

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

*A Study of Parent Involvement in Their Children's  
Education at Pistis School*

BY  
CATHERINE MKOZA BANDA

*A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts (Educational Studies)*

JULY 2007

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**July, 2007**

**Student's Declaration**

**A STUDY OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN'S  
EDUCATION AT PISTIS SCHOOL**

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other College or University for academic credit.

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology or the Examiners

(Signed)  .

Catherine Mkoza Banda

July, 2007

## ABSTRACT

This study was an attempt to investigate the ways in which parents get involved in the education of their children at Pistis School. It was a descriptive study, which was done using the opinion of parents as the basis for investigation. The major focus of the study was to investigate ways in which parents get involved in the education of their children, the barriers and promoters to parental involvement.

The data collection involved the use of both closed and open-ended questionnaire. The Likert Scale of Summated Ratings also formed part of the instrument. The instrument was distributed personally to 74 parents. The research sought to discover ways, barriers and promoters to parental involvement through the Chi-Square Test of Independence..

The findings of this study revealed that parents with high educational level reported teaching their children values more often than parents with low education, while on advising teachers, parents with low education reported rarely advising teachers. Furthermore, it was discovered that regardless of their level of education parents reported always providing their children with necessary resources and helping their children with homework always. Parents at Pistis School get involved in the education of their children in five ways: by teaching their children values which are useful in the school, advising teachers on some matters, providing their children with necessary resources, helping their children with homework, and attending teacher-parent meetings.

On barriers and promoters, parents with good relationship with teachers reported not at all affected by these four: perceived bad attitude of teachers, perceived fear of criticism by parents, perceived previous negative experiences, and perceived effects of large size of families. Parents who reported good and bad relationship are not at all affected by: perceived inadequate training of teachers, perceived cultural barriers, perceived language barrier between the parents and teachers, perceived lack of invitation from teachers, perceived refusal of teachers to come when invited home, and perceived lack of time. Regardless of the type of relationship, parents reported that they are very much affected by lack of time on their part to get involved in the education of their children. The following are the barriers to parental involvement at Pistis School from the perspective of parents with perceived bad relationship: perceived bad attitude of teachers, perceived fear of criticism by parents, perceived previous negative experiences, perceived large size of families and perceived lack of time by parents. The only barrier to parental involvement at Pistis School from the perspective of parents with perceived good relationship is their reported lack of time. Conversely, promoters of parental involvement at Pistis School are: perceived good attitude of teachers, perceived openness to criticism by parents, perceived ironing out of previous negative experiences, and perceived small families from the perspective of parents with perceived bad relationship. The need to create time is thought to be a promoter of involvement by both categories of parents.

**To**

My loving husband Goodwell  
And  
My lovely son and daughter Evans and Ruth  
Whose school I am concerned with

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

For a long time, the role of helping children to acquire and develop desired knowledge, skills and attitudes has been left in the hands of teachers alone. The parents have seen their responsibility as taking children to school to become educated and nothing more. Of late however, research has shown that when parents or families are involved in their children's education, children do better in school (Kugler 2002, 128). De Roche and Williams state that "parental involvement in their children's education at school increases achievement and success" (2001, 135). However, the involvement of parents is not only done at school since "education could be received within an educational institution or outside it" (Oluoch 1982, 3).

There are many influences that parents pass on to children in the home that are also useful in school. Barber says parents pass on their values to children through "primary reinforcement, secondary reinforcement, and vicarious reinforcement" (Barber 1984, 35). So, in a way, parents are already involved in their children's education, yet they might not know it. Some parents wish to get involved consciously, but most of the time they do not know how and where to start (Kugler 2002, 127). It is not only parents who are in this dilemma; even some teachers do not know how they can involve parents in their children's education. Different schools involve parents differently; some ways of involving parents are written in the literature while others are not, but are used.

## Problem Statement

Different authors and schools have come up with different ways of involving parents to improve the education of their children. This is an indication that there are diverse ways of how parents can be involved in their children's education. Different schools have different ways of involving parents because they also have different barriers and promoters influencing their choices. This obviously is the reason why different schools have different outcomes as a result of the involvement of parents. Pistis, as a school of its own kind, needed to know what constituted parental involvement in the education of its children at their school. Thus this research aimed at inquiring into what constituted parental involvement as defined and determined by parents in the education of children at Pistis School.

## Background of Pistis School

Pistis School is located within the campus of Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST); the latter opened its doors in 1983. Pistis School started in 1985 as a nursery school. The school came into being as a response to the needs of parents who were studying at NEGST. The pioneers of NEGST recommended that the spouses of the students undergoing postgraduate studies also be trained, as the emerging African Church needed the full family's engagement in ministry. After providing for the education for spouses, the next concern was education for their children. The NEGST program of Christian ministries conceived the idea of having a nursery school that would serve two purposes: Firstly, it was to provide in close proximity, an affordable low cost nursery education and day care facilities. Parents, also being NEGST students, would

have the convenience of accessibility to their children. Secondly, it was geared towards providing education that is based on Christian values, considering the fact that the children are in their formative years. A nursery and day care was started with the following objectives:

- (i) Proverbs 22:6. To train a child in the way he should walk so that when he grows up, he will not depart from it.
- (ii) To provide an educational and social environment, where Christian values and attitudes as well as good educational standards will be maintained.

The school continued to be a nursery school until 2003 when the management of the school decided that it should be adding a class each year. At the time of this study, it had grown up to class four. The enrolment of the whole school was 62 pupils. Pistis School worked with parents since its inception.

#### Purpose of the Study

Since Pistis School had been working with parents ever since its inception, and since the school is unique in its own way, the purpose of this research was to ascertain what constitutes parental involvement in the education of children at Pistis School.

#### Significance of the Study

The results of the study would provide knowledge for parents on how they could be involved in their children's education. Through the same results, parents and teachers would be able to ascertain which areas they were concentrating on and which areas they were neglecting. They would also learn what barriers and promoters exist vis a vis

parental involvement as well as the present status of parental involvement in their children's education at this school.

### Research Questions

The following research questions directed this study:

- RQ 1. In what ways are parents involved in their children's education at Pistis School?
- RQ 2. What are the barriers to parental involvement in their children's education at Pistis School?
- RQ 3. What are the promoters of parental involvement in their children's education at Pistis School?

### Research Hypotheses

- H<sub>0</sub>: 1 Differences in levels of education of parents will not significantly affect ways in which parents get involved in the education of their children at Pistis School.
- H<sub>0</sub>: 2 Type of relationship between teachers and parents will not significantly affect parental involvement in the education of their children at Pistis School.

### Definition of Terms

Words may mean something different if used in a different context. Because of this, it is important to define some of the words that were used differently in this research.

**Education:** "The process of acquiring and developing desired knowledge, skills and attitudes" (Oluoch 1982, 3).

**Parent:** According to Callison, “the term parent will refer to any caregiver who assumes responsibility for nurturing and caring for children including parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, foster parents, and step parents” (2003, 31). In other words, “parent” may extend to other family members.

**Involvement:** Participation. The Thesaurus Dictionary (2002), s.v. “Francis A Match”

**Partnership:** “Partnership implies a common effort toward common goals” (Unruh and Unruh 1984, 89).

**PTA:** Parent - Teacher Association

**PTO:** Parent -Teacher Organization

### Limitations

Pistis School has students up to class four. A school with full primary classes would have been preferable for the study. The results that have been obtained in this study would not necessarily be applicable in school environments that do not replicate or have identical characteristics of the current field of investigation.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Substantive Literature Review

The word involvement simply means participation according to *The Thesaurus Dictionary*. Therefore, parent involvement in their children's education means parent's participation in the education of their children. Since the work of teaching is usually attributed to teachers, partnership is another word used to describe the kind of participation. Unruh and Unruh say "partnership is the major concept underlying involvement of parents and other lay persons" (Unruh and Unruh 1984, 89). Parents may participate in different ways and at different levels. Below are some of the levels in which parents may get involved.

#### Involvement at Individual Pupil Level

The first level in which parents get involved in the education of their children is at individual level. Any pupil is a member of a family. Therefore, before a pupil is influenced in any way at school, he is already influenced by the family. Nicholls and Nicholls state that,

Two greatest environmental influences on the pupil are his family and his peer group. Within the family itself factors such as its size, the pupil's position within it, the relationship between parents, their attitude to education, their level of aspiration, the absence of one parent, will all have their effect on the child, an effect which may either help or hinder learning, sometimes dependent upon the curriculum being offered (1983, 27).

The role of parents at the individual level begins with planning for a family. A family needs to plan beforehand how many children they want to have according to their resources. This is to make sure that the children born into the family have a better atmosphere for learning. “Children whose parents do not have the resources, ability or time to teach their children these skills start school at a considerable disadvantage compared to more affluent children” (Goslin 2003, 88).

A family also needs to plan ahead of time the kind of values they want to embrace in their family. The values must be intended, not those that come without parents realizing what they are imparting to their children. Values that are intended will be imparted with an aim of suppressing all other unintended values that a child may learn elsewhere since parents are not the only people who can instill values in children. Goslin says,

It is clear that parents, as well as many other adults in the lives of children, including their teachers, play a crucial role in instilling and sustaining the values of hard work, perseverance, self-discipline, and respect for authority that form the essential motivational underpinnings for academic achievement. Parents also play a special role in sustaining their children’s motivation to succeed in school (Goslin 2003, 124).

When parents’ values favor education, they are likely to be in agreement with the teachers’ values; thus, a pupil is likely to find the two talking the same language. As a result, a pupil may not get confused. However, when parents do not instill favorable values of education in their children, even if a teacher does, the values of a teacher find no base to build on; thus, the teacher’s efforts are in vain. Usually, it is easy for a teacher to notice that his efforts are in vain even before meeting the parents of a pupil because “many anxieties of children originate with and are reflections of tension of their parents” (Rucker, Arnspiger, and Brodbeck 1969, 256).

Teachers do not only notice bad effects of parents on their children, they also are aware of parents' efforts at home of instilling good values like love. "A person who is loved and who learns to give love also has some chance of succeeding in the world; from love he develops motivation to succeed and feel worthwhile" (Glasser 1969, 13). So, by instilling values in their children, the parents are working in partnership with teachers although they may not necessarily meet.

Apart from the home being a place where the family influences behavior and instills values, Byrne argues that it is a place for real teaching. Quoting Ephesians 6:4, Byrne says, "Parents have been obligated by God to see that their children are properly cared for and educated" (Byrne 1917, 208). The education being implied here may firstly mean Christian education. Buconyori is of the opinion that homes are a training school where human beings become God's people. He therefore, states that Christian educators should train parents to teach at home (Buconyori 1993, 86). While other primary schools may offer religious education in their schools, it is important to realize that "guiding, training, and educating the next generation's spiritual lives is primarily the responsibility of parents in the home" (Anthony 2001, 195). Secondly, the education being implied may mean vocational training. Education includes all aspects of life; so, while pupils are learning at primary school, they may also be learning vocations of some kind at home. In ancient Jewish education, "Children were taught by example. They learned vocational responsibilities by watching and following the parents as they saw to their duties" (Reed and Prevost 1993, 45). Thirdly, parents may also help educate their children by helping them with school work at home. Parents are capable of teaching their children. Thody, Gray and Bowden realize the fact that parents are pupil's first educators because by the

age of five, a pupil has learnt 85 per cent of his or her adult language (2000, 90).

Therefore, if parents are educated, they can also help with the home work. Filbin and Vogel advise teachers that “if a child needs help in some subject and you are confident that there is a good relationship between the parent and the child, don’t fail to utilize this resource. Never underestimate the abilities of parents in this” (1962, 97). The same plea goes to parents that if they see their child needs help in some subject and they know quite well how to go about it, they should not hesitate to help.

Parents’ involvement at the individual level, in connection with the school, may include parents inviting a teacher, social worker and guidance counselor home. This facilitates close communication. Close communication with people like these has its benefits. In dialoging with a teacher, parents get skills that a teacher uses and begin to use them at home (Small 2003, 195). Not only that, if there were some misunderstanding between the parents and the school staff, “Close communication not only clears up misunderstanding but also helps to spot and define problems before they become too severe” (Boerkoel 1985, 13). Instead of contacting the teacher at school where tensions may be high, the home gives a warm atmosphere for free interaction. If parents can do as stated above, they are participating in the education of their children at the individual level. However, this alone is not enough. There are other ways for parents to participate in the education of their children.

### Involvement at Classroom Level

In the classroom the level of parent involvement may depend on these two factors: the teacher’s willingness to involve parents, and the parents’ readiness to be

available. It depends on teachers whether parents are allowed to visit classes. Filbin and Vogel are of the opinion that parents should be allowed to visit classes if they want to. What teachers are supposed to do is to inform parents concerning the days they can visit because not every school day is a suitable day for parent visits (1962, 97).

Parents can volunteer to work with “a small group of students, help log in homework, record book numbers, read a special story, ask comprehension questions, or help with something as simple as cursive guidance” (Small 2003, 195). This does not mean that the parent will take over the responsibility of a teacher; rather, the parent will only be supporting the teacher.

Parents may also be involved in their children’s education by asking the teachers how their children are progressing, weekly, monthly, and per term. The more frequent the parents receive reports, the more the learning improves, especially when the reports are positive (Levine and Associates 1985, 169). If reports are negative, the researcher suggests that teachers should include recommendations for parents to follow if their child is to improve.

Another way in which parents may be involved at the classroom level is through grade level meetings, teacher-parent conferences, and teacher-parent-pupil conferences (Rucker, Arnspiger, and Brodbeck 1969, 206). The issues of concern in grade level meetings are to do with activities aimed at classroom improvement. Likewise, teacher-parent conferences and teacher-parent-pupil conferences deal with issues of concern to the three parties, but at the classroom level. Meetings at the classroom level are vital because they can encourage or discourage parents to get involved at other levels such as the school level. If parents are handled well at the classroom level, they develop a

positive attitude towards participating in school activities. “Active parents start thinking in broad terms of helping all parents particularly those who don’t have experience and skills” (Kugler 2002, 128). It is important to remember, especially on the part of teachers that the parents’ priority is their child before they can consider other people’s children.

### Involvement at School Level

A pupil as an individual at home or a pupil in the classroom is a member of a large family of the school institution. Therefore, just as parents involve themselves with activities to improve the education of their children at the already mentioned levels, they also need to get involved at the school level. “Parents of children in school, college and university students, and other community residents help man offices, classrooms, lunch rooms, health clinics, libraries, and other school facilities” (Saylor, Alexander and Lewis 1981, 104). Some parents have skills in other areas beyond those mentioned above and they can help the school without necessarily charging money for the work they are doing. They can work in turns for a week, thereby relieving the school of the expenses of employing so many people to do the work.

Apart from volunteering in work outside the classroom, parents can use their professions to help even in training the pupils. For instance, professionals in computer may help in specialized training of the pupils. Small is of the opinion that teachers should make use of parents because a lot of the parents have knowledge that can be shared to improve their teaching and skill base (2003, 194). Knowledge shared may be as part of the curriculum or an extra curricular activity. Hobbies such as swimming and gathering stamps may be part of the extra curriculum.

Another way parents can get involved at school level is to offer themselves as mentors to the students. Kugler states, “We all know the important role that one adult can play in the life of a child, yet some students simply don’t have an adult who can assume the responsibility of guider and role model” (2002, 134). If parents offer themselves to guide the pupils, pupils can be sure that they have trustworthy guides. At this level, parents may not necessarily be a model to their children alone; rather, the parents may choose to mentor pupils of a certain age at school.

The most common avenue for parent involvement at school is that of forming an organization such as a PTA or PTO. According to West, “One of the most effective ways of involving parents is through a Parent Teacher Association or a Parent Teacher Organization” (1985, 140). At meetings of organizations such as these, parents hold general meetings where they discuss different activities such as: trips and tours involving children, parents, and teachers, the involvement of social agencies, public libraries, and other resources, facilitation of communication by way of newsletters, fundraising, planning parenting workshops, and consultation on school-wide disciplinary policies (Petr 2003, 4)

### The Role of Parents in Decision Making

Decision making may be part of the activities that parents and teachers at PTAs and PTOs do, but it is also part of the other levels of parental involvement. Decision making can be at individual child, at classroom, and school levels. At home parents may make decisions that affect their child in school as well as at home (Kugler 2002, 129). The decisions at this level may include whether or not to help a child with homework. In

this way, parents have participated in the learning of their children either negatively or positively. Thus, decisions made at this level will in one way or another cause the parent to partner well or badly with teachers.

At classroom level, decisions by parents may not count since a class is professionally handled. However, teachers may share with parents what they have decided to do in their class.

At school level, there are a lot of decisions that parents may take part in. “Parents can play a role in determining purposes and objectives for schooling and in evaluating the consequences of schooling” (Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis 1981, 129). In other words, parents take part in coming up with a curriculum of the school because determining purposes and objectives and evaluation are issues of curriculum. Besides, parents may participate in deciding the location of a new school, in deciding disciplinary issues of a school, and in recruiting teachers. “In Kenya, decisions affecting primary education are made by several individuals, private and government organizations such as parents, teachers, pupils, school committees and parents’ association” (Olembo 1992, 34). Allowing parents to participate in all aspects including decision making is beneficial to both the school and to the parent. Valesky and Horgan say, “Participation in decision making instills a sense of ownership and improves morale and motivation” (2003, 3). Parents feel honored when consulted on issues concerning decision making. However, while participant decision making is being advocated, care must be observed when dealing with parents’ decisions. Not all decisions made by parents are worth adhering to because they may be influenced by other factors such as their professions, which are different from the teaching profession. There is a need to establish something that may



act as a screen to sieve the decisions. Teachers should help by guiding parents to make sure they don't stray from the goals and objectives of the school and from the teaching profession when making decisions.

### The Role of Parents in Curriculum Development

Curriculum may be defined as the “planning of learning opportunities, intended to bring about changes in pupils’ behaviors and the assessment of the extent to which these changes have taken place” (Ondiek 1986, 16). Parents may participate by giving information to the curriculum developers if the curriculum developers are following the Tyler rationale curriculum design. This may be so because according to Cole, objectives in this particular design come from three sources: subject matter, the learner, and the society (2001, 30). In this case, according to the researcher’s definition, parents are a part of the society. In other curriculum development designs, parents take part in the development, implementation, and evaluation of curriculum. Saylor, Alexander and Lewis say, “Curriculum evaluation can not be adequately done without extensive community involvement” (1981, 104).

Although it is important to involve parents in the development of curriculum, there is a challenge to be faced. There is a possibility that each one of the participants will be operating according to his or her orientation in life. Unruh and Unruh point out the same thing,

Sharing power in curriculum development with teachers, experts, students, parents and other lay citizens is difficult and involves risks. The administrator must be responsible for clarifying the decision-making structure right from the beginning of a task so that participants do not become disappointed with the organization, expect exclusive control, or charge that certain interests have been kept out to achieve a preconceived outcome (1984, 84).

The way parents have been handled at forums such as these will determine whether or not they will attend the subsequent meetings. There is need for a lot of diplomacy when dealing with parents, most of whom are lay persons. Fleming warns that, “No program or method can make up for a lack of empathy, trust and mutual respect among members of the school community” (1996, 75). Therefore, since parents are vital in the development and evaluation of curriculum, great care is needed.

### Barriers to Parent Involvement

Much as parent involvement is being advocated, some schools do not put it into practice. Some may have tried but they discontinued, and yet others are just concentrating on particular concerns while neglecting other aspects of the process of education. There are many possibilities for divergent opinions when conflict arises; it is an indication that there are barriers to parent involvement. The following are some of the barriers to parent involvement: The first is a bad relationship between teachers and parents. Icenhower warns school administrators that, “A school reputation may stand or fall not because of academics, but because of parent-teacher relationship” (1985, 6). Where there is a bad relationship, there is no time to think about the future of the child who is bringing them together as partners; instead, parents and teachers look for ways of bringing each other down. Thody, Gray, and Bowden encourage teachers to maintain a good relationship with parents,

If your relationship with them is effective, their positive impact will be enormous though their visibility to you may be slight. If your relationship with them is ineffective, their negative impact will be enormous, as is their visibility (2000, 89).

The blame is not only on teachers. Both parents and teachers are responsible for maintaining a good relationship with each other. An instance where a parent may be encouraging a strained relationship is when he or she decides to meet a teacher after a child has done something wrong when all along no effort was made to meet a teacher (Van Elderen 1985, 15). On the part of teachers, a tainted relationship may be the result of “treating parents as intruders” (Tanis 1988, 34). Some teachers do not want to associate with parents, or to take time to listen to them. Sometimes teachers are seated behind desks, feeling important as they talk to parents. This kind of behavior puts parents off. What teachers need to know is that most parents are interested in what is going on with their children, and that they need to be told in a manner that is welcoming.

The most common relationship problem teachers admit to is “no training on how to partner with families” (Petr 2003, 9). If teachers were trained on how to deal with parents, such misunderstandings would be minimized.

Another barrier to parent involvement is passive programs at PTAs (Slager 1985, 9). This is usually the case when activities are imposed on parents by teachers and administrators. The parents do not feel part of it all, that sense of ownership is not in them. Otherwise, when parents are involved right away from the beginning, they are able to dismiss activities that are passive and replace them with activities that are active.

Sometimes the barriers are the parents themselves. Some parents look at attending school events as an inconvenience in their own lives (West 1985, 140). They view spending time with teachers of their children as a waste of time. However, sometimes the reasons go beyond a waste of time. Petr notes that barriers faced by families include fear of criticism or blame for their child’s problems, previous negative experience with school

and cultural/language barriers (Petr 2003, 7). These problems may be resolved through improved communication. Parents should communicate what their fears are, while teachers must encourage parents to communicate through their children if they have language barriers, for example.

As regards involvement at the individual level, the size of the family may be a barrier to parent involvement. Nicholls and Nicholls assert that, “Within the family itself factors such as its size, the pupil’s position within it ...will all have their effect on the child, an effect which may either help or hinder learning” (1983, 27). If this is true, large families are placed at a disadvantage.

The next barrier is that of shifting blame for all bad things that happen in the school. When administrators blame teachers and parents for their inability to change the program, and parents blame administrators and teachers for not instituting changes, there is a complete circle in which the three parties blame each other. When this continues, obviously, there cannot be a good partnership between the school and parents (Glasser 1969, 114). Parents usually withdraw.

Finally, when teachers only rely on report cards as a way of communicating to parents, it becomes a barrier to parent involvement because the communication becomes one-sided. Since parents do not write report cards back to the teacher, it seems to the parents that teachers do not need their input. Even on the part of teachers, report cards alone are not an effective way of communicating with parents because “report cards tell parents what their child has done, not how he is doing” (Van Elderen 1985,15).

### Promoters of Parent Involvement

For schools that have not been doing well in terms of parent involvement, some of the things they may need to improve on are the following: Firstly, teachers and parents need to maintain good communication with each other. “When parents are well informed and feel you have nothing to hide, they feel more comfortable, welcome, and supportive” (Small 2003, 195). Teachers too feel the same when parents are open about their child and about their family.

Secondly, teachers should avoid or minimize calling parents to school for their children’s serious disciplinary problems. “Bringing to school the parents of a child who is causing problems often does more harm than good” (Glasser 1969, 13).

Thirdly, some parents may be a barrier to other parents. However, to promote parent involvement, parents are advised not to blame other parents for not participating; instead, they should seek out new ways to provide alternatives so that those who take advantage of their friends may begin to participate (Kugler 2002, 129).

Fourthly, both teachers and parents are advised to respect differences, even if they are uncomfortable with them. No one should expect others to be like them. Kugler advises them to recognize “that the strength of the school is in the differences people bring to the environment” (Kugler 2002, 131). Every person is unique, thus there is no point in thinking that all people should think the same way.

### Results of parent involvement

Parent involvement has results, both negative and positive. However, the positive results outweigh the negative ones probably because the aim of the idea of involving

parents is to improve, and not to worsen the performance of the pupils. “Parent involvement is beneficial to the child, class, parent and teacher” (Small 2003, 194). Everyone is a winner at the end of it all.

Children are the most targeted group in the whole process. “Parental involvement in their children’s education at school increases achievement and success” (DeRoche and Williams 2001, 135). They benefit from both the efforts of the parents and the teachers. Other results for children are better school attendance, better homework completion, and a positive attitude toward school and teacher (Petr, 2003, 11). The children are forced to attend all classes because they realize that with the amount of coordination that is there between the teacher and the parents their tricks will not be hidden. Again, when a pupil sees how much confidence a parent has in a teacher, he or she develops a positive attitude towards the teacher, and that helps him or her to improve. Kugler states that, “The research on the importance of parent involvement in a child’s education is striking. Students with involved families generally do better in school, stay in school longer, and continue their studies after high school” (2002, 128). From this, both parents and teachers can be assured that the good results go beyond primary and secondary school. In other words, with parent involvement, a child is impacted for life.

Parents and or families benefit from a feeling of support from the school and other parents, an increased understanding of school programs and policies, an improved understanding of the teachers’ job, a better awareness of the child’s abilities, and needs as a learner, and a sense of participation and ownership in the school (Petr 2003, 11). Through the support they receive from other parents and teachers, the parents benefit in that their parenting skills improve. They learn from interacting with teachers, and try to

implement the new skills in their own families. Furthermore, through interacting with other parents, their association skills are improved.

Results for teachers include respect for family's strengths, efforts and struggles, a greater individual attention to students as volunteers help, a better design of homework assignments, and a sense of satisfaction in seeing students improve in their attitudes and performance (Petr 2003, 11). The work of a teacher is eased when parents get involved in the education of their children.

### Methodological Literature Review

Different methodologies can be used for research. The use of the survey method has lately been more popular in finding out the opinion of people about certain issues. Since this research was about opinions on the involvement of parents in the education of their children, a survey method was used. According to Vyhmeister, a survey gathers information from a large number of people, but the information does not go very deep (2001, 132). Although the information may not be exceptionally deep, Isaac and Michael say the information gathered through survey,

can be used to answer questions that have been raised, to solve problems that have been posed or observed, to assess needs and set goals, to determine whether or not specific objectives have been met, to establish baselines against which future comparisons can be made, to analyze trends across time, and generally, to describe what exists, in what amount, and in what context (1997, 136).

In this particular research, the survey method helped to answer questions that had been raised and to describe what existed, in what amount, and in what context.

In the survey method, data may be gathered by a number of ways. Best and Kahn list the following four ways: observation, interview, questionnaires and recorded data

(Best and Kahn 1998, 249). This study used the questionnaire. The questionnaire is a popular survey instrument used to get factual information from people. Isaac and Michael however, warn that, "It requires a careful, clear statement of the problem underlying the questionnaire. Otherwise, ambiguity and misinterpretation will invalidate the findings" (Isaac and Michael 1997, 141).

Questions that are found in questionnaires can be categorized as open and closed. In the closed category, respondents choose from the already given answers, while in the open category, respondents are free to answer the way they want (Vyhmeister 2001, 134).

Best and Kahn discuss a number of ways questionnaires can be distributed. They can be distributed personally or by mail. The authors state that the person administering the instrument has the opportunity to establish rapport, explain the purpose of the study and explain the meaning of items that may not be clear (Best and Kahn 1998, 182).

The Likert method of summated ratings "contains a set of items, all of which are considered approximately equal in attitude or value loading" (Isaac and Michael 1997, 148). It measures the opinion or attitude on a scale that normally contains five responses rated from 1-5. The responses range from a very strong positive assertion to a very strong negative assertion on an issue. Midway between these two extremes are moderate responses. Gall, Borg and Gall state that the Likert scale takes much less time to construct and it offers an interesting possibility of survey method (Gall, Borg and Gall 1994, 105). In this study, tables have been designed to express the data gathered and findings have been interpreted.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter explains the methods and procedures for data collection and analysis. The researcher did a literature review from libraries. Best states that "...the search for related literature is one of the first steps in the research process. It is valuable to defining the problem, recognizing its significance, suggesting promising data gathering devices, appropriate study design and sources of data" (Best 1981, 41). The information in the literature review was used as the basis for a research among parents with children at Pistis.

#### **Research Design**

The researcher used a quantitative approach to the study in which a survey was employed to collect the required information from the parents of the children at Pistis School. The researcher chose a survey because, "The use of survey is often associated with the collection of quantitative data" (Wellington 2000, 106). According to Creswell, a survey design is helpful in that the researcher collects data at one point in time, and in addition, the design has the advantage of measuring current attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or practices (Creswell 2002, 398). Since this research was about parents' beliefs, opinions, and practices on their involvement in the education of their children, a survey was appropriate. To achieve this, the three research questions and two hypotheses were formulated from the information in literature.

### Entry

The researcher obtained a recommendation letter from the Academic Dean of NEGST to the Headmistress of Pistis School. The same letter was extended to the parents through the Headmistress. After permission was granted, especially from the Headmistress, the researcher approached the parents who had children at Pistis School to participate in the research by responding to the questionnaires.

### Population

The population of this study was made up of parents with children at Pistis School. The enrolment of Pistis School pupils was 62. However, some parents had more than one child at the School. Thus, the number of couples with children at the school was 35, making a total of 70 married parents. In addition there were 4 single parents making it a total of 74 parents. Since both parents in a family were supposed to complete a questionnaire, 74 parents was the population. To access parents who had children at Pistis School, the researcher obtained a list of parents and their details from the Headmistress. The Headmistress had already sent copies of the recommendation letter to the parents through their children.

### Sampling

There was no sampling because the population under study was manageable. Questionnaires were given to all the 74 parents.

## Instrument Design

Questionnaires were employed to gather information from the population. This research used both forms of closed-ended and open-ended questions. The instrument had been developed based on the relevant literature on the possible ways in which parents get involved in the education of their children, and the barriers and promoters of parents' involvement. Appendix A consisted of the questionnaire for parents.

### Part A

This part of appendix A consisted of seventeen items inquiring into how parents get involved in the education of their children. This part responded to research question 1:

RQ 1 In what ways are parents involved in their children's education at Pistis School?

### Part B

This section of appendix A carried ten items, which were inquiring into the barriers and promoters of parental involvement in the education of their children. This was in response to research questions 2 and 3 which were:

RQ 2 What are the barriers to parental involvement at Pistis School?

RQ 3 What are the promoters of parental involvement at Pistis School?

Note: Same items were used for both questions because the opposite of barrier is true for the promoter.

### Validity of the Instrument

In general, a test is valid to the extent that it measures what it claims to measure (Best and Kahn 1998, 197). The validity of the instrument connotes asking the right question, and phrasing it in a non-ambiguous way. For this research, its validity was examined by a panel of experts in research. Best and Kahn say that, “The panel of experts may rate the instrument in terms of how effectively it samples significant aspects of its purpose, providing estimates of content validity” (1989, 194). The experts in this case were the researcher’s supervisor and other lecturers who are experienced in research at NEGST.

The questionnaire and the written purposes of the study were given to three lecturers at NEGST for close examination. Among other things, the experts checked: Firstly, whether the items sampled a significant aspect of the purpose of the investigation, and secondly, if the meanings of all the terms had been clearly defined so that they had the same meaning for all respondents. The experts wrote down their recommendations that were later included in the questionnaire.

### Pilot Testing

The questionnaire was tested on four parents who have children at Forest View Academy, a primary school which is about half a kilometer away from Pistis School. The purpose of pilot testing was to determine whether the items on the instrument were clear and valid. The instrument was tested on people who were similar to the population under study. Corrections were made on questions which were not very clear.

### Administering the Questionnaire

After pilot-testing and making the necessary corrections on the instrument, it was ready for administration to the population under study. The researcher obtained from the Headmistress pertinent information about the parents who had children at Pistis School. The researcher personally went through the questionnaire with female parents at their usual meetings that are held at the NEGST Chapel every Friday. The questionnaires were collected the same time. For the male parents and the female parents who were not present at the meeting, the researcher personally handed out the questionnaire to them in their homes so that if they would need some kind of clarification, the researcher could help. Some of these questionnaires were collected at the same time, but others were collected later due to some reasons that parents were giving. The researcher separated the places for filling the questionnaire for couples to make sure they did not confer with one another.

Once the data had been gathered, it was analyzed statistically. For the statistical data, the method that was used is the Chi-Square test of independence. Chi-Square was used because data in this study was collected in the form of frequency counts. The data was analyzed using the Likert Scale of Summated Ratings. The responses of parents were tallied and summed up to show their opinions as regards the ways, barriers, and promoters of parental involvement in the education of their children at Pistis School.

As for the five-point Likert items, the opinion of parents were considered high if the respondents ticked “always”, or “often” and low if they ticked “sometimes” or “rarely” and neutral or no opinion if they ticked “not sure”.

Null hypotheses were tested using the Chi-Square Test. This is a non parametric statistical test that can be used as a “test of independence, the idea that one variable is not

affected by, or related to, another variable. The  $\chi^2$  is not a measure of the degree of relationship” (Best and Kahn 1989, 299). To control the variable identified in this study, related null hypothesis was tested using the Chi-Square formula. The Chi-Square formula that was used for a 2x3 tables was

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Where O = observed frequency

E = expected frequency

The Chi-Square formula which was used for a 2x2 table was

$$\chi^2 = \frac{N(AD-BC)^2}{(A+B)(C+D)(A+C)(B+D)}$$

Where  $\chi^2$  = Chi-Square

N = Sample Size

A, B, C, and D are values of respective cells on a 2x2 table.

If the calculated Chi-Square did not equal or exceed the critical value necessary to reject the null hypothesis at the .05 level of significance, the hypothesis was not rejected, if otherwise, it was rejected.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA, ANALYSIS OF DATA, AND INTERPRETATIONS OF FINDINGS

This study aimed at finding out parents' opinion on their involvement in their children's education at Pistis School. This chapter reports on data collected, data analysis, and interpretations of findings.

#### Questionnaire Returns

Table 1 below shows the rate of returns of the questionnaire distributed to parents. Out of 74 questionnaires, 66 were completed and returned. This represents 89.4 % (approximately 89%) response rate. The researcher had personally handed the questionnaires to the parents.

Table 1. Returns of questionnaire

No. sent out	No. returned	Percentage returned
74	66	89

#### Ways in which Parents get Involved in the Education of their Children

The first research question sought to find out the ways in which parents are involved in their children's education at Pistis School. The question was as follows:

RQ 1. In what ways are parents involved in their children's education at Pistis School?

A null hypothesis was developed in response to this question. Ways in which parents get involved in the education of their children at Pistis School were examined using the chi-square Test of Independence.

H<sub>0</sub>: 1 Differences in levels of education of parents will not significantly affect ways in which parents get involved in the education of their children at Pistis School.

Items 7 to 17 on the questionnaire sought to gather information on the views of parents on how often they get involved in the education of their children at Pistis School. Eleven ways of involvement were tested under education levels as follows:

***Level 1: Providing Children with Necessary Resources for School by Levels of Education***

This was an attempt to find out the frequency with which parents reported providing their children with necessary resources for school. The results of parents' opinions are tabulated in the table below:

Table 2: Parental provision of necessary resources for school by levels of education

	Always	Rarely
Low educated parent (primary to diploma level)	24 B	A 3
High educated parent (first degree and above)	38 D	C 1
	(24+38)	(3+1) 66 (3+24) (1+38)

$$\chi^2 = \frac{66[(3)(38)-(24)(1)]^2}{(27)(39)(4)(62)}$$

$$\chi^2 = \frac{534600}{261144}$$

$$\chi^2 = 2.047$$

df=1 level of significance = .05



Table 2 shows the Chi-Square test that was carried out. Since a Chi square value of at least 3.84 must be obtained to be significant at the .05 level for a two tailed test on a 2 x 2 table with 1 degree of freedom, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The result implies that there is no significant difference in the views of parents along levels of education in reported provision of necessary resources for school. Parents with high and low levels of education tend to report providing their children with necessary resources 'always'.

***Level 2: Teaching Children Useful Values for School by Levels of Education***

This was an attempt to investigate the rate with which parents reported teaching their children values which are useful at school. The results of parents' views are represented in table 3:

Table 3: Teaching children useful values for school by levels of education

	Always	Neutral	Rarely	Row Total
Low educated parent (primary to diploma level)	19(23.32)	2(0.82)	6(2.86)	27
High educated parent (first degree and above)	38(33.68)	0(1.18)	1(4.14)	39
Column Total	57	2	7	66

$\chi^2 = 10.055$                        $df = 2$                       level of significance = .05

A Chi-square test of independence was performed (see table 3), to obtain a value of 10.055. Since the Chi-square value is above 5.991, at critical value of .05 level of significance on a 2 x 3 with 2 degrees of freedom, the null hypothesis was rejected. The result means that there is a difference in the frequency with which parents reported teaching their children values which are useful at school. Parents with high education reported more frequently teaching children useful values for school than parents with low education.

### ***Level 3: Helping Children with Homework by Levels of Education***

This aimed at trying to find out the frequency with which parents reported helping their children with homework. The findings are represented in table 4.

Table 4: Helping children with homework by levels of education

	Always	Neutral	Rarely	Row Total
Low educated parent (primary to diploma level)	16(15.55)	0(1.23)	11(10.23)	27
High educated parent (first degree and above)	22(22.45)	3(1.77)	14(10.23)	39
Column Total	38	3	25	66

$$\chi^2 = 2.198$$

$$df = 2$$

$$\text{level of significance} = .05$$

Table 4 is on a 2 x 3 table; the result obtained from the Chi-Square test (2.198) is below the critical value of 5.991 at 2 degrees of freedom needed to reject the hypothesis. The hypothesis is therefore not rejected. It implies that at .05 level of significance, there is no significant difference in the views of parents along levels of education in reported help of children with homework. In other words, parents with high and low levels of education tend to report helping their children with homework more always than rarely.

### ***Level 4: Inviting Teachers Home by Levels of Education***

This was an effort to analyze the regularity with which parents reported inviting teachers home to discuss the progress of their children. The results of parents' opinions are tabulated in table 5.

Table 5: Inviting teachers home by levels of education

	Always	Neutral	Rarely	Row Total
Low educated parent (primary to diploma level)	0(0.82)	2(4.09)	25(22.09)	27
High educated parent (first degree and above)	2(1.18)	8(5.91)	29(31.91)	39
Column Total	2	10	54	66

$\chi^2 = 2.0329$                        $df = 2$                       level of significance = .05

The null hypothesis was not rejected because the result obtained from the Chi-Square test (2.0329) is below the critical value of 5.991 at 2 degrees of freedom needed to reject the hypothesis. The result means that there is no significant difference in the views of parents along levels of education in the reported attempts to invite teachers home to discuss the progress of their children. Parents with high and low levels of education reported rarely inviting teachers home.

### ***Level 5: Visiting Children's Class by Levels of Education***

This aimed at trying to analyze the occurrences with which parents reported visiting the class of their children to observe how the teacher is teaching.

Table 6: Visiting children's class by levels of education

	Always	Neutral	Rarely	Row Total
Low educated parent (primary to diploma level)	2(1.64)	0(2.86)	25(22.09)	27
High educated parent (first degree and above)	2(2.36)	7(4.14)	30(32.5)	39
Column Total	4	7	55	66

$\chi^2 = 0.606$                        $df = 2$                       level of significance = .05

A Chi-square test of independence was performed (see table 6). It was found that the computed chi-square of 0.606 is far below the value of (5.991) necessary for the

rejection of the null hypothesis at .05 level of significance on a 2 x 3 table with 2 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The result means that there is no significant difference in the views of parents with high or low education in the reported visits to the class of their children to observe how the teacher is teaching. Parents generally reported rarely visiting the class of their children.

### ***Level 6: Advising Teachers by Levels of Education***

This was to find out the frequency with which parents reported advising teachers on certain matters.

Table 7: Advising teachers by levels of education

	Always	Neutral	Rarely	Row Total
Low educated parent (primary to diploma level)	1(4.5)	0(1.64)	26(20.86)	27
High educated parent (first degree and above)	10(6.5)	4(2.36)	25(30.14)	39
Column Total	11	4	51	66

$$\chi^2 = 6.746$$

$$df = 2$$

$$\text{level of significance} = .05$$

The null hypothesis was rejected because the result obtained from the Chi-Square test (6.746) is above the critical value of 5.991 at 2 degrees of freedom. This implies that there is a significant difference in the rate with which parents report advising teachers on certain matters. Parents with low education tend to report advising teachers slightly less often than did parents with high education.

### ***Level 7: Attending Teacher-Parent Meetings by Levels of Education***

Level 7 was an attempt to investigate the regularity with which parents reported attending teacher-parent meetings. The findings are represented in table 8.

Table 8: Attending teacher-parent meeting by levels of education

	Always	Neutral	Rarely	Row Total
Low educated parent (primary to diploma level)	13(10.64)	0(2.86)	14(13.5)	27
High educated parent (first degree and above)	13(15.36)	7(4.14)	19(19.5)	39
Column Total	26	7	33	66

$$\chi^2 = 0.92$$

$$df = 2$$

$$\text{significance level} = .05$$

A Chi-square test of independence was performed (see table 8). The chi-square value of 0.92 is far below the value of (5.991) necessary to reject the null hypothesis at .05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The result implies that there is no significant difference in the views of parents with high or low education in the reported attendance of teacher-parent meetings. While slightly over half of parents in both groups reported rarely attending the teacher-parent meetings, almost half of the parents in both groups reported frequently attending teacher-parent meetings.

### ***Level 8: Volunteering to do Some Jobs at School by Levels of Education***

This aimed at trying to investigate the frequency with which parents reported volunteering to do some jobs at school.

Table 9: Volunteering to do some jobs at school by levels of education

	Always	Neutral	Rarely	Row Total
Low educated parent (primary to diploma level)	0(0.82)	3(4.09)	24(22.09)	27
High educated parent (first degree and above)	2(1.18)	7(5.91)	30(31.91)	39
Column Total	2	10	54	66

$$\chi^2 = 1.663$$

$$df = 2$$

$$\text{level of significance} = .05$$

The null hypothesis was not rejected because the result obtained from the Chi-Square test (1.663) is below the critical value of 5.991 at 2 degrees of freedom. This entails that there is no significant difference in the frequency with which parents reported volunteering to do some jobs at school. Parents with high or low levels of education reported rarely volunteering to do some jobs at school.

### ***Level 9: Taking Part in the Curriculum Development of the School by Levels of Education***

This was an attempt to find out the rate with which parents reported taking part in the curriculum development of the school. The findings are represented in table 10.

Table 10: Taking part in the curriculum development of the school by levels of education

	Always	Neutral	Rarely	Row Total
Low educated parent (primary to diploma level)	2(1.23)	3(4.5)	22(21.27)	27
High educated parent (first degree and above)	1(1.77)	8(6.5)	30(30.73)	39
Column Total	3	11	52	66

$$\chi^2 = 0.865$$

$$df = 2$$

$$\text{level of significance} = .05$$

It was found that the computed chi-square of 0.865 is far below the value of (5.991) necessary for the rejection of the null hypothesis at .05 level of significance on a

2 x3 table with 2 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The result means that there is no significant difference in the views of parents with high or low education in the reported taking part in the curriculum development of the school. Parents reported rarely taking part in the curriculum development of the school.

***Level 10: Taking Part in the Fundraising Activities for the School by Levels of Education***

This level was an effort to find out the regularity with which parents reported taking part in fundraising activities for the school.

Table 11: Taking part in the fundraising activities for the school by levels of education

	Always	Neutral	Rarely	Row Total
Low educated parent (primary to diploma level)	4(2.86)	2(4.91)	21(19.23)	27
High educated parent (first degree and above)	3(4.14)	10(7.09)	26(27.77)	39
Column Total	7	12	47	66

$\chi^2 = 1.039$

df = 2

level of significance = .05

Table 11 shows the Chi-Square test that was performed. Since a Chi square value of at least 5.991 must be obtained to be significant at critical value of .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The result means that there is no significant difference in the views of parents with high or low education in the reported participation in the fundraising activities for the school. Parents reported rarely taking part in the fundraising activities for the school.

### *Level 11: Using One's Profession to Help the School by Levels of Education*

This was an attempt to analyze the rate with which parents reported using their profession to help the school. The results of parents' views are shown below:

Table 12: Using their profession to help the school by levels of education

	Always	Neutral	Rarely	Row Total
Low educated parent (primary to diploma level)	2(1.64)	2(4.91)	23(20.45)	27
High educated parent (first degree and above)	2(2.36)	10(7.09)	27(29.55)	39
Column Total	4	12	50	66

$$\chi^2 = 0.672$$

$$df = 2$$

$$\text{level of significance} = .05$$

Table 12 shows the Chi-Square test that was carried out. On a 2 x 3 table, the result obtained from the Chi-Square test (0.672) is below the critical value of 5.991 at 2 degrees of freedom needed to reject the hypothesis. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The result means no significant difference was found in the views of parents in the reported use of their profession to help the school. Parents with high or low levels of education tend to report rarely using their profession to help the school.

### Discussion

Parents with high and low levels of education generally reported providing their children with necessary resources and helping them with homework always.

There was a difference however, in the views of parents in the reported teaching of values to their children. Parents with high education reported always teaching their children values which are useful at school. This may suggest that parents with high



education have through their years of education come to learn that they have a crucial role of introducing and maintaining in their children values such as hard work, determination, and respect for authority that form the basis for academic achievement. On the contrary, parents with low education may not want to force on their children what they failed to achieve.

Parents with high and low levels of education reported rarely inviting teachers home, or visiting the class of their children, or doing some volunteer jobs, or taking part in curriculum development, or taking part in fundraising for the school, or using their profession to help the school. This could suggest that the school has not yet opened up to let parents participate in these activities because if we look closely at these activities, they are all to do with direct involvement with school. On the other hand, parents reported doing well on the activities that are home-based.

There was a difference in the reported advising of teachers. Parents with low education reported advising teachers less often than parents with high education. This may suggest that parents with low educational level, maximum of diploma, feel inferior to advise teachers, who are all university graduates.

There was no significant difference in the views of parents with high or low education in the reported attendance of teacher-parent meetings. While slightly over half of the parents in both groups reported rarely attending the teacher-parent meetings, almost half of the parents in both groups reported frequently attending teacher-parent meetings. This likely suggests that some parents respond when called for a meeting. It further suggests that some parents would be willing to get involved in other ways if

called by the school. For those who do not attend, the reason may be lack of time since most of the parents are students at NEGST.

Therefore, parents at Pistis School reported involvement in the education of their children in five ways: by teaching their children values which are useful in the school, advising teachers on some matters, providing their children with necessary resources, helping their children with homework, and attending teacher-parent meetings.

### Barriers and Promoters of Parental Involvement at Pistis School

The second and third research questions sought to find out the barriers and promoters to parental involvement at Pistis School. The questions were as follows:

RQ 2 What are the barriers to parental involvement at Pistis School?

RQ 3 What are the promoters of parental involvement at Pistis School?

A null hypothesis was developed in response to these questions.

Ho: 3 Type of relationship between teachers and parents will not significantly affect parental involvement in the education of their children at Pistis School.

Items 18 to 27 on the questionnaire sought to gather information on the views of parents on extent to which they get affected by their perceptions of barriers. Ten levels of perceptions were tested under type of relationship and the findings were represented in tables.

#### ***Level 1: Perceived Bad Attitude of Teachers by Type of Relationship***

This was an attempt to find out the extent to which parents reported being affected by perception that teachers had bad attitude.

Table 13: Perceived bad attitude of teachers by type of relationship

	Very Much	Uncertain	Not at all	Row Total
Bad relationship	7(1.91)	0(0.21)	7(11.88)	14
Good relationship	2(7.09)	1(0.79)	49(44.12)	52
Column Total	9	1	56	66

$$\chi^2 = 19.774 \quad df = 2 \quad \text{level of significance} = .05$$

The null hypothesis was rejected because the result obtained from the Chi-Square test (19.774) is far above the critical value of 5.991. The result means that there is a significant difference in perceived effect of bad attitude of teachers on parental involvement or lack thereof. Parents with good relationship with teachers reported that their involvement or otherwise in their children's school is far less affected by their perceived relationship with the teachers, whereas parents with poor relationship seem ambivalent.

### ***Level 2: Perceived Inadequate Training of Teachers by Type of Relationship***

This aimed at investigating the extent to which parents reported being affected by perceived inadequate training of teachers.

Table 14: Perceived inadequate training of teachers by type of relationship

	Very Much	Uncertain	Not at all	Row Total
Bad relationship	6(3.18)	1(1.06)	7(9.76)	14
Good relationship	9(11.82)	4(3.94)	39(36.24)	52
Column Total	15	5	46	66

$$\chi^2 = 4.157 \quad df = 2 \quad \text{level of significance} = .05$$

Since the result obtained from the Chi square test (4.157) is below the value of 5.991, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The result means that there is no significant difference in the views of parents in the effect of perception of how adequately teachers have been trained. Parents tend to report that their involvement or otherwise in their

children's school is not affected one way or the other by their perception of the teachers' level of training.

### ***Level 3: Perceived Lack of Time on the Part of Parents by type of Relationship***

This aimed at trying to find out the extent to which parents reported to be affected by perceived lack of time in participating in school activities.

Table15: Perceived lack of time on the part of parents by type of relationship

	Very Much	Uncertain	Not at all	Row Total
Bad relationship	7(8.91)	3(0.64)	4(4.45)	14
Good relationship	35(33.09)	0(2.36)	17(16.55)	52
Column Total	42	3	21	66

$\chi^2 = 0.578$                        $df = 2$                       level of significance = .05

It was found that the result obtained from the Chi-Square test (0.578) is far below the critical value of 5.991 necessary to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This suggests that there is no significant difference in the extent to which parents reported being affected by perceived lack of time. Both groups of parents tend to report that their involvement in their children's school is 'very much' affected by perceived lack of time.

### ***Level 4: Perceived Fear of Criticism from Teachers by Type of Relationship***

This was an attempt to investigate the extent to which parents reported being affected by perceived fear of criticism from teachers.

Table 16: Perceived fear of criticism from teachers by type of relationship

	Very Much	Uncertain	Not at all	Row Total
Bad relationship	7(2.76)	0(0.85)	7(10.39)	14
Good relationship	6(10.24)	4(3.15)	42(38.61)	52
Column Total	13	4	49	66

$\chi^2 = 9.690$                        $df = 2$                       level of significance = .05

The null hypothesis was rejected because the result obtained from the Chi square test (9.690) is above the value of 5.991. The result means that there is a significant difference in perceived effect of fear of criticism from teachers on parental involvement or lack thereof. Parents with perceived good relationship reported that their involvement or lack thereof is far less affected by perceived fear of criticism from teachers.

#### ***Level 5: Perceived Previous Negative Experience with a Teacher by Type of Relationship***

This aimed at trying to find out the extent to which parents reported being affected by perceived previous negative experience with a teacher.

Table 17: Perceived previous negative experience with a teacher by type of relationship

	Very Much	Uncertain	Not at all	Row Total
Bad relationship	6(1.91)	1(0.64)	7(11.45)	14
Good relationship	3(7.09)	2(2.36)	47(42.55)	52
Column Total	9	3	54	66

$\chi^2 = 13.325$                        $df = 2$                       level of significance = .05

A chi-square test was performed (see table 27). It was found that the result obtained (13.325) is above the critical value of 5.991 at 2 degrees of freedom needed to reject the hypothesis. The hypothesis was therefore rejected. The result means how parents viewed relationship with teachers made a difference in terms of their involvement in their children's school. Parents with perceived bad relationship reported that their

involvement or otherwise in their children's school is far more affected by previous negative dealings with a teacher.

### ***Level 6: Perceived Cultural Barrier by Type of Relationship***

This was an attempt to investigate the extent to which parents reported being affected by perceived cultural barrier.

Table 18: Perceived cultural barrier by type of relationship

	Very Much	Uncertain	Not at all	Row Total
Bad relationship	2(0.64)	0(0.42)	12(12.94)	14
Good relationship	1(2.36)	2(1.58)	49(48.06)	52
Column Total	3	2	61	66

$\chi^2 = 3.795$        $df = 2$       level of significance = .05

A Chi-square test of independence was performed (see table 28). The null hypothesis was not rejected because the result obtained from the Chi square test (3.795) is below the value of 5.991. The result implies that there is no significant difference in the views of parents with perceived good or bad relationship in the reported effect of cultural barrier on their involvement in their children's school. Parents reported that their involvement or lack of is 'not at all' affected by perceived cultural barriers.

### ***Level 7: Perceived Language Barrier between Parents and Teachers by Type of relationship***

This was an attempt to find out the extent to which parents reported being affected by perceived language barrier between the parents and teachers.

Table 19: Perceived language barrier between the parents teachers by type of relationship

	Very Much	Uncertain	Not at all	Row Total
Bad relationship	0(0.21)	1(0.21)	13(13.58)	14

Good relationship	1(0.79)	0(0.79)	51(50.42)	52
Column Total	1	1	64	66

$\chi^2 = 0.300$                        $df = 2$                       level of significance = .05

Table 19 above shows the Chi-Square test that was carried out. The null hypothesis was not rejected since the result obtained from the Chi-Square test (0.300) is far below the critical value of 5.991 at 2 degrees of freedom to reject the hypothesis. The result means that there is no significant difference in the views of parents in the reported effect of perceived language barrier and their involvement with school. Parents reported that their involvement or otherwise is 'not at all' affected by perceived language barrier between the parents and teachers.

#### ***Level 8: Perceived Lack of Invitation from Teachers by Type of Relationship***

This was an attempt to investigate the extent to which parents attribute their involvement to lack of invitation from teachers.

Table 20: Perceived lack of invitation from teachers by type of relationship

	Very Much	Uncertain	Not at all	Row Total
Bad relationship	9(5.73)	0(.21)	5(8.06)	14
Good relationship	18(21.27)	1(0.79)	33(29.94)	52
Column Total	27	1	38	66

$\chi^2 = 3.848$                        $df = 2$                       level of significance = .05

A Chi-square test of independence was performed (see table 20). Since the result obtained from the Chi square test (3.848) is below the value of 5.991, the null hypothesis was not rejected. No significant difference was found in the views of parents with perceived good or bad relationship with teachers in the reported effect of lack of invitation from teachers. The two categories of parents reported some ambivalence on

the extent to which perceived lack of invitation from teachers affect their involvement or lack thereof in their children's schooling.

### ***Level 9: Perceived Teachers' Refusal of Parental Invitation by Type of Relationship***

This aimed at trying to find out the extent to which parents reported being affected by teachers' refusal of parental invitation home.

Table 21: Perceived teachers' refusal of parental invitation by type of relationship

	Very Much	Uncertain	Not at all	Row Total
Bad relationship	0(0.21)	1(0.42)	13(13.36)	14
Good relationship	1(0.79)	1(1.58)	50(49.64)	52
Column Total	1	2	63	66

$$\chi^2 = 0.281$$

$$df = 2$$

$$\text{level of significance} = .05$$

Since the result obtained from the Chi-Square test (0.281) is far below the critical value of 5.991 at 2 degrees of freedom, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This means there is no significant difference in the extent to which parents reported being affected by perceived teachers' refusal of parental invitation home. In other words, parents reported overwhelmingly that their involvement or otherwise in their children's school is 'not at all' affected by perceived refusal of parental invitation home.

### ***Level 10: Effect of a Big Family Size on Involvement***

This was an attempt to find out the extent to which parents reported that their involvement or lack of in their children's school was affected by big family size.



Table 22: Effect of a big family size on involvement

	Very Much	Uncertain	Not at all	Row Total
Bad relationship	5(1.91)	1(0.21)	8(11.88)	14
Good relationship	4(7.09)	0(0.79)	48(44.12)	52
Column Total	9	1	56	66

$$\chi^2 = 7.959$$

$$df = 2$$

$$\text{level of significance} = .05$$

The null hypothesis was rejected because the result obtained from the Chi-Square test (7.959) is above the critical value of 5.991. The result shows a significant difference in the views of parents along type of relationship. Parents with perceived good relationship overwhelmingly reported that their involvement in their children's school is less affected by having a large family, while parents with perceived bad relationship are somewhat split on this.

### Discussion

In summary, it can be concluded that parents with perceived good relationship with teachers reported that their involvement or otherwise in their children's school is far less affected by their perceived relationship with the teachers, whereas parents with poor relationship seem ambivalent. This is in agreement with what Thody, Gray and Bowden write about teachers, "If your relationship with them is effective, their positive impact will be enormous....If your relationship with them is ineffective, their negative impact will be enormous" (2000, 89). It is therefore, expected that parents with perceived good relationship with teachers should be less affected by perceived bad attitude of teachers. At Pistis School, perceived bad attitude of teachers would be a barrier while the opposite would be a promoter of involvement.

There is no significant difference in the views of parents in the effect of perception of how adequately teachers have been trained. Parents tend to report that their involvement or otherwise in their children's school is not affected one way or the other by their perception of the teachers' level of training. The reason for this could be because parents are aware of the high qualifications of the teachers; thus, they do not feel demotivated to participate on the excuse that teachers are less equipped to do their work. Therefore, at Pistis School, this would be neither a barrier nor a promoter.

Both groups of parents reported that their involvement or lack thereof in their children's school is 'very much' affected by lack of time. There is a high probability that parents are very much affected by perceived lack of time because most of the parents with children at Pistis School are students of NEGST, who are also busy with their own school. Perceived lack of time would be a barrier, while deliberate creation of time by parents would be a promoter of parental involvement at Pistis School.

Parents with perceived good relationship reported that their involvement or lack thereof is far less affected by perceived fear of criticism from teachers. The perceived fear of criticism could be there because of the negative assumptions of some parents. At Pistis School, perceived fear of criticism would be a barrier for parents who think they have poor relationship with the teachers, while the opposite would be true for parents who think they have good relationship with the teachers.

Parents with perceived bad relationship reported that their involvement or otherwise in their children's school is far more affected by previous negative dealings with a teacher. This could suggest poor attitude between some teachers and parents; it could also suggest lack of forums where teachers and parents can iron out their previous

misunderstandings, because where there is good communication and where parents are given a chance to point out what is affecting them, parents may not report being affected by perceived previous negative experience. In this case, perceived previous negative experience is a barrier while ironing out previous negative experience would be a promoter to parental involvement in their children's education.

Both categories of parents reported that their involvement or lack of is 'not at all' affected by perceived cultural barriers and language barriers. Pistis School is a place with people of diverse cultures. Because of this, it is likely that parents' mind are already set that they will be dealing with people of different cultures. As a result, they do not feel affected by perceived cultural differences. On language barrier, most parents speak English, which is a means of communication, except for a few who come from French speaking countries; thus, language may not really be a barrier.

No significant difference was found in the views of parents with perceived good or bad relationship with teachers in the reported effect of perceived lack of invitation from teachers and teachers' refusal of parental invitation home. The two categories of parents reported some ambivalence on the extent to which perceived lack of invitation from teachers and teachers' refusal of parental invitation home affected their involvement or lack thereof in their children's schooling. Ignorance of parental responsibilities and the responsibilities of teachers may be the reason why parents do not seem to be affected by these two perceptions. Therefore, these two can not necessarily be considered barriers or promoters of parental involvement at Pistis School.

There is a significant difference in the views of parents along type of relationship. Parents with perceived good relationship reported that their involvement in their

children's school is less affected by having a large family, while parents with perceived bad relationship are somewhat split on this. This may suggest that parents who perceive their relationship with their children's teachers as poor tend to blame their lack of involvement in school on having a large family.

Therefore, the following are the barriers to parental involvement at Pistis School: perceived bad attitude of teachers, perceived fear of criticism by parents, perceived previous negative experiences, perceived large size of families and perceived lack of time on the part of parents, particularly those with perceived bad relationship with teachers.

Conversely, promoters of parental involvement at Pistis School are: perceived good attitude of teachers, perceived openness to criticism by parents, perceived ironing out of previous negative experiences, and perceived small families from the perspective of parents with perceived bad relationship. The need to create time is thought to be a promoter of involvement by both categories of parents.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This descriptive study was an attempt to investigate the parents' opinion on parental involvement in the education of their children at Pistis School. The study started by establishing ways in which parents get involved in the education of their children at Pistis School, and then investigated barriers and promoters of parental involvement in the education of their children at Pistis School.

#### **Purpose of Study**

In an effort to investigate parents' involvement in the education of their children at Pistis School, the following research questions directed this study:

- RQ 1. In what ways are parents involved in their children's education at Pistis School?
- RQ 2. What are the barriers to parental involvement in their children's education at Pistis School?
- RQ 3. What are the promoters of parental involvement in their children's education at Pistis School?

## Significance of Study

This study was intended to provide knowledge for parents as to how they need to be involved in their children's education. In addition, this study was intended to provide valuable information to both parents and teachers that would guide them to ascertain which areas they were concentrating on and which areas they were neglecting. They would also learn what barriers and promoters exist vis a vis parental involvement as well as the present status of parental involvement in their children's education at this school.

## Research Design

No sampling was done for this research because the population was manageable. A questionnaire return-rate of 89% was obtained. The instrument that was used to collect the necessary information for this study was both closed-ended and open-ended questionnaire. The Likert Scale of Summated Ratings was used to measure the parents' opinion on different issues to do with parental involvement in the education of their children at Pistis School. The instrument was developed after examining the relevant literature on ways of parental involvement, barriers and promoters to parental involvement.

## Findings

The three research questions that the researcher attempted to answer were:

RQ 1. In what ways are parents involved in their children's education at Pistis School?

In relation to research question 1, a hypothesis was cast.

H<sub>0</sub>: 1 Differences in levels of education of parents will not significantly affect ways in which parents get involved in the education of their children at Pistis School.

Eleven levels were tested in this hypothesis and the following were the results:

- Parents with high and low levels of education generally reported providing their children with necessary resources and helping them with homework always.
- Parents with high education reported always teaching their children values which are useful at school.
- Parents with high and low levels of education reported rarely inviting teachers home, or visiting the class of their children, or doing some voluntary jobs, or taking part in curriculum development, or taking part in fundraising for the school, or using their profession to help the school.
- Parents with low education reported advising teachers less often than parents with high education.
- While slightly over half of parents in both groups reported rarely attending the teacher-parent meetings, almost half of the parents in both groups reported frequently attending teacher-parent meetings.

Therefore, both types of parents at Pistis School get involved in the education of their children in five ways: by teaching their children values which are useful in the school, advising teachers on some matters, providing their children with necessary resources, helping their children with homework and attending teacher-parent meetings.

RQ 2 What are the barriers to parental involvement at Pistis School?

RQ 3 What are the promoters of parental involvement at Pistis School?

In relation to research question 2 and 3, a hypothesis was cast.

Ho: 2 Type of relationship between teachers and parents will not significantly affect parental involvement in the education of their children at Pistis School.

Ten levels were tested in this hypothesis and these were the results:

- Parents with perceived good relationship with teachers reported that their involvement or otherwise in their children's school is far less affected by their perceived relationship with the teachers, whereas parents with perceived poor relationship seem ambivalent.
- Both categories of parents reported that their involvement or otherwise in their children's school is not affected one way or the other by their perception of the teachers' level of training, nor by perceived cultural barriers, nor by perceived language barrier between the parents and teachers, nor by perceived lack of invitation from teachers, nor by perceived refusal of parental invitation home.
- Both groups of parents reported that their involvement or lack thereof in their children's school is 'very much' affected by perceived lack of time.
- Parents with perceived good relationship reported that their involvement or lack thereof is far less affected by perceived fear of criticism from teachers.
- Parents with perceived bad relationship reported that their involvement or otherwise in their children's school is far more affected by perceived previous negative dealings with a teacher.
- Parents with perceived good relationship reported that their involvement in their children's school is less affected by perceived large size of family, while parents with perceived bad relationship are somewhat split on this.



Therefore, the following are the barriers to parental involvement at Pistis School from the perspective of parents with perceived bad relationship: perceived bad attitude of teachers, perceived fear of criticism by parents, perceived previous negative experiences, perceived large size of families and reported lack of time by parents. These are reported to inhibit involvement in their children's school.

The only barrier to parental involvement at Pistis School from the perspective of parents with perceived good relationship is their reported lack of time.

Conversely, promoters of parental involvement at Pistis School are: perceived good attitude of teachers, perceived openness to criticism by parents, perceived ironing out of previous negative experiences, and perceived small families from the perspective of parents with perceived bad relationship. The need to create time is thought to be a promoter of involvement by both categories of parents.

### Conclusion

The following conclusions can be drawn from the summarized findings given in the chapter:

1. Parents with high level of education report involvement more than parents with low level of education.
2. Both categories of parents more often get involved in activities that are home-based than in activities that are school-based.
3. The involvement or lack thereof in the education of their children is very much affected by lack of time by both groups of parents because most of the parents are also students at NEGST.

4. Perceived good relationship between parents and teachers could likely motivate parents to get involved at school and the reverse would be expected to be true.
5. There appears to be some poor attitudes and misunderstandings between parents and teachers, from the study.

### Recommendations

Since parents have shown that they participate more in activities that are home-based than those that are school-based, it is likely that the school does not open up opportunities for parents to get involved at the school. Therefore, we recommend that teachers start inviting parents to participate in activities done at school, not only teacher-parent meetings.

Parents should deliberately create time for parental involvement despite their busy schedule by voluntarily signing a covenant form with the school committing themselves to get involved in the education of their children. Perceived lack of time on the part of parents was the most common barrier to involvement regardless of type of parents.

Since perception of misunderstanding appears from the study, it is recommendable that parents and teachers meet to iron out any likely misunderstandings.

Since perceived good relationship between parents and teachers could likely motivate parents to get involved at school and the reverse would be expected to be true, we recommend that parents and teachers work towards maintaining good relationship between them to enhance the education of the children through parental involvement.

Since parents with high level of education reported involvement more than parents with low level of education, we recommend that parents with low educational

level seek education to empower them to get involved or they interact with parents with high education level for them to understand why getting involved in one's child's education is important.

#### Areas for Further Research

Other related areas that may be further examined include:

1. A study to investigate parental involvement in the education of their children at Pistis School from the teachers' perspective in order to compare the results with those of parents.
2. A similar study to investigate parental involvement in another school with full primary education since the findings in this study are representing views of parents with children in lower classes.
3. A similar study to investigate how parents who are in rural areas and are illiterate get involved in the education of children since in this study every parent was literate.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE TO PARENTS**

Dear Parent

The purpose of this study is to explore parents' opinions on parents' involvement in the education of their children at Pistis School. Your views will provide valuable information to the school that will help in improving parent's involvement in the education of their children. You are free to write or not to write your name on top of the questionnaire.

May you kindly complete the questionnaire either by ticking or writing the responses that represent your views in the spaces provided.

Part A

Indicate all applicable answers by ticking in the spaces provided.

1. Sex: Male [ ] Female [ ]
2. In what class is your child(ren)?
  - (a) Nursery [ ]
  - (b) One [ ]
  - (c) Two [ ]
  - (d) Three [ ]
  - (e) Four [ ]
3. What is your highest level of education?
  - (a) Primary level [ ]

- (b) Secondary level [ ]
- (c) Certificate level [ ]
- (d) Diploma level [ ]
- (e) First Degree level and above [ ]
- (f) Others (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many children do you have in your family?

- (a) 1 to 2 children [ ] (b) 3 to 10 children [ ]

5. Do you communicate with teachers of your child(ren)? Yes [ ] No [ ]

6. Indicate with a tick the level of overall satisfaction with the relationship you have with teachers of your child(ren) at Pistis School.

Very satisfied \_\_\_\_\_

Satisfied \_\_\_\_\_

Not satisfied \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate with a tick how often you are involved in the education of your children at Pistis through the following activities:

ACTIVITY	ALWAYS	OFTEN	NOT SURE	SOMETIMES	RARELY
7. I provide my child(ren) with necessary resources for school					
8. I teach my child(ren) some values at home which are helpful at school					



9. I help my child(ren) do home work					
10. I invite a teacher home to discuss the progress of my child(ren)					
11. I visit the class of my child(ren) to observe how the teacher is teaching					
12. I advise teachers on certain matters					
13. I attend teacher-parent meetings					
14. I volunteer to do some jobs at school					
15. I take part in the curriculum development of the school					
16. I take part in fundraising activities for the school					
17. I use my profession to help the school					
Others (specify)					

## Part B

Indicate with a tick to what extent the following may be affecting your active involvement in the education of your children at Pistis school?

ACTIVITY	Very much	To some degree	Not sure	A little bit	Not at all
18. Bad attitude of teachers					
19. Inadequate training of teachers					
20. Lack of time on my part					
21. My fear of criticism from teachers					
22. Previous negative experience with a teacher					
23. Cultural barrier					
24. Language barrier between me and the teachers					
25. Lack of invitation from teachers					
26. Teachers' refusal to come when I invite them home					

27. I have a big family to take care of					
Others (Specify)					

28. In your opinion what is the greatest barrier to your getting involved in the education of your child(ren) at Pistis School?

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29. What do you think should be done to better get you involved in the education of your child(ren) at Pistis School?



# NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

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January 26, 2007

The Headteacher  
Pistis School  
Nairobi

Dear Madam,

## **RE: RESEARCH WORK**

The bearer of this letter, Mrs. Catherine Banda is a student at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) and is doing research towards the completion of the Master of Arts in Christian Education degree. The research is on "A Study of Parent Involvement in the Education of their Children at Pistis School."

Any assistance that you can give to Mrs Banda will be highly appreciated.

Sincerely,

John Ochola, (PhD.)  
**Academic Dean**

## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

**Catherine Mkoza Banda**

<b>Education</b>	<b>1975-1985 Mponela II Primary School</b> <b>1985-1989 Likuni Girls Secondary School</b> <b>1989-1991 Mzuzu Teacher's College</b> <b>2000-2004 African Bible College</b>
<b>Summary of Qualifications</b>	<b>1985-Primary School Certificate</b> <b>1989-MSCE Certificate</b> <b>1991- Teaching Certificate</b> <b>2004- Bachelor of Arts in Biblical Studies with a minor in education.</b> <b>2007- Master of Arts in Christian Education</b>
<b>Professional Experience</b>	<b>As a class teacher</b> <b>1991-1996 Chitedze Primary School</b> <b>1996-2000 Chitedze Community Day Secondary School</b> <b>2004-2005 Bwaila Secondary School</b>
<b>Volunteer experience</b>	<b>Teaching women at the women's guild</b> <b>Teaching youths at youth clubs</b>
<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Married</b>
<b>Number of children</b>	<b>Two</b>