important than the scientific point of view; hence, the researcher has chosen the qualitative method over the quantitative method.



3.3 PROTOCOL

The protocol in this research refers to the exact steps which the researcher will undertake to conduct the research. The ethical considerations are the principles that guided the researcher through this research, and it would be considered seriously throughout this study.

3.3.1 Relationship with respondents

The researcher will ensure that co-operative relationship with the respondents is maintained throughout the research. Mills (2003:91) asserts that participants should not be "wronged" in the name of research. In order to facilitate a co-operative relationship, I will explain to the respondents the purpose of the research so that they can decide whether to participate or not. I will further make them aware that they can withdraw at anytime if they feel like doing so. I will request permission from the respondents to

audiotape them. Respondents will be assured of anonymity and confidentiality. This is intended to protect research informants from stress, embarrassment or unwanted publicity.

It also protects participants in situations where the information they reveal to the researcher can be used against them. I will therefore use no names to conceal the participants' identities.

3.3.2 Informed consent

Sprinthall et al (1990:69) asserts that respondents must be willing to participate and should be informed of any features of the study that might influence them in deciding whether or not to participate. To facilitate that (Burns & Groove, in Simelane, 1998:15-17) highlight the following steps:

- Introduction of the research subject

The researcher will explain to the respondents the purpose of the research and request them to participate. After the explanation they will then decide whether to participate or not.

- Statement of the research purpose

The researcher will inform the respondents of both the long term and short benefits of the research to both themselves and researcher.

- Selection of respondents

The respondents will be informed that they were selected because they meet the researcher's criteria for the study.

- Explanation of procedures

The respondents will be informed that they will be interviewed and audio-taped. The researcher will give the respondents his particulars so that they can ask for some clarification or withdraw from the study, if and when they so wish.

- Description of risks and discomfort

The researcher will inform the respondents that the research contains minimal risks or discomfort. The researcher will make the respondents aware that the interview will consume approximately thirty minutes of their time. This is done to prepare respondents to allocate their time to accommodate the interview.

- Disclosure of alternatives

The researcher will explain that the interview was chosen as a method of collecting data, since it is a face-to-face conversation in which confidentiality and anonymity is guaranteed. The explanation is given to make respondents feel at ease and also feel protected.

- Assurance of anonymity and confidentiality

The researcher will assure the respondents that the data or whatever they have said will be kept confidential. To facilitate that, the researcher will locate a private place to conduct the interviews.

- Offer to answer questions

If respondents ask questions concerning the research, the researcher will abide by giving satisfactory answers as far as possible.

- Option to withdraw

The researcher will explain to the participants that they are free to stop participating at any point during the interview without penalty.

- Consent to incomplete disclosure

The researcher will inform the respondents that there will be no information that will be withheld on purpose.

In addition to the above steps, Mills (2003:93) also highlighted the following:

- Accuracy

It is unethical and unscientific to fabricate data in order to substantiate a personal belief (Mills 2003:93). To avoid that, the researcher will inform the respondents that he will accept the findings of the study without being biased. No attempt shall be made to manipulate data to support the researcher's personal position.

- Deception

There is no room for deception in qualitative research or any other research for that matter. The researcher will inform the respondents to be free to say whatever they wish to be "off the record". The subject of the conversation will remain off the record. The researcher will emphasise his responsibility to act with integrity and to honor the respondents' requests for confidentiality.



3.4 SAMPLING

A sample is a smaller number of observations taken from the total number making out a given population (Sprinthall et al, 1990:28). In order to get the respondents, the researcher will use purposive sampling. Bless (1995:54) asserts that strategy is used to select units that are judged to be typical of the population under investigation. The aim of studying the sample is to be able to understand the population from which it is drawn.

3.4.1 Population

According to Sprinthall et al (1990:27) the term population refers to the entire group of persons, things or events that share at least one common factor. The population in this

research is the people who live in Buxton. As a result of the sampling procedure, the following respondents will be chosen:

- Parents from the community
- Educators
- Learners
- Members from a religious group
- Members from the business sector
- Members from a leading political party

3.5 THE DATA

After the interview, the data will be transcribed. The transcription will be done verbatim. The researcher will write everything the participants have said apart from what has been said off the record. The researcher will leave a wide space on the right side of the page for notes and the writing of codes. According to Mills (2003:5) coding is the process of trying to find patterns and meaning in data collected through interviews. The researcher will use coding to reduce data to a manageable form.

The typing would be on double line spacing, so that the open coding can be used. The open coding will proceed with a lot of space for notes, lines, arrows and so forth. The codes will be selected according to what the data means to the researcher. The researcher will read all the transcription before any formal meaning is attributed to a single unit.

Once the transcription is ready and the codes been awarded to different units of meaning, the related codes will be grouped into categories to make themes. Mills (2003:105) asserts that the researcher should consider the big picture and start to list “themes” that have emerged in the literature review and in the data collection. The researcher will check if patterns emerge, such as events that repeat themselves and if there is any match between feelings and responses. The data will be used to guide the

researcher in deciding what name should be given to a certain category. The categories will show the themes that will be constructed from the data and that will be used in the discussion of the research.

When the researcher is satisfied about the themes, each theme can be used as a basis for an argument. In getting a sense of the whole, the researcher will ask himself the following questions:

- How do themes address the research question?
- What are the relationships in meaning between all these categories?
- What do they say together?
- What do they say about each other?
- What is actually missing?

With the assistance of the experienced qualitative researcher, the analysed themes, concepts and ideas will be discussed. The aim is to try and reach consensus on the similarities and differences among themes, ideas and concepts. At the end, the results will be transcribed into English and recorded.

In Chapter four, the researcher will present the raw data, discuss the findings and come up with categories of what the respondents said about the relationship between the community and the High School in this rural area.

3.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the research methodology has been described. The raw data, findings and results will be discussed in chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter has its focus on the process of data analysis and the findings as determined by the research question. The research phenomenon under investigation in this study is to find out why the relationship between the community and the school in a rural area is strenuous (see chapter 1 paragraph 1.3).

4.2 GAINING ENTRY

Before I could start conducting the interviews, I initially asked for formal permission from the Head of the Institution (see addendum A). I explained to him the importance of my research to the school, the community and myself. I also explained to him that the findings could be used to develop a good working relationship between the community and the school. It could further be used to develop a sense of togetherness and unity in the education of learners in this rural area. I further explained to him that some respondents that will feature in my research will be from the same school, that is educators and learners, and other respondents will be from the community. He gave me permission to go ahead and do the research as I requested.

4.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE SETTING

The research was conducted at Gabobidiwe High School in Buxton. The school was named after the late chief Lekwene's wife. Mrs. (also the late) Lekwene (Gabobidiwe), was the founder of the school and also the first principal of this school. She was the most respected and popular person in Taung. Gabobidiwe is a community school built on the site of the Tswana area of the village. Mrs. Lekwene's authority as the chief's wife and as a principal was respected widely. The community's involvement in this school became a force to be reckoned with. Because of this, it was the best managed

school in the area. Immediately after this highly esteemed principal, Mrs. Lekwene, left the school, on the basis of promotion, the school started to decline. The sound foundation laid by the chief's wife started to crumble. The school deviated from its positive course characterised by community involvement. The school failed to retain some of the oldest and cooperative staff members. Instead there was an influx of new teachers. The school's results declined and that seemed to fail to satisfy everybody in the community. The community appointed one principal after the other because they all come and go but none of them managed to take the school back to where Mrs. Lekwene left it.

4.4 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

After I was granted permission, I met with the respondents, which were educators and learners, on the same day at the school. As an educator in the school myself, I had the advantage of already knowing the cast of characters that will feature in my research. I explained to them the purpose of the research; that is to explore the relationship between the community and the High School in this rural area, which seems to have an impact on the learners' performance at the school. I also explained the long and short term benefits of the research to them and to me. I explained to them that they were selected because they met the researcher's criteria of the study. Although I requested them to participate in my research, I also made it clear to them that they are the ones to decide whether to participate or not. They all agreed to participate.

I informed them that they will be interviewed and audio-taped. The interview would consume approximately thirty minutes of their time. I assured them that the interview would be a face-to-face conversation in which anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed. They should be free to say whatever they wish to say and also feel free to ask questions concerning the research during the interview. I guaranteed them that I will make no attempt to manipulate data to support my personal opinion. I explained to them that they are free to stop participating at any point during the interview without penalty. Lastly, I gave them my particulars so that they can ask for some clarification or

withdraw from the study if they so wish. I explained to them to use the language they are comfortable with if they are not comfortable with English.

The next day I met with the other respondents from the community and I gave them the same explanation I have given to the other respondents. They too also agreed to participate in the interview. We made an agreement with them to schedule the interview for the next day. On the same day I contacted all respondents from the school to inform them about the day of the interview and that it will start at 09h00.

On the day of the interview, some of the respondents did not avail themselves. I waited for about an hour and still they did not come. The learners and teachers were closing for the winter vacation; therefore I was unable to reschedule the interview then.

I started the interview with the few respondents who were present. I explained to them the purpose of the interview and requested them to participate freely since confidentiality has already been guaranteed.

The interview was planned to be a focus group interview in which all respondents were expected to participate, but only teachers, learners and one parent were present that day. In the interview I used a tape recorder and a notebook. The tape recorder was used to record everything that was said in the interview. The notebook was a necessity because in this method of interviewing it is often difficult to distinguish what was said by whom. During the process all respondents seemed to enjoy being in a free environment and this helped me to get more information from them.

Afterwards, I went back again to all respondents who were not present in the interview. They apologised for not being present in the interview. They all agreed to be interviewed. All of them were interviewed in their own settings; that is in places where they conducted their daily routines. I requested them to hold an interview where there can be only two people, because I wanted the conversation to be confidential, as I have assured them. They tried their level best to provide me with such a place. Eventually I

transcribed all the interviews. I decoded the data with the help of an independent decoder, and with the supervision of my supervisor. From the interviews conducted, the following categories came forward:

4.4.1 Learners

What learners said about themselves:

The learners raised problems about themselves, that most of them are doing many things. “...*many things*” means all the things that are not good. They said that they come late to school, they absent themselves from school, they do not attend classes regularly and all of this shows that they are ill-disciplined. They are mischievous. They are doing bad and naughty things that even make their parents not to come to school when they are called to come and hear what their children have done, although most learners are doing things that are not good. There are, however, those who refrain from doing them. That means among them, there are learners who are well-disciplined, who attend classes regularly and who don't come late to school. The learners said that some of them travel far distances on foot. They cannot organise a common form of transport for themselves. They said that a lack of transport is the cause of late coming. They said that they acknowledge that they played a role in bringing down the standard of education in rural areas, because they don't listen to teachers, they don't learn and above all, they don't even care. To show that they don't care, they go to the streets after school or even visit the “shebeens” to drink alcohol. Instead of taking teachers seriously, they said that they take them for granted. They don't show any respect for them and they don't appreciate what teachers are doing for them. They look down upon them because of who they are, where they come from and what their status is. They are biased and prejudiced towards their teachers.


The relationship among them (learners), is also not good because they don't work together. They cannot share books and spend time together as learners. They raised a problem of not having books and they are also concerned about the low grade twelve

results. They said that they wanted a meeting between parents, teachers and themselves.

What learners said about teachers:

The learners said that teachers are trying to teach but learners don't listen to them. The learners are taking teachers for granted. The relationship between learners and teachers is also strenuous, because learners don't listen, they don't understand, teachers do not explain to them because they do not listen and as a result teachers scold them, insult and hurt them with words and by so doing they offend and humiliate them. Learners said that they are afraid of teachers. One respondent said "*children are afraid because teachers do not speak well with them.*" The learners said that teachers gave them homework to do at home, but they don't do it because they don't have books and teachers don't speak well with them.

What learners said about parents:



The learners raised a problem of parents who don't come to school when they are called about issues concerning their children. They put blame on such parents for not doing anything about their children's bad behaviour. The learners also blamed their parents for contributing in bringing down the standard of education in rural areas. They said that parents say nasty words to teachers and this shows that they are ignorant, ashamed and they put the blame on teachers. The learners blamed parents in rural areas for not taking their children's education seriously. They are of the opinion that parents don't care about them. One learner said that; "*I would be happy if parents can assist teachers, so that learning can proceed in our school.*"

What learners said about the community:

The learners as members of the community are affected by almost everything that is taking place around them. They reflect on community perceptions such as jealousy and

hatred. They said that jealousy and hatred between neighbours end up reflecting on an influencing them as learners. They cannot study or learn together at home because of neighbourhood misunderstandings. The conflict in the community spills over into the school. As members of the community, they said that they wanted a meeting to take place in order to discuss the strenuous relationship that exists between the community and the school.

4.4.2 Teachers

What teachers said about learners:

Teachers raised the problem of learners whose parents are far away from home and who are left under the care of grandparents. They said that these learners don't do homework, don't attend school regularly and do not pass accordingly. When these learners fail, their parents say that the teachers are not working. Teachers complained that parents say they are not teaching their children. Teachers on the other hand said that they couldn't do enough things because learners cannot pay for resources such as photocopied materials. Teachers acknowledged that they are teaching learners who are staying far away from school. Since they travel long distances on foot, they get tired and loose concentration in class.

What teachers said about themselves:

The teachers raised a problem about their teaching. They said that they are working alone with learners, parents are not involved and are not present at all. Some respondents said that parents are working in Gauteng. The teachers said that they couldn't do many different things, like photocopying materials for learners, which will end up helping them (learners). One respondent said, "*most parents are unemployed*". The learners whose parents are unemployed cannot afford to pay money for photocopied materials. The teachers raised a problem of working in an environment, which is dirty, and it is within this environment where teaching has to take place.

What teachers said about parents:

The teachers said that the problems they encounter most are because they are working with learners alone. There is no teacher-parent relationship, which is the integral part in learning. Since parents are not there, teachers complained that they are working with learners without parental care, supervision, discipline, authority, example, motivation and parental praise.

The teachers complained that they couldn't get parents to discuss learners' problems. The problems teachers encounter with learners are of not doing homework, not attending school regularly and not passing accordingly. One respondent said, "*...when the child has failed, that's when parents come to school to say that teachers are not teaching, they are not doing their work*". Teachers did not get a chance to speak with the parent, which is why they are saying such words. One respondent even raised up his voice emotionally when she said parents don't really care. They don't care about the school because even the schoolyard is dirty. They don't attend meetings; therefore teachers are of the opinion that parents don't want to know what the school needs. Teachers complained that parents do not want to assist in almost anything. Teachers said that there are parents who are not doing anything to see that their children are doing their homework. They said parents never go through their children's books, just to check their performance. Parents are ignorant about their children's progress at school. Instead they blame teachers for poor performance and for learners' failures.

Teachers also said that most parents are unemployed, poor and illiterate. They said that parents take a very long time to pay fees at school; therefore teachers struggle to cope with the running of the school. Teachers said that there are problems with teaching since learners cannot pay for resources such as photocopies. These things disturb the smooth running of the school. Learners cannot get materials because they don't have money, because their parents are unemployed.

Teachers about grandparents:

The teachers raised their concern about parents who left their children with grandparents (grandmothers). Grandparents are old, they cannot walk. The pension they get can only cater for their own needs and augment where necessary on their grandchildren's school fees. Teachers said that learners depend on their grandparents' pensions, because their parents are unemployed, deceased and some are staying in Gauteng and cannot cater for the immediate needs of their children.

The teachers said that grandparents don't come to school because they are old, sick and cannot walk long distance to school. Most respondents said "*some learners stay far away from school*". There is no transport for them and they travel on foot to and from school. Grandparents cannot afford to travel on foot. Teachers said that grandparents make sure that their grandchildren are in school uniform when they go to school. Their grandchildren sometimes don't even tell them about the meetings to be held at school. Some respondents said "*learners absent themselves from school*". This results in grandparents not knowing about the meetings at school. Grandparents don't know what learners are supposed to learn. They don't really know because they don't attend meetings. The teachers complained that the grandparents' role is not meaningful enough.

4.4.3 Parents

Parents about learners:

Parents in rural areas are culturally inclined. They are gender biased. They don't treat boys and girls equally. They said that they agreed to build toilets for girls but did not mention anything for boys, but in the end it did not happen. Parents said that learners in a high school are grown-ups; therefore they should take care of their school themselves because they are independent.

Parents about themselves:

The parents raised the problem of not keeping an agreement on funding, cleaning, repairing and building. Parents are not actively involved. They are working far away from the school, which their children attend.

Parents about the community:

Due to the history of the school in this area, politics, ideology and even ethnic diversity still play a very dominant role in the relationship between the community and the school. Parents said that the community of Mokassa II who is mainly the Tswana speaking community are the ones who respond to the “*letsema*” at school. The community of Buxton with its mixed ethnic groups does not respond to the “*letsema*” at school. “*Letsema*” is a word, which is derived from a Tswana proverb. The proverb in full is “*letsema le lema le bona beng*”. It means that a person whose work is supposed to be done can only be assisted when he too is working. Parents whose children attend in that school should form a “*letsema*” and work so that other community members can assist them. One respondent said that “*we should be united and be one thing*”.

JOHANNESBURG

4.4.4 The Church

The respondents raised the same problem, namely, that people are poor, and they need help. One respondent said, “*The role of the church is to help needy families*”. The families, which live in homes where conditions are not good, where parents are unemployed, where children are without parental care, supervision, discipline, motivation and good parental example. What is important is that the church needs to obey James 2:14-17, emphasising that it is not good to have faith without action to prove it. “*It is not good to say, God bless you, keep warm and eat well, if you don’t give him the necessities of life*”. The respondent said that the church should be actively involved. The priest should talk to children about naughty things they are doing at school, like disrespecting their teachers and being biased and prejudiced towards them.

4.4.5 The Business Sector

This respondent said that *the business community should help the school community*". The business should supply materials that are needed by the school such as books. Since some parents are unemployed, they can be employed by the business sector. Needy families can be provided with things like clothes and food.

4.4.6 The Political Sector

The respondent said, *"Everyone should respect democracy"*. The learners should be taught about rights and responsibilities. The respondent said that political party members who are respected in the community should be given a chance to assist the school positively. They should be involved at school to motivate learners with their speeches. The respondent said that the school and the community should strive to form a team, which will assist and motivate learners to learn.

4.5 CONCLUSION

In this section, I have described how I have analysed data and wrote the findings up. From the interviews, the respondents in my study highlighted the problems of teachers who are teaching learners whose parents are not involved in their learning. The respondents highlighted the strenuous relationship between learners and teachers as well as teachers and parents. The respondents raised a concern that they want to bring the community together, unite it and form a team that will assist learners in their learning. This chapter is concluded with a summarised picture (see figure 4.1) of all the findings. The last chapter will round off this study with the conclusions, recommendations and possible future research possibilities on the theme of relationships between the school and the community in rural areas.

SUMMARY OF ALL THE FINDINGS

FIGURE 4.1 – What the learners say

	LEARNERS	TEACHERS	PARENTS	COMMUNITY
Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing things that are not good • Come late to school • Absent themselves • Don't attend classes regularly • Are ill disciplined • Don't listen to teachers • Don't care • Go to the streets after school • Disrespect teachers • Biased and prejudiced towards teachers • Don't work together • Don't have books • Others refrain from doing things that are not good • Travel far distances on foot • Cannot organize common transport • Concerned about grade twelve low results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trying to teach • Take them for granted • Strenuous relationship between them and teachers • Don't explain to them • They scold them • They insult them and hurt them with words • Offend and humiliate them • They are afraid of teachers • Teachers don't speak well with them • Teachers gave them homework • Wanted teachers to be part of a meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They don't come to school • Blame parents for bringing down the standard • Parents say nasty words to teachers • They are ignorant and ashamed • Don't take education seriously • They don't care • Wanted parents to assist teachers • Wanted a meeting where parents can be present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affected by everything in the community • Affected by jealousy and hatred • Cannot study together • Affected by neighbourhood misunderstanding • Wanted a meeting between the community and the school.

FIGURE 4.2 – What the teachers say

	LEARNERS	TEACHERS	PARENTS
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their parents are far away • Don't do homework • Don't pass accordingly • Don't attend regularly • Don't pay for photocopies • Travel long distances on foot • Get tired • Loose concentration in class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working alone with learners • Cannot do many things • Working in a dirty environment • Struggle with the running of the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't come to school • Don't care about learners • Don't care about the school • Don't attend meetings • Don't want to assist • Never go through children's books • Are ignorant • Blame teachers • Are unemployed • Left children with grandparents • Grandparents are old • Grandparents cannot walk long distance • Grandparents don't know what learners should learn • Grandparents don't attend meetings • Their role not meaningful

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FIGURE 4.3 – What the parents say

	LEARNERS	PARENT	COMMUNITY
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed to build toilets for learners (girls) • Said learners are grown-ups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't keep their agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tswana speaking community from Mokassa II responded to the letsema • Buxton community did not respond • Wanted to unite to form one thing

FIGURE 4.4 – What the church says

	LEARNERS	COMMUNITY	CHURCH
Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners are from needy families • Priest to talk with children • Are biased, undisciplined and disrespectful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditions are not good in certain homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should obey James 2:14-17

FIGURE 4.5 – What the business sector says

	LEARNERS	COMMUNITY
Business Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide books to learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help with clothes

FIGURE 4.6 – What the political sector says

	LEARNERS	TEACHERS	COMMUNITY
Political Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be taught about rights and responsibilities • Should respect democracy • Know that corporal punishment has been abolished 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect democracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect democracy • Motivate learners with speeches • Form a team to assist learners • Form a strong partnership between community and the school

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of chapter five is to round off the study with conclusions, recommendations and possible future research possibilities on the theme of the relationship between the community and the school in rural areas. The conclusions will be made from the literature and the findings of the research. Strengths and weaknesses of this research will also be discussed.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

The researcher will make conclusions based on what other authors have said about the community and the school and on what the findings of the research are concerning the community and the school in rural areas.

5.2.1 About the learners

It has been indicated in chapter two by Kindred (1976:105) that an impressive number of parents in every community form a judgment of a school from the comments that are made by learners. There are two groups of learners. Those who talk positive things about their school and those who say negative things. It has been established from the findings that most learners are not doing their homework, they are not attending classes regularly and they absent themselves from school. All these realities result in poor performances at school, which will eventually end up causing a high failure rate at the end of the year. The poor performance and high failure rate are the main causes of the strenuous relationship between the parents and the school. The comments of learners who perform weakly and those who actually failed will never be favourable to the school. This also makes matters worse as far as the relationship between the school and the community is concerned.

It has further been established from the findings that learners are rebelling against the authority of teachers. They show their rebellion by not doing homework, not attending classes regularly and absenting themselves from school. The learners do so because there are teachers in the school who scold, insult and hurt them with words. They feel offended and humiliated by the teachers. The findings however, also indicated that there are learners who refrain from doing things that are not good. They attend classes regularly and they do their homework. These are the learners whose comments are favourable to the school. They work cooperatively with their teachers and their performance is good. Since they are not in majority, and even if they pass at the end of the year, this makes a little difference in the results of the whole school.

As indicated above that the comments of learners make parents in every community to form a judgment about the school, the researcher cannot hesitate to point out that learners who are not doing homework, who are not attending classes regularly and who absent themselves from school, are the ones who cause the strenuous relationship between them and their teachers. They complain about the unjust treatment they receive from their teachers, and these stories end up reaching the parents and the community. No school can expect to enjoy the confidence and support of the community unless the comments of most learners are favourable to the school.

The researcher has found that learners also put some blame on the parents. They blame parents who do not come to school when they are called to attend meetings about issues concerning their children in the school. The findings also indicate that although most learners are ill-disciplined, there are learners who are well-disciplined. That is why they want their parents to come to school when they are called. This also shows that they want their parents to work together with teachers to solve whatever problems hinder their learning. But the findings show that most parents are not there, they are working far away and they have left their children with grandparents. As guardians, they are expected to take the whole responsibility of these children. Grandparents cannot do that because they are old, and therefore they cannot frequently

come to the school. Their conditions of health are not always good. For example, they sometimes don't hear, speak and see properly.

It has also been indicated in chapter two that most parents are literate. This is what also causes grandparents not to come to school when they are called. They are ashamed to hear that their grandchildren are not conforming to the rules and regulations of the school. They are afraid that they will be blamed for their grandchildren's behaviour, because as guardians, they are expected to maintain a good discipline for their children. Grandparents cannot discipline children because they might think that since they are illiterate, their method of discipline might not conform to that of the school. Grandparents are likely to be afraid to scold them because they (children) will stop looking after them.

5.2.2 About teachers

As indicated in chapter two, teachers have an obligation to do the best job of teaching as possible, this is what schools are all about and the community understands this very clearly. It has been established in the findings that some teachers are doing a poor job of teaching. They insult, scold, hurt, offend and humiliate learners. The relationship between teachers and learners is not good. This creates an internal discord in the school. Effective learning cannot take place in an environment which is not conducive for learning. Some learners are performing badly because they dislike their teachers. They don't listen to them because the teachers also don't speak well with them. If learners don't listen to teachers, they will not understand and therefore they are likely to fail.

It has also been indicated in chapter two that the backbone of any school-community relation is the teaching done in the classroom. Since there is no harmonious relationship between learners and teachers, the community does not hold confidence in the school. The teachers who do not work constantly for good relations with learners, cause parents and the community to have a strenuous relationship with the school.

The researcher has found that teachers are concerned about learners who are staying far away from the school. These learners lose concentration in class because they travel long distances on foot and they get tired. Again the findings show that their problem of transport cannot be solved because their villages are far apart from one another. If these learners don't concentrate in class, they will increase the failure rate in school. Since parents don't attend meetings to come and solve such problems, teachers alone cannot do much. If parents and the school cannot come to the aid of these learners, they will keep on performing low and fail at the end of the year. It has been indicated in chapter one that the strenuous relationship between the community and the school is caused by this low performance of learners.

The findings show that teachers are working alone with learners. There is no effective parent-teacher relationship. The learners are without parental motivation, example and supervision. Teaching in such situations is not effective. Even though teachers as surrogate parents, can love and show interest in learners, but this will not improve their learning so much. What is needed most is that there should be an effective parent-teacher relationship.



In the literature, chapter two, it has been indicated that parents are stakeholders; they have to be consulted by the school on matters pertaining to their children's education. The findings however, show that if and when the school made attempts to call the parents, they don't come to meetings because they simply are not there. It is evident that they did not choose not to come to school on purpose, but simply because they don't have steady jobs, they do migratory labour, which takes them far away from their homes.

The researcher cannot hesitate to point out that in a school where teachers cannot get a chance to speak to parents, learners' performance are very low. Teachers are unable to access the foundation laid down by parents. This foundation is important because it is on these principles and values that the teacher supplements his teaching. It is the

parent who has the responsibility to teach their children certain skills and knowledge. Teachers only supplement on that. But, if parents don't avail themselves to school, teachers would not have valuable information about learners, because such information should come from the parents. Teachers therefore, don't know much about their learners and this has an effect on their teaching. In the literature it has been said that the home and the school supplement one another. If one falls down, the one left has a chance to make a difference. The difference made by teachers in a school where parents are not available, is there, but it is not good enough because learners' performance will always be low.

5.2.3 About parents

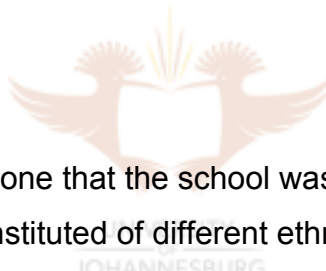
It has been established in chapter two that today's parents are not always positive towards the school. The researcher found that parents never go through their children's books to check their performance. The learners are virtually left on their own. The teachers are the ones who monitor their performance at school. Since there are no parents to report to, teachers end up reporting to learners about their progress and performance. Teachers' professional advice is not taken into consideration by learners, and this result in poor performance.

In the literature it has been said that learners are allowed to be admitted even if they cannot pay or has not paid school fees. The researcher has found that in rural areas most parents do pay their school fees, but they do so after a long time. Teachers complain that their teaching is affected by the non-payments of school fees in time. Teaching in the classroom cannot be effectively carried out since certain materials needed to be purchased. These materials are used on daily basis for learning in the classroom. Parents who don't pay timeously impact on the teaching and learning in a school.

The researcher again cannot hesitate to point out that in a school where meetings are held regularly, teachers, parents and learners are encountering fewer problems. It has

been established in the literature that parents should keep in touch with the school instead of waiting until a problem arises. The researcher has found that parents do not attend meetings. They don't come even if they are called at school. It is in these meetings where problems encountered by the school are discussed, problems such as learners' unsatisfactory performance, bad behaviour and poor discipline. If parents do not attend meetings, the burden of dealing with such problems is left alone to the school and few parents who attend meetings. Such problems need teamwork. Parents who attend meetings make agreements but they don't keep them. Such meetings are not fruitful because what has been agreed upon is often not adhered to. This shows that even the few parents that do attend the meetings, are also not supportive of the school. Although the majority of parents are unemployed, they can keep agreements such as cleaning, repairing and building. But since they are not really interested and actively involved, they don't even keep their agreements with the school.

5.2.4 About the community

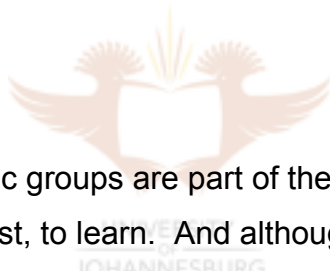


It has been indicated in chapter one that the school was built by the community, the diverse community, which is constituted of different ethnic groups. The findings also indicated that the history of the school is a good one. The charismatic personality and leadership of the first principal was a good foundation, particularly since it was characterised by community involvement. The researcher cannot hesitate to point out that the community was supporting the first principal because she was the one who came up with the idea of building a school. The school was named after her and she was also the first principal of that school after it has been built. She also had some authority over the community as the chief's wife and as an influential person in the community. The community was supportive to the principal to a certain extent as an individual but not as a school principal. The community therefore, was not supporting the school, although they were actively involved. It has been indicated in the findings that other principals failed to enjoy the same support of the community. The community is not supportive to the school because the principals do not have certain status in a community like the former principal. That is why parents accused teachers for not

teaching their children. In actual fact, parents and the community are the ones to be blamed for stopping their involvement at school.

The findings indicated that parents from the Tswana-speaking community of Mokassa II (a neighbouring village) are willing and interested in working together with the school, even though the school is built in another village (Buxton). This shows the support the Tswana-speaking parents have for the school their children attend. The researcher wants to point out however, that the findings indicated that ethnic diversity still plays an important role in rural areas. So, for instance, because the High School is built on the side of the Tswana-speaking people, it has been indicated that the different ethnic groups in Buxton do not always support the school as well as the Tswana people do. And even if it situated quite some distance away, the school is still supported by the community of Mokassa II village.

5.2.5 About the Church



The learners from different ethnic groups are part of the school community, bounded together by their common interest, to learn. And although they are one community in the school, they do differ in terms of the different churches they attend. But since they are mostly Christian, they can still be regarded as a community of believers on the basis of their common faith to God.

It has been indicated in chapter two that the school should accommodate the different beliefs and practices of different denominations on an equal basis. Different churches preach about different things, but everything that they say, evolves around the concepts of “tirisano” and “ubuntu”. “Tirisano” is about working together, whereas “ubuntu” encompasses humanness, honesty, respect for authority and various other positive norms. The researcher has found that learners are doing things that are contrary to what their churches preach. They don’t do their homework and this shows that they disobey their teachers. They absent themselves from school without any reason and this indicates that they don’t show any respect to authority. They are biased towards

their own teachers and even don't appreciate what teachers are doing for them. The Church as an institution, including all the different denominations, has failed the parents, the community and the school by not doing enough to reinstate the culture of respect for authority according to the Bible.

It has been said in chapter two that educational objectives are derived from how society views life. Christian parents would have to be trained to educate and support their children in terms of keeping the promises they made at baptism. The researcher found that most parents seem not to care about the education of their children. They have distanced themselves from the promises they made at baptism, that they would take care of their children and will assist them to live according to the Christian way of life. It has also been indicated in the findings that parents don't come to school when they are called to meetings, and they don't attend meetings to discuss matters concerning the school their children attend. The school therefore, cannot reach its objectives since parents as the most important stakeholders are not really involved. The Church in this regard has also not done much to encourage parents to take full responsibility of their children. They have shifted their responsibility to the school, and when the school blamed them from expecting more than what is realistic, they distance themselves from the school. Their relationship with the school becomes strenuous. The Church therefore, needs to seriously intensify its role to parents so that parents should take care of their own children.

The researcher has found that most parents are not always available; they are working far away from their homes. Since they are not there, learners (children) are without parental care, motivation and parental supervision. Conditions in such homes are not good. The findings also indicated that people in rural areas are poor. Children from such disadvantaged areas do not even value education, do not adhere to school norms and they don't work hard for success. The findings show that priests and pastors can talk to such children to behave in such a manner which is not disgraceful. The Church is not doing enough in this regard, because most children, particularly from homes where parents are not available, are ill-disciplined. They behave according to the

situation they find themselves in on a daily basis, that is a situation where there are no parents, nobody that really care for them, no respect, no discipline and therefore, no hope. These attitudes and behaviours, that were supposed to be corrected by the Churches, filter into the school. Such behaviours end up creating problems between teachers and learners, because these learners don't listen to their teachers and they take the teachers for granted.

5.2.6 About the business sector

It has been said in chapter two that there should be a sound partnership between the business community and the school. The community around which the school is built supports the business community. They buy food for their children there. They use transport for transporting learners for educational tours and other school trips. The researcher has found that the business community is not doing anything practical for the school. All they say is that the business should support the school by buying materials that are needed by the school. The business community is not practically involved with the school.



5.2.7 About the political sector

In the literature it has been said that the political community plays an important role in the transformation of schools and the democratisation of schools. The findings indicated that the political members said that learners should be taught about their rights and responsibilities. The researcher cannot hesitate to point out that the school does not involve the political sector; therefore political members end up not doing much to assist the school.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3.1 About the learners

- Learners should organise through the relevant structures their own meetings where they would discuss matters affecting them at school. On the same note, they should do introspection about themselves on how they contribute to the low pass rate at school.
- Learners should also take note of what they say in their conversations and what they don't say about their school. They should be aware that this has a direct bearing on the image of the school.
- Learners should also take the responsibilities of correcting anyone who say unfounded things about their school, because this puts the image of the school in disrepute.
- Learners should do their homework, because it is the extension of the work that has been done in class, or the supplementary work that will enable them to perform well in the examinations.
- Learners should feel free to ask for assistance from any member of the community if for instance illiterate grandparents or parents cannot assist him/her.
- Learners should report teachers who are not treating them well to the relevant authorities. It is enshrined in the constitution that they should be treated with dignity and that their rights as learners are also guaranteed.
- They should respect, love and obey their teachers.

5.3.2 About teachers

- They should do the best job of teaching as possible in class and outside the classroom. If the need arises for them to improve, they should do so.


- They should work at all times for good relations with learners, parents, colleagues and the community. By so doing they will have the support of both parents and the community.
- They should be surrogate parents in a true sense of the word. That is, they should encourage learners to work hard, to form groups with other learners and to work together.
- They should do home visitation to know the parents of learners they are teaching and to encourage them to collaborate with the school. By so doing they will receive valuable information that will help them in dealing with learners.
- They should encourage parents to attend ABET Centres to reduce the rate of illiteracy in their communities.
- They should know the community in which they are working.
- They should provide any information about their school to any member of the community if they are so asked, provided the information is not detrimental to the school and again is not confidential.
- They should involve other stakeholders like churches, businesses and the political sector in their school.

5.3.3 About parents

- Parents should do the good work of real parenting. It is their children, not that of the community, the Church, the government or the business sector!

- They should work together with the school.
- They should respond when they are called to meetings at school.
- They should be seen supporting the school, as a group, a whole community, not only as an individual.
- They should keep promises they made at school and in church about their children.
- They should use the relevant structures to speak out their views and complaints about the school.

5.3.4 About the community

- 
- The community should use the available structures in place to work for unity among themselves and the school.
 - They should strive to provide a conducive environment in which their children can learn.
 - They should support the school, not only some individuals with certain status.
 - They should also love teachers as fellow human beings.
 - They should discourage bad things that are done by the community, school and parents.

5.3.5 About the church

- The church should encourage its members to practice intensively what it preaches.
- The church should give spiritual support as well as financial support to needy families.
- The church members can adopt learners (children) whose parents are not available and children, who are living below the breadline, feed them and encourage them to do their best.

5.3.6 About the business sector

- They should be seen supporting and sponsoring the school by financing endeavours and facilities, and giving out things like educational materials, such as books, sports gear and prizes.
- They should employ parents from the community in which the business is situated.



5.3.7 About the political sector

- They should not say they are democratising school, but should be seen doing that.
- They should not over emphasise children's rights over their responsibilities.
- They should form a sound relationship with the school.

5.4 FUTURE RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES

It is recommended that the following themes be considered seriously for further and more thorough research and scrutiny:

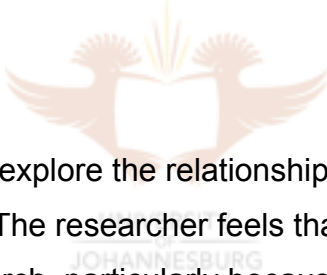
5.4.1 The impact of ethnicity in rural schools.

5.4.2 The impact of unemployment of parents in rural schools.

5.4.3 The role played by the community/churches/business in education from the teachers' perspective.

5.5 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THIS RESEARCH

5.5.1 Strengths



The research was conducted to explore the relationship between the community and the High School in rural areas. The researcher feels that the research covered a much neglected area in terms of research, particularly because of the impact the relationship has on learners. The researcher came up with quite important conclusions and recommendations concerning the relationship between the school and the community in rural areas. This may indicate that there are other areas that struggle with the same kind of problems as far as relationships are concerned, and that this can be addressed in the same way through research. Further research possibilities have been listed.

5.5.2 Weaknesses

The researcher acknowledges that the research covered a rural high school (only one!) situated in a community where its members, learners, parents and teachers come from places and villages which are ethnically defined and politically divided. Therefore, the research cannot really be viewed (or can it?) as fully representative of this whole

country, but simply provides insight in education in rural areas. Nevertheless, although an isolated case study, it still serves as a good example of what is possibly going on in certain rural areas in South Africa.

5.6 CONCLUSION

The research has been rounded off by conclusions, recommendations and possible future research possibilities. The researcher made conclusions from what other authors have said about the school and the community, as well as from the findings of the interviews with respondents. The researcher made some recommendations on how to work towards a sound relationship between the school and the community. The strengths and weaknesses of the research were also discussed, in the hope that somebody somewhere may learn from what has been found to the benefit of the people and community of the Buxton area in the North-West Province.



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White Paper of 1995

THE INTERVIEW

Tell me why the relationship between the community and the high school in this rural area is strenuous?

Respondent No. 1

Eeh! The relationship between the community and Gabobidiwe High School is parents who agreed on a particular thing at school in front of the school committee. Parents agreed on a certain amount of money and at the end they don't keep their promise. When the school committee called them to remind them about their agreement, they oppose them. Parents at the end distance themselves from the school.

I have heard you talking about the agreement, can you clarify on it?

As parents, we have agreed on school funds, building funds and the matric dance for the Grade twelves. We agreed to pay the money as from the 1st of January until the 31st of March, until now there is no response.

You mentioned the community; could you tell me more about that?

The community agreed to build toilets for girls, so that they can use them when they are in certain conditions.

You mentioned the toilets, is it the only thing parents agreed upon?

Another thing which parents agreed upon was to form a "*letsema*" that is to group themselves to clean the schoolyard, and to put back the yard poles that were fallen down, but parents did not do that.

You mentioned "*letsema*", could you tell me more about it?

“*Letsema*”, I have seen a little bit on January when we called parents to start on the 13th of January to form a “*letsema*”. Only parents from Mokasa II village responded, but parents from Buxton and Mocweding did not.

Is there any reason, which makes the “*letsema*” to be inefficient at school?

Parents said that “*letsema*” and the school is for the mature people but not for children who are young. These children belong to high school and they are supposed to be independent. As members of the School Governing Body we explained to parents that sometimes they should volunteer in cleaning for our children.

If you had the power to do anything you wanted for the good of this community and this high school, what would you do or suggest to be done?

To make things normal, I should allow myself (touching herself on the breast) to put my thoughts together and speak with the community about their rights. So that things should go back to normality, we should be united and be one thing.

You have mentioned rights, I did not understand, can you elaborate on that?

Mostly when we mention rights we speak about things that we are about to do, because we should not refuse people things they are supposed to do.

Respondent No. 2

Here, in the school we are working in, you will find that children who attend here, mostly their parents are not there. Their parents are not staying with them, in their homes. Parents are working in Gauteng, so when you are a teacher, you encounter problems with the child and you cannot get the parents, to sit down with and speak about the problems the child is encountering, like not doing homework, not attending regularly, not

passing accordingly. So, parents receive results of their children's performance only when the year ends. When the child has failed, that's when parents come to school to say that teachers are not teaching, they are not working, and they are not doing their work. Teachers did not get a chance to speak with the parents that is why they are saying such words. The relationship or the working together with them is not good. Even when school meetings are called, parents did not avail themselves. They don't even send people to represent them. You will find that a child finish school without even being ever represented by his parent at school.

Respondent No. 3

Yes, in most cases the cause of the bad relationship between parents and the school is because most parents are unemployed. There is no employment. You find that a person takes a very long time to come to school and pay school fees. Such things disturb the smooth running of the school. Eeh! We cannot do many things because when you ask children to pay school fees or any money for photocopies that will end up helping them, they simply say they don't have money, parents are not working. In most cases many children stay with their grandmothers. Their parents are staying in Gauteng. The, children start to depend on the pension, and then at the ultimate end the grandmother cannot afford because of other family responsibilities. Grandparents are unable to attend meetings at school. Even when there is something you want to ask, or show him about his child, when you call them, they don't come to school, they don't care. Most parents don't care (raising the voice) yes, they careless about their children's progress at school, they don't even come to school, just one day, to check the child's progress, how children are doing, whether a child is learning something or whether he is not learning. And even at home, parents are not taking any pains to see whether their children are doing their homework. They never go through their books, just to check their performance. They don't care. There is no good relationship between parents and the school. The schoolyard is dirty, they care less to come and clean the schoolyard. They don't want to know what the school needs, you understand. Everything is the responsibility of the principal and the teachers. They don't want to

assist in almost anything. They don't attend meetings to have a say in the running of the school. Again most children stay far away from school and they travel on foot. They don't use any transport, so they get tired at school and they don't concentrate well. There are so many problems.

You have mentioned grandmothers. I didn't understand, could you clarify on that?

Most parents, I mean biological parents live in Gauteng and some are just staying there, not working. So many children are left under the care of grandmothers. They look after them, when a child is having a problem at school, like a certain child in one of the classrooms, he is giving us problems. His parents are in Gauteng. He lives with his grandmother, who is unable to come to school. These parents (raising his voice) who lives in Gauteng and are not working, they don't care. Grandmothers at home don't know what the child is supposed to learn, whether they do their homework. Everything is just right when the child puts on uniform and goes to school. So they don't play a meaningful role, which is supposed to be played by biological parents.

Respondent No. 4



According to me, I have realized that there is only one thing about school children. Teachers are teaching them accordingly but they don't take this seriously. Most of them are doing many things but others refrain from them. So, when the parents are called to hear what their children are doing, they don't come. This results in poor learning. Many children come late, they don't attend regularly. Their parents don't do anything about such behaviour. When parents are called in matters concerning their children they don't come. Education standard in our school is brought down by children together with their parents. Even when parents come to school, they don't know why they come; instead they choose to fight teachers with nasty words. I would be happy if parents can assist teachers so that learning can proceed in our school.

You mentioned late coming. What actually causes it?

Late coming might be caused by the distance, which some of the learners travel. Learners from Mocweding village and Mokasa 1 village are from different villages. It is difficult for them to organize a common transport so that they should not come late.

Respondent No. 5

What I think is that our parents, parents of learners living in rural areas do not show any seriousness. They don't care about their children. They are ignorant in things they are supposed to take serious. They don't realize that we know that a parent should ask his child about his schoolwork on daily basis. After school the child packs his books and goes to the street, and it is amazing. He doesn't ask a child whether he has read his books. School children do not learn, instead they take teachers for granted. Because they know where the teacher comes from, who he is and what type of a person he is and even his status. Children don't listen to teachers as they are supposed to. Some teachers enjoy certain status from learners. There are children at school who disappoint their parents like in the location. What concerns us as learners is that our school, particularly the matric results every year are always below fifty percent. I realize that they should be like other schools where learners like to go to school. Everyone should go to school for himself not because my parents (mother) have not said I should go to school, therefore I am not going.

You mentioned disrespect, what actually were you referring to?

School children You know that there are teachers who are from rural areas; they get a lot of disrespect, unlike their counterparts from urban areas who has a lot of money. If you find me in the shebeen, because children also drink, you are not supposed to speak with me. You cannot scold me. School children in a shebeen can do many things to you.

Respondent No. 6

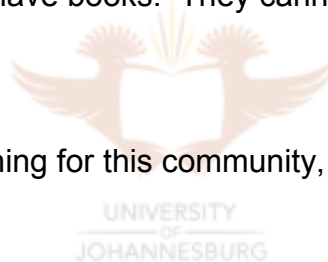
I have heard that learners do not do their homework.

School children are afraid to ask their teachers, that really I don't understand, Sir. The teacher cannot explain to the child, that if you don't understand do this and that. Children are afraid because teachers do not speak well with them. Teachers say that even a grade one learner can understand that. According to me, that is what causes learners not to do their homework because they are afraid.

I have heard you mentioning homework, I did not understand, can you elaborate on that.

In most instances when learners were given homework, they don't do it, like in one class, children there they don't have books. They cannot do the homework since they don't have books.

If you had the power to do anything for this community, what would you suggest to be done?



Eeh! I would suggest that all parents should be called although many of them are not available since they are in Gauteng.

Respondent No. 7

Eeh! I realize that the strenuous relationship between parents and teachers is continuing. Parents don't take the education of their children seriously. Teachers are trying to teach learners but they don't listen to teachers. This is all that I can say.

What should be done about the relationship?

We should call a meeting. We should call parents, learners and teachers to discuss this.

What is that which should be discussed?

That learners are bringing down the standard of education in our school.

Are children the one that brings down the standard of education in rural areas?

Yes, teachers are trying hard to teach them, but they don't listen. Sometimes even when they listen, they don't understand.

Respondent No. 5 (again)

Again, learners don't take their own time to do their things. They don't work together. The way parents are living in the neighbourhood, children end up adopting hatred and jealousy between neighbours. They should ask one another to take books and read together.



Is there anyone who wants to ask questions or comment on what we have been saying?

Respondent No. 4 (again)

It is important for parents to come together and become one thing, and look at how to improve our relationship at school and with the community.

I thank you all for participating in this interview. Our conversation has come to an end.

Thank you very much.

Respondent No. 8

Yes, yes I am, business community should be, must be helping school community, school children, like clothes, like books, like other things. You can think of all facilities you can give, school communities must help business community. Like other things (He blushed and stop the audiotape) and explains that he is not good in English because he is from Pakistan.

Respondent No. 9

Relationship between the church and the school means that the church should be actively involved, particularly in rural areas, people are poor. Many children are poor and when you visit their homes, conditions there are not good. The church should have a role to play in such situations.

You have mentioned the role of the church, what actually were you referring to?

The role of the church is to help the needy families.

You have also mentioned help, how can families be helped?

If a child is a delinquent, a priest can talk to him and show him a good way of living.

Respondent No. 10

On behalf of the A.N.C., which is the leading political party in the area, I urge everyone including our youth in schools to respect our democracy. I therefore believe that the party should have a positive way of dealing with schools. We should teach them about their rights and responsibilities as school children. I think other political party members also should be given a chance to assist positively in the education of the learners. This can be done at school or out of the school premises. I think that respected members of

political parties should be involved at schools for giving out certain speeches for motivational sake.

You have mentioned rights, can you elaborate on them?

Learners have rights like anybody in South Africa. They should know them so that no one should trample upon them simply because they are ignorant. They should know that corporal punishment has been abolished and instead there are other acceptable means of punishment. Lastly, I believe that there should be a strong partnership between the community and the school. Both the school and the community should put their differences aside and form a team that will assist learners to learn well.

