A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF PRINCIPALS’, TEACHERS’, AND PARENTS’ PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THEIR RESPECTIVE ROLES IN CHILDREN’S EDUCATION AT TWO JAMAICAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS – ONE RURAL AND ONE URBAN

A Dissertation Submitted to The Temple University Graduate Board

In partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

To educate a child at any institution, three key stakeholders are required: the principal, the teacher and the parent. Even though this phenomenon is de facto (real), there appears to be a perennial controversy among principals, teachers and parents in rural and urban schools at the primary level in Jamaica. This controversy normally occurs when students perform poorly on the Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT) which is now the Primary Exist Profile (PEP) national exam. This dilemma inevitably leads to the controversial question of “who is ultimately responsible to ensure that a child gets quality education?”

Thus, through the lens of the principals, teachers and parents of two Jamaican primary schools (one rural and one urban), this qualitative (narrative) multi-site study investigated the principals, teachers and parents perceptions about their respective roles in children’s education at these two un-named schools in the parish of Clarendon, Jamaica (a rural and an urban school).

Fifty respondents (combined sample size) from both rural and urban schools participated in the study - 13 from the rural school and 37 from the urban school. The primary instruments that were used to collect the data for this study were observation and semi-structured interviews in addition to a tape recorder.

The findings of the study revealed that whilst there are major disagreements among the principals, teachers and parents, regarding their respective roles in relation to who is responsible to ensure that the child gets quality education at both schools; there are also agreements among stakeholders concerning their respective roles. Thus, the findings of the study which are paramount to both institutions could serve as benchmarks.
to improve the principal-teacher-parent-communication, parental involvement, and stakeholder partnership, in that, the results of the study also revealed major stakeholder-weaknesses at both institutions in these quintessential areas. Hence, all stakeholders need to work together collaboratively to provide quality education for the children who attend these schools.

This study should be impactful, not only to the stakeholders at both primary schools, but also to other stakeholders and policymakers at the primary level.

The implications that the study has examined based on the findings are: implications for further research and practice; implications for the Ministry of Education (MOE); implications for school administrators/educational leaders; implications for teacher education in teachers’ colleges and universities (Jamaican context); and implications for in-service teachers and parents at both schools.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My theological philosophies have always been “I can do all things through Christ…” (Phil. 4:13). And “He (The Lord Jesus Christ) who has begun a good work in you is able to accomplish it” (Phil.1: 6). Thanks to the Omnipotent for empowering me to accomplish such faith testing and challenging dissertation. It was truly a long doctoral journey – a marathon indeed, but without ambiguity, I accomplished it through the Lord Jesus Christ who strengthened me.

A number of individuals motivated me on this journey when I felt like giving up. Hence, this great achievement is not only for me, but for all those persons who stood by me to the end. To you, I say thanks! From a depth of gratitude and generosity, I express my unreserved indebtedness and kindness to my dissertation chair, Professor Joseph DuCette, Professor of Higher Education and Educational Psychology (professor extraordinaire). Without your aptness, prudence, sagacity, shrewdness, astuteness, intellectual instructions and guidance, this dissertation would not have been completed. On the other hand, it would have been remised of me not to thank the other members/supervisors of my doctoral committee whose scholasticism has contributed immensely to the overall shaping of this doctoral project; these distinguish supervisors are: Professor. Judith Stull, Department of Policy, Organizational, and Leadership Studies, and Professor Michael Smith, Department of Teaching and Learning.

My deepest appreciation and thanks to all rural and urban participants at both schools who participated voluntarily in the study without being coerced during their responses to questions. Your invaluable time and effort helped to make this study what it has been. Thanks for participating.
To my conspicuous and beloved wife, Ann Marie (Cass) whose understanding, maturity, motivation and consistent support propelled me along the journey which sometimes seemed to be infinite. Thank you, Cass. Without your indefatigable support I would not have been able to make it to the end. And to my four children, Althea, Canute (Jr.), Andre, and Rodane (Ro Ro); thanks for your support. Thanks to my sisters: Eunice, and Monica who supported me economically and socially whilst I was in the United States. To Lisa (niece), thank you, having purchased a new computer for me when I needed it most to complete my post-graduate work. Thanks also to Sonia (niece) who consistently sought to find out whether the completion of my dissertation was near; and to Jackie (niece) whose advisement was quintessential at the initial stage of my dissertation, thanks. And how could I forget my parents: Edward Sylvanus (my dad – deceased), and Lunez (my mom – deceased). One of the findings of this research revealed that the child’s first teacher is his or her parents. Hence, I corroborate with this finding, because you (my mom and dad) were indeed my first teachers. Thanks, Mom and Dad even in death. Thanks to Mrs. Angella Morgan (Mom) (my mother-in-law) who provided those sumptuous meals when I was hungry. To Mrs. Violet McKenzie (my sister-in-law) and Linus (my brother) who assisted me holistically whilst I was in the United States. Thanks.

Finally, and quintessentially, a big thank you to the Logos Church of Jesus Christ church family. Your petitions to God on my behalf have certainly given me the victory; hence, God came, God stood, and God marched (Habakkuk Chaps. 1-3). Thanks, again to all those who supported me on this doctoral journey. God Bless! Kudos!
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Without ambiguity, principals, teachers, and parents do have a role to play in the academic lives of children (Kolambe, 2016). Hence, a study conducted by Allen (1997) showed that teachers and parents have high expectations for the academic achievement of children. There is also a large body of research that showed that children have better academic, behavioral and social outcomes when parents work in collaboration with schools (Epstein, 1995; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jeynes, 2003). Thus, Graue (1999) further argued that both educators (principals and teachers) and parents have a massive role to play in children’s academic achievement and the supportive systems put in place to make such an academic achievement a reality.

Thus, based on the researcher’s expertise, knowledge, and experience in the classroom for approximately thirty years, principal-teacher-parent involvement is fundamental in the life of a child if he/she is going to be developed academically, and by extension intellectually. What may not be clear in the minds of many persons, however, is how principals, teachers and parents may agree or differ in terms of their perceptions about their respective roles (roles of principals, teachers and parents) in relation to the education of children. In other words, how do their respective roles similar or different? Or, what should each group of stakeholders do similarly or differently to empower a child academically? This study, therefore, sought to find answers to this and other relevant questions associated with this study.

Organization of the Study

To organize the study chronologically, its content is divided into several sections. The abstract gives an overview of background information, statement of the problem, research
question, methodological procedures of how the study was conducted, summary of the findings/results, conclusion, impact, and the implications of the study.

The introduction of the study in Chapter 1 introduces the reader to how the study is organized, background and context of the study, statement of the problem, rationale for the research, rationale for using a rural school and an urban school, purpose of the study, research questions, definition of terms, delimitations and limitations, and the significance of the study.

The literature review in Chapter 2 is organized as follows: an introduction, the organization of the literature, relevance of the literature for the research topic; theoretical framework, overview of the role of the principal, teacher and parent; disparities between rural and urban principals; rural and urban parents; rural and urban students; a keen look at the rural and urban contexts of Jamaican schools; communication problems that exist amongst major stakeholders (principals, teachers, parents) in the field of education; parent - teacher - student benefits derived from healthy parent-teacher collaboration; outcome of the study and its relation to theory and literature; and a summary of the literature.

Then, there is a chronological setting of the methodology and procedures in Chapter 3 that the study employed. There is an overview of this chapter, the rationale for a qualitative design, the researcher’s positionality: examples: researcher’s interest in the phenomenon investigated, background and experience in conducting the study, researcher’s role in data collection and analysis; significant effects the researcher may have had on the data, the population and sample; rationale for data collection strategies; data collection, informants, pilot-testing, data analysis, methods of verification (Creswell, 2009), validity, reliability, research procedures, administration procedures, ethical and moral consideration (Leacock, Warrican, & Rose, 2009), and privacy and confidentiality, and summary.
Chapter 4 has an introduction, schools’ characteristics, characteristics of respondence, analysis and presentation of data; and the summary of the results. Ultimately, the components of chapter 5 are: a preamble, the results of the study viewed through the lens of the research questions; implications for implementations, and the conclusion

Background and Context of the Study

McCracken and Barcinas (1991) argued that huge disparities were found between urban and rural school settings. According to these researchers, urban schools were larger and had more administrators, teachers, support staff and financial backing in comparison to rural schools that were not blessed with such opportunities. Urban schools provided more opportunities for students by offering more courses and extra-curricular activities which helped the students not only to develop academically, but holistically. These schools, in contrast to rural schools, were also more costly to run on a per-pupil expenditure basis.

Since rural schools are smaller demographically than urban schools there is a smaller number of teachers, even though some rural teachers often have higher degrees than some urban teachers. This small size, however, may have a positive effect since teachers can provide more individual attention to students; there is a smaller pupil-teacher ratio in terms of class sizes, and the learning environment may be more accommodating, conducive to learning, comfortable and less stressful and cumbersome (Ballou & Podgursky, n.d.)

The rural school that was studied in this research is located in the upper hills of Clarendon, Jamaica. Its present population is 34 students which is far below the total number of students it was built to accommodate (300 students). This has resulted in the school being overstaffed since the national standardized pupil-teacher ratio is 35 students to one teacher at the primary level (Hall & Turner, 2010); yet, the pupil-teacher ratio at this school is 6.8 students to
one teacher. This over staffing has resulted because of depopulation, which is a result of persons in the community migrating with their children to reside in the city to seek a better livelihood. In addition, some parents have opted to send their children to other schools which they perceive to be better. This dilemma has put the academic staff in a serious position. Consequently, the teachers at this school have two choices to make in resolving the problem of overstaffing: voluntary relocation to other schools which the Ministry of Education has been encouraging teachers to do or applying to other schools where clear teaching vacancies exist.

In the community, the main source of survival that parents rely on to send their children to school is micro-farming. This is sometimes difficult because of natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes, bushfires or droughts. Hence, parents find it very difficult to send their children to school consistently, as a result of their low socio-economic status, which results in a high level of student absenteeism.

The urban school that was studied is also located in the parish of Clarendon, Jamaica, but it is located in one of the main urban towns. This school operates on a shift system (morning and afternoon shifts), because of its large population size (1,020) which makes it impossible to accommodate its present student population (1,020) on one shift. However, the pupil-teacher ratio at this school which is one teacher to 24.9 students is adequate. This number is just 10.1 students short of the Ministry of Education national standardized ratio which is 35 students to one teacher at the primary level. The parents’ main sources of survival are multifaceted: for example, some parents who send their children to this school are lawyers, health professionals, teachers, businessmen and women, itinerants, entrepreneurs, ministers of religion, police officers, soldiers and other secular and para-professionals. These parents whose socio-economic
background is better, do not experience such financial challenges as the parents whose children attend the rural school. Thus, the level of student absenteeism at this school is low.

The two different geographical locations of these schools were deliberately selected in order to find out whether their geographical locations and cultures have anything to do with how stakeholders think about their respective roles, in relation to children’s education at both schools, that is, whether their perceptions are different or similar. In other words, even though rural and urban schools have the same common curriculum, it was important to know if the perceptions of stakeholders (principals, teachers and parents) associated with these two schools differ in relation to educating a child. As a consequence, the principals, teachers and parents connected to both rural and urban schools were studied.

Statement of the Problem

Healthy communication between the school and the home can build a good partnership among principals, teachers and parents, laying a solid foundation for students’ academic development and their future success (American Federation of Teachers, 2007). “When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school, but throughout life” (Henderson & Berla, 1994, p. 1). A lack of good communication, on the other hand, may cultivate a divide among principals, teachers and parents, preventing them from reaching a consensus on fundamental educational issues pertaining to the academic success of students.

From my perspective, to educate a child is a tripartite effort (principal, teacher and parent). Yet, there is always a perennial controversy between teachers (including principals) and parents, especially in rural and urban primary schools, when the Grade Six Achievement Test (now the Primary Exit Profile – PEP) national results are released by the Ministry of Education.
Thus, there may be some principals, teachers and parents who may hold different perspectives on the issue of empowering the child to get a sound education. As a consequence, this study investigated these important stakeholders’ perceptions in children’s education about their respective roles in educating the children who attend these two primary schools in the parish of Clarendon, Jamaica, West Indies.

**Rationale for Conducting This Research**

The rationale for investigating the principals’, teachers’, and parents’ perceptions about their respective roles in children’s education at both rural and urban schools can be justified because of the ongoing debate on the issues of the role of stakeholders in primary education; and who is responsible to ensure that the child gets quality education? However, there appears to be more oral debates on this subject than documentation through research. Having done a thorough literature search, I found studies that have some connection to this study, but their context and content are by and large divergent. Another reason why this research was pursued was to provide new data in this area of study and to add to the existing literature if such literature exists.

This ongoing debate needs to be substantiated by empirical research so that principals, teachers and parents can be clear on what exactly their roles should be in educating children whom they have to interact with daily. As a result, it was my intention to conduct this research in order to make a significant contribution to the archives of teacher and parental education.

**Rationale for Using Two Different Schools - a Rural School and an Urban School**

In relation to the role of the principals’, teachers’, and parents’ regarding children’s education, two different schools were selected from two different geographical locations (rural and urban). Consequently, does the principal of a rural school have the same view of his or her role as the principal of an urban school? Are there differences between teachers in a rural and
urban school in relation to how a child should be educated based on their respective roles? Are there disparities between parents in a rural and urban school setting in relation to their children’s education? Do these participants perceive what their roles are and what the literature says they should be? Do they agree with each other on these roles? Are their views different in different settings?

These and other questions, the dissertation was designed to explore. In other words, even though rural and urban schools are engaged in the same curriculum and extracurricular activities, it is essential to know their divergent views on the issue. Consequently, these two schools were juxtaposed throughout the study in order to find authentic data on the research topic.

**Purpose of the Study**

The principal who is the chief member of the triangular paradigmatic team supervises the teacher who teaches the children sent to them by their parents. These three individuals are quintessential in the lives of children’s academic, intellectual and social developments.

As a result, the purpose of this study was to investigate the principals’, teachers’, and parents’ perceptions about their respective roles in children’s education at two primary schools (one rural and one urban) in the parish of Clarendon. Extensive researches were done on the roles of principals, teachers and parents, but there seems to be no formal researches done on the present research topic, obviously, there is a gap to be filled in the literature.
Research Questions

The research question in any research is of real significance in terms of the direction the research takes. Hence, what a research question does is to guide the research into a particular path focusing on the specific phenomenon that is being investigated.

In this study, the research questions were structured to organize the research in two fundamental ways. Demographically, the questions were drafted to access vital information on the backgrounds of the principals, teachers and parents which were important components of the questionnaire. In addition, the questions were designed to decipher whether the principals, teachers and parents of both schools (rural and urban) had significant differences as well as similarities in their perceptions about their respective roles regarding the education of children. Hence, the primary research questions that were addressed in this study were:

1. How do principals, teachers, and parents perceive their respective roles in relation to the education of children at two Jamaican schools – one rural and one urban?

2. To what extent do the perceptions of principals, teachers and parents differ in regard to their respective roles in relation to children accessing quality education at two Jamaican schools – one rural and one urban?

Definition of Terms

Terms whose definitions for the purposes of this research necessitate clarification are as follows:

- Parental Involvement – Parental involvement is the amount of participation a parent has in a child’s schooling and in a child’s life (Ireland, 2014).

- Triangular Paradigm – In this context the term triangular paradigm means that the child’s education or academic success is centered around three variables: the principal, the
teacher and the parent. For the child to be successful academically, all three variables must play their respective roles equally in the triangular model.

- Barriers – These are obstacles or impediments that limit parents from participating in their children’s education.
- NCLB – This is the No Child Left Behind Act; the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1955.
- Administrator/principal – According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (U.S. Department of Labor, December 17, 2015), “Elementary, middle, and high school principals manage all operations including daily school activities. They coordinate curricula, oversee teachers and other staff, and provide a safe and productive learning environment for students.” In the field of education, the word “administrator” is sometimes used to denote “principal” in that both a principal or an administrator executes similar functions in a school or institution.

**Delimitations and Limitations of This Study**

Simon and Goes (2013) informed us that delimitations are variables that the researcher is able to control in a research; whilst limitations are variables that the researcher is not able to control. In other words, the delimitations in a research are controllable; whereas the limitations are uncontrollable.

The study was delimited in several ways and was not organized to facilitate generalization. The sample of this study was delimited to two primary schools selected from a rural area and an urban area in the Parish of Clarendon, Jamaica, West Indies. As a matter of logistics, the two schools chosen were delimited to Region Six of the Ministry of Education which covers the parishes of St. Catherine and Clarendon. Generalization in any shape or form,
beyond these two schools studied, was not the intent of this research. Additionally, the inclination to draw broad assumptions/conclusions about the principals’, teachers’, and parents’ perceptions in children’s education about their respective roles in educating children at both schools was not contemplated nor compromised throughout the research process.

A number of limitations surfaced during the research process. Firstly, the sample of the study was probably small and restricted. Only one rural school and an urban school were selected and used in the study. Furthermore, only 50 participants together from both schools were interviewed. If a larger population sample was used covering more rural and urban schools, this could probably produce a more credible data finding. As a consequence, this limitation made it impossible to generalize the data findings to represent other schools in other geographical locations. Nevertheless, it was not the intention of the researcher to make generalizations beyond the rural and urban schools that were studied. According to Heath and Street (2008), qualitative data do not essentially seek to make broad statements, but rather, produce credible narratives of a definite construct in order to apprehend it.

Second, the literature in the field of education appears to be limited on this research topic. There is certainly a wide gap in the literature to be filled specifically in the area of “principals’, teachers’, and parents’ perceptions in children’s education about their respective roles in a rural and an urban school.

And third, even though a specific time was planned for some parents to come to both sites to be interviewed, a number of them did not turn up; hence, the researcher had to take the interviewing process to their homes, and on a few occasions rescheduled the interviews for both rural and urban parents to visit both schools to be interviewed.
**Significance of the Study**

The findings of this research may be of great significance not only to the stakeholders (principals, teachers and parents) of both primary schools where this study was executed, but also to primary education researchers, policymakers and other primary schools that offer the same curriculum. These stakeholders in primary education could use the findings of this study to better understand the distinct role of each stakeholder group. As partners in primary education this catalyst or mechanism could probably minimize the misunderstandings that may exist amongst stakeholders, as a result of the respective role each stakeholder has to play in proving quality education for the children at both schools.

The findings may even further help stakeholders to work in the spirit of reciprocity to develop and implement intervention programs to empower themselves to function in their respective roles effectively. It may also provide an insight of the understanding of principals, teachers and parents in regard to effective pedagogical and parental involvement practices, fundamental for enhancing students’ academic development. Based on the invaluable findings on the lack of parental involvement, and the strategies to surmount this egregious parental syndrome, these schools could be provided with effective strategies for meeting parental involvement requirements that are found in this study.

Finally, the literature review in chapter 2 is rich on strategies to improve principal-teacher-parent-communication relationship and stakeholder-partnership. Again, this invaluable literature can provide strategies to improve wholesome communication and partnership among the principals, teachers and parents at both institutions. This, over a period of time could resuscitate, foster, and improve effective parent-teacher-communication relationship and stakeholder-partnership to maximize students’ academic success at these institutions.
The findings will also impart and furnish information needed to empower researchers in the field of education, seeking to comprehend the detractors that spell bound and rob students of their role in the triangular model that leads to academic success. Finally, the results of this study will certainly help educational leaders, teachers/educators, and parents working in collaboration and in the spirit of reciprocity to develop and implement intervention programs to help students to understand their role in the triangular paradigm of academic achievement and success. The findings will also impart and furnish information needed to empower researchers in the field of education seeking to comprehend the detractors that spell bound and rob students of their role in the triangular model that leads to academic success. Finally, the results of this study will certainly help educational leaders, teachers/educators, and parents working in collaboration and in the spirit of reciprocity to develop and implement intervention programs to help students to understand their role in the triangular paradigm of academic achievement and success. The findings will also impart and furnish information needed to empower researchers in the field of education, seeking to comprehend the detractors that spell bound and rob students of their role in the triangular model that leads to academic success. Finally, the results of this study will certainly help educational leaders, teachers/educators, and parents working in collaboration and in the spirit of reciprocity to develop and implement intervention programs to help students to understand their role in the triangular paradigm of academic achievement
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Chapter two of the study was designed to review the literature in relation to the role of principals, teachers, and parents; disparities between the role of rural and urban principals, teachers and parents; the teacher - parent involvement relationship; and communication problems between parents and teachers; the benefits parents, teachers and students derived from parent-teacher communication relationship; the Jamaican context of Rural and Urban schools; and the study’s outcome as far as the education of children is concerned. The review of the literature in this chapter was structured in accordance with the main phenomenon that guides the study. Hence, of real importance is the theoretical base/ framework of the social theory of answerability which guides this research project.

Organization of the Literature

For a better chronicle and sequence of the literature review, the above broad themes are further broken down into sub-themes for a clearer presentation and organization of the literature. Thus, Chapter 2 is further organized as follows: (a) Introduction (b) Organization of the Literature (c) Theoretical Base/Framework of the study (d) The Role of the Principal (e) The Role of Teachers (f) The Role of Parents (g) Rural and Urban Parents (h) Rural and Urban Students (i) Parent-Teacher-Communication (j) Parents, Teachers and Students Benefit from Parent-Teacher-Communication-Partnership (k) The Jamaican Context of Rural and Urban Schools (l) and (m) a Summary
Why This Particular Literature is Relevant for the Research Topic

The appropriateness of the literature for this research topic is that it deals with the important variables that this study sought to investigate such as the fundamental roles of three key stakeholders and their responsibilities in relation to children’s education; these stakeholders are: the principal, teacher and parent. Consequently, the relevance of this particular literature which creates a platform and literary base for this research topic, is that, the literature review throughout its content sets out vividly, that, in order for a child to get quality education, three major stakeholders must be involved in the child’s academic life – the principal, teacher and parent (Allen, 1997; Epstein, 1995; Graue, 1999; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jeynes, 2003; Kolambe, 2016). Those who read the literature will better understand that education for children is a partnership among stakeholders and that each stakeholder has a responsibility to perform his/her individual role, so that, the child can access quality education which every child deserves.

Theoretical Framework: Bakhtin’s Social Theory Defined and its Appropriateness to the Study

Bakhtin’s (1981; 1986; 1990) Social Theory of Answerability, as cited in Graue (1999), is the theoretical framework chosen for this study, and is the theory which states that “one is answerable (answerability) to one’s duty that one is responsible to do, and that one should not expect another person to perform such a duty that one is responsibility to do.” Answerability, according to Graue can be translated to mean “responsibility.” Graue, in further discussion of this theory tells us that Bakhtin’s theory of Answerability is “non-transferable” in the context of “you cannot expect anyone to do what is yours to do.” She used this social theory in her research work to demonstrate the kind of stakeholder-partnership that should exist among stakeholders in education – each stakeholder executing his/her responsibility/role to enable the child to pursue
academic progress/excellence on his/her own. This kind of partner-relationship, according to Graue should exist between two social institutions – school and home.

Linking Bakhtin’s social theory to this study was deliberately done because of its appropriateness and relevance. For unless principals, teachers and parents are cognizant of their individual duties/roles/responsibilities (in educating children), principals, teachers and parents may continue to be divided on the issue of who is responsible to ensure that the child gets quality education.

As a consequence, this theory was the primary theoretical lens through which the data were collected on the perceptions of principals; teachers and parents, in regard to their respective duties/roles/responsibilities in relation to children’s education were viewed, interpreted and analyzed. This study (guided by this theoretical framework) may help stakeholders (especially in primary education) to better understand how principals, teachers and parents perceive their individual duties/roles/responsibilities in relation to children’s education.

The theory of Answerability, postulated by Bakhtin is the theory that provides a theoretical framework for principal-teacher-parent-responsibilities/roles and relationships, which indicate to us the acts of individual duty, role or responsibility, and who is responsible for executing the specified actions that are required (Graue, 1999). As was previously mentioned, the relevance of this theory for this research is a good fit, in that, the research questions that were formulated focused primarily on the duties/roles/responsibilities of the three cohorts of different stakeholders (principals, teachers and parents), and were formulated carefully in order to get the kind of authentic data that were sought from stakeholder-participants.

The research question was drafted to pull from each group of participants their individual duties/roles/responsibilities in ensuring that the children who attended these two schools get
quality education, and having known their respective duties, roles or responsibilities, try to execute them, which is the responsibility of each of the different individual groups of stakeholders. Unless each group of stakeholders executes their responsibilities, the teacher-parent-relationship-partnership may fail; and the children may ultimately fail academically, since education is a collaborative effort. If any of the three stakeholder groups shirks their duty/role/responsibility, this may prevent the child from acquiring the kind of quality education he/she deserves. Thus, Bakhtins’ theoretical framework/theory of Answerability (responsibility/duty/role) is the most relevant and appropriate theory for this study.

Finally, Bakhtin’s social theory and the findings of this study may be used as points of reference to help educational leaders, policymakers, teachers and parents to develop and implement intervention programs to help stakeholders (including students) understand their role in the business of education.

The Role of the Principal

In this section the literature which covers the role of the principal is presented under five sub-themes: the importance of the principal for students’ academic success; building a school climate that is accommodating to parents; strategies the principal can utilize to get parents involved in the school; disparities between the roles of rural and urban principals; and rural principals need additional training and more resources. Broadly speaking, the principal’s role in enhancing students’ academic achievement in the 21st century is multi-faceted, complexed and diverse (Gardner, 2008). Hence, the role of the school principal covers a wide range of functionalities such as:

- educational administration and school leadership
- curriculum planning and development
• pedagogy and students’ learning
• School and classroom supervision
• teacher professional development
• learning theories and classroom practices
• the evaluation of teachers
• school improvement planning
• security and safety planning
• values and attitudes building
• spirituality education
• the welfare of students and discipline
• parent teacher association meetings and seminars
• good rapport with the outer and inner communities
• reporting to organizations
• financial planning, budgeting, and school finances
• the management and security of the school’s physical plant and property
• the mitigation of risks
• conflict/litigation management
• staff welfare and industrial relations
• customization and marketization of the school to parents who are the school’s valued clients
• selection of staff and students
• deployment and indirect dismissal of the academic, administrative and ancillary staffs through the board of governors
• strategic planning and formulation of vision and mission statements
• outdoor education
• school governance
• reporting to statutory authorities
• student council affairs
• attending educational workshops, symposia and seminars; and the list goes on (Collier, 2012).

All of these functionalities which the principal should perform directly or indirectly are all inter-connected to the principal’s role, having the academic performance of all students at the center. Apart from these roles, the principal is also expected to be a prominent member of the community and civic organizations, a visible attendee at evening school, cultural and extra-curricular activities, and an observer of the school’s Saturday sport activities. Ultimately, the principal is also expected in many settings: to be in church on Sunday or Saturday; attend weddings when invited; attending and sometimes participating in funerals; performing the duty of guest speaker whilst simultaneously being a model husband and father, and an active citizen in his community (Collier, 2012).

The Importance of the Principal for Students’ Academic Success

Irrespective of the broad functionalities the principal has to perform, there are some important, specific, student-centered academic functions which are the main tasks of the principal, and are more closely aligned to his role as far as the academic success of students is concerned. These important, specific, student-centered academic functions/roles which the principal is expected to perform are as follows:
A school principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

A school principal promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

A school principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

A school principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring the management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

A school principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
A school principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

Effective principals actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for student and school success.

Effective principals use multiple sources of data as diagnostic tools to assess, identify and apply instructional improvement to enhance students’ academic achievement.

Effective principals create a culture of continuous learning for adults tied to student learning and other school goals.

Effective principals demand content and instruction that ensure student achievement of agreed-upon academic standards.

Effective principals set high expectations and standards for the academic and social development of all students and the performance of adults.

Effective principals lead schools in a way that places student learning at the centre (Principal as Instructional Leader, 2008, p. i).

Thus, the principal who functions in multiple roles plays, perhaps, the most fundamental role in the institution, as regard to advancing parental involvement, and the academic success of students. The principal, therefore, sets the tone for the school, creates an environment for
teamwork between partners, and facilitates both teachers and parents in acquiring the skills to work together effectively and collaboratively for the academic success of students (Principals – Parents Involvement Center, 2012).

Consequently, the research of Bruggencate, Luyten, Scheerens and Sleegers (as cited in Spicer, 2016) points out that there are several components in leadership which are controversial. As a result, principals need to be competent enough to navigate through these components, strike an equilibrium among them, while simultaneously being cognizant of the things that influence a school’s climate. This is important so that the school he or she leads can measure up to the goals set, and take full advantage of outcomes (Leithwood & Sun; Bruggencate, Luyten, Scheerens, & Sleegers (as cited in Spicer, 2016 ).

Based on these broad functionalities, principals are seen as generalists, being able to execute several functions simultaneously, while having students under their wings as their main function. Hence, when schools excel academically principals get the praise; when schools underperform academically they get the blame. Why? In every educational institution, the principal is the chief accounting officer; all the academic, pedagogical, administrative, management, professional, disciplinary and regulatory arrows point to him/her. Students are sent to school to learn. Thus, Horace Levy, former director of education, Ministry of Education, Region 6, St. Catherine, Jamaica, puts it bluntly when he says, “School is all about children learning” (H. Levy, Personal Communication, 2008). This points to the great and difficult task the principal faces if learning is not taking place at the school that he or she leads being the instructional leader. Hence, in the Jamaican culture, when students do not learn the principal’s leadership is brought into serious questioning, even though teachers and parents, on the whole, have an equal contribution to make to children’s academic success.
Building a School Climate that is Accommodating to Parents

In my opinion, if principals, teachers and parents are going to agree on how a child is to be educated, then a parent-friendly school climate is paramount for such a dialogue. Hence, principals of institutions are not ordinary leaders. They are like a captain of a ship; they are expected to steer the ship in the right direction irrespective of the weather.

In the same vein, Epsteins’ and Rodrigeuez – Jansorns’ work (as cited in Rapp & Duncan, 2011) pointed out that the dynamics in building a school climate that is pleasing and friendly to parents rest on the principal. According to these researchers, the principal needs to cultivate a focal point which centers on that kind of leadership that is collectively aligned, democratically participatory, collaboratively team oriented, and holistically interconnected. The principal, therefore, has a mammoth task as head of the school to initiate this kind of leadership model. Consequently, it is the responsibility of the principal to create the climate and opportunities for different perspectives, ideas, views, and varied opinions to be heard and shared (Stelmach & Preston as cited in Rapp & Duncan, 2011). It is, therefore, undemocratic to exclude parents from the decision-making process which was a practice in the past. Thus, in the 21st century and beyond, parents or guardians should be intrinsically participating in the decision-making process that influences the lives of their children. Parents should, therefore, see good academic and behavioural results in their children, because of their own participation, as long as an atmosphere of professionalism, mutual understanding, respect, collaboration and cohesiveness is established between the parent and the teacher (Gordon & Seashore –Luo as cited in Rapp & Duncan, 2011).

It is, however, the role of the principal to put in place a network that is responsive to time and other socio-economic issues that confront parents and students from time to time. This
would certainly cultivate a caring and parent-friendly school climate that is conducive to parents. Thus, if principals and teachers have a desire that the concerns of all parents be heard then a meaningful time schedule must be initiated for ongoing dialogue. Parent - teacher symposia and conferences must be planned in a creative and flexible manner (Shedlin, 2004). Paynes (2006) opined that it would be very good if the principal and staff create multiple opportunities for parents to attend functions at the school with provision made for transport, child-care and food.

As a result, principals should be responsive to the unique socio-economic needs of parents and find ways in connection to school and community opportunities to resolve those needs (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007; Paynes, 2006; Van Velsor & Orozco, 2007). Howards (2007) and Paynes (2006) argued that it is important that principals, on the first occasion, communicate the significance of parental participation and integrate professional development programs for staff members which includes working with parents, increasing cultural competencies, and decreasing disparities.

**Strategies the Principal can utilize to get Parents Involved in the School**

A principal should be wise in order to get parents involved in the school that he or she leads; such a parental involvement has to be democratic, egalitarian, respectful, collaborative, cohesive, warm, collegial and welcoming. Thus, Gordon and Seashore – Louis (2009) said that principals who are efficient should always be equipped to delegate authority to parents whilst at the same time being able to guide the process. According to research, this process of shared decision making with parents may bring about better decision-making and create a sense of ownership and responsibility for the outcomes of those decisions that are shared (Leithwoods, Jantzis & Stainbachs, 1999). As a consequence, Stelmach and Preston (2008) reported that parents are now asked to participate in the process of decision-making in education which was once the sole
responsibility of teachers and other concerned professionals in education. In permitting this democratic right, parents and non-professionals are now integrally involved in the decision-making process of school reform, which empowers their rightful place in the institution (Stelmachs & Prestons, 2008).

Hendersons et al. (2007) also posited that to get parents involved in the school to form a formidable partnership of parental democratic practice, the following mechanisms must be put in place by the principal who leads the institution: the first of these is allowing parents to exercise their democratic right and empowering them to get involved in an equitable system that functions and benefits all stakeholders, giving their own perspectives on issues of importance. According to Hendersons et al. (2007), the opinion of parents should be heard on a fundamental topic such as policy, which governs the cultural, spiritual, moral, social, economic, academic and intellectual development of their children. Fiscal management, finance and budgeting, the development of the curriculum, and the safety of students are also important issues on which parents should be given the opportunity to voice their opinion. Second, being cognizant of the expectation of the school’s community (such as its values, attitude, culture and norms) is critical.

A paradigm of parental involvement is also postulated by Hoover – Dempsey, Sandler, Green and Walker (2007). They explained that the principal, as educational leader of the school, is the foremost team player and partner with parents. According to these researchers, the model consists of three concepts: the first being motivational beliefs – this is “how” and “what” parents perceive to be their role and responsibilities in education. Thus, the decisions that parents make are closely linked to how likely they believe that their involvement will impact outcomes that are positive. Furthermore, the principal, at all times, should try to create roles that are centered on active participation in the school’s surrounding. These researchers agree that in our
contemporary school system, the habit of listening to parents’ input alone will not get the job done; the principal, who is the head of the institution, needs to go the extra mile by follow up on parents’ input.

Hoover – Dempsey, Sandler, Green and Walker (2007) went on to say that school invitation is another concept that principal can use to get parents to work in partnership with the school. They insisted that as educational leaders and visionaries, it is the responsibility of principals to request of teachers the delivery of specific invitations to parents. Hence, principals should encourage and motivate teachers to communicate with parents about interventions, achievements, and home-based activities to foster and advance school learning. According to these researchers child invitations are influential and dynamic tools to boost parental involvement. When parents receive invitations from their children to engage in school activities or educational conversation, this can be an excellent catalyst and strategy to enhance their involvement in the holistic life of the school. The final strategy or concept that the principal can utilize to get parents fully integrated in the operation of the school is life context variables – this is having knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of parents in order to provide opportunities for them so that they can participate where they feel most comfortable, in benefitting the school in the most influential, productive, effective and impactful way (Hoover – Dempsey, Sandler, Green and Walker, 2007)

Disparities Between the Roles of Rural and Urban Principals

While most researchers in the literature review agreed and pointed out the expected roles of principals (rural and urban), the literature also shows fundamental differences in role execution, in terms of their geographical context, space, location or the country from which they operate. When comparing rural and urban school principals, it is discovered that rural school
principals in some countries, metaphorically speaking, wear many more hats than urban
principals. One of such countries is Jamaica (Miller, 2015). Specifically, rural principals on a
regular basis take on more roles, such as: classroom teacher, counsellor, instructional specialist,
bursar, assessment leader, care giver, parent leader, social worker, plant manager, change agent,
and active community volunteer. Many of these roles are not executed by urban principals
(Canales, Tejeda-Delgado, & Slate, 2008; Cortez-Jiminez, 2012; Wildy, 2004; Masumoto &
Browne-Welty, 2009; Renihan & Noonan, 2012; Starr & White, 2009), according to other
studies in reference to rural principals in other countries who have been experiencing the same
scenario as rural principals in Jamaica.

Research has also shown that rural school principals are sometimes assigned to more than
one school, irrespective of the many different hats they wear, which is not so in an urban school
setting (Clarke & Stevens, 2006; Howley, Howley, Henrickson, Belcher, & Howley, 2012;
Thompson, 2011). While urban principals may not struggle with role execution, rural principals
struggle to execute their full-time administrative roles, while shouldering heavy pedagogical
loads, sometimes across multi-grades (Clarke, Stevens, & Wildy, 2006; Cortez-Jiminez, 2012;
Starr & White, 2009; Taole, 2013). These practices are also evident in Jamaica in rural schools
and absent in urban schools (Miller, 2015). According to Bard, Gardener, and Wieland (2005),
rural principals are more immersed in areas of challenges in education but are less equipped with
administrative, pedagogical and ancillary supports. These include personnel such as vice-
principals, guidance counselors, deans of disciplines, senior teachers, administrative staff
members, receptionists, curriculum specialists, grade supervisors, reading specialists, special
education specialists, and ancillary staff members. This is in contrast to most urban school
districts that enjoy all of the above human resources. On the other hand, while principals of
urban schools often have the capacity of persons to delegate and share leadership, administrative, and managerial tasks, this choice is not commonly accorded to rural school principals (IEL, 2005; Starr & White, 2009).

Thus, a plethora of research projects has shown that there are many different reasons why this opportunity or choice is not accorded to rural principals as urban principals, example: geographical-isolation, high expectations from parents, limited and restricted budgets, limited salaries, and the recruitment and retention of quality rural principals that pose serious challenges commonly encountered by many rural school districts (Arnold et al., 2005; Browne-Ferrigno & Maynard, 2005; Fusarelli & Militello, 2012; IEL, 2005; Lock et al., 2012; Lowe, 2006; Miller, 2004; Novak, Green, & Gottschall, 2009; Partlow & Ridenour, 2008; Wallin, 2009; Wildy & Clarke, 2005).

It should be further noted that rural school principals are not only experiencing heavy and diverse workloads. These rural school principals are often over-worked even to the point, on some occasions, of being burnt out (IEL, 2005). This critical point worsens leadership succession problems since teachers who are aspiring to become principals do not desire the same fate they observed from their school principals (Brooking, Collins, Court, & O’Neill, 2003; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Graham, Miller, & Paterson, 2009; Howley, Andrianaivo, & Perry, 2005; Starr & White, 2009).

Hence, Schuman’s (2010) research posited that at the initial stage of their teaching careers, a number of teachers were motivated to make an application for an administrative position. With time, however, this motivation significantly decreased. Consequently, when these candidates became rural principals, they were deficient of wide classroom practice and experience. Ultimately, Lock et al. (2012) also discovered that the most common rationale that
present principals give when they are applying for the position of principal in a rural school was because they were motivated, shoulder-tapped, encouraged or invited to submit their applications.

*Rural Principals Need Additional Training and more Resources*

An abundance of research in the field of education has shown that there are serious concerns about the lack of holistic preparation and quality professional development for school principals (Cortez-Jiminez, 2012; Dean, 2007). Arnold et al. (2005), Lock et al., (2012), and Salazar (2007) opined that principals who run schools in rural areas need special leadership, professional, administrative and pedagogical (instructional) training in leadership development for their rural context and situation. Furthermore, research indicates that certain themes need to be injected into professional development designed for rural school leaders, such as reciprocal school-based- community partnerships and relationships which will be beneficial to both school and community (Cortez-Jiminez, 2012; Harmon & Schafft, 2009). These include fiscal and financial accounting and budgetary management for rural schools (Williams & Nierengarten, 2011; Williams et al., 2009; Singh & Gumbi, 2009), and a comprehensive mentorship program that is well planned for the empowerment of rural principals (Brown-Ferrigno & Allen, 2006; Ingvarson, Anderson, Gronn, & Jackson, 2006). According to Budge (2006) and Caneles et al. (2008), a self-awareness initiative or program could be another viable solution or alternative to equip and empower rural principals on the job to know what jobs they should personally execute and those that they should delegate.

Studies concerning the pedagogical, administrative and professional development of rural principals have indicated that principals of rural schools experience much more difficulty in collaborating with other principals (Clark & Stevens, 2009; De Ruyck, 2005; Graham et al.,
In reference to British research which focused on the principalship in rural and urban schools, Southworth (2004) discovered that leaders who led rural schools were more detached from leadership programs and resources, than their colleague principals who led urban schools. There are also other militating factors that have been preventing rural principals from collaborating professionally with their colleagues both inside of their school space and outside of their immediate school community. These include a deficiency of diverse perspectives of members of staff, oppressive and extreme workload, and the challenges and expenses in connection to travel (Clarke & Stevens, 2006; Bizzell, 2011; Renihan & Noonan, 2012; Williams & Nierengarten, 2011).

Funding deficiency, on a regular basis, has always been a major problem that principals of rural schools encountered (Arnold, 2004). The inadequacy of funds worsens the problems that have already existed in many rural settings, such as: the reduction of budgetary allocation, travel cost for professional development and extracurricular sports, the absence of specialist teachers and a school guidance counsellor, the problems of old infrastructure, and the lack of a reliable internet service. Being the instructional leader, chief supervisor, administrator and manager of the school, the rural principal is tasked with the responsibility to find extra funds to empower school programs and other fundamental educational services (Munsch, 2004). Further research has shown that another major concern of principals of rural schools is successfully putting in place fiscal and viable school budgets (Williams, 2012; Williams, Nierengarten, Riordan, Munson, & Corbett, 2009; Singh & Gumbi, 2009). Consequently, in comparison to urban schools, principals of rural schools are expected to be more innovative and to do more on a
budget that is restricted or tight. Hence, due to tight budgetary constraints, the writing of
successful grants has become a vital skill and duty of rural principals (Williams et al., 2009).

Montgomery (2013), William and Nierengarten (2011) said that when discussing the
whole issue of resources in rural schools, one of the most invaluable resources are teachers. And,
comparing rural and urban principals, research has shown that rural principals encounter bigger
challenges when it comes to human resources than urban principals in influencing teachers
whose credentials qualify them for teaching vacancies elsewhere. This is a point of authenticity
notably in the disciplines or subject areas of technology (Cullen, Brush, Frey, Hinshaw, &
Warren, 2006), mathematics, the sciences taught in high school, French, Spanish, and other
foreign languages (Kitchenham & Chasteauneuf, 2010).

The Role of the Teacher

This section of the literature is organized under three sub-headings: the role of the teacher
as teacher and manager, the importance of teachers for student academic success, and Building a
Teacher-Friendly School Climate.

Teacher and Manager

According to Matalon (2004), the role of a classroom teacher who is also a manager is
manifold. Teachers who are effective in the classroom manage their own behavior and also the
behavior of their students. They are required to execute many other fundamental roles in the
classroom such as: being the facilitator of students’ learning, the arrangement of the classroom,
the proper utilization of time allotted for teaching, the application of different methodologies
used in instructional delivery, assessing students’ academic work, distribution of resources, the
organization of students’ locomotion, and the implementation of classroom rules and seeing to it
that they are obeyed by students (Matalon, 2004). Real learning begins when students are
conditioned to self-discipline; hence, McQueen (1992) stated: “The ultimate goal of successful managers, however, is not to simply manage classrooms but to create conditions that enable students to manage their own behavior and become self-disciplined” (p.7).

In order to enhance a child’s academic achievement the teacher is expected to fulfill two major roles - being a teacher and manager (Matalon, 2004). Matalon said that the major role of the classroom teacher is to educate students. She says, however, that this does not mean that the teacher’s main function in the classroom is merely to dictate notes to students, write exams for them to sit, and then feeling well that he/she has done an excellent job in teaching the subject. According to her, there are many other aspects to this function.

Thus, in order to appropriately perform the role of educator, the teacher has to be as Cullingford (1995) put it, a “mentor” which is much more than just the impartation of knowledge to students. Cullingford believed that a teacher being a mentor means that the teacher will try his/her utmost to bring out the best in the student. Matalon (2004) also explained that being an excellent mentor means that the teacher will make students feel belonged, comfortable, important and highly valued in the classroom. Such a teacher will criticize students, but constructively, helping the student to learn from the criticism made. On the other hand, if the criticism is done destructively, this punishes the child and does nothing to enhance the child’s behavior or to empower the child to learn effectively. Simply put, destructive criticism creates an unfriendly learning environment and hinders students’ learning. An experienced and good educator, therefore, explains academic knowledge to students in a manner that is accommodating, vivid and facilitating. Thus, teachers need to know that this is not only about knowing the content of the subject, which is taught to students, but being able to explain the fundamental concepts of the lesson so that students are able to comprehend. The next role of a good teacher as manager is
making the lesson/subject matter interesting to students by utilizing appropriate instructional aids and experiments which will make the lesson real and practical, rather than being abstract and boring. Hence, this is much more than just explaining a concept to a student; it is more about demonstrating the concept in a practical way so that the student can completely apprehend it (Matalon, 2004).

Ultimately, the role of the classroom teacher as manager consists of all that the teacher does to create an environment that is conducive to learning. In this way, students can be empowered morally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, aesthetically, academically, and intellectually. As manager, the teacher’s role is multifaceted; this includes the keeping of chronological academic records, planning and organizing lesson plans, the execution of actual lessons in the classroom or elsewhere, classroom management, conflict management, being a surrogate to parents, classroom disciplinarian, counselor, learner, facilitator, assessor of students’ learning, and many other roles (Cox, n. d.).

**The Importance of Teachers for Students’ Academic Success**

Research opined that excellent teachers are the pillars of quality education. Hence, a student who has obtained quality education has the key to a lifetime of opportunity and future success if used wisely. Quality teachers, therefore, make the difference in the academic pursuits of students, and also in their future success. Thus, children, irrespective of their ethnicity need great teachers to instruct, guide and prepare them for the future (The Education Trust, 2011).

A teacher is one of the major stakeholders in a child’s academic life. The importance of teachers for students’ academic success is emphasized by Saunders and Rivers (1996) in the findings of their research. In their study, it was unveiled that after three years, subsequent to the sequencing of the lessons by teachers, differences in the students’ academic performance of 50
percentile points were vividly seen. The effectiveness of the teachers on the academic performance of students was both additive and cumulative with minimal proof of compensatory influence. As a result of the increase of teacher effectiveness, students who were weak academically were the first to benefit from the process. Five equal groups of teachers who facilitated the students appropriately saw excellent gains for students at all the academic levels; and students from different ethnic background responded equally with the same five group of teacher effectiveness.

**Building a Teacher-Friendly School Climate**

Matuszny et al. (2007) posited that the instructional leader (principal) and the academic staff should be aware of the importance and benefits of parents being involved in their children’s education. As such, guidelines for working with parents in a manner that is impactful and effective should be drafted and implemented. These researchers inform us that if teachers are going to meet the academic, social and cultural needs of students it is vital that they set aside available time to learn about the different cultures, norms, ethos, practices and traditions of the families represented by students in the classrooms, and be well equipped to respect, tolerate and honor their cultural practices (Matuszny et al., 2007). Teachers’ early conversational engagement with parents is paramount as far as the students and the school that they attend are concerned. Teachers and parents should work in the spirit of reciprocity in that the school should not withhold secrets from parents concerning their own children; neither should parents withhold certain secrets from teachers. This bipartite exchange of information shared about the student will certainly help both teachers and parents to understand the child better as an individual. Thus, for an effective parent-teacher relationship to take place, bi-partite communication is paramount. Such communication should be proactive and positive most of the time, rather than being
reactive and negative (Howards, 2007; Matuszny et al., 2007). Duncan and Rapp (2011) argued that if teachers and support staff are ready to accommodate a welcoming community, then these same parents must be the targets of communicative efforts regarding their responsibilities and roles in the education of their children.

The roles of teachers are, therefore, fundamental in the process of creating a parent friendly school environment. Hence, teachers should make time available for each individual parent, even though there may be many who have minimal association or contact with the institution/school (Van Velsors & Orozcos, 2007). Research has shown that even though some parents may have little or no association with the school, personal invitations should still be issued to parents, which will signal to them that the school is persistent and determined to communicate with them (Hoover-Dempseys et al., 2007; Lloyd-Nestlings, 2006) through mails, texts, telephone calls, circulars, emails or personal notes. When parent workshops, seminars, symposia, and conferences are being held, teachers and support staff need to create a parent-friendly environment that is relaxed and comfortable; an environment that conveys their total devotion, dedication and commitment to a partnership that is built on the foundation of equalitarianism (Hendersons et al., 2007; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2007; Howards, 2007; Matuszny et al., 2007). Research has also shown that school principals and their vice principals should always endeavor to empower, motivate and encourage the academic staff to put a system in place so that homework guidelines can be given to parents to help their children with homework exercises (Ingrams et al., 2007). Hence, a step in the right direction would be a teacher-parent homework guide given by the teacher to parents. Having put this strategy or plan in place, communication should be direct, reciprocal, proactive, positive focused and occur on a regular basis, openly, intentionally, purposefully, and respectfully (Howards, 2007; Lloyd-
The Role of Parents

The Importance of Parents for Students’ Academic Success

The expected role of parents to see their children achieve academically should not be underestimated. Research evidence has shown that the academic expectations of parents for their children to succeed is so great that their expectation is sometimes unrealistic. For example, they expect their children to do a certain level of academic work which they are not mature enough to do, and even punish them if they are not able to do it based on their role expectations (Kazdin, 2008).

Researches have shown that the first teacher of every child is his or her parents, and that the parental role of preparing a child for school begins the very first day the child is brought into the world through birth (Cimagala, 2019; Price, 2017; Parents Are A Child’s First Teacher, 2011; & LDA Learning Disabilities Association of America: Parents Are their Child’s First Teachers, 2013). Hence, if properly executed, the influence of parents can greatly impact the academic development and achievement of their children through many different media. As a consequence, Bempechat (1990) purported that parents who have a responsible role to play in their children’s education can realistically impact their children’s learning through the medium of cognitive socialization, which has to do with the development of the child’s basic intelligence. According to Bempechat, parents are not only able to impact their children’s learning through cognitive socialization they can also empower their children academically through the medium
of academic socialization. This medium deals with the inculcation of positive values, attitudes and motives which are fundamental for the child’s learning in school. He said that motivating the child to participate in active learning, building around students a climate and context that open gate-ways to new and discovery learning is important. He also indicated that the chronological sequence of information is critical so that a strong support system for critical thinking and problem solving is provided. Finally, parents helping their children to understand their own identity and individuality, and being separated from the things around them are all parental roles/practices which are nurtured through cognitive development. Therefore, Bempechat posits that academic socialization is closely connected to the following roles performed by parents: aligning academic achievement to children’s competence, the use of sustained contributive techniques and strategies to enhance children’s learning, ongoing parental dialogue of high expectation for children’s academic achievement in the future, and parental motivation, expectation and aspirations towards a sound career path.

In addressing the issue of middle and lower class parenting, Bempechat offers a solution to the problem. He says that even though parents of middle class status foster cognitive and academic socialization, the implementation of parental education initiatives and programs can empower parents of the lower economic class with the skill-sets they need to enhance the academic achievement of their children, and by extension improving their own job skills.

In concluding, Bempechat says that the attitude and support of teachers are very important to effective parental involvement programs, which involve strategies such as: fostering regular contact between school and home (teachers and parents); motivating, strengthening, and facilitating parents to develop home environments that are conducive to
learning; the utilization of parents as resource persons in schools; and empowering parents to be involved in the school’s decision-making process and school governance (Bempechat, 1990).

**Building a School Climate that is Parent-Friendly**

Research supports the phenomenon that parents need to be involved in their children’s academic pursuits and that this practice produces social, academic and economic benefits for the child. The inevitable question, therefore, is: how can parents get themselves involved in this process (parental involvement) in order to help in building a parent-friendly school climate, while focusing on the educational development of their children?

There are several steps that parents can take in order to accomplish this partnership (bi-partite parent-teacher partnership paradigm). Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders and Simon (1997) argued that these parental involvement activities disseminate from the environment of the home to the school. Authors Lee and Bowen (2006), Patel and Stevens (2010), Pomerantz et al.(2007), and Rooprarine (2004) informed us that parents at home through their parental involvement skills are capable of stimulating high academic performance and setting educational targets/goals with their children. Indeed, Hoover-Dempsey and others informed us that parents can empower their children by motivating and encouraging out of school learning (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2007). Hence, through consistent and ongoing dialogue with their children, many parents are competent enough to stimulate their children’s brain, by sharing their experience, and helping them with instructional and educational materials (Guo & Harris, 2000). To eradicate the social distance that sometimes exists between home and school, parents should volunteer to go out on school excursions such as: trips to the museums, beaches, cultural state of the art shows and displays, zoos, and other educational settings or destinations with teachers and their children. They could also participate in fund-raising, labor day projects, renovation of school buildings,
open-day exhibitions, sports day, culture day, attending regular PTA meetings, impromptu visits to the school, attend parent-teacher Christmas dinner, etcetera, which can generate an ethos of fun for parents and teachers alike (Ingrams et al., 2007).

In order to execute their parental role effectively, parents on a consistent basis need to be aware of their children’s progress behaviorally and academically (Lloyd-Nestlings, 2006; Korkmazs, 2007; Matuszny et al., 2007); communication with the school should be consistent (Howard, 2007; Msengis, 2007; Reynolds, 2010). According to Payne (2006) parents need to support their children in the spirit of democracy whilst these communicative efforts are being made. Parents can share their experience and expertise with the teacher which will help the teacher to monitor their children better, bearing in mind their strengths and weaknesses (Howard, 2007). Howard reported that this is an excellent parental involvement strategy and opportunity which parents need to cease and utilize. However, he went on further to say that parents need to visit their children’s classrooms regularly, as this can also enhance parent-teacher relationships and boost the academic performance of students. These activities he said will help to cultivate a vibrant, effective, formidable and healthy parent-friendly school climate.

Parental voluntarism, according to Epstein (1997) is also one of the other ways parents can work together with teachers to support school activities in order to build a healthy parent-friendly environment. Hence, Leithwoods et al. (1999) and Matuszny et al.(2007) informed us that parents are one of the key stakeholders of the decision-making process at the school’s level, and that discussing educational topics, health, safety and policies with other key stakeholders are important parental functions that they should not overlook. Hence, parents should ensure that these functions are executed at the decision-making level, which can foster a good working and friendly relation among teachers and parents. Thus, Paynes (2006) narrated that it is important
that the principal who is the leader of the school put in place and promote a variety of opportunities that are parent-friendly, relevant, captivating, empowering, workable, conducive, collaborative, equitable, transparent, accommodating, inclusive and welcoming to every parent.

However, such opportunities, according to Matuszny et al. (2007) and Reynolds (2010), must be vividly communicated and articulated at the beginning of the school’s academic year, in P.T.A. meetings, at parenting symposia, conferences, workshops and seminars through the channels or media of school reports, notices, orientations, circulars, newsletters, registration packets or packages, school correspondences, emails, telephones, and websites; and also through personal classroom conversations with all parents. These researchers concurred that in the spirit of reciprocity, parents having received communication from the school should be informed by the school to always acknowledge receipt of such communication by responding to the school through the medium of feedback, which will facilitate parent-teacher collaboration.

Researchers have shown that the school should be cognizant of the fact that when parents have taken time out to volunteer their inputs, they should expect to see the work being done and should also expect good results. Thus, parents’ expectations should be met if teachers inform them about the topic of discussion. And whilst parents are volunteering their respective services to their schools through the different committees, and work with other decision making groups at the school, their inputs should not be underestimated, but should be highly respected, appreciated, and authentically recognized (Leithwoods et al., 1999). Finally, when the school is working in collaboration with parents, it is the principal’s responsibility (as chief educator and leader) to exemplify meaningful efforts of communication, while motivating teachers to be fair, rational, objective and balanced in their pedagogical practices during their encounter with
parents (Duncan & Rapp, 2011). In so doing, the building of a healthy parent-friendly school climate or environment will be highly fostered and realized.

**Rural and Urban Parents**

McCracken and Barcinas (1991) have shown that there are numerous researches that have ascertained that the educational standard of rural parents is inferior to that of urban parents; and in a research project also conducted by Tine (2017), there was approximately 27% of rural children whose parents did not experience secondary education, in comparison to about 21% of urban children whose parents did not experience secondary education. There were also less young adults (21%) in rural areas with a bachelor’s degree qualification, in comparison to young adults (34%) in urban areas with a bachelor’s degree. According to Tine parental education must be taken seriously because research has shown that it is connected to better linguistic, cognitive, academic and social skills as far as the overall educational development of the child is concerned at the early childhood, primary and secondary levels of their schooling.

He further purported that the behavior pattern of rural parents was different from that of urban parents, in that, rural parents seem to be less supportive emotionally, more investigative, and tougher than parents who live in urban areas. Hence, rural and urban parents even have different lifestyle practices, values, belief systems and behaviors about the academic achievements of their children. For example, in comparison to urban parents, rural parents focus less on the academic performance of their children, have little expectation for their children’s academic outcome, spend less money on educational material and cultural experiences, and also spend less time paying attention to the academic and social development of their children than urban parents. He, therefore, concludes that urban parents have a more in-depth knowledge of
child-rearing and child development than rural parents, which may be connected to the different levels of parental education.

Hence, prolonging the rural-urban parental dialogue, McCracken and Barcinas (1991) believed that “Parents of rural students were less likely to expect their children to advance their education” (p. 39). Thus, they have recommended that schools in the rural area should implement strategies to help empower both parents and students, as they think about the different choices for the advancement of secondary to tertiary education.

**Rural and Urban Students**

The literature shows that urban schools are more privileged than rural schools in terms of financial, material, physical, technological and human resources. Yet, surprisingly, Fan and Chen (1988) in their research revealed that the academic performance of some rural schools is just as good as urban schools, and may be better in some cases. Both cohorts which consisted of different ethnic groups were tested in Reading, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. The results showed that there were no significant differences between some rural and urban schools in this context. However, when all is said and done, whether rural or urban, students also need to take responsibility for their learning and by extension their education (Gilbert, 2018; Hazri, 2014)

Within the context of the educational aspirations of students, the research of McCracken and Barcinas (1991), conducted in Ohio, showed that most students decided to further their studies from the secondary to the tertiary level. There was, however, a disparity among rural and urban students in the areas they planned to pursue. According to McCracken and Barcinas these students seemed to have chosen areas they had observed or experienced. Hence, studying in college for four years was a more common choice for those students who attended urban schools
comparable to those students who attended rural schools. On the other hand, for students who attended rural schools, there was a greater possibility that they would have attended technical institutes comparable to urban students who plan to pursue a four year college education. Thus, this kind of disparity, as far as these researchers are concerned, was probably due to the fact that technical institutes may have been more accessible based on their geographical location than four (4) year colleges and universities that are located mostly in the urban areas. It could also be that some rural students possess less academic qualification comparable to urban students, hence, both sets of students attend different institutions.

**Parent-Teacher Communication Relationship**

**Styles and Associated Difficulties**

According to Lopez, Udell, Lozano, and Mendez (n.d.), parents have always occupied an essential communicative role in the education of their children. Parents, therefore, need to continue this communication process with teachers to enhance their children’s education. As a consequence, it is also paramount to examine the role of the teacher in the process of communication. A rationale that may cause teachers to have communication difficulties with parents is their different perceptions on how parents should be involved in their children’s education. Teachers seem to have a more narrow perception of parental involvement, being confined mainly to a school-home communication – relationship. On the other hand, parents seem to have a much wider perception of the kinds of conversational or communicative relationships and responsibilities that need to be executed, such as attending PTA meetings, symposia, workshops and other programs that are associated with parenting and school events (Barge & Loges, 2003).
In a research carried out by Barges and Loges (2003) the findings revealed two common themes emanating from parent, teacher and student responses in regard to what constitutes high-quality parental involvement and communication: (a) cultivating relationships that are wholesome, sound, respectful and good with teachers, and (b) both teachers and parents supervising the child’s academic work and progression as well as the child also monitoring his/her own academic work. There were, however, some fundamental disparities from the feedback of parents, teachers and students in regard to what is seen as high-quality parental involvement and communication. Primarily, teachers, parents and students differ on the notion of discipline and encouragement. They also disagree on the role of extracurricular activities and the networking of community support systems in parental involvement.

Halsey (2005) explained that there are some teachers who see parents as not being involved in their child’s education, which can also contribute to communication difficulties. Realistically, he said that the majority of parents would want to be involved in their child’s education, but some are faced with serious socio-economic setbacks. According to Halsey these parents are really interested in knowing how their child is doing academically, and what they can do to help. However, he reasoned that the reality is that there are erroneous beliefs and misconceptions of a parent’s desire for parental involvement which exist between the school and the home. He concludes by saying that there are a number of teachers who feel that parents do not want to become involved in their child’s education, and many parents are not cognizant of the opportunities for involvement.

Based on Cameron’s and Lee’s (1997) work, there are times when parents’ workload makes them too busy, preventing them from communicating with the school. Additionally, these two researchers said that for some teachers, the availability of time is just not enough during the
operation of school to meet with parents, and it is still not possible for parents to meet with teachers after their work hours. Consequently, they said that both the quality and quantity of parent-teacher interaction is badly affected because of the constraints of time.

On the other hand, Eberly, Joshi, Konzal, & Galen (2010) informed us that the society in which we are now living has become more culturally diverse which has had an impactful effect on our school system. Furthermore, these researchers posit that in some countries, teachers who are Caucasians out-numbered non-Caucasian teachers thus creating obstacles and barriers causing the communication process between the school and the home to be affected. Hence, teachers could encounter serious problems communicating productively with parents who have a different geographical space; different cultures and linguistic backgrounds which are totally different from their own. These researchers also agree that language can be the major hindrance to communication, but teachers are also not empowered with the different language skills to connect or identify with the personal experience of students.

The task of the teacher is wide and varied. Apart from serving students of diverse cultures, teachers also have the additional task of interacting with students from varying socio-economic contexts or backgrounds. Normally, the parents with a high socio-economic standing are more educated and involved in their child’s/children’s education. According to Raccah’s and Elyashiv’s work (as cited in Lopez et al., n.d.), parents who have a high socio-economic standing are more involved in schools. Lopez and his colleagues believe that when parents are fully involved in their children’s education, the better the teacher-parent communication quality will be. On the other hand, the parents who have a low socio-economic standing are less educated and are not as involved in their child’s/children’s education. Hence, these researchers conclude that
when the parent is not as involved there is a possibility that the teacher may experience communication difficulties.

Finally, an additional barrier in the process of teacher-parent-communication is teacher training. In a number of countries throughout the world teachers are taught only how to teach children. Not much focus is placed on the psychological aspect of their training, for example, how to effectively work in collaboration with parents (Elyashiv’s work (as cited in Lopez et al., n.d.).

Ramirez (1999) purported that most teachers (70%) hold on to the belief that in-service methodologies and strategies could empower teachers in initiating and implementing effective parental involvement practices. According to him, seeing that a lot of the teachers’ time is spent with parents, teachers need to be competent and equipped in the area of communication in order to communicate with them effectively. As a result, the training of teachers has to be contextual and appropriate as far as verbal and written communication methodologies and strategies are concerned. However, Ramirez concludes his dialogue by saying that knowing how to communicate successfully with parents will certainly help both the school and the home.

Lopez et al. (n. d.) stated that there are conventional corrective measures that can be utilized to minimize the impediments that hinder wholesome teacher-parent communication. These researchers informed us that there are many other things teachers can do to make parents a part of school involvement activities. Parents at times may feel isolated from their child’s/children’s education and as a consequence they need to be accepted and assured by teachers who will make them feel like they are a part of their child’s/children’s education. These researchers opined that teachers and parents need to work in the spirit of collaboration as a team to know what is taking place at school and at home. They believe that working
collaboratively will not only enhance the child but will ultimately hinder difficulties encountered in communication (Lopez et al. (n.d). Epstein (1986) also shared with us that about 58% of parents, did not receive requests from the teacher to take part in home based learning activities, and less than approximately 30% of the parents said that teachers advised them of how to help their child in reading and mathematics.

Communication that is effective is fundamental to bring about solid parent-teacher partnership in both school and home, according to Graham-Clay (n. d.). She says that as teachers received the pedagogical skills in their training which are fundamental for imparting knowledge to their students, they also need to access parental knowledge and skills to communicate effectively with parents. She said that teachers can be empowered with a plethora of communication opportunities available to them, for example: parent symposia, conferences, workshops, seminars, school-to-home visits, the internet, correspondence, newsletter, telephone, etcetera. As a consequence, she believed that teachers should endeavour to utilize many different effective communicative strategies to make the process of communication positive, informative and interactive with parents as best as they possibly can. She said that a significant part of the process of communication must be the inclusion of new strategies of communication whilst simultaneously demonstrating acceptable professionalism at its highest level. Thus, all dialogue of communication, irrespective of model or style, should portray a conventional approach that is well organized, and should be seen as an innovative opportunity for teachers to enhance parent-partnership-relations, and, finally to empower the ability of students to learn (Graham-Clay, n. d.).

There are other studies that have shown that it is important for teachers and parents to work collaboratively. One of these studies was done by Sanders (2008) who said that as teachers
and parents work in alliance, the better the communication process will become. This will ultimately empower and equip students to be more successful socially and academically. Sanders concludes by saying that when teachers and parents work collaboratively this produces positive student outcomes such as: better and higher student achievement, improved student behavioral patterns, improved punctuality and attendance, and an improved positive school surrounding which is conducive to students learning (Sanders, 2008).

**Barriers**

As the different definitions, theories, concepts, views, and perceptions are studied, one cannot deny the phenomenon that there are barriers that hinder parent-teacher communication-relationship. Mainly teachers and parents who have to deal with these obstacles daily, which can affect the academic performance of students, create these barriers. According to Wright (2009), theories have been developed, documented and postulated over a number of years concerning the possible reasons that cause these barriers to occur, and the appropriate corrective methods available to eradicate them. One of these critical barriers is the utilization of incomprehensible language (jargon) by teachers to parents, which obscures their understanding and further causes parents and the public to show little respect to teachers (Baker, 2001). Communication of this sort creates barriers to formal parent-teacher relationships, making the process of good communication which leads to good understanding difficult for both parent and teacher (Rich, 1987). Teachers, therefore, need to communicate to parents in a communicable jargon or vernacular in order to keep the teacher-parent relationship going. Research has shown that negative communication between teacher and parent deteriorates the parent-teacher partnership when teachers practice to communicate or contact parents only when they are confronted by behavioral or academic problems portrayed by students (Epstein, 2001). According to Epstein,
this kind of reactionary parental communication is not good for the parent-teacher collaboration process, and only enhances a high percentage rate of students’ absenteeism, students having negative behavior toward school attendance, and poor academic performance. As a result, Epstein strongly believes that teachers should work towards contacting the home when positive things are happening to students and not just home contacts of negativity when bad things occur.

Another barrier that leads to the lack of parental involvement which causes a breakdown in the parent-teacher-communication-relationship is the notion that the status of the teacher’s profession is compromised by too many parental involvement visits or activities. Consequently, many teachers become uncomfortable with the influx of parental involvement visits/activities in their school (Berger, 1995). However, Berger opines that parents who are involved in this practice ought not to be judged or seen in this light. Teachers, on the other hand, should instead try their utmost to find strategies to empower parents to be involved in the life of the school holistically. This, he says, can be done by using parents in meaningful ways that can ultimately impact or enhance students’ learning (Berger, 1995).

Other barriers that obstruct parental involvement based on extensive research are: different styles of parenting, differences in language, different cultures, educational background of parents, socio-economic barriers, family composition or structure, parents who are employed, and the modus operandi and attitude of teachers (Anderson, 2000; Carrasquillo & London, 1993; Chavrin, 1989; Katz, 1996; Pena, 2000; Steinberg, Lamborn & Narling, 1992; Taylor, 1993; Wanke, 2008).

In summary, there are a number of factors that can hinder parental involvement, which can ultimately prevent a good parent-teacher-communication-relationship from reaching its ultimate expected outcome. These include: parental style, language barrier, cultural differences,
educational background of parents, socio-economic impediments, the structuring of the family, employed parents, and teachers’ attitude or mannerism toward parents. These are all hindrances to parental involvement and play a major role in the dialogue of why parental involvement does not take place at certain expected levels. The present solution to this problem, however, is that parents and teachers need to work collaboratively in order to surmount these obstacles, thus finding the methods of solution to improve parental involvement levels, and strengthen the parent-teacher-communication-relationship that exists between teacher and parent or school and home.

**Strategies for Surmounting Barriers**

Data from the United States Department of Education (2004) have shown that parents who have lower income and parents with less education are less involved on a regular basis in school-based parental involvement activities in comparison to parents who have a better standard of education and income. Parents who have older children get involved less in parental involvement activities than parents whose siblings are younger. According to these studies, when parental involvement activities are hindered by barriers that are connected to the school, the family and the community, there are future implications and consequences that may disrupt students’ academic performance (U.S Department of Education, 2004).

As a consequence, knowing about strategies to surmount obstacles to parental involvement activities is, therefore, paramount if teachers and parents are willing enough to eradicate such impediments. So, what are these strategies? The U.S Department of Education (1997 & 2004) Family Involvement in Children’s Education postulates seven (7) fundamental strategies which can be used to combat parental involvement barriers in schools; these are: overcoming the constraints of time and resources through innovations, ensuring the accessibility
of needed information for both parents and academic staff members, training in the area of parenting for parents as to how they need to work together as a team with the school to secure good quality education for their children, equipping the academic staff through training to work with parents and students socially, professionally, academically and pedagogically, the reorganization of schools to empower, encourage, support, and strengthen the involvement of families in all parental programs and school activities, the amalgamation of school-family differences, seeking external help for ongoing partnership between home and school, providing the essential needs for family members, providing suitable times and place to facilitate parental involvement activities, and to foster and strengthen ongoing communication with staff and parents. Additionally, Monteith (2010) also points out some very important strategies that can be used to surmount barriers that may exist during the teacher-parent-communication-relationship; these strategies are as follows:

Develop a good rapport with parents, ensure that they are approachable, speak to parents with respect, collaborate with them to become partners in education, prepare a schedule of activities, meet with them regularly at PTA meetings and classroom meetings, establish protocol to deal with complaints by parents, encourage parents to complain, let them feel at ease, make time for them, be a good listener, never criticize complainants (parents), never abuse the complainants’ (parents’) child, resolve the issue in an amicable way (p. 50).

On the other hand, parents should speak to teachers in a respectful manner. It is important that if a parent has a grouse he or she should go to the principal or class teacher to discuss the matter. It would be good to encourage parents to dress appropriately when taking their children to school or when attending a meeting. This will show respect. Parents should understand that the school expects them to treat their children with love and respect. Parents should also
understand that they are expected to assist their children with homework (Monteith, 2010, p.50). Consequently, schools can do well if these strategic principles are adhered to as regards to the eradication of parental involvement barriers.

**Parents, Teachers, and Students Benefit from Parent-Teacher Communication Partnership**

Research has shown that a parent-teacher communication partnership that is empowering and supportive generates huge benefits for parents, teachers and students (American Federation of Teachers, 2007). Hence, there should be no doubt in the minds of stakeholders in education that a good parent-teacher communication partnership dialogue is the right path to pursue in connection to the home and the school, working together collaboratively to build a healthy academic school-home-environment in which the child is enveloped as he/she pursues and apprehends knowledge.

**Parents Benefit**

Research is clear in showing that parent involvement activities that are properly organized, planned and well executed result in significant benefits to parents. For example, Olsen and Fuller (2008) inform us that when parental involvement activities take place these increase parents’ interaction and discussion with their children. This results in the parents being more answerable and sensitive to their children's social, emotional, and intellectual developmental needs. Parents have more confidence in their parenting and decision-making skills; and as the knowledge of child development increases in parents, they are more affectionate and practice the use of positive reinforcement, using less punishment on their children. Parents also understand better the job of the teacher and the curriculum of the school. Furthermore, when parents are cognizant of the things their children are learning, they gradually develop the spirit of motivation to help when they are asked by teachers to participate more in their children's learning activities.
at home. The parental perception that parents hold of the school improves, and there is a better bonding, stronger alliance, social connectivity, parents owning the school as their school and having a greater commitment to the school. These researchers conclude by saying that parents are more cognizant of what their children’s schooling entails and thus become more participatory in wanting to know about policies that affect their children's future education when the school asks them to be involved in the decision-making process (Olsen & Fuller, 2008).

Studies have also shown that the benefits of parental involvement are real (Che, 2010, Smith, n.d.; Wright, 2009) and that children, parents as well as the community benefit from parental involvement at different levels. When parents are involved in their children’s academic development they acquire the opportunity to understand the school’s educational programs, culture, and activities much better. As a result, parents become more comfortable with the quality of education given to their children. Research has shown that children whose parents get involved in their education and in the life of the school show greater socio-emotional development (Allen & Daley, 2002). Furthermore, when parents become involved this leads to greater self-satisfaction, self-direction, control, social adjustment, competence, increase in supportive relationships, positive peer relations, tolerance, successful marriages and reduction in delinquent behaviors (Comer, 1980; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Gillum, 1977; Rich, Van Dien & Mallox, 1979).

**Teachers Benefit**

Research also shows that the involvement of parents can emancipate teachers to concentrate more on the role of teaching children. By keeping in touch with parents on a regular basis, teachers learn more about students' needs and home environment, which is information they can utilize to better improve those needs. Hence, parents who are fully involved seem to
have a more positive perception of teachers, which results in improved teacher recognition and morale (American Federation of Teachers, 2007).

Ultimately, when schools have a high percentage of parents who are involved in and out of schools, teachers and principals are more likely to experience higher morale and respect. Thus, teachers and principals often earn greater respect for their profession from parents. Continued parental involvement leads to improved communication and relations between parents, teachers, and administrators. As a consequence, teachers and principals acquire a better understanding of families' cultures and diversity, and they form deeper respect for parents' abilities and time, which results in teachers and principals reporting an escalation in job satisfaction (Olsen & Fuller, 2008).

**Students Benefit**

An abundance of evidence exists which indicates that parent involvement benefits students, including improving their academic achievement (American Federation of Teachers, n.d). Furthermore, according to research conducted throughout the last twenty-five years, there is a plethora of empirical evidence which points to the fact that parental involvement correlates to students’ academic achievement, lower drop-out rates, positive attitudes toward learning, better parent-child communication, better parent-teacher communication, improved behavior and enhanced community support for schools (Chiu & Xihua, 2008; DePlany, Coulter-Kerr, & Duchane, 2007; Englund, Luckner, Waley, & Egeland, 2004; Friedel, Cortina, Turner, & Midgley, 2006; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Hong & Hsiu-Zu, 2005; Jeynes, 2005; Jung-Sook & Bowen, 2006; Lontos, 1992; McBride, Schoppe-Sullivan, & Moon-Ho, 2004; Renihan & Renihan, 1994; Sarason, 1995; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005; Stein, Goldring, & Zottola, 2008; Swap, 1993; Wenfan & Lin, 2005; Wilson, 2009). There are other positives for children when
parents become engaged — namely, increased motivation for learning, more regular attendance, and a more positive attitude about homework and school in general, and a better parent teacher communication relationship (American Federation of Teachers, 2007).

Irrespective of ethnic or racial background, socio-economic status, or parents' education level, children tend to achieve more when there is a solid parent-teacher partnership. In general, children achieve and maintain better grades, test scores, and attendance. On a consistent basis, children complete their assignments, have better self-esteem, are more self-disciplined, and show higher aspirations and motivation toward school.

Hence, a good parent-teacher-communication-relationship is indeed essential and beneficial for children's success in school. According to Ramirez (1999) when parents and teachers work together as a team, children have a team of adults who are devoted to bringing out their very best. Thus, parents and teachers can strengthen one another in ways that keep this goal in mind.

The parent teacher communication relationship can be powerful, just like all other powerful relationships in which humans are involved. Whatever a parent does affects the teacher, but the child is the most impacted individual. Thus, parents and teachers need to be cognizant that the child’s academic success is based on a number of significant factors, such as: the child's self-perception—which is how children see themselves, their desire to learn, and the aptitude, capacity or capability of parents and teachers to engage them in a manner that acknowledges their needs and interests, and motivates them intrinsically (Ramirez, 1999)

Impediments or struggles at home and school influence how children feel about themselves, the universe, and their ability to face new challenges whether academic, psychological, social or economic. Consequently, these fundamental factors should highlight the
importance of the parent teacher alliance. However, on many occasions, parents and teachers become adversarial, focusing on the wrong issues or just fail to take advantage of the impact they have together. Obviously, when a child's teacher and parents enter into an agreed commitment for the best interests of the child, he or she feels empowered at every point in life. Thus, having two adults as caring guides, the child feels that he or she has the competence to achieve academically, and more significantly, feels supported as an individual (Ramirez, 1999).

On the whole, education has a greater good; it is much more than just academic achievement and intellectualism. Hence, the parent-teacher relationship must be used to help children achieve a sense of responsibility, awareness, competence, civility, commitment, patriotism and equity, which means fostering the many varied areas of a child's development and supporting him from a healthy core foundation. This healthy core foundation includes the perception of self, worldview and the willingness to learn how to create long life-affirming relationships with humankind. Thus, a child who has a core foundation of good health, has a strong inclination to learn, experiment, and to discover new things.

According to Ramirez (1999) this does not need a paradigm shift in the curriculum; it simply means that both teachers and parents need to be looking out for opportunities as they arise and work in collaboration to help make lessons concrete and practical. In order for children to learn what they need to do to succeed in school and in life, they need parents and teachers who are willing to communicate and embrace one another in relation to what they are teaching in their different and separate domains. Authentic learning is not in a vacuum or being unilateral, but experiential and extends to other areas of life. This, according to Ramirez is where the parent-teacher-relationship comes in and evolves to boost students’ academic advancement. If a child is being taught about money at school and the teacher takes the time to communicate this to the
parents, the parents can take the child to the store to practice what has been learned at school. Here, at the store, the child gets the opportunity to apply what has been learned in the classroom by picking out an item he or she can afford to purchase, select the proper bills to pay for it, and then check to ensure that the cashier has given the correct change. Ramirez said that the excitement of making this first purchase and the satisfaction that comes from doing so successfully stimulated a child's interest to learn about the world in which he or she lives.

Ramirez goes on to state that if a parent informs the teacher that, at home, the child is being taught to be considerate about the feelings of other persons, then the teacher can guide the child during a conflict management class to treat his/her classmates with dignity, fair play, respect and diplomacy. This, Ramirez believes, is how good parent-teacher communication supports the parent, the teacher and ultimately, the child. She said that the true lessons of life are not learned in unrealistic environments, but in real life.

When a child comes to realize that learning is an ongoing process which takes place everywhere, and not just at school, and such a child is guided in a manner that stresses and explains the process of learning while simultaneously making the learning process practical rather than focusing on unrealistic measures like grades, the child's joy of learning blooms and becomes a lifelong inquiry and discovery. Ramirez concluded that in order for this to happen or to be successful, the parent-teacher-relationship must be supplemented, strengthened, encouraged, empowered, fostered and maintained (Ramirez, 1999).

**The Jamaican Context of Rural and Urban Schools**

Having looked at the different contexts of rural and urban schooling within the education system globally, the final context I have looked at is the Jamaican context of rural and urban schooling. In Jamaica, however, we are more verbal than documental in that we talk more and do
less documentation of vital information. Hence, literature on the Jamaican context of rural and urban schools is severely limited and hard to access, which further demonstrates a gap in the literature to be filled, and the important contribution this dissertation will make to the literature of rural and urban schools in Jamaican and the wider diaspora. Thus, with the limited access of information, Thaffe (2013) visited three rural schools in the parishes of St. Ann and Clarendon (Jamaica) and subsequently published an interesting article in The Gleaner on April 3, 2013. The article argued that rural schools are still being treated inequitably as far as the accessibility of resources is concerned to enhance students’ learning. The schools that were visited are the St. Georges All-Age School in St Ann, Staceyville Primary and the McGnie All-Age Schools in Clarendon.

Thaffe (2013) indicated that the absence of computer technology at these schools deprives the students of one of the requirements which the Ministry of Education sets out- that every child should be computer literate, even though the Ministry of Education itself has not been making the kind of effort needed to furnish these schools with computers. The computers in the classrooms are outdated, and sit like monuments, while the students yearn to enjoy the same computer technology education privileges as students who attend urban schools.

It is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to erect a perimeter fence at every school for the safety and security of students, teachers, parents and all ancillary workers who move about in the school’s space. However, the principal of Staceyville Primary says that she has to be shouldering two major projects simultaneously: constructing the perimeter fence for the safety and security of persons who attend and visit her school and implementing a fund-raising project to get the malfunctioned computers up and running again. Thaffe tells us that the Staceyville Primary School principal admitted that such fund-raising could take a long time;
hence, members of the academic staff have been bringing their personal computers to school to prevent their students from being left behind technologically. Apart from not having their own functional computers, the school does not have a multimedia projector which the principal says they could not afford due to serious financial constraints.

In his discourse, Thaffe says that rural schools are treated unfairly and are at a disadvantage when it comes to the distribution of resources between rural and urban schools. Thus, both private and public sector entities need to take an objective look at correcting the imbalances and inequities that exist in the education system. He reports that the principal of the St. Georges All-Age School admitted that the urban schools that are within close proximity to the Ministry of Education are given extra resources, while the private sector, on the other hand, also caters mostly to the urban schools that are within their space. Consequently, the schools in the rural areas are not treated equally, and limited attention is paid to them. Thus, the principal concludes that the Ministry of Education needs to do an audit of the schools that are located in the rural areas and then distribute the resources that are badly needed to the rural schools to enhance the existing literacy and numeracy rates.

On the other hand, the president of the Jamaica Computer Society, Mr. Dean Smith, while not having empirical evidence on whether there are inequities and imbalances in the distribution of resources between rural and urban schools, conceded that a united and balanced approach needs to be implemented as to how computers are donated to these schools (Thaffe, 2013).

Stewart (2017), former principal of Denbigh Primary School, in Clarendon, Jamaica, said in his report that disparities do exist between rural and urban schools. Based on the information that he has given, there are more disparities than similarities existing in rural schools when
juxtaposed to urban schools. Stewart purports that in rural schools in Jamaica the behavior of students is better than the students who attend urban schools. In urban schools, school violence is more prevalent, and students are more troublesome and harder to control than the students who attend rural schools; hence, the rate of suspension and expulsion, according to him, is higher in urban than rural schools. Stewart posits that rural parental support, that is, parents getting involved in the academic life of their children, surpasses that of urban parents. However, Stewart, who has had over thirty-five (35) years of classroom experience, said that even though urban schools have more access to an abundance of different resources, these resources do not give them the academic edge over rural schools. This is shown by the fact that the academic performance of students in rural schools is equivalent to or even sometimes better than the academic performance of students in urban schools. According to Stewart, this is surprising, seeing that urban schools are blessed with more financial, material, physical and human resources (Stewart, 2017). Miller (2015), who conducted a case study on “Rural principals in Jamaica” at the post-graduate level in the Department of Education at Brune University also supported Stewart’s perspectives immensely.

Addressing the issue of computer technology, he says that rural schools are deficient in computer technology resources, but this does not affect teaching and learning to a great extent. This is because rural teachers are more resourceful, innovative, and creative in their pedagogy than their urban colleagues; thus, the deficiency of computer technology does not really affect student quality in rural schools. On the other hand, Stewart says that while computer technology and multimedia presentations are good for 21st century classrooms, urban teachers tend to rely on them too heavily, and sometimes use them inappropriately. He reports that even some parents complain that their children report to them that most of their time in school is spent watching
shows/movies. This, he says, sometimes robs urban teachers of being innovative, resourceful, creative, and being able to improvise when computer technology and multimedia devices fail.

According to Stewart, urban teachers who live in the towns and cities are more inclined and motivated to further their studies at colleges and universities located in the towns and cities. On the contrary, while many rural teachers would like to do the same, the high economic cost of travelling long distances to these colleges and universities (back and forth) to pursue part-time studies, plus a substantial sum of money that would have to be paid for tuition fees, and also the cost of books, demotivate them; hence, they remain in the classroom until retirement, without furthering their studies (Stewart, 2017)

Economic survival, experienced by both rural and urban teachers, is completely different. Stewart tells us that urban teachers are able to find other ways and means to survive economically than just relying only on a single pay cheque, paid to them by the Ministry of Education at the end of the month. Urban teachers are able to earn large sums of money, gained from extra evening classes (held during the week and on Saturdays) apart from their monthly pay cheque. Unfortunately, many teachers who live and teach in rural schools long for such opportunities, rather than relying only on a single pay cheque at the end of the month, on which they can barely survive.

He says that there is a big migration of rural teachers to urban schools. Hence, rural principals have difficulties retaining their teachers. The serious exodus of rural teachers to urban schools, he says, is caused by the lack of attraction in these schools. There are less opportunities for social mobility, such as senior teacher appointment, principal or vice principal appointment. There are not enough students in rural schools to hold evening classes so that teachers can earn an additional stipend, and the non-existence of tertiary institutions in rural communities where
they could go to earn a degree, which would empower them to earn a better salary. This sharp migration of teachers forces some rural principals to employ poor quality teachers as replacement in their schools. Poor teacher attendance and late arrival at school are also serious problems that plague rural schools. This problem normally occurs because of the lack of regular transportation which the teachers need in order to reach school on time, in addition to the deplorable roads and the long distance they have to travel back and forth to school.

Stewart (2017) posits that the migration of teachers from urban schools is almost non-existent, apart from when they go on study leave to further their studies or leave the classroom for retirement. Hence, the teaching and learning environment in which they operate is more conducive to teaching and learning. This is so because teachers and students are exposed to more instructional aids, computer technology, a bigger staff compliment which lightens each teacher’s timetable and work-load, and a shift system in a number of urban schools which requires each teacher to teach for only five (hours) in comparison to a rural teacher who is required to teach for eight hours. Stewart admits that urban teachers love to teach at a school where the shift system exists; the reason being that the shift system creates an added opportunity for them to be gainfully employed in private schools where they can earn a second salary at the end of the month.

Grants and subventions that the Ministry of Education sends to urban schools are larger in comparison to rural schools, and there is always a robust fund-raising event which generates thousands of dollars which is used to boost the school’s financial account. These fund-raisers, according to Stewart, are normally successful because of the overwhelming support given by the school board, the PTA, the school community, the external community, and the financial backing
of the business community. Unfortunately, such privileges and opportunities are not normally enjoyed by schools that are rurally located (Stewart, 2017).

In his discourse he says that it would not be fair to say that urban schools have a better teacher quality when juxtaposed to rural schools, since there is not a big difference when rural and urban teachers are compared. He believes that even though urban schools have more human, financial and technological resources, these are not the authentic factors that produce quality teachers, because there are some rural teachers who have been blessed with the resources mentioned, yet they are still poor quality teachers. Thus, he says that quality teachers develop over a period of time because of a deep love for the profession, dedication to the children they teach, on-going research in their respective subject areas, resourcefulness, innovativeness, professional and academic up-grading through workshops, conferences, symposia, working with parents assiduously, and pursuing a first degree in one’s area of specialization. He goes on to say that there are highly qualified degreed teachers in most urban schools, whilst the cohort of teachers in rural schools in Jamaica is improving steadily; hence, both schools are on par as far as teacher quality is concerned.

Ultimately, having compared both rural and urban principals, Miller (2015) as well as Stewart (2017) extrapolated that the workload of a rural principal is more weighty than that of an urban principal. According to them, rural principals have multiple functions, in that they wear more hats. He or she functions as the bursar, supervisor, school administrator, guidance counsellor, social worker, judge, dean of discipline, instructional leader, mediator, spiritual adviser, school nurse, teacher, physical education teacher, music teacher if he or she is an expert in this area, and the list goes on. They said that in our Jamaican setting/context, because the rural principal does not have a large pool of human resource personnel to assign to these respective
posts as the urban principal does, he or she has to execute these functions in order for the school to operate. On the other hand, this is not so with the urban principal who is blessed with a large pool of personnel and support staff from whom he or she is able to pull teachers, administrative and ancillary workers to fill these important posts. Hence, the urban principal focuses mainly on administration and supervision who is assisted by one, two or even sometimes three vice principals, in addition to several middle managers who are senior teachers (Miller, 2015; Stewart, 2017).

Summary

The literature review shows three significant variables surrounding the child in relation to his/her education: the principal, teacher and parent, and that this triangular paradigm is quintessential if the child is going to excel academically. The literature, as well as the study’s theoretical framework points out that each stakeholder has a role/responsibility to execute to empower the child academically. Bearing the findings of the literature in Chapter 2 in mind, this construct appears to be authentic, because each variable has a separate, yet, collaborative role to execute as the child pursues academic excellence which the literature supports.

The literature further shows that the academic success of the child may not be realized unless the principal, teacher and parent build a parent-teacher communication partnership through frequent dialogue, home and school visits, teamwork and a cohesive and healthy home-school relationship among stakeholders.

Such a relationship, the literature shows, can be marginalized by certain barriers, but there are effective strategies that both teacher and parent can utilize to surmount these obstacles in order not to impede the child’s academic development. This comes through practical orientation and real life experiences rather than abstractness as far as the school’s curriculum is
concerned. According to the literature, this kind of parent-teacher partnership appears to be the right fit for the child’s holistic development.

The literature also highlights the distinction between rural and urban principals in terms of the different geographical, social and economic contexts in which they operate their respective schools; the urgent need for rural principals to undergo specialized leadership, professional, instructional, and administrative training to fit into and operate in the rural context; the lack of resources in rural schools in comparison to urban schools that have such amenities in abundance; the different rural and urban contexts in which teachers, parents and students operate; and a realistic look on the Jamaica context of rural and urban schools.

Finally, the literature shows that there are three archetypal beneficiaries who benefit from the parent-teacher-communication-relationship-partnership: parent, teacher and student; thus, this kind of relationship needs to be fostered among parents, teachers and students for the child’s ongoing academic and intellectual development. Thus, in many ways, the findings of the study dovetail with the study’s theoretical framework and the literature review which is explained above.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

Preamble

The purpose of this study was to investigate the principals’, teachers’, and parents’ perceptions about their respective roles in children’s education at two Jamaican schools – one rural and one urban. As a consequence, the study investigated different and similar views of these stakeholders regarding their respective roles in relation to children’s education, guided by two research questions mentioned below:

• How principals, teachers, and parents perceived their respective roles in relation to children’s education.

• The extent to which they differed about their respective roles in regard to children accessing quality education.

Based on the literature review there is a perceived assumption that principals, teachers, and parents do have roles/responsibilities to perform in relation to children’s education, and that failure to perform these fundamental roles could impede quality education for children. Thus, at the rural and urban schools, stakeholders/interviewees shared their views on their respective roles in relation to children accessing quality education.

This section explains the whole research procedures including germane information on how the data were retrieved. It also layouts the rationale and design of the research and how the subjects were selected for this study. Additionally, this section also addresses the researcher’s positionality, population and sample, data collection, rationale for data collection strategies, data analysis, methods of verification, validity, reliability, research procedures, administrative procedures, ethical considerations, privacy and confidentiality, and a summary.
Rationale for a Qualitative Design

According to Babbie (2001), in a qualitative study, there is a non-numerical examination and interpretation of all observed variables in order to unveil underlying relationships of meanings and patterns as they unfold throughout the study. A qualitative research design was used to provide rich and in-depth insights into the state of affairs that was investigated. A qualitative study was therefore used to collect, analyze and interpret the data by the observation of what participants did and said during the data collection process (Creswell, 2009).

As a consequence, a qualitative methodology was employed by the investigator for a number of reasons. On the whole, qualitative research methods have the potential to collect quality and in-depth information about precise or distinct phenomena among groups that are not large. To be more specific, researches have shown that qualitative research methods are invaluable and useful in unveiling the meaning and interpretations that participants narrate about events they have encountered. In addition, a qualitative design was utilized in order to obtain a better insight and holistic understanding of how behaviors are developed, and thus, taking a more comprehensive approach in looking at things from a more balanced and inclusive perspective (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003 & Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). A qualitative design methodology, caters for and strengths qualitative research (Merriam, 1998), hence, the rationale for using this methodology. I therefore chose a qualitative design to address the problem and answer the research questions.

Another rationale for this choice is that qualitative studies are inductive. They move from specific to general, and begin with the goal of observing, discovering and developing theories and concepts from the data collected. Instruments such as interviews – interviewing participants; and observation – observing behavior of participants (Creswell, 2009) were utilized.
The research focused mainly on “how” and “what” questions as opposed to open-ended questions, in that, qualitative studies investigate the underlying meaning of an event (normally to subjects) and diligently seek their perspectives about how and why such an event happened. In this context, the subjects/participants of the study were principals, teachers and parents. Ultimately, this type of study (qualitative) will afford me the ability to collect diverse, thick data through semi-structured interviews with document analysis (Leacock, Rose, & Warrican, 2009). Furthermore, this study which used a multi-case approach heightened the ability to evaluate models across cases and described similarities, nuances and major disparities across these cases (Finnegan, 2008).

**Researcher’s Positionality**

Throughout the research process, you have interacted with your informants or participants or subjects and there is always the likelihood that you may impact the methodology or findings of the study. Especially in qualitative research, it is difficult for you to distant yourself from the subjects you interact with. Hence, it is necessary that you state your ‘position’ which is described as ‘reflexivity.’ (Valmiki Academy, n.d., pp. 42-43). “Reflexivity involves a self-scrutiny on the part of the researcher; a self-conscious awareness of the relationship between the researcher and an ‘other’” (Bourke, 2014, p.2). Simply put, reflexivity is a continuous process of self-analysis whereby the researcher reflects more in-depth on the experiences he/she faced while executing the research (Bourke, 2014).
Hence, the researcher’s positionality in this section of the study covers the researcher’s interest in the phenomenon investigated, his background and experiences in conducting the study, his role in the data collection and analysis, and the significant effects the researcher may have had on the data.

**Researcher’s Interest in the Phenomenon Investigated**

The conceptualization of researching this phenomenon (topic) started almost at the beginning of this present doctoral program. The irresponsibleness of some stakeholders in education (especially at the primary level) certainly aroused my interest to conduct a study in this state of affairs, which led me to ask the following inevitable questions: what are the roles of principals, teachers, and parents in educating children? Who is ultimately responsible to see that the child gets quality education? These questions have been bothering me for many years being a principal for a government owned primary and junior high school for approximately 10 years. I have had numerous experiences of principals, teachers, and parents blaming one another when students failed the former Grade Six Achievement Test (G.S.A.T) which is now the Primary Exit Profile (PEP). Thus, the unequivocal question that I have been asking from thence until now is, who is responsible to ensure that a child accesses quality education; and what are the roles of these key stakeholders (principals, teachers, and parents) in relation to children’s education. These questions aroused my interest to launch a qualitative multi-site study into the phenomenon of investigating the principals’, teachers’, and parents’ perceptions about their respective roles in children’s education at two un-named Jamaican school - one being rural and the other being urban.
**Background and Experience in Conducting the Study**

Apart from being a doctoral student in the Doctor of Education Program at Temple University, I hold the following qualifications: Teacher’s Diploma in Teacher Education, Diploma in Ministerial Studies, Post-graduate Diploma in School Management and Supervision, Bachelor of Arts Degree in Theology and General Studies, and a Master of Arts Degree in Theology, Theory of Education & Religious Education, and Counseling. I have also completed Part One of the Principals’ Post-graduate Program with the National College of Education and Leadership (NCEL) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. I am a principal, Justice of the Peace and Lay Magistrate for the Parish of Clarendon, Minister of Religion, Marriage Officer of the Island of Jamaica, Trained Guidance Counselor and Adjunct Lecturer. With this educational background and experience which has empowered me academically and professionally, I believe I should be able to conduct an invaluable research which I presume should make a worthwhile contribution to stakeholders, not only at the rural and urban primary schools studied, but also to other key stakeholders in primary education.

**Researcher’s Role in Data Collection and Analysis**

In a qualitative research, Locke et al. (2007) informed us that the researcher’s role being the chief data collection instrument is to identify personal values, assumptions, and biases at the very beginning of the study. These researchers believe that the contribution of the researcher or investigator can be beneficial, invaluable and good to the research setting instead of being harmful.

Thus, as an educator, instructional leader and school administrator for approximately thirty years, I have been practicing at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels molding and leading young and mature lives in the field of education. Having this kind of educational
background and wide experience from the respective disciplines and functionalities, I think I have an invaluable contribution to make in this area of study pedagogically, administratively, and professionally. As a consequence, I ensured that my personal biases did not deliberately influence or coerce the participants involved in the study in any way, and I made every effort to be objective, transparent and balanced during the data collection and analysis proceedings.

**Significant Effects the Researcher may have had on the Data**

Authentically speaking, the significant effects the researcher may have had on the data in general were certainly beneficial to the study, in that, being exposed to the ethics and scholasticisms of a good research/study the researcher used these cautious research tools to guide the study in the right direction. Hence, the researcher paid strict attention to the utilization of non-assumptive language during the analysis and presentation of the data in Chapter 4, as well as, the discussion of the data in Chapter 5. This was intentionally done in order to safeguard the credibility, authenticity and reliability of the data. In addition, the researcher did not try in anyway to trap or trick respondents to get the kind of responses that suited him, but rather posed questions that were clear, objective and equitable, giving subjects enough time to contemplate and then respond to the relevant questions asked based on their own volition.

On the other hand, being human, there could have been occasions during the processing, coding, analysis and discussion of the data when probably limited coercion could have taken place unknowingly. If this took place, this was not deliberately planned by the researcher and should not take away from the data a great deal as far as the authenticity and reliability of the data are concerned. The researcher tried his utmost to minimize all forms of misrepresentation, misinterpretation, assumptions and coercion during the collection, processing, triangulation, analysis and discussion of the data in order to make the data findings authentic and credible.
However, one should be consistently and cautiously reminded that “in a qualitative research, it is difficult for you to distant yourself from the subjects you interact with” (Valmiki Academy, n.d., pp. 42-43); hence, in this study there might have been minimal coercion of the respondents in order for them to respond accordingly and not straying away from the topic in question.

**Population and Sample**

What is a sample? A sample is a segment or portion of the elements retrieved from the size of a population. Hence, it is imperative that the population be first identified, before a sample can be selected (Black & Champion, 1976). On the other hand, a population is defined as the sum total of all cases to which an individual generalizes (Jaccard, 1983). Consequently, Jaccard postulated that for the selection of a sample to be beneficial, such a sample selection must be as close as possible to be a true representative sample of the entire population.

The sample of this study consisted of two principals, 15 teachers and 33 parents. Thirteen subjects participated from the rural school and 37 subjects participated from the urban school. This made up a total of 50 subjects who participated in the overall interview process at both schools. One principal, three teachers and nine parents from a total of 22 adult-participants were interviewed at the rural primary school, whilst one principal, 12 teachers and 24 parents from a total of 690 adult-participants were interviewed at the urban primary school.

Interviews with some of the rural parents were done at their respective homes because they did not visit the school to do their respective interviews that were scheduled. All the other interviews for both rural and urban principals, teachers, and parents were done at their respective schools. This method of selection was deliberately chosen in order to get a broad enough
A representative sample of the data collected. This methodology was intentionally pursued to ensure the authenticity, validity and credibility of the data collection process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.1</th>
<th>Summary of Participants-Rural School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category of Participants</td>
<td>Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School’s Total Adult Populations (Parents and Teachers)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Academic Staff Included in Sample</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Parents Included in Sample</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.2</th>
<th>Summary of Participants-Urban School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category of Participants</td>
<td>Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School’s Total Adult Populations (Parents and Teachers)</td>
<td>690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Academic Staff Included in Sample</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Parents Included in Sample</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.3</th>
<th>Total Number of Adult-Participants Involved in the Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total Across Both Schools</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rationale for Data Collection Strategies

The rationale for selecting this method of inquiry and data collection strategies is that in conducting a qualitative study, four basic types of procedures are normally utilized. These are: interviews, observations, documentation (looking at all relevant documents and also documenting what you hear), and the utilization of audio-visual materials (Creswell, 2009). A good qualitative study always requires this kind of methodology and procedural activities; thus, the selection of this method of inquiry and data collection strategies were appropriate, relevant and contextual for this qualitative design.

Data Collection

Throughout the process of data collection, I had face-to-face interaction with participants during the months of April to May, 2019, at the different multi-sites (homes of some rural parents and rural and urban schools selected). Even though a specific time was planned for rural and urban parents to come to both sites to be interviewed, a number of them did not turn up; hence, the researcher had to take the interviewing process to the homes of some rural parents who were not yet interviewed. It should be noted, however, that this problem was not only evident at the rural school with rural parents, but this dilemma was also experienced at the urban school, in that, a number of urban parents did not turn up for the interview, hence, the researcher had to rescheduled the interview in order to get them involved in the process. Nevertheless, the interviews went accordingly, in that, all 50 stakeholders who represented the population sample from both rural and urban schools were interviewed. This gives a further breakdown of two principals, 15 teachers, and 33 parents who were interviewed. The interviews were audio recorded and a complete transcription of each interview was done on a daily basis.
By doing a qualitative interview, Berg (2009) suggested that there is more room for data collection of the experiences of individuals to share, express and capture. Hence, Monette, Sillivan, and Delong (2011) posited that an interview is an excellent qualitative technique of data collection which provides genuine responses to questions asked and providing an allowance for clarity of the questions posed. The interview protocol/instrument consisted of demographic and background questions in additional to 7 questions directly linked to the overarching research question (See Interview Protocol in Appendix B). Open-ended and semi-structured interview questions were used throughout the interview. Hence, subjects were allowed the freedom to talk about their experiences in a manner in which they were at ease.

- A time schedule was set in order to interview the principal and teachers at different times, so that the respective interviews could be conducted in a structured and timely manner.
- Permission was granted by both principals to the researcher to use a tape recorder throughout the interview process.
- Timely observation, interviews, field notes and active participation by participants as well as the researcher were all immersed in the data collection process. The locations where the research was done, and the real names of participants were kept confidential and reported pseudonymously throughout the study.
- My field notes, written during the interviewing process, were properly secured until, and after, the data were finally analyzed.
- I obtained a signed statement of informed consent (See sample of Temple University IRB Approval Consent Form for prospective participants in Appendix D) from each of
the two principals after they corroborated with the teachers and parents at their respective schools.

- Permission in the form of two letters were also authorized and given by both principals to the researcher to interview the principals themselves, teachers and parents at the rural and urban schools (Note: Letters of institutional authorization have not been posted in Appendices for private and confidential reasons. Names of rural and urban schools need to be concealed based on Agreed Documentation of Privacy and Confidentiality between the researcher and rural and urban participants who were involved in the study).

A qualitative study also utilizes observation as one of the methods of data collection which is the selection and recording of how people behavior in their environment. Observation as a method of data collection is important for the execution of in-depth descriptions of organization or events, whereby information is obtained that is otherwise not accessible. Observation is also used in qualitative research when other methods of data collection are inadequate. Some of the rationale/advantages for using observation in a qualitative study are: the researcher has a first-hand encounter with the subjects or persons to be interviewed; the researcher can record information as it unfolds; things that are unusual can be noticed during the process of observation; and observation is useful in the exploration of topics that may be uncomfortable for participants to talk about (Creswell, 2009). Thus, this method of observation which was paramount during the data collection process was utilized in order to capture the real feeling and passion of stakeholders as they expressed themselves unreservedly.

Table 3.4 below illustrates the items on the interview schedules (for rural and urban principals) and the purpose for which they were designed.
Table 3.4
*Items on the Interview Schedule for Rural and Urban Principals*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, &amp; 3</td>
<td>Designed to identify respondents (principals) according to variables which relate to their age, institution attended, professional qualification, experience and position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, &amp; 10</td>
<td>Designed to find out the genesis of each school, status of institution, vibrancy of school board, number of students on role and gender, number of teachers on the academic staff and gender, number of degree and non-degree teachers on the academic staff, and vibrancy of PTA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11, 12 &amp; 13</td>
<td>Designed to provide information on the role of the principals, teachers and parents in educating children at both schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 &amp; 15</td>
<td>To get information on how the principal compare his role as principal with the role of the teacher; and how the principal compare his role with that of parent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Designed to find out who is really responsible to ensure that a child gets quality education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Seeks to uncover any other information the respondent would like to add to the interview.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5 below illustrates the items on the interview schedules (for rural and urban teachers) and the purpose for which they were designed.

Table 3.5
*Items on the Interview Schedule for Rural and Urban Teachers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Designed to identify respondents (teachers) according to variables which relate to their age, institution attended, professional training and qualification, and position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3, 4, 5 &amp; 6</td>
<td>Designed to find out the Grade teacher teaches, teacher’s teaching tenure at the school, number of students in the teacher’s class and the subjects teacher teaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7, 8 &amp; 9</td>
<td>Design to provide information on the role of teachers, principals and parents in educating children at both schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 &amp; 11</td>
<td>To get information on how the teacher compare his/her role as teacher with the role of the principal; and how the teacher compares his/her role with the role of parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Designed to find out who is really responsible to ensure that a child gets quality education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Seeks to uncover any other information the respondent would like to add to the interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.6 below illustrates the items on the interview schedules (for rural and urban parents at both schools) and the purpose for which they were designed.

Table 3.6
Items on the Interview Schedule for Rural and Urban Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>Designed to identify respondents (parents) according to variables which relate to their age, the number of children they gave birth to, level of education and the number of months or years they have been visiting the school,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 6 &amp; 7</td>
<td>Designed to unearth information on the role of parents, principals and teachers in relation to educating children at both schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 &amp; 9</td>
<td>To access information on how parents compare their role with the role of the principals; and how parents compare their role with the role of teachers at both schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Designed to find out who is really responsible to ensure that a child gets quality education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Seeks to uncover any other information the respondent would like to add to the interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.7 below presents Interview Schedule items with questions for the principals, teachers and parents of both rural and urban schools.

Table 3.7
Items on the Interview Schedule for Rural and Urban Principals, Teacher and Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 &amp; 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.8 below presents an alignment of Interview Schedule items with the Two Major Research Questions used to collect data at both schools.

Table 3.8
Alignment of Interview Schedule Items with the Two Major Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Interview Schedule Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R. Q. #1</td>
<td>11, 12 &amp; 13 (Principals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Q. #2</td>
<td>14, 15 &amp; 16, (Principals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Q. #1</td>
<td>7, 8 &amp; 9 (Teachers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Q. #2</td>
<td>10, 11 &amp; 12 (Teachers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Q. #1</td>
<td>5, 6 &amp; 7 (Parents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Q. #2</td>
<td>8, 9, &amp; 10 (Parents)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Informants

A sample of 50 informant/participants were chosen because the researcher thought that the sample sizes from both schools were adequate to represent the populations at both schools. A total of 50 interviews were conducted. Interviewees were provided with a copy of the informed consent form pointing out the purpose of the study, how they can participate and withdraw from the study and any expected risk of harm that may be involved. Both principals were asked by the researcher to provide referrals of informants (teachers and parents) who were eligible and had interest in the study. Subjects from both institutions were contacted later by the researcher who outlined to them the purpose and nature of the study, extrapolating their rights to participate or not to participate in the study. Informants were able to provide the information needed to answer the research questions; also, subjects attributes typical of the populations of both rural and urban institutions.

It was obvious, that the rationale for choosing these participants for the study was their willingness to consent. Participants of this study were also chosen due to their expertise, years of experience in school administration and leadership, teaching and parenting, and their great
passion for children and loyalty to both schools. Fundamentally, I strongly believe that these participants added value to the subject matter of the study based on their years of expertise and experience. Bearing in mind their devotedness to these institutions for several years, demonstrate quite vividly their indefatigableness, commitment, and dedication. Additionally, these stakeholder-participants (principals, teachers, and parents) would have been more conditioned to the underlining state of affairs that presently heightens at both rural and urban schools.

Personally, the interviews were executed and recorded in a private, comforting, welcoming, quiet, and neutral location at both schools, free from danger, coercion and intimidation. Apart from the homes of some rural parents where some of the interviews were done, all other interviews were done in the office of the rural principal. All interviews were done in the guidance counselor’s office and in the principal’s office at the urban school.

**Pilot-Testing**

In order to assist the researcher to determine whether there were flaws, limitations or other weaknesses within the interview protocol or design and enable the researcher to make necessary adjustments and revisions before the implementation of the study, a basic pilot study was carried out by the researcher with one of the stakeholders who was interviewed at the urban school. The interview was audio-recorded in order to ensure the correct utilization of the electronic device. While the exercise was executed, the stakeholder’s body language, non-verbal responses, and the nature of questioning were observed. The researcher was the main data collection instrument, hence, the pilot-study provided a bird’s eye view into the construct studied, and also increased the researcher’s experience in the interviewing process, as well as, sharpened his interpersonal skills. As a consequence, errors made during the pilot-study, in interviewing skills, were corrected and were not reiterated in the major research/study.
Data Analysis

Three forms of analysis were employed in the study: Inductive Analysis, Constant Comparative Analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), and Content Analysis (Berg, 2009). Inductive Analysis – this is sorting and analyzing data into categories and themes. Thus, Thomas (2006) talked about the rationale or purposes for using the inductive approach/analysis. He said that the reasons for using an inductive analysis/approach in a qualitative study are to: (a) condense large raw data into brief summaries (b) set up clear connections between the research objectives and the findings of the summary drawn from the raw data; and (c) establish a network or frame of reference of the underlying structure of experiences that are vividly seen in the raw data. Hence, Thomas argued that the inductive analysis approach employs a systematic set of procedures that are easily utilized for the analyzation of qualitative data that can generate sound and empirical findings. Thus, Inductive analysis was appropriately used to analyze the data of this study.

Constant Comparative Analysis – this is comparing the data across all data sources and looking for similarities, nuances and major disparities as the process of analysis proceeds (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Having collected all the relevant data, the data at hand were compared with the data collected before, in order to decipher and analyze similarities and dissimilarities when juxtaposing the data.

Content Analysis – this has to do with observing the data critically in order to point out styles or patterns, themes, biases, and meanings (Berg, 2009).
As a result, the raw data of this study were further analyzed by steps in detail chronology, based on Creswell’s (2009) framework of qualitative procedures mentioned above in figure 3.1. The coding and analysis strategies/procedures are extrapolated below chronologically:

- Step 1. All gathered raw data were retrieved from the transcripts and fieldnotes (Creswell, 2009) as a result of the face to face interviews done with the principal, teachers, and parents on both morning and afternoon shifts (urban school); and the face to face interviews done with the rural principal, teachers, and parents (rural school). Having reviewed all 50 audio-tapes repeatedly and thoroughly that came from the interviews (which became the raw data) they were then transferred into Microsoft Word document format.

- Step 2. The data were then organized and prepared chronologically for analysis and presentation. All the interviews were transcribed, scanned, and field notes were typed and infused into the general data processing. The data were further sorted and arranged...
into the different groups of stakeholders (principals, teachers, and parents) (Creswell, 2009).

- Step 3. The data were read through thoroughly; this was done comprehensively to acquire an overall understanding of the information and its general interpretation. My general thoughts were written down on fundamental aspects of the data as I continued the review process. As I read through thoroughly, I reflected on the general understanding or meaning of what respondents were saying, bearing in mind the tone of their ideas, their credibility and the overall use and significance of the information at hand (Creswell, 2009).

- Step 4. The data were coded by hand into themes and descriptions. Creswell (2009) citing (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p.171) said that coding is a process which involves organizing the data/information into chunks, portions or segments of a text before the information has meaning or is understood. Thus, the data text collected was then segmented into a content unit. Smith and Strickland (2001) opined that a content unit is a chunk or portion of a discourse devised to make one point (p.150). The themes that were coded emanated from the exact language of the respondents (Creswell, 2009).

The coding process was used to produce a thorough description of the geographical settings (rural and urban schools); the people/participants (rural and urban principals, teachers, and parents) who were interviewed, as well as the provision of codes for data description (Creswell, 2009, p.189). Having produced codes for the description of the data (see tables 4.1 to 4.2), I further used coding to generate a number of themes which compartmentalized the study/research thematically. The themes that emerged from the data were organized and analyzed and then amalgamated into a general description which became the major findings of the study (Creswell, 2009).
It should also be noted that content analysis was integrated into this research study which had to do with observing the data critically in order to distinguish “patterns, themes, biases, and meanings” (Berg, 2009). The utilization of the conventional content analysis in this research was to describe vividly a specific construct or phenomenon. In order to make sense of the coded data holistically the data were read repeatedly (Tesch, 1990). Being a researcher, I deliberately immersed my whole being into the data, thus, allowing my own interpretation and insights to emanate from what I had read (Kondracki & Wellman, 2002). The data were also read verbatim in order to develop the appropriate codes for the data findings analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Morgan, 1993).

- Step 5. Comparing/interrelating themes and descriptions: A discussion of the different themes and subthemes, and the many different perceptions of rural and urban participants, in addition to the exact responses of informants (verbatim/direct quotations of subjects) (Creswell, 2009) were provided for a full understanding of the data findings.

- Step 6. Interpretation of the meaning of the themes and descriptions: The interpretation or meaning of the data was done by triangulating, juxtaposing, and comparing the findings of the research with the theoretical framework of the study, and also the literature review in Chapter 2 in order to verify whether the findings corroborated with previous or existing researches. Creswell (2009) argued about the researcher’s own or individual meaning, understanding or interpretation which is affected in understanding what the researcher conveys to the research by way of his/her experiences, culture, and history. Thus, my personal feelings, discrimination, prejudices, flaws, inequities, biases, and partialities in no way have a strong effect on the study/research.
Authentically speaking, my personal encounter played a very pivotal role in my own understanding and interpretation of data analysis process. Being persistent in my analysis, I was determined to document the views, notions and perceptions of each subject chronologically and authentically as much as possible. Through their own insights I was able to focus and interpret their verbatims. Consequently, their narrations, experiences, and how they interpreted the meaning of the respective phenomenon in question were thoroughly captured and documented for further research and pedagogical praxis. In order to be fully acquainted with the rigorous processes of manual coding, no computer software program was used to codify the themes and arrange the data for analysis and presentation in order to supplement this study.

**Methods of Verification**

Creswell (2009) argued about the potential validity threats, and the importance of minimizing or avoiding them. According to Creswell, several threats to validity exist that can question the ability of the researcher to bring the research to an outcome or result. He pointed out that there are two types of threats to validity: internal and external. Internal validity threats are the experiences of the respondents/participants which impede or threaten the ability of the researcher to draw conclusions or inferences from the data concerning the population being studied. On the other hand, external validity threats are those threats that may arise when researchers or experimenters draw conclusions or inferences from the data sample in reference to other individuals, settings, past or other events in the future that are not accurate. As a consequence, in this study, the following procedures were used to ensure internal and external validity, integrity, reliability, and trustworthiness of the data analysis process.

Multiple Sources of Data: Using multiple sources in qualitative research is one of the techniques used to accommodate the validity of data through the process of cross verification
with two or more sources. Hence, this process has to do with the application and amalgamation of several research methods that deal with a similar phenomenon (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). As a consequence, this study employed the use of multiple data sources to compare, contrast and crosscheck the data collected for analysis. By this method, there was no single reliance on any one source of data.

Peer-Review/Peer Debriefing: This is the evaluation of one’s work, research, or study by one or more persons of the same competence or field of study. Peer-review/peer debriefing is self-regulated by qualified members of a profession within a related field. The methods of peer-review are utilized to uphold standards of quality, enhance performance, and to facilitate credibility and accuracy (Creswell, 2009). Consequently, a peer-review/peer debriefing of this research was done to reflect my own interpretation and situations during the research process. This peer-review/debriefing was done by one of my colleagues in the field of education who obtained her post-graduate qualification which focused on stakeholders (teachers, parents and disadvantaged children) at an un-named high school.

Member Checks: Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, and Walter (2016) opined that the backbone of a research of high quality is based on the trustworthiness of its results or findings. Hence, these researchers posited that member-checks which is also called member-checking is a good verification method in a qualitative research, whereas, participant or respondent validation is a unique strategy/technique used to check the credibility of the results/data retrieved. By this process, the results/data are returned by the researcher to the participants, and the researcher double checks with the participants for accuracy in order to determine whether the participants changed the original information given to the researcher in the first interview or whether they still hold on to their original positionality or may even have additional information that they
would like to add or change. Thus, during the data collection process, member checks were carried out among participants to test the accuracy/validity of the research findings with the participants involved in the study (Creswell, 2009).

Data Collection and Duration: Bearing in mind the data collection process, Miles and Huberman (1994) told us that a dialogue concerning the respondents/participants and sites may involve four main segments: where the study will be conducted (the setting), the persons to be observed and interviewed (the actors), what the actors will be doing while they will be observed and interviewed (the events), and ultimately, the ongoing nature of the events taken on by the actors in the midst of the setting (the process). As a result, a keen interest was taken into consideration as regards to the settings (rural and urban schools), the actors/participants (rural and urban respondents), the events (interviews and observation) and the research process during the collection of the data needed for the research. Having borne these research essentials in mind, the data collection for this study took approximately two months. This time period was necessary, because, Creswell (2009) cautioned researchers that a prolonged time period should be spent in the field which will help researchers to develop an in-depth understanding of the construct being studied, and can also help to convey vital information about the site being studied, and the persons who lend credibility to narrative account.

Validity

Validity in a quantitative study is whether a person is able to draw meaningful and useful conclusion from the number of points on specific instruments. The strategies that validate the data findings in a study are: member checking, and triangulating sources of data which qualitative researchers utilize to show the accuracy or validity of their data findings. They do this in order to persuade their readers of the accuracy of the findings of their studies (Creswell,
Hence, member checking and the triangulation of multiple sources across data sets were used in this study to ascertain its data findings accuracy or validity.

Reliability

According to Bryman (2008) reliability is the consistency of a measured concept. Similarly, Creswell (2009) purported that qualitative reliability has to do with consistency across different researches/studies and projects. The interview questions that were utilized throughout the interview process were reliable and therefore produced credible results for this study. The reliable strategies of this research are contained in Gibbs (2007) work as cited in Creswell (2009).

On the contrary, Merriam (1998) postulated that achieving reliability in the traditional context is not only evasive or euphemistic but is almost impossible. Notwithstanding, reliability procedures were used for this study in order to ascertain some level of reliability. The following procedures were:

- Persistence in checking all transcripts to make sure that there were no infallibilities during the transcription processes.
- Consistently juxtaposing and comparing the data with codes whilst at the same time writing notes/memos about codes and definitions.
- Seeing to it that all definitions of coding remain unchangeable.
- Making sure that all interviews were standardized and that subjects/informants were cognizant of the specific purpose of the interview.

Research Procedures

In order to enable a transparent data gathering, and to make sure that there was a vivid and accurate picture of the data findings that should be gathered for the scheduled interviews; and as a means to the data that should be collated which should be consistent with the goals of this study, a well structured protocol was pursued. This protocol involved:
• Sending Consent Form for Perspective Participants to Temple University IRB for Approval (Approval was granted) (See Appendix D)

• Seeking approval from Temple University Institutional Review Board (IRB) in regard to interviews scheduled for both rural and urban schools which was granted (See Appendix F)

• Sending IRB Risks Protocol to Temple University for Approval: Application for Human Subjects Research/IRB sent to Temple University was Approved (See Appendix G)

• Obtaining institutional authorization letters from both schools which were all granted before the study was conducted (Note: Letters of institutional authorization have not been posted in Appendices for private and confidential reasons. Names of rural and urban schools need to be concealed based on Agreed Documentation of Privacy and Confidentiality between the researcher and rural and urban participants who were involved in the study)

• Letters seeking permission from both schools to conduct study (See Appendix H & Appendix I)

• Respondents were guaranteed that both written and verbal data retrieved for the research would have been held in confidence and privately, and that pseudonyms would have been used throughout the study to represent interviewees who were involved in the study. This promise between the researcher and subjects was kept.

• The researcher made all participants aware of the study. Participants were asked to sign a consent form before the interview process started.
- Participants were interviewed at their respective schools (rural and urban) and homes. However, some interviews were done in rural homes to facilitate parents who were not able to visit the school (rural school) for an interview.
- The observation of participants was done keenly during the interview process.
- During the interview process, all interviews were audio taped, and a comprehensive transcription of all the interviews was done daily.
- For every interview that was executed, fieldnotes were secured and maintained for further use in the study.
- Constantly reviewing rural and urban schools’ data to identify similarities and dissimilarities in order to obtain more information.
- Thorough and in-depth codification of data for apparent themes that emanate/emerge

Little over a two months period, all relevant data were retrieved from April to the first week of June 2019. The time schedule/table in Appendix C outlines the time period over which the data were collected and the number of activities that took place over that period of time throughout the study.

**Administration Procedures**

Two letters from the researcher were sent to both rural and urban schools seeking permission from both principals to collect the data for the study. In order to inform the participants of both schools of the nature, aims and objectives of the study, a cover letter along with a questionnaire were sent to both institutions, seeking the permission of all respondents who were going to be involved in the study (See Appendix B and Appendix H & I)
Ethical and Moral Consideration

The privacy, rights, needs, values, and desires of all subjects should be respected by the researcher according to Creswell during the data collection process (Creswell, 2009). In addition, Babbie (2001) informed us that ethical and moral consideration are fundamental elements that should be very much a part of all social research, investigating humankind. As a consequence, the threat of no harm to subjects was explicitly discussed at length with all subjects (Babbie, 2001).

Temple University Institutional Review Board (IRB) gave permission to the researcher to conduct the study at both schools. Informants were given two choices: to participate or not to participate in the study; no coercion nor forcing the participants to take part in the study occurred. The willingness of subjects to participate in a study according to Homan (1991) must be free from purposive influence, and coercion. Rural and urban informants got all the necessary information they needed from the researcher to make their own informed decision.

Attached to all interview protocols were cover letters and consent forms which were submitted to participants for proper scrutiny before the respective interviews started (See Appendix D). All interviewees were asked to inscribe their signatures to the consent forms. This was a declaration for them to endorse by filling out the signature sections that they agreed to participate in the study voluntarily, and also consent that the information that they provided could be used in the study. Assurance was given to interviewees that their identities would not be disclosed, and that all information in connection to them, and the different sites where the study would be conducted would have been narrated by the utilization of pseudonyms. A filing cabinet was used to store all collected data; these data were securely locked away and secured.

Furthermore, electronic files of all data collected were kept and protected on a password computer that was well protected. The tape recorder which contained the collected data from both
sites is properly secured at a secluded and unrevealing spot in my office. The findings/results were shared with the principals and teachers at the rural and urban schools subsequent to the completion of the study. The rural and urban principals were asked to share the findings of the study with the parents who participated in the study, and also the entire parent body at one of their regular PTA monthly meetings.

All participants were motivated to be a part of the research project; and those participants who demonstrated a level of shyness had the option to participate or not to participate in the research investigation. They also had the choice of excluding themselves from the interview process at any time if they felt uncomfortable. However, those who felt uncomfortable with participating in the study had the option to be excluded from the study at any time. They were also told that they were at liberty to answer or not to answer any question that may expose private or confidential information that put them at risks.

**Privacy and Confidentiality**

Confidentiality has to do with persons who have legal access to information that is sensitive and private. They are expected not to disclose legal information given to them, unless they are permitted by the person who passes on such information to them. Hence, not disclosing private information given out of the spirit of trust to undesirable persons without the consent of the one who gives it in confidence is known as confidentiality (DeGrazia & Brand-Ballard, 2011).

Therefore, confidentiality concerning the participants was maintained in that they were assured that identified information would not have been available to anyone who was not directly involved in the study. The principle of anonymity was also honored, which means that all participants remained anonymous throughout the study. Participants had a right to serve or not to
serve; hence, they were allowed to participate freely. Authorization was given to me by the principals of both institutions before I observed the locations and participants to be studied. The data were kept in a locked filing cabinet during and after the dissertation process was complete.

Summary

The methodology and procedure of any study is paramount to its authenticity and credibility which this section of the study has demonstrated. Chapter 3 of the research shows how the raw data was collected, juxtaposed, triangulated, verified, and validated. Thus, this section looks at the preamble, the rationale for a qualitative design, the researcher’s positionality, the population and sample, the rationale for data collection strategies, data collection, informants, pilot-testing, the data analysis, the methods of verification, validity, reliability, research procedures, the administrative procedures, ethical considerations, privacy and confidentiality, and a summary.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to discover whether important stakeholders in primary education (principals, teachers and parents) hold divergent or similar views in relation to their respective roles in educating the children who attend two primary schools (rural and urban) in the parish of Clarendon, Jamaica, West Indies.

The findings presented in this chapter are structured in accordance with the two major research questions which guided the study. These are:

1. How do principals, teachers, and parents perceive their respective roles in relation to the education of children at two Jamaican schools – one rural and one urban?

2. To what extent do the perceptions of principals, teachers and parents differ in regard to their respective roles in relation to children accessing quality education at two Jamaican schools – one rural and one urban?

This chapter consists of the analysis and presentation of data. The data were audio-taped, transcribed, member-checked, juxtaposed, triangulated, coded and peer-reviewed/debriefed repeatedly until the appropriate themes emerged from the data under which the results of the study were presented. The research design that was used in this study was a qualitative (narrative analysis) model. Czarniawska (2004) described the term narrative in this manner: “I will define it here as a specific type of qualitative design in which narrative is understood as a spoken/written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected” (p.17).
This chapter presents the results which emanated from the analysis of the fifty (50) interviews. A qualitative analysis was executed in order to identify the patterns of data in connection to the study of the principals’, teachers’, and parents’ perceptions about their respective roles in children’s education at both schools – rural and urban. Exemplars from the raw data were chosen based on their close alignment and proximity to the raw data. They were used to substantiate the relevant analytical argumentations used to strengthen the overall data analysis placed under each theme. Finally, the exact words of a number of informants’ responses were presented in a number of cases. This was deliberately done in order to uphold the integrity and authenticity of the research whilst simultaneously expressing the views of participants who responded in the interviews.

The two primary schools studied are co-educational and offer five core subjects: Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science and Aesthetics. Data in Table 4.1 below show the differences between the two schools, most notably in size and teacher to student ratio. The urban school is older than the rural school as it opened September 1956 while the rural school opened January 1968. Table 4.1 for further details on the characteristics of both rural and urban schools.
Table 4.1

*Characteristics of the Schools*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inception</td>
<td>January, 1968</td>
<td>September, 1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Board</td>
<td>Fairly Active</td>
<td>Very Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>Partially Active</td>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender of Students:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Teachers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Degreed Teachers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender of Teachers:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil/Teacher Ratio</td>
<td>6.8 to 1</td>
<td>24.9 to 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The schools’ respondents differ considerably by school shown in Table 4.2 below. On the whole, those in the urban school were more educated. On the contrary, the rural school evidenced considerably involvement. See Table 4.2 for further details.

Table 4.2

*Characteristics of the Respondents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers with at least a bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents with Primary Education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years of School Involvement:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis and Presentation of Data

The analysis and presentation of the data in this section were structured in line with the constructs that emanated from the literature review which provided the theoretical framework for the study. Taken into consideration the focus of the research, the major research questions that were used to guide the study were:

1. How do principals, teachers, and parents perceive their respective roles in relation to the education of children at two Jamaican schools – one rural and one urban.

2. To what extent do the perceptions of principals, teachers and parents differ in regard to their respective roles in relation to children accessing quality education at two Jamaican schools – one rural and one urban?

Tables 3.9 to 3.10 in Chapter 3 present a summary of the alignment of the two research questions with the corresponding interview questions. These tables showed the extent to which the respective interview items were designed to garner information for the analysis of data, and to have a better understanding of the data in response to each of the two research questions. In qualitative research, the researcher needs to be sensitive, responsive and impartial to the data during the data analysis stage. Of real significance, is that, the researcher at all times, should remain impartial and should not allow speculations to influence the findings of the study.

Rossman (1989) indicated that qualitative research is a process that takes into account subjects’ views in their world, while simultaneously seeking to unveil those views or perspectives. The author points out that an investigation is an interactive course between the one who is doing the research and the informants. In addition, a qualitative study is primarily descriptive and relies on individuals’ words as the primary data.
In the same breath, Merritt and Labbo (2004) postulated the phenomenon that researchers in essence must look at what is present and not necessarily what they are expecting to be present or seen. As a result, the qualitative data that were gathered for this study were thoroughly juxtaposed, scrutinized and examined, in order to identify and determine meaningful data patterns that evolved from the data.

Two major themes emerged from the data and are related directly to the two research questions; these are:

1. Differing Perceptions of School Organization, with its two sub-themes: leadership and discipline seen through the lens of the principals, teachers and parents of both schools who were interviewed, which corroborated with research question 1.

2. School Functioning - with its three sub-themes: communication, participation/involvement, and stakeholders’ partnership seen through the lens of the principals, teachers and parents of both schools who were interviewed, which also corroborated with research question 2.

Research Question 1: How Do Principals, Teachers, and Parents Perceive Their Respective Roles in Relation to the Education of Children at Two Jamaican schools – One Rural and One Urban?

In connection to research question 1, the data were juxtaposed and triangulated in order to derive the common themes which later emerged from the raw data. As was said previously, one major theme emerged and two sub-themes from the raw data which are connected directly to research question 1. The common major theme is:

Theme 1: Differing and Similar Perceptions of School Organization

The sub-themes that emerged from the data in connection to Theme 1 are:

• Leadership
Theme 1: Differing and Similar Perceptions of School Organization

In relation to research question 1, the findings of the study revealed that the respondents (principals, teachers and parents) who were interviewed from the rural and urban schools had critical disagreements as well as agreements in their perceptions about their respective roles in relation to children’s education at both institutions. Even though the areas of disagreement are of a greater concern, the researcher focused firstly on the areas of agreement before analyzing the critical areas of disagreement.

Areas of Stakeholders’ Agreement in Relation to Children’s Education

Sub-theme 1: Leadership

With reference to research question 1, the data findings of the study have shown that for a child to access quality education, leadership in the context of designated roles at every level is compulsory. Thus, having analyzed the data at hand, the findings of the data have shown clearly that most of the respondents/interviewees agreed that each stakeholder (principal, teacher and parent) being a part of this leadership process, has a fundamental role to play in the child’s academic life by owning his/her responsibility/role. As a consequence, the findings of the study show that the role of the principal is to lead the school in the areas of instruction and facilitation. In the context of the classroom, the teacher is also seen as a leader in the quintessential areas of facilitating students’ learning, imparting knowledge to students, and assessing students’ academic work consistently as revealed by the study’s findings. And last, but by no means least, a parent is also an important leader-stakeholder in the home whose role is to prepare his/her child/children for school by supervising his/her deportment, providing daily meals for them, ensuring that the child is punctual for school, supervising the child’s class work and home work,
the provision of all needed resources for learning to take place, creating a good study environment for the child and motivating the child to study consistently, keep track of the child’s attendance at school, and being involved in the life/affairs of the school. Below, the data findings show the exact areas in which each stakeholder leads to empower the child with quality education.

**The Principal’s Role**

The findings of the data revealed that rural and urban respondents agreed that the principals of both schools are seen as instructional leader and facilitator. In relation to the education of children at these two Jamaican schools in response to research question 1, 42 of the 50 people who participated in the interview (84%) expressed their views that the role of both rural and urban principals has to do with being an instructional leader and facilitator. This common view runs across the data from the face-to-face interviews conducted at both schools and was captured from the rural principal, three rural teachers, seven rural parents, the urban principal, 12 urban teachers, and 18 urban parents.

As key stakeholders in the process of helping to educate children, the data revealed that it is their beliefs that the principal is ultimately responsible to lead the teaching and learning processes in their schools by seeing to it that competent and adequate teachers are on the academic staff, teachers are properly trained pedagogically, quality instruction is being delivered to students, and students are learning and performing academically. In executing more administrative functions, the principals are expected to keep ongoing academic records, teachers are being facilitated with the necessary and appropriate resources that are needed to enhance students’ learning, ongoing professional and content development seminars are executed to keep teachers up to date with the new paradigm shifts that are taking place in education, and that
the delivery of the content or subject matter by teachers is in line with the Ministry of Education curriculum. Finally, the principal ensures that the school environment is student-friendly and is conducive to learning, and that the school ethos is centered around students’ academic achievement supported by awards for excellence as a means of student motivation.

Below are some of the exact views of informants that reflect their opinions captured in the interviews at both schools. The rural principal said:

The principal is responsible to see that appropriate instructions take place in the school by supervising all teachers under his command. He needs to know what is taking place in the classes, know about students’ academic performance on internal and external exams, pay attention to proper record keeping of students’ academic records, and being a facilitator by providing resources for teachers to teach students to enhance their learning.

On the other hand, this is what the urban principal had to say which seems to be synonymous with the perspective of the rural principal:

The principal, as the leader of instructional delivery at the school, first of all ensures that competent staff members are employed who can facilitate the learning needs of the students. The principal ensures that the staff members are properly equipped pedagogically and where there are gaps in competence ensures that professional development of staff members addresses these gaps. She also sees to it that the curriculum is attuned to the learning needs of the students, procures the necessary instructional materials, sees to it that appropriate assessment tools are utilized to measure students’ progress and that where deficiencies occur, students get the opportunity to master the basic concepts before more difficult ones are introduced. Additionally, the principal ensures that the school’s learning environment is student-friendly, and that the entire school ethos is geared towards student achievement with appropriate awards for excellence.

In giving her perspective on the role of the principal as an instructional leader a rural teacher said that “The role of the principal is to lead the staff and students in the areas of teaching and learning.” Another rural teacher said that “The principal’s role is to be the main facilitator of teaching and learning. He should be the resource person in the school; so, in essence, he is the leader of teaching and learning.” A third respondent from the rural school also said that “The principal is the leading teacher whose responsibility is to lead the school in teaching and learning; he should be guiding instructional deliveries, supervising lesson planning and assessment in order to educate students in the school he leads.
Similar views were also postulated in the interview by a number of urban teachers. A few examples of their perspectives are as follows: “The role of the principal is to ensure that lesson plans are done and executed by teachers to foster student’s learning; and to facilitate the teacher with all the resources that are needed to enhance learning in students.”

As the principal of the school she provides leadership in the areas of teaching and learning and ensures that all the material and resources are sufficiently available so that teaching and learning can take place, being the chief facilitator in the school.

“The principal’s role is to guide his/her staff being the instructional leader and facilitator who will bring out the best academic performance in all the students.”

It would appear that the majority of rural and urban parents held the same common view that the principal is the instructional leader and facilitator at their schools, in that, the principal should be “the leading teacher who should see to it that all the resources are given to the teacher to teach the class and that the children learn their lessons,” said one rural parent. Another rural parent said: “Show the teachers what to teach and what not to teach to the students and give the teachers all the facilities the teachers need to make the children learn.” According to another rural parent, the principal should “guide the teachers in teaching and motivate the children to learn.”

As was said previously, some urban parents also believed that the role of the principal is to lead and facilitate in the areas of teaching and learning. Here are the comments of three urban parents whose views are presented below:

The principal is there to lead and guide both teachers and students in teaching and learning; in other words, the principal has to make sure that all facilities is in place, so the kids can get a better education, for example: providing computers for the children so that they can be more advance in technology.
The role of the principal is more like a facilitator in seeing to it that the teachers are provided with all the resources (human, physical and financial) needed to enhance students’ learning.

The principal is responsible to ensure that the teacher teaches the students from the curriculum that the Ministry of Education demands, and ensures that the teacher does his job well, and that the child learns.

*The Teacher’s Role*

Thirty-nine of the 50 informants from both schools who together represented (78%) agreed that the teacher as classroom leader has an important role in helping to educate the students who sit in his/her class. The findings show that this important role has to do with the teacher facilitating students’ learning, imparting knowledge to students, and assessing students’ academic work. The stakeholder-participants who held on to this view were the rural principal, three rural teachers, seven rural parents, the urban principal, 10 urban teachers, and 17 urban parents. Juxtaposing these three groups of respondents based on the interviews, it should be noted that both rural and urban respondents seemed to believe that these are the essential roles or responsibilities that the teachers of both primary schools should be practicing in the classroom in relation to educating the children who attended these schools. A few examples of their quotes are presented below:

The role of the teacher is to be in charge of the class to facilitate learning; and assessing the academic work of students,” said the rural principal. And, the urban principal responded in this manner:

The classroom teacher is crucial in facilitating student achievement and overall performance. It is essential that staff members be properly trained, deployed, resourced and supervised so that they can impart knowledge to their clients. Teachers’ lesson planning, execution of lessons and assessments of students’ academic work are paramount in this endeavor. Very crucially as well, staff members must use data to drive their instruction, and maintain up-to-date records that can chart/track students’ needs/progress so that no one will be left behind.
One of the urban teachers replied:

The role of the teacher is to facilitate the learning process; this means that the teacher should pull from the students’ their thoughts, stimulate their minds and help them to think critically, rather than just banking information in their brains. This is not what is happening, but this is what I think should be done.

Another urban teacher narrated:

To impart knowledge to the students and to carry out ongoing assessment of students’ academic work; to teach them and prepare them so that they can use the information that they have garnered to fit into the outside world, and thus, equipping them for the world of work; to guide and to facilitate the students how to solve problems, and to help them to think critically, logically and rationally.

One rural teacher said, “The role of the teacher is the facilitation of the child’s learning, impartation of the content area to students, and the evaluation of the child’s work.”

Additional comments by both rural and urban teachers were:

- “The role of the teacher is a big role, but, the main role of the teacher is to facilitate learning activities, impart knowledge to students and to assess students learning activities,” responded a rural teacher.
- “The role of the teacher is holistic that is facilitating, imparting and evaluating students’ learning activities. Thus, the teacher should teach the total child,” said this rural teacher.
- “The teacher has a multiplicity of roles but the teacher’s main role is to facilitate learning, posit knowledge to students and to guide the students academically by evaluating them, monthly, mid-termly and annually,” according to this urban teacher.
- “The main role of a teacher in the classroom is to play the role of facilitating students’ learning, knowledge impartation in students, and the evaluation and examination of all academic work done by students in the class

Rural and urban parents expressed themselves in this manner:
• Teachers are facilitators of learning; that is to guide the students into what they want them to learn, impart knowledge to them and then assess them, so that, they can learn by discovering things on their own rather than telling them. (Rural Parent)
• “The primary role of the teacher is to facilitate students learning; motivating the students, impart knowledge which will provide a worthwhile learning environment for the children,” replied yet another rural parent.
• “To make learning possible for the students, pass on knowledge, and to evaluate students’ learning,” this urban parent responded.
• “The teacher is in the classroom to foster learning in students, facilitate them during the teaching of the lesson, mark their books, and assess their work in class,” said another urban parent.

**The Parent’s Role**

**Core Roles.** Another vital finding that emanated from the data is core parental roles for children’s education. Core parental roles are the main roles parents need to execute in order to enhance their children’s education. Forty-six (46) participants who represented 92% of the 50 respondents reported consistently that the main leadership roles of parents in their homes are: preparing children for school, paying attention to their children’s attire and deportment, providing daily lunches for them, seeing that they are punctual for school, ensuring that their children’s class work and home work are done, providing all the resources the child needs for learning enhancement and empowerment, encouraging the child to study, monitoring consistent attendance at school, attending PTA meetings and seminars, and being involved in an ongoing dialogue with teachers pertaining to the child’s academic performance. These
subjects were: the rural principal, three rural teachers, eight rural parents, the urban principal, 12 urban teachers, and 21 urban parents.

The notion of both principals on the leadership roles of parents in their children’s education at home is synonymous. These principals purported that the most important roles of parents are: to provide their children with all the necessary tools that are needed for school; they should prepare the children for school – meaning that their children should leave their homes properly attired, ready to learn with their books, bags, pencil, pens and all the necessary things required for learning in school. Parents should see to it that their children who are attending school do their academic work, inspect and check on their children’s home work, and also visit the school to find out what their children are doing.

Rural and urban teachers also held on to the same perception about the leading role of parents in their children’s education. According to them, the role of parents is to assist their children to get quality education, getting them ready and prepared for school, provide the necessary resources that they need for learning, ensure that their children have a nutritious breakfast, books, pencils, showing up at school to enquire about their children’s academic performance, attending PTA meetings and parenting seminars, supervising their children’s homework, and all the other necessities that the school requires for their children.

Below are some of the perceptions of both rural and urban parents who send their children to both rural and urban schools; the comments of this rural parent were:

- The most important roles of parents are preparing their children for school – meaning that their children should leave their homes properly attired, provide heathy lunches for them, make them ready to learn with their books, bags, pencil, pens and all the necessary things required for learning in school. Parents should see to it that their children who are attending school do their academic work that they are supposed to be doing; they are supposed to inspect and check on their children’s home work, and also visit the school to find out what their children are doing.
- “My role is to send my children to school to learn,” replied another rural parent.
“A parent role is to see to it that the children attend school; see to it that they get homework; see to it that they read and look over their children’s work,” yet another rural parent responded. Again, this rural parent stated her core role vivid: “My main role as a parent is to make sure that my children are well supported by sending them to school early, providing lunch or lunch money for them daily, seeing to it that they are well disciplined, visiting the school to communicate with the principal and teachers about my children’s academic work, and assisting them with homework activities.

“Parents should see that their children do their homework, send the children to school every day, provide food or lunch money for them to eat at school, and ensure that the children go to school often,” responded another rural parent.

Finally, the perceptions of this rural parent about her core role was expressed in a similar manner:

A good parent is one who sends his/her children to school every day; ensures that they eat their breakfast before they go to school; helps them with their homework; sees to it that the teacher gives the child homework and visits the school to talk with the teacher about the child’s academic performance.

Urban parents held on to the same view as rural parents when they were asked what the role of a parent should be; these comments were their views:

This was what this urban parent had to say, “The role of a parent is to see that the child has a healthy meal every day, learns his lesson, pay attention to his studies, does his/her homework, reach school on time, attend school every day, and go to the school to discuss the child’s academic performance with his teacher. A second urban parent said, “A parent should ensure that the child goes to school; make sure that the child is punctual for school; assist the child in doing homework; ensure that the child is properly attired for school; and make sure the child is provided with a daily meal. “Let the child turn up for school on time and attend school regularly,
encourage the child to study more ……… see to it that he does his school work,” said a third urban parent. “It is the role of every parent to provide food, books, clothes, pens, text books; find out from them what they and their teacher discuss in class; help them with their homework, and motivate their children to study,” were the responses of another urban parent.

**A Parent: The First Teacher**

A majority of 38 subjects (rural and urban) who represented 76% of the overall sample (50 interviewees) said that a parent is seen as the first teacher of his/her child/children as far as his/her role is concerned. The views of those who opined this concept were: the two principals (one rural and one urban), three rural teachers, four rural parents, 11 urban teachers, and 18 urban parents. Both rural and urban principals agreed that parents are really the first teachers of their children and not schoolteachers as a number of parents may have thought.

The expressions of both principals are quoted verbatim, “The role of parents is to be the first educator at home, and not to wait until the child gets to school, which is the secondary phase of the child’s education. Parents can help a lot if they really practice this principle,” said the rural principal. On the other hand, the urban principal also pointed out that:

The first teacher of the children are parents at home. Here, at home, parents can begin the reading and writing process, as well as teaching the child the social graces and good mannerisms once the child reaches a certain age; especially when the parents are literate. When parents carry out this parental function this makes it easier for the principal and teachers, seeing that the foundation for learning has been laid.

A rural teacher said that parents are seen as the first educators, which means that certain aspects of their holistic development are dependent on the parents; the education of a child really begins from the womb to when the child enters an educational facility. Having entered an educational facility it is the fundamental role of the parent to work along with the principal, other parents and teachers, in order to see the wellbeing of their own child.
This rural teacher opined: “The role of parents is to be the first educator at home.” And another rural teacher reported, “The first teacher of students should be their parents at home.”

This urban teacher in responding to the question replied, “Several researches done in the field of psychology affirm that the first teacher of the child is the parent. Hence, how the child behaves and learns in school could be as a result of how he/she is taught at home to behave and value education. And finally, the reply of another urban teacher was:

There are a number of parents who are not cognizant of the phenomenon that every single parent (socially and educationally) is the first teacher of his/her sibling. When they eventually come to this realization and put this into action, then, they will realize that this is a very vital role that they really need to address in order for them to be called good parents.

One rural parent said that the home is the first place of socialization, hence, this is where learning first begins. Whatever is taught at school should be reinforced by their parents at home. Another rural parent expressed the view that the role of parents is to be primary teachers (the first teachers who teach their children) and that teachers at school are really secondary teachers. One other rural parent reported that the role of parents is even greater than that of the teachers, in that educating children really begins at home. As such the role of parents is actually to teach their children at home first, so that when they go to school the teacher can facilitate them.

An urban parent said it in this manner: “The role of parents is to be the first teacher to their children at home.” Another urban parent explained: “The child’s first schooling begins at home which means that the parent teaches his or her child first before he/she comes to school. The parent is therefore the first teacher of the child.”

**Sub-theme 2: Discipline**

The principals and teachers of both schools are expected to execute the role of discipline for the enhancement of students’ learning; this was revealed by the findings of the study in
relation to research question 1. Rural and urban respondents (teachers and parents) agreed that it is necessary for principals and teachers to be rigid disciplinarians, so that the enhancement and empowerment of students’ learning may become a reality.

**The Principal as Disciplinarian.** Below are examples of some of the comments made by 35 or 70% of the 50 respondents (rural and urban teachers and parents) who participated in the study; these informants were: three rural teachers, seven rural parents, five urban teachers, and 20 urban parents.

The verbatims of some of the respective informants are listed below.

- “I would like the principal to act as a principal and discipline the children which will force them to do well in their lesson,” another rural teacher emphasized.
- “The role of the principal is to discipline the child, which will make them settle down and learn” said another rural teacher.
- The major role of the principal is to provide the resources for the teacher to teach and to instill discipline in the students so that they can learn,” said yet another rural teacher.

One urban teacher stated her views on the issue without reservation, “The principal is not supposed to flog the students and the students are aware of this rule which came from the Ministry of Education. This rule, which the principal obeys, prevents a number of students from being disciplined. This is not good for the students, in that, when they used to be disciplined by the principal they used to show more interest in their academic work and learn more.” Another urban teacher uttered this statement, “Since flogging has been removed from the classroom, teachers have been having it difficult to get a number of students to focus on their lesson and learn. They do not want to study for their exams nor do their assignments when they are given.” This rural parent responded, “The role of the principal is to discipline and scold my child, as long
as he does not bruise his eyes or any other parts of his body; and to discipline and put pressure on my child to learn his lesson.” The role of the principal is to discipline the child; we cannot discipline the child the way we would like to,” said another rural parent. This urban parent said, “The role of the principal is to discipline and scold my child so that he can learn and come out to something good, so, I do not agree with the principal who told me that scolding is abolished in school, because whenever they are disobedient at home I scold them.” The principal is afraid to be strict on the children and to discipline them so that they can learn, because the Ministry of Education does not want the principal to flog the students,” said another urban parent.

**The Teacher as Disciplinarian**

The majority of rural and urban teachers and parents who represented 45 subjects or (90%) of the 50 respondents also agreed that not only the principal needs to execute the role of discipline to enhance students’ learning, but that teachers also need to take on this fundamental role. The respondents who upheld this notion were: three rural teachers, eight rural parents, 11 urban teachers, and 23 urban parents. This revelation was evident in the findings of the study. “The teacher disciplining the child is a very important state of affairs which is vital if the child is going to attain quality education,” responded this rural teacher. The exact quotation of another rural teacher is as follows, “Disciplining the child is a very important part of the child’s educational development which reinforces learning among students. Once, discipline is not focused on in the classroom it is almost certain that the child’s learning will be affected in the long run.” “The role of the teacher is to discipline the students to learn, and to present the information given to them in a clear manner, so that, they are able to understand,” an urban teacher replied. And “teachers and parents should work together in partnership to discipline the children at home and at school to do their work,” another urban teacher replied. “To instill
discipline in the children so that the child can learn, is the role of the teacher,” replied one urban parent. “The role of the teacher is to discipline the child to make him learn,” was the response of yet another urban parent. “To discipline the children so that they can learn and turn out to become something good is the very important role of the teacher,” another rural parent reported. These were the exact word of this rural parent,

According to the Ministry of Education, a teacher should not administer corporal punishment in school regardless of what that child has done, while, when the children are at home, we discipline them when they disobey us. I still believe in corporal punishment. The Ministry of Education should not remove it from the classroom completely. In using corporal punishment in school, the teachers could administer it mildly on the child. When this is done, the child will have manners, respect the teacher, behave in school and focus more on the lessons given to him by the teacher.

Areas of Stakeholders’ Disagreement in Relation to Children’s Education

Role of Rural Principal versus Role of Urban Principal

The contrast between the role of the rural and urban principals was one of the interesting findings of the data in connection with research question 1. The findings revealed huge disparities between the role of the rural and urban principals in educating the children of both schools. In pointing out these disparities, the rural principal was forthright in his expressions. He opined that the rural principal’s role is different from that of the urban principal. In a rural school, according to him, the principal wears many hats and has to be everything. On the other hand, he said that this does not happen in an urban school, and that more resources, such as human, physical and financial are provided; thus, less improvisation takes place, and the teaching and learning process (in terms of resources) is not that demanding on urban teachers. He reported that the Ministry of Education (one of the chief stakeholders in education) fails to execute its responsibility by not allocating enough funds to his school in order for him to get the appropriate and adequate resources necessary to empower his teachers. He said that as the principal, he has
to use his own initiative to fill this gap through improvisation. He bemoaned this kind of
treatment and doubted whether such things take place in urban schools. In concluding, he
extrapolated that the role of the rural principal is in many ways different from that of the urban
principal, in that, most rural parents expect the rural principal to be everything to them in terms
of resources that were necessary to enhance their children’s learning. The views of the rural
principal are stated below:

Because of the limited funds given to rural schools by the Ministry of Education, not all
the resources needed by teachers are provided. As a consequence, to remedy this
deficiency, a lot of improvisation takes place to compensate or cover up for the resources
the Ministry of Education fails to give to the school. Here, the Ministry of Education (one
of the major stakeholders) fails to execute its fundamental responsibility which impedes
both teaching and learning, in that, the teacher does not have the required resources to
teach which ultimately affects the students, the most important stakeholders in the school.
The role of the rural principal is completely different from the role of the urban principal,
in that, in a rural school, the principal wears many hats and has to be everything, whereas,
in an urban school this state of affairs does not seem exist; and more resources, such as
human, physical and financial are provided; hence, less improvisation takes place and the
teaching-learning process in terms of resources is not that demanding on urban teachers.
The expectation of a rural parent of a rural principal is much higher than that of an urban
principal; for example, they expect a rural principal to provide things like: lunch money,
uniform, shoes, pencils, pens, writing books, text books, reporting to them what took
place at PTA meetings, etcetera, for their children. On several occasions, they send their
children to the rural principal to be given these things. I doubt whether these kinds of
treatment take place in an urban school.

The rural principal opined that the Ministry of Education (one of the chief stakeholders)
which is responsible to allocate adequate funds to his school to purchase the appropriate
resources failed to do so. This he said affected teaching and learning activities at his school. To
fill this gap or shortfall, he had to shoulder the responsibility of the Ministry of Education by
creating improvised resources to facilitate his teachers and students in order for the school to
remain functional. The Ministry of Education, according to him, had therefore failed in the
execution of its duty to be answerable to what it knew was its full responsibility; and it also
failed to execute (address) its full responsibility by not providing enough funds, so that, holistic
teaching and learning activities could take place at this rural school. He concluded that the
Ministry of Education was found wanting in this state of affairs. An analysis of the next finding
is presented below.

**Different and Narrow Views on the Role of Rural and Urban Principals**

Nine participants (an urban teacher, four rural parents and four urban parents) of the 50
interviewees had a different view of the role of a rural and an urban principal. These
interviewees viewed their role as more administrative based. The urban teacher said that the role
of the principal is to enforce rules and regulations in order for the school to remain functional,
and to be a good role model to all stakeholders connected to the school; and that the principal
should be one worthy of emulation by all stakeholders. Below are the different perspectives of
the nine rural and urban informants who perceived the role of the principal differently. “From my
viewpoint the role of the principal is to enforce rules and regulations and to be a role model so
that all stakeholders including the students can emulate him/her,” said one of the urban teachers.
“He can call the parents and talk to them and find ways to get more books for the children,”
reported this rural parent when questioned. “The principal should be well spoken, tidy, see that
the school runs properly,” was the response of another rural parent. “The principal’s role is to see
that everything goes well with the child,” another rural parent responded. “The principal needs to
see that everything is alright with the child,” yet another rural parent opined. This urban parent
narrated: ”The role of the principal is to see that the children come to school early; that they do
not run up and down in school when it is class time; to do the same things to the children like
when they are at home by taking care of the children when they are in school. “The role of the
principal is to make sure that the children stay in class; and to ensure that the children are well
taken care of,” said a second urban parent. “The role of the principal is to play the same role as parents,” responded a third urban parent. “The role of the parent and the role of the principal are the same,” was the comment made by another urban parent.”

**Nuances between Rural and Urban Principal**

The data in connection to research question 1 revealed that there are nuances between the perceptions of the rural and urban principals when the teacher’s role was compared with the role of the principal. The rural principal pointed out definitively a clear distinction between his role as principal and the teacher’s role; the urban principal seemed to measure her role as principal on the same level with the role of the teacher. In other words, the urban principal did not give a clear distinction between both roles as the rural principal had done. The nuanced views of both rural and urban principals can be seen below. The rural principal had this to say:

My role is more supervisory. I am supposed to supervise what is happening in the school. I am supposed to supervise the children and teachers. The teachers’ role is ……..
different, because, they are only responsible to supervise children and to provide them with a sound education, which is the real business of school, because, school is the main business of educating. So, once the teachers are doing their job then this makes my job as principal easier.

The urban principal expressed her view in this manner:

As far as these roles are concerned both persons are important in the institution. Even though the principal has the overall governance of the school in his or her hands, the teachers are just as effective and just as important, or probably even more important, because, if you do not have a teacher in a classroom, then, of course it poses a challenge for the principal to do classroom work and administration at the same time. So both of them of course are important stakeholders in the education sector.

**Different Views Held by Some Parents as to What the Role of the Teacher Is**

The previous findings showed 39 of the 50 participants agreeing that the main role of the teacher at both schools is being a facilitator of students’ learning, imparting knowledge to
students, and being an assessor of students’ academic work. However, the next findings of the study, which represented 11 of the same 50 participants, representing 22% of the sample of the study, showed that there are divergent views among subjects as to what the role of the teacher is. These respondents were four rural parents, and seven urban parents. The following parents seem to hold similar views in their responses in connection to research question 1.

Thus, a rural respondent (a parent) expressed the view that the role of the teacher is to give work to the children in class and to supervise the children so that they can do their own work. Another rural respondent (a parent) said that the teacher should teach the children reading and writing. In commenting on the role of the teacher, a third rural parent indicated that the responsibility/role of the teacher is to teach the children the correct lesson so that they can be successful academically. “Ensuring that the children stay in the classroom and learn to read and write, take out their books, do a lot of work, and do their research in order to do their homework” was the view of one urban parent. Another urban parent held on to the same view as his counterparts that the teacher’s role is to stand up and see to it that the children do their school work and learn to read and write.

However, there appears to be other different perspectives shared by some rural and urban parents which seem to suggest that the role of the teacher has nothing to do with teaching and learning. Rather, teachers should take care of the students just as how they (teachers) would take care of their children at home, love them, protect them, see that the children are okay, and ensure that the children have good manners and respect. Teachers should acquaint themselves with the citizens in the community, talk to parents whenever they see them on the road, say good morning, good afternoon or good evening to parents, mold the children morally, socially,
ethically, and spiritually and be a good role model. A few examples of their respective comments are listed below:

- “The teachers should care for the children just as how they (teachers) care for their own children at home,” opined one rural parent.
- “The teachers should love our children, protect them from danger, see that our children are okay and well taken care of,” were the comments of another rural parent.
- “It is the teacher’s role to make sure that the children shown good manners and respect to persons in authority,” yet another rural parent pointed out.
- “Teachers need to talk to the parents and citizens in their communities, so that they can know them more,” this urban parent reported in the interview.
- “Talk to parents whenever they see them on the road, say good morning, good afternoon or good evening to parents,” was the view of a second urban parent.

The third urban parent voiced her opinion in this manner exempting the academic dimension, “The role of the teacher is to mold his/her students morally, socially, ethically, and spiritually and be a good role model to the community in which he/she lives.”

Some Parents Seemed to be Unaware of Their Role: No Disparity Between Their Role and the Role of the Principal is seen

In relation to research question 1, the data indicated that there is a group of parents (15 interviewees) who seemed to be unaware of their respective role in relation to their children’s education. This finding was not discovered only among rural respondents but also among urban respondents. These respondents were: five rural parents and 10 urban parents who represented 30% of the representative sample (50 subjects). This is what one of the rural teachers propounded, “In this society in which we live, until the home changes and parents are aware of
their respective role, and unless each parent executes his/her role, then, we will not get the desired and expected academic results we would like to see the children achieve.

Another rural respondent (parent) reported when she was asked to differentiate between the role of parents and that of the principal: “No. I do not see any difference between my role and the principal role.” Two (2) rural parents (interviewees) said that the parent’s role is the same as the principal’s role. Also, a respondent urban parent said that the role of the principal and the role of parents are the same. This urban parent gave a zig-zag response to the same question that was asked. In replying she pointed out that “the principal is the principal of the school and the parent is the parent of the child.” Another, urban parent seemed to miss what the question required of her. In direct quotation, these were her own words: “The teacher knows more than the parent.” Yet another urban parent seemed to have misinterpreted the same question that was asked repeatedly: “what is the difference between the role of the principal and the role of the teacher?” This is the answer that was given by this urban parent, “I do not see a difference between the role of the parent and the role of the principal; the only difference is that I see my child on a daily basis, while the principal may just glimpse on that child but not knowing that child, because the principal has a lot of different cases to deal with.”

In relation to research question 1, which sought to investigate how principals, teachers and parents perceived their respective roles in relation to children’s education at both schools (rural and urban), major disagreements were revealed in the findings of the study when both rural and urban respondents were asked “who is ultimately responsible to ensure that the children who attend both schools (rural and urban) get quality education?” There were big disagreements among respondents who gave their differing views in relation to research question 1. The responses of rural and urban subjects are listed and analyzed below:
Quality Education: The Role/Responsibility of All Major Stakeholders including Students

Of the 50 respondents who were interviewed, eight respondents (the rural principal, urban principal, one rural teacher, four urban teachers and one urban parent) who represented 16% of the sample size, said that it is the role/responsibility of all major stakeholders (including the students) to ensure that the children who attend both schools access quality education. Several examples of the differing perceptions of rural and urban informants are presented as empirical evidence of their differing dispositions. For example, when the rural principal was asked to voice his opinion on the question of who is responsible to ensure that the child accesses quality education at his school, he opined that this role/responsibility is the onus of all major stakeholders inclusive of the students. According to him, all major stakeholders who are responsible for the child’s education include the ministry of education, school board, principal, teachers, parents, P.T.A., students, and the community.

The Ministry of Education according to the rural principal failed to deliver the new curriculum at the beginning of the new academic year; yet, the school has to administer normal exams during and at the end of the academic year. In this context, he purported that the Ministry of Education failed to execute its major responsibility. He also went on to say that parents should not blame teachers when their children do not perform academically, especially when they themselves fail to execute their role; and that the children also have a part to play in accessing education, in that, children will not learn when they have no interest in their academic work. By extension, he said that after the principal supervises the teacher, the teacher teaches the students, the parent supervises the child and assists the child with his/her homework, then, the onus is now on the child to complete the process by working toward academic excellence. An example of what the rural principal narrated is stated below:
All major stakeholders are responsible to see that children get quality education: parents, teachers, principal, school board, PTA, community and the Ministry of Education all have their respective role to play. So for a child to do well academically, it means that all stakeholders have to execute their role or responsibility, including the students themselves. So, for example, the Ministry of Education requires that the new curriculum (NSC) be taught to all students, yet, the Ministry of Education did not send copies of the curriculum to the school to be distributed to each grade. So even though the new academic year started from September, 2018, some classes have not yet received a copy of the new curriculum, even though they will be tested during and also at the end of the academic year, 2019. Hence, the Ministry of Education - one of the chief stakeholders is not really fulfilling its role as it ought to. The students also should not be left out of the scheme of things or state of affairs, because, they too have a fundamental role to play in getting quality education. Needless the teacher is teaching and the child has no interest in what is taught. The child, therefore, needs to play his or her part. The teacher monitors the students in class, but, parents also need to monitor what the child is doing. If the child knows that parents will question them about their work they will do their academic work, but, the monitoring of students must be done at all levels of the education ladder in order for children to succeed. So, it is not fair for parents to blame teachers if their children did not succeed academically when they themselves fail to execute their parental role. Thus, educating a child holistically takes on a quadruple design: the principal, teachers, parents and students. The principal supervises the teachers, the teachers teach the students, the parents monitor their children’s work at home, and the children on the other hand execute the directives given by their teachers and parents, this should empower them to achieve academic success.

A rural teacher narrated that all stakeholders are responsible for the child’s education; and that these stakeholders are: the principal, the teacher, the parent and even the child him/herself. She said that when one group of stakeholders does not execute their role there will be a gap to be filled, so if all stakeholders work together, as a whole, the total child will be developed, and the child will be successful in whatever is taught by the teacher at school. According to this respondent, if parents are not deficient in their roles, then, the child will be successful in all that he/she will learn at school; hence, all stakeholders are important in educating the total child. She said that it is not fair for parents to blame teachers, because teachers can only do what they are capable of doing.

Based on her views she believed that when the teacher teaches and gives homework, if the parent does not ensure that the child’s homework is done, there is nothing that the teacher can
do, because other students will turn up at school having done their homework, and they will not be left behind. She reported that many times the teacher has to take on the role of the parents by doing extra classes with their children, do their homework, and study with them, so that, they can be successful in both internal and external exams. In concluding, she said that the child also has to play his or herself role by doing the academic work, because if all three stakeholders are executing their roles, the child also needs to execute his or her role in order to achieve academic excellence.

The perception of an urban teacher is also synonymous with the perception of the rural teacher mentioned above. He reported that on a regular basis, he tells his students that there are three groups of persons who are directly responsible for learning to take place: firstly, the teachers who prepare themselves to teach the students through tertiary training, seminars, workshops, ongoing researches, planning their lessons, delivering the lessons to the students, and finally getting the students to learn the concepts that evolve from the lessons supplemented by homework and assessments; second, parents who invest money and time in their children’s education, and third, the learners/students themselves on whom the onus/role/responsibility is placed for their own learning.

To make his argument even more profound, he emphasized that the person who is ultimately responsible to ensure that he/she gets quality education is the learner/student. According to him every child is ultimately responsible for his or her education when all the stakeholders in education provide all the basic resources and necessities to empower the learner/student. His belief is that learning is possible to those who know its value. He concluded saying that when students are given the opportunity to learn and they do not make use of it, they are to be blamed – not the parent or the teacher, because, there are other students who have been
given the same educational opportunity and they make use of it, hence, they turn out to be productive citizens in their community/country.

Responding in relation to research question 1, another urban respondent (a parent) voiced the same view that quality education is the responsibility of the principal, teacher, and parent; but the child is also responsible to ensure that he/she gets a good education by taking her academic work seriously. Consequently, she said that quality education is therefore the responsibility of all three individuals plus the child.

The following is also a representation of the exact words used by the urban principal to advance the same notion in tandem with the perception of the urban parent mentioned above:

All stakeholders of the school community are responsible for ensuring that the child gets quality education, but, they have different roles to play. The principal as the leader of instructional activities in the school has the most crucial role to play, however. He liaisons with the Ministry of Education to see that resources, materials and upgrades to the physical facility are effected, works with the school board and staff to craft effective policies that are geared towards the best interest of students, teachers and parents, and also networks with the business community and other interests to make quality education for all students paramount.

Excluding the students also, another participant (urban teacher) reported that it is the responsibility of all stakeholders to ensure that students gets quality education – for example: the principal; teacher, parent, and the Ministry of Education; thus, parents should not blame teachers whenever their children fail to access quality education, because it is the responsibility of all stakeholders to prepare the child holistically for the society and the world of work.

Again, the same narrative came from the lips of another urban respondent (teacher) that all stakeholders such as: policy makers, Ministry of Education officials, school board, principals, teachers, parents, and students are solely responsible for quality education as far as the child’s
education is concerned. In other words, they agreed that all stakeholders are responsible and should be involved, including the child. See next data findings below.

**Quality Education: The role/responsibility of Principals, Teachers and Parents**

While 16% of the respondents who were interviewed concurred that it is the responsibility of all stakeholders (including the child) to ensure that quality education is accessible to children, another 12% of the respondents who were also interviewed had a different perception in their responses in relation to research question 1: How do principals, teachers, and parents perceive their respective roles in relation to the education of children at two Jamaican schools – one rural and one urban? Based on the findings of the study, 12% of the subjects who were interviewed stated specifically that the principals, teachers and parents are ultimately responsible for the children getting quality education at both schools (rural and urban). It should also be noted that while 16% of the respondent were deliberate in their responses by including the student as being responsible for his/her education, this 12% of the respondents did not mention that all stakeholders including the children themselves are responsible. This cohort of stakeholders confined the responsibility of quality education for the children who attend these two schools only to the principals, teachers and parents. The respondents who held on to this perception were two rural teachers, two urban teachers and two urban parents.

Below are a few examples of some of the exact words that were used in their responses to the question: Who is ultimately responsible to ensure that the children who attend both schools (rural and urban) get quality education? This sub-question falls under research question 1. In response to this question, the rural teacher responded:

A child getting quality education hangs on the principal, teachers and parents of this school. If parents at home do not explain the significance of education to their children they will not see the importance of attending school to be educated. Hence, parents need to push their children to get quality education. The teacher alone cannot do it. Each group
of stakeholders (the principal, teacher and parent) has a responsibility to carry out which should not be passed on to somebody else. Parents have a way of blaming teachers when their children fail their exams, but, they are not fair, because they too are to be blamed for not being fully involved in their children’s academic life by attending PTA meetings, visiting the school regularly to talk with the teachers about the performance of their children, providing lunch money and books, helping their children with homework, and so on. All three stakeholders surround the child; and the child will only be educated when all three stakeholders associate themselves with their respective roles/responsibilities.

In congruence with one rural teacher, the findings of the research also revealed that another rural teacher uttered the same sentiments that no single stakeholder is responsible for a child to get quality education; in that, it takes all three stakeholders (principal, teachers and parents) on board to enable the child to earn quality education. Based on the perception of this informant all three stakeholders need to collaborate in order to get the desired result which is the academic success of the child.

Yet, another informant who was an urban teacher held on to the same view that all three stakeholders: the principal, teacher and parent are ultimately responsible to ensure that the child gets quality education. However, she said that the principal needs to sensitize parents through ongoing parental seminars about holistic parental involvement; this according to the respondent, may prevent them from blaming teachers whenever their children fail internal and national exams. She explained that parents need to discipline their children who have all kinds of behavioral and anger problems which ultimately affect their learning. Thus, she narrated that teachers should not be blamed when they have gone the extra mile to teach everything that is required of them in the curriculum to empower students who fail to access quality education. She concluded by saying that “a child getting quality education is the responsibility of the principal, teachers and parent, hence, if the child fails to access quality education, not only the principal and teachers should be blamed, but also parents who continue to shirk their responsibilities.”
Participants consistently mentioned that the onus of the child’s education is the responsibility of the principal, teacher and parent. The precise comments of each participant is presented below. Thus, another urban teacher expressed: “The principal, teacher and parent are accountable for the child’s Education.” And, an urban parent had a similar perception: “The principal, teachers and parents are responsible, therefore, they need to work together to educate the child.” Additionally, the findings of the study are reiterated by yet another urban parent. This is what she said, “What I have to add to this interview is that all three stakeholders (the principal, teacher and parent) are responsible for our children’s learning, and they all need to work together in partnership to educate the child, because, if one fails all fail, and the overall loser is the child who will be denied a rounded education.

Quality Education: The Responsibility of the Principal and Teachers

Stakeholders are really divided on the issue of who is responsible to educate the child at these two rural and urban schools. This was discovered by the researcher whilst juxtaposing, triangulating and coding the raw data garnered for the analysis and presentation of this chapter. The revelation of the findings showed that six percent (3 respondents) of the representative sample (50 respondents) had a different perception on the issue. They believed that the principals’ and the teachers’ main role at both institutions is to ensure that every child obtains an education that is of quality. Special note should be taken that all other stakeholders are obliterated from the educational process in relation to the child getting quality education. These are the verbatims of the following respondents who were interviewed: “The principal and teacher are responsible for the child getting an education that is of a good quality,” said an urban teacher. This rural teacher response was: “It is the responsibility of the principal and teacher to educate my child.” And ultimately, another urban parent also concurred that “the teacher and the
principal shape the child for the nation, therefore, helping the child to be educated is the responsibility of the principal and the teacher.” Note should be taken that these responses were given by an urban teacher, a rural parent and an urban parent. All three respondents from the same type of school (primary), but from two different geographical spaces or locations held on to the same view. The next data finding is set out below for your perusal.

Quality Education: The responsibility of Teachers and Parents

The findings from the interviews conducted also indicated that quality education is the responsibility of teachers and parents. This departure from what other stakeholders perceived is represented by 10% of the 50 informants interviewed; these informants were: two urban teachers, and three rural parents. They stated their views clearly that these two categories of stakeholders (teachers and parents) are responsible for educating the children who attend these two schools. Their comments were captured during the process of the interview which demonstrated unanimity in their perceptions. Examples of their perceptions are given in their own vernacular. Thus, one urban teacher explained: “Both teachers and parents are responsible for the education of the children who attend this school, because teachers were trained to teach them, and parents are the ones who brought them into this world, hence, they are responsible.” Another urban teacher explained: “There is no question in one’s mind that the teacher and parent are ultimately responsible to see that the child gets quality education, because the child spends most of his/her time with the teacher and parent.”

Conclusively, the views of the following rural respondents resonated in the same dialogue that quality education for the children at these schools is the role/responsibility of the teacher and the parent. This is what this rural parent reported: “The teacher and parent are responsible to see to it that the child gets quality education.” Another rural parent reported: “The
teacher and myself should be responsible for this task of education for my children.” And yet, another rural parent regurgitated: “The parent, and the teacher who teaches the child are responsible to see the child learn.”

**Quality Education: The Responsibility of the Teacher**

As the analysis and presentation of data continue, this study further revealed through its findings that 10% of the respondents interviewed (five of the 50 respondents who participated in the study) seemed to believe that the accessibility of quality education for children rests solely on the teachers at both schools. These respondents were two urban parents and three rural parents. Here, again the findings of the study showed a disparity in the perceptions of this group of respondents which is contrary to what the other respondents (who were also interviewed) perceived. As a consequence, this urban respondent reported that “the teacher is responsible to see to it that the child gets quality education.” Another urban parent’s perception was that the teacher is mostly responsible for the child’s education, because, they are the ones who teach them most of the time. This rural parent expression was: “…the teacher is answerable for the child’s education at this school, so when I send my child to the teacher I expect him to learn.” Yet, another rural parent seemed to hold on to the same concept: “The Teacher is responsible; but if the children need books the parents are supposed to provide these vital things for them.” Lastly, this rural parent reported that the teacher is responsible for the children’s learning, and to ensure that they behave in school and get a good education when they are in school.

**Quality Education: Responsibility of Parents**

Quality education: the role/responsibility of parents was another finding that emanated from the data as a result of research question 1: How principals, teachers, and parent perceive their respective roles in relation to children’s education at both schools. In answering the
question: who is ultimately responsible to ensure that the child gets quality education in connection to research question 1, this finding shows the largest disparity/disagreement among stakeholders who expressed different perceptions on the issue. As such, the finding in relation to research question 1, show that 21 subjects (two rural parents, 15 urban parents and four urban teachers) who represented 42% of the representative sample of 50 subjects (from both rural and urban schools), who were interviewed face to face, had a different perception from the other subjects concerning their respective role in relation to children accessing quality education. Thus, 42% of the respondents unanimously agreed that parents are responsible for their children getting quality education. A few examples of their perceptions on the issue is expressed below directly and indirectly.

Without giving a rationale for her response this urban teacher said that “parents are responsible for their children’s education.” The narrative of another urban teacher was that initially, this is the responsibility of parents, because, the child’s brain develops between the ages of 1-5, so it is their responsibility to ensure that their children learn the basics of life so that when they go into the classroom the teacher can build on the foundation that their parents have laid in order to empower the child. Another urban parent extrapolated in her response to the question posed to her in the interview in this manner, “This responsibility mainly rests on the parents. The rationale for saying this is that the teacher is there to guide and to reinforce the lesson to the students academically, but, it is the responsibility of the parent to reinforce what the child does at school when the child gets home by pushing the child persistently towards getting quality education to help him or her in the future for the world of work.”

The commonality of the same perception found among this group of respondents that parents are responsible for the child’s education was also evident among rural parents; thus, it
was not surprising that this rural parent also reported that “parents are indeed responsible to see to it that the child gets quality education.” Similarly, another rural parent reported that,

The parents are responsible. The principal and teachers cannot do it alone; the children spend more time with their parents at home than at school with the teachers; they spend less time with the teacher and principal, therefore, my children getting a good education is my responsibility, not the teacher.

The following urban parents said that parents are responsible, because even though the teachers went to college to get higher education so that they are now empowered to teach their children, parents are ultimately responsible to guarantee quality education for their children.

One urban parent said, “A lot of times parents believe that it is the responsibility of the principal and teachers to ensure that their children get a good education, but this is not so. It is mainly the parents who are responsible who should partner with the school to help their children to get quality education which every child deserves.”

In addition, the perception of yet another urban Parent co-relates with the perception of the previous respondents (rural and urban) that parents are the ones who are responsible for their children’s education, because they are the one who brought them into the world; so, it is their duty to make sure that their children get a good education.

**Quality Education: Responsibility of Students**

Conclusively, captured from the interview were the findings of participants who with a great passion reiterated that the child who is also a stakeholder is ultimately responsible to ensure that he/she gets quality education. Observing the modus operandi of these respondents during the interview process, the seriousness of their responses could be seen whilst they were replying to the question in connection to research question 1. Two urban respondents who represented 4% of the representative sample (50 participants) of the study, held onto the perceptions that quality
education rests on the shoulders of the students of their schools. Surprisingly, this notion was uttered by two urban parents. Below, the verbatims of the two respondents are presented for the reader’s perusal. The utterance of this urban parent was:

The principal, teacher and parent can only do what they are capable of doing to help the child to learn, therefore, the responsibility rests on the child to ensure that he or she gets quality education by taking his/her lesson seriously in school; reason: the teacher cannot force them to learn; when the teacher puts the work on the board it is their responsibility to do it and to get it right; the teacher cannot really drill the work into their heads; they are ultimately responsible for their academic journey as far as learning is concerned.

And the second urban parent said without giving a rationale when she was asked who is responsible to ensure that the child gets quality education: “The child him or herself is responsible.”

Having analyzed and presented the findings that emanated from the data with respect to research question 1, the analysis and presentation of the data relating to research question 2 will now be dealt with chronologically.

Research Question 2: To What Extent Do The Perceptions Of Principals, Teachers And Parents Differ In Regard To Their Respective Roles In Relation To Children Accessing Quality Education At Two Jamaican Schools – One Rural And One Urban

School functioning is a major theme that emerged from the data with regard to research question 2, along with its three (3) sub-themes: communication, participation/involvement, and stakeholders’ partnership.

Areas of Stakeholders’ Agreement in Relation to Children’s Education

Theme 2: School Functioning

Schools will not function effectively if proper communication channels among stakeholders are missing. Proper communication, participation/involvement, and stakeholders’
partnership are important pillars/foundations for children’s education. If these fundamental
tenets are missing among stakeholders (principal, teachers and parents), students could be
deprived of quality education. Notwithstanding, the findings of the study revealed vividly that
these paramount pillars are missing at both rural and urban schools as far as stakeholders’
communication, participation/involvement, and stakeholders’ partnership are concerned. The
sub-themes that emanated from the data as a result of research question 2 were analyzed and
presented below.

The Sub-themes are:

1. Communication
2. Participation/Involvement
3. Stakeholders’ Partnership

Areas of Stakeholders’ Agreement in Relation to Children’s Education

Sub-theme 1: Communication

The findings of the study with regard to research question 2 (which looked at the extent
to which the perceptions of the principals, teachers and parents differ in regard to their respective
roles in relation to children accessing quality education at two Jamaican schools – one rural and
one urban) is a call for parent-principal-teacher-communication-relationship. Fifty subjects were
interviewed, and 35 interviewees (70%) (rural and urban subjects combined) of the 50 subjects
agreed that there was an urgent need for a healthy parent-principal-teacher communication
relationship for the advancement of children’s education at both schools. These respondents were
the rural principal, three rural teachers, seven rural parents, the urban principal, 12 urban
teachers, and 11 rural parents. As a consequence, the principal of the rural primary school had
this to say:
one of the main roles of parents is to work hand in hand with the principal and teachers to see what is happening and to play their parental role to the fullest extent; so the parent should always be there to aid the teacher’s instruction; so when the child goes home the parents should be there to guide the academics, guide the social life of the child, and guide all the different aspects of the child in conjunction with the school, so this is a correlation. Without proper communication between the school and the home the effort of all stakeholders will fail and ultimately the child who is the innocent one will automatically suffer academically, hence, this healthy communication relationship is badly needed at our school.

The findings of the study further showed that this problem is not only evident at the rural primary school, but that it is also evident at the urban primary school based on the narration of the urban principal whose explanation of the problem was expressed vividly. She said that the role of parents is to visit the school to talk with the teacher about their children’s overall academic performance; do follow ups on their kids; making sure that they do their homework; helping with their homework; and finding out what they are doing at school; this, she said, is really having a cordial relationship with the teacher to see that their children get a good education. Parents have fallen short in performing their role in this area. If there is no change in this direction, the school as well as the home is heading in the wrong direction.

This rural teacher reported that “parents need to communicate with teachers so that they can know the strengths and weaknesses of the children in order for them to develop strategies to help the children to learn which will prepare them for the society.” The extrapolation of another rural teacher was that parents should “be supportive. Parents ought to be supportive of their children; so, it’s a collaborative effort of all stakeholders and a strong communicative relationship among parents, teachers and principal that will help the child to get a good education.” In stating her view on the issue of parent-principal-teacher-communication relationship, yet another rural teacher said, “My role as teacher is to have a good rapport with parents so that whenever they send their children to school, they can rest assure that they will be
taught and cared for. Thus, as teachers we need to cultivate a good parent-principal-teacher relationship with parents which is missing at our school.

Another respondent (a rural parent) in her description indicated that the principal, teachers and parents need to work as a team so that they can have respect for one another. According to this respondent, this will help all three stakeholders to communicate better, because when they work together the children will see that they are serious, and that they will settle down in school and take their work seriously; hence, the personal relationship between parents and teachers really need improvement at the school. Another urban teacher in his response said:

“The role of a parent is to ensure that parents have an amicable working relationship with the class teacher which makes the teaching and learning process much easier both for the students and the teacher; it is to communicate with the teachers by asking about your child; to communicate with teachers to see if there are gaps to be filled; and then both parents and teachers work together to fill these gaps which may ultimately work out for the betterment of the child academically. Finally, this urban parent made these sentiments, “The role of the parent is to communicate with the principal and teacher; and the role of the teacher is to communicate with the parent, and I love that; but this kind of communication seems to be absent in this school

Areas of Stakeholders’ Disagreement in Relation to Children’s Education

Incongruous to similar perceptions expressed by both rural and urban informants were some areas of disagreement on the subject of stakeholders’ communication among informants with reference to research question 2. From the representative sample of 50 participants, 11 or 22% showed clear disparities in their perceptions on the subject of stakeholders’ communication at both schools. Six rural parents, three urban parents, and two urban teachers were the ones who showed sharp disparities in their views. A few of their responses are expressed below; for
example one rural parent said, “We need a principal who can sit and speak with us; sometimes you go up to the school to talk to the principal but he is not there; if you see him on the road, and try to stop him, he does not spare the time to stop, so that you can talk to him.

One rural respondent (a parent) replied: “If the teacher does not give my child homework I would argue with the teacher.” And an urban informant (a teacher) told the researcher:

There are some principals in our primary schools who need to have a better teacher-principal communicative relationship with their teachers, in that, some principals have a way of talking down to teachers, believing that they are better than the teachers whom they lead. The disrespectful manner in which some principals talk to teachers can indeed affect the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

Being tired of the situation, this urban teacher was very concerned and forthright in her narration. She outlined that the teachers in today’s world are having serious problem with students, and that the present school system is completely different from many years ago. She bemoaned what seems to be a phenomenon that children are now attending school to fight their teachers, and when they are reprimanded by their teachers, their parents who are indiscipline turn up at the school to fight and curse the teachers, instead of visiting the school to hear both sides of the story, sit down with the teacher, and settle the dispute amicably, which would ultimately teach their children how to settle a conflict.

An urban parent also had a big problem with the modus operandi of some parents who come to the school, now and then, to curse the teachers because their children are reprimanded by the teachers. This is what she had to say:

I have a big problem with some parents who come to the school to curse the teacher for reprimanding their children, instead of coming to the school to deal with the teacher amicably, so that, the child can be helped both behaviorally and academically. When parents and teachers cannot see eye to eye about the child’s education and behavior, this causes a big rift between the parent and the teacher, which breeds disrespect in the child for the teacher, affecting the child’s education.
In speaking about the communication problem that exists among the urban principal and parents at this primary school, this particular urban parent was unreserved in her expressions about the modus operandi of the principal. Hence, her description of the principal was as follow: “All the teachers are okay; the former principal was okay; but this present principal is not okay. She is not like the previous principal; she is not a people person.”

Areas of Stakeholders’ Agreement in Relation to Children’s Education

Sub-theme 2: Participation/Involvement

A large number of parents not being involved in their children’s education was the general perception of a number of informants who were interviewed from both rural and urban schools. Ninety percent (45 interviewees) of the subjects interviewed agreed that parental involvement is at its lowest level, especially at the rural primary school. The informants who held onto this view were: the rural principal, three rural teachers, nine rural parents, the urban principal, 12 urban teachers, and 19 urban parents. The rural principal opined that “parents need to show more interest in their children’s academic development, because, the teachers alone cannot do it. Administrators alone cannot do it. Everybody has a part to play. Parents have a role to play just as educators.”

The urban principal unreservedly conveyed the same sentiments. It has been observed that the parents who take an active interest in their children’s education by forging harmonious relations with the school, involving themselves in school activities and being available for meetings and parent-teacher conferences are the ones whose children tend to do better in school academically. When this is twinned with their provision of educational materials for their children, ensuring that children attend school regularly and punctually, attending to their proper nutrition as well as ensuring that homework is done, all speak to the role of parents in the lives of their children’s education. The bottom line is that parents need to do much more in supporting their children to get quality education. What they have been doing in relation to their children’s education is certainly of little or no effect.
A rural teacher also reported that parents need to play their part in helping their children with homework. However, she said that at her school, parents’ involvement with students’ homework is poor, in that they do not pay much attention to their children’s homework. Moreover, a number of parents who send their children to school are not literate; hence, they are not able to assist their children with homework. Another factor according to this teacher is that being a farming area, parents spend most of their time in the field farming from early in the morning until late in the evening. Consequently, they do not have enough time to supervise their children, which helps to deprive them of getting quality education. She said that most of the parents do not have enough time to look into their children’s bags to see if the teacher gives homework to their children. Another factor she mentioned was that a number of parents violate their responsibility by not attending PTA meetings, and that you always see the same little number of parents who are interested in their children’s education attending PTA meetings.

This rural teacher gave an in-depth explanation of the deficiency of parental involvement:

The first teacher of students should be their parents. However, in our case, it is not so; children come to us not knowing the basic things that their parents should have taught them. This has been happening, because most of the parents in the area are farmers; they spent most of their time farming and pay less attention to their children’s education. They come to school without breakfast, lunch money, books and pencils and pens; thus, we have to aid them with these basic things. Most of the times we have to purchase these things for students from our pockets. We have been doing this because it is really hard to sit in the classroom and look at them not having all of these necessities which they need in the class to enhance learning. The parental role involvement process is certainly missing as far as real parental involvement is concerned at our school. This is really a major problem, because whenever parents fail to be involved in the life of their children this affects their overall academic, social and moral development. Most of the parents do not help their children with homework nor give their children the basic amenities they need to do their academic work, hence, most of the students fail the national exams.

Another rural teacher replied, “Parents need to do more to nurture their children; parents need to let their children know that the way out of poverty is to be educated. Since September,
there are students in my class whose parents I have never seen turn up at school to talk to the teacher about their children work. Parents just give birth to their children, but they are not spending time to make sure that they get the kind of education they deserve.” It must also be noted that the following rural parents all had the same narrative in their responses that parental involvement was grossly lacking at their school (rural school). These are their responses, “Parents are not playing the kind of role they need to play in their children’s lives, hence, teachers have to be shouldering the roles of parents that they are supposed to be shouldering. On many occasions teachers have to give our children resources such as: uniforms, taxi-fare, books, lunch money, text books, pens, pencil, eraser, note books, et cetera.” Another rural parent expressed his view that “parents need to know that in order for a child to get quality education all parents must be involved, collaborate and partner with one another, so that, the child can be helped academically.” The next rural parent said:

The parents in this area which is deeply rural do not seem to value education that much, even though some of the children in the area do well academically. But a number of parents in the area do not seem to know the importance of education, hence, they need to be educated in this area of deficiency. In this area, once some of the children graduate from high school they do not move on to further their education. Parents therefore need to be more involved holistically in the lives of their children. They need to get more involved in both the school and their children’s homework. If the students know that their parents will be coming to visit school to check on their academic work and to talk to the teacher about their academic performance, this may drive them to focus more on their work; but, when parents fail to visit the school, children seem not to care that much about their academic work.

This is what an urban parent had to say which is in line with what the parents of the rural school have said: “Our Jamaica parents as a whole need to value education much more; the teacher and principal alone cannot educate parents’ children.” Another urban parent reported that parents need to supervise their children’s homework whenever homework is given; this she said would help the students and teachers as far as stakeholder-partnership is concerned. Yet
another urban parent disclosed “One of the main hindrances to our children’s education is our lack in our parental duties in supporting our children in school. We need to work with the teachers so that our children can have a good education, but we have shirked our responsibilities, hence, our children have been suffering academically. These urban teachers also supported the views of the above urban parents. Here, an urban teacher talked about parenting as Jamaica’s number one problem and what is good parenting:

I believe that the number one problem we have in Jamaica is parenting. A good parent is going to be very involved with the school; they are going to be a member of the PTA; they are going to know their headmaster very well; they are going to be interacting with the teachers, and from that synergy the child will gather that his/her parent is interesting in him/her, the school and the community.

The narrative of yet another urban parent described this state of affair as follows:

Parents need to be more involved in helping their children to get quality education; in that, as far as this present generation is concerned, there is little or no parental involvement. If both teacher and parent work together, the education system can be better; the truth is that some parents are in denial, in that, when they are told that their children are not able to read, some of them fail to believe, rather than accepting the teacher’s feedback, and then, seek remedial help for them so that they can be reintegrated into the mainstream of the class.

**Theme 3: Stakeholders’ Partnership**

One of the other common themes that was identified in the data was “stakeholders’ partnership for children’s education which is seen as a partnership among stakeholders. This view was strongly advocated among respondents. Eighty-five percent (42.5 respondents) of the 50 subjects interviewed agreed that to educate children holistically in or outside of the classroom necessitates a meaningful dialogue of partnership among stakeholders; and that this mammoth role or responsibility should not be carried out by any one stakeholder group. The data also showed that when one stakeholder group fails, it automatically affects the other stakeholder
groups, especially the students who are the main focus in this state of affairs. The informants who synonymously supported this notion were: the rural principal, three rural teachers, seven rural parents, the urban principal, 12 urban teachers, and 18 urban parents.

The rural principal who was very passionate in his comments on the issue said that “education in general is a partnership that stakeholders entered into.” He continued his discourse by saying that if one group of stakeholders shirks their responsibility or role, the expectation of the principal, teachers, and parents will not be realized. He went on to say that we should not forget that in all of this, the children are the ones who are at the center of this state of affairs; therefore, if they do not see the importance of accessing quality education, then the united effort of all other stakeholders is futile. The respondent urban principal said: “As leaders and educators, whatever we can do in our best interest together, bearing in mind that the children are our future, it is very important that each stakeholder stands up to his or her responsibility.” This respondent rural teacher who has been teaching at this rural school for over 20 years reported:

The principal, teacher and parent are all stakeholders and partners in educating a child; all stakeholders are important, and if all stakeholders do what they are supposed to be doing, then, the success of the child will be evident at the end; so if the principal, teacher and parent execute their respective roles and executive them well, and the child is motivated to do his or her academic work, then, at the end, this equals to the success of all stakeholders.

Even though the question that was asked focused mainly on the role of parents, some parents were very frank in their responses when they were giving their views on the subject of parental responsibility towards stakeholder partnership for children’s education. A few examples of their responses follow. “The principal and the teacher should be working together in partnership to ensure that the child learns,” was the utterance of this rural teacher. This is teamwork. Teachers and parents must work together in alliance to ensure that the children get a
good education,” was another rural parent’s remarks. “Principal, teachers and parents need to work together so that the children can have a proper education,” were the view of yet another rural parent.

In expressing his view on the same subject an urban teacher explained that this is pretty much a partnership; a partnership between teacher and parent, in that the teacher is there to guide the students academically, while the parents are there to follow through with the teacher by ensuring that the child does his/her homework. He said that parents need to know that if they do not help their children at home with their homework, then it is very challenging for the teacher to help their children academically, because the teacher cannot do it alone. Again, another urban teacher extrapolated that the teacher and parent should be working together, and that no teacher should be happy not knowing the parent of the child he/she is teaching. Thus, the teacher and parent must be working together to mold the child socially, morally, psychologically and academically. It was also the perception of this teacher that to educate the child, all persons have to be good stakeholders in a principal-teacher-parent partnership, and so, whatever stakeholder group one falls in, one should ensure that one executes his/her role, rather than expecting one’s role to be carried out by another stakeholder. According to this respondent, when this is done, this will ultimately hinder the child from getting the kind of education he/she needs.

Most of the urban parents interviewed were also supportive of the principal and teachers that parents who are one of the main stakeholders in education should enter into partnership with the school to educate their children; these are the comments that they made, “It’s a role of partnership which is to work along with the principal and teachers seeing that we are one of the main stakeholders in education. Whatever I do not understand I should seek information from the teacher and principal and work along with them based on the information they give to me.”
Another urban parent said that “my role and the teacher’s role should be one of partnership, which is, working together to make sure that the child learns in school.” And again, this urban parent reported that “the role of the parent is to work hand in hand with the principal and teacher to educate the child in all respects, because, we are all stakeholders and partners in this business of education.”

**Summary of Results**

The findings of the study in relation to research question 1, revealed the following areas of agreement among stakeholders:

- The findings of the data show clearly that most of the respondents agreed that each stakeholder (principal, teacher and parent) being a part of this leadership process in primary education, has a leading role to play in the child’s academic life by owning and executing his/her responsibility/role.

- The majority of rural and urban respondents had parallel views that the principal’s main role is being an instructional leader and facilitator of teaching and learning. Eighty-four percent of the total number of participants (50) who were interviewed expressed this view. The respondents who agreed on this state of affairs were rural and urban principals, teachers and parents.

- Rural and urban respondents agreed that the role of the teacher is to be a facilitator of learning, imparter of knowledge, and an assessor of students’ academic work. Those who saw the teacher in this light were the rural and urban principals, rural and urban teachers, and rural and urban parents who represented 70% of all informants interviewed.

- Core/central parental roles of parents were also revealed by the findings such as: sending the child to school daily, providing lunch/lunch money for the child, assisting the child with homework, visiting the school in order to check-up on the child’s academic
performance and to attend PTA meetings. Of the 50 subjects who were interviewed, 90% (rural and urban principals, teachers and parents) agreed that these are the main functions of parents.

- The data further revealed that the first teacher of the child is his/her parent and not the classroom teacher; hence, the classroom teacher is the second teacher of the child if the child is registered in a public or private institution. Rural and urban respondents (principals, teachers and parents) of both schools who represented 75% of those who were interviewed agreed that the parent is indeed the first teacher of the child.

- At the rural and urban schools, principals and teachers are seen as disciplinarians for the enhancement of students’ learning. Some rural and urban respondents even agreed that the principals and teachers at both schools should apply corporal punishment on students in order to pressure them to take their academic work seriously and excel academically. Seventy percent of those who were interviewed saw the principals and teachers in this context.

Contrary to similar perceptions expressed by the interviewees, were some areas of disagreement among stakeholders with reference to research question 1; these are as follows:

- Disparity between the role of the rural and urban principals was also revealed by the findings of the data. This disparity was reported by the rural principal. According to him the rural principal wears more hats than the urban principal, and that the urban principal is also blessed with more resources.

- Likewise, different and narrow perceptions concerning the role of rural and urban principals, in relation to children’s education at both schools appeared from the findings of the data. There were serious divergent views among rural and urban informants about
what the real roles of the rural and urban principals are. These narrow and different perceptions came from both rural and urban subjects whom together represented 15% of the respondents who were interviewed.

• Nuances between the role of rural and urban principals of both schools were also discovered through the findings. Both principals seemed to have given two differing perspectives when they were asked to point out the distinction between their role and the role of the teacher.

• The next findings of the study, which represented 11 of the same 50 participants, representing 22% of the sample of the study, also showed that there are divergent views among subjects as to what the role of the teacher is. These respondents were rural and urban parents.

• The findings showed that some parents seemed to be unaware of their respective roles; hence, their perceptions of the role of the principal were completely different from the other rural and urban interviewees. These respondents do not really see a disparity between their role and the role of the principal. Fifteen of the 50 respondents who were interviewed were a part of this group which consisted of rural and urban respondents.

• There were also divergent views on the role of the teacher with 22% of the respondents narrating as if the role of the teacher has nothing to do with teaching and learning.

Additionally, there are some major findings which emanated from the data which emerged as a result of research question 1, which sought to find out how principals, teachers, and parents perceive their respective roles in relation to the education of children at two Jamaican schools – one being rural and the other being urban. The findings showed a plethora of
disagreements among stakeholders as to who is ultimately responsible for the child to access quality education, as far as each stakeholder’s respective role is concerned.

- Of the 50 rural and urban respondents who were interviewed, eight respondents (one rural principal and one urban principal, one rural teacher, one urban parent, and four urban teachers) who represented 16% reported that it is the role/responsibility of all major stakeholders (including the students) to ensure that the children who attend both schools access quality education.

- Other respondents who were also interviewed had a different perception in their responses in relation to research question 2. Based on the findings of the study, 12% of the 50 subjects stated specifically that the principals, teachers and parents are ultimately responsible for the children getting quality education at both schools (rural and urban); these were two rural teachers, two urban teachers, and two urban parents.

- The revelation of the findings further showed that six percent (three respondents – an urban teacher, a rural parent, and an urban parent) of the 50 respondents had a different perception on the same issue. They believed that the principals and teachers of both institutions are ultimately responsible for ensuring that every child obtains an education that is of quality.

- The findings from the interviews conducted also indicated that quality education is the responsibility of teachers and parents. This departure from what other stakeholders perceived is represented by 10% (five informants — two urban teachers and three rural parents) of the 50 informants interviewed.

- Furthermore, the results of the study showed a disparity that exist among all 50 stakeholders interviewed, in that, 10% (five respondents - two urban parents and three
rural parents) of the 50 respondents who participated in the study pointed out that the accessibility of quality education for children rests solely on the teachers at both schools.

- Penultimately, 21 (42%) of the 50 subjects unanimously agreed that parents are responsible for their children getting quality education.
- Ultimately, two respondents (two urban parents) who represented 4% of the population sample (50 respondents) held on to their perceptions that quality education rests on the shoulders of the students of both schools.

**Areas of Agreement Among Stakeholders in Relation to Children’s Education**

*Communication, Parental Involvement and Stakeholder Partnership*

There are differences and similarities of opinion of rural and urban subjects who participated in the study with regards to research question 2, mentioned above.

- Several calls for parent-principal-teacher-communication among stakeholders were captured by the data findings. These calls were supported by 70% of both rural and urban respondents who agreed that stakeholder communication in their schools is paramount and needs resuscitation and continuation, which could build a firm foundation to effect children’s learning.

- The lack of parental involvement at both schools was one of the other findings that the data revealed. However, this was more dominant in the rural primary school than the urban primary school. The majority of teachers, parents and principals from both schools, who represented 90% of the participants interviewed (and who agreed that serious parental involvement was lacking at both schools) vented their feelings about this state of affairs.
• Identified in the data findings, as well, was the necessity of a vibrant stakeholders’ partnership in support of children’s education at both schools. Together, a cohort of rural and urban respondents who represented 75% of the interviewees spoke unanimously and passionately about this issue at both schools; this was keenly observed by the researcher whilst the interviews were being conducted.

Area of Disagreement Among Stakeholders in Relation to Children’s Education

Communication

Relating to research question 2, which sought to discover the extent to which the perceptions of principals, teachers, and parents differ in regard to their respective roles in relation to children accessing quality education at two Jamaican schools (one rural and one urban), the findings of the study showed that even though there were agreements among stakeholders on the issue of stakeholder communication at both schools, there were also sharp disagreements, on the same issue. For example, there was one rural participant (parent) who voiced her opinion against the rural principal, who according to her, failed to communicate with parents on the road, and that he cannot be found at the school whenever parents visit the school to talk/communicate with him. One rural respondent (a parent) even said that if the teacher does not give homework to her child she would argue with the teacher. An urban informant admitted that there are some principals who are unprofessional in their modus operandi whenever they are communicating with the teachers. This she said affects the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Another urban teacher even complained how some parents would turn up at school to curse the teachers because their child/children were reprimanded. Yet another urban parent was not afraid to be forthright/blunt in her views. She said that at the urban school the former principal and the
present teachers are okay, but, the present principal is not approachable, and that she is not a people person.
Preamble

The purpose of this investigative narrative qualitative multi-site study was to investigate the perceptions of principals, teachers and parents about their respective roles in children’s education at a rural primary school and an urban primary school in the parish of Clarendon, Jamaica.

To empower a child educationally, the tripartite effort of the principal, teacher and parent is required. However, there is always a perennial controversy among principals, teachers and parents, in a number of rural primary and urban primary schools in Clarendon, Jamaica, when the Grade Six Achievement Test (now the Primary Exit Profile – PEP) national results are released by the Ministry of Education, and the results are not satisfactory. As a consequence, the Ministry of Education normally blames the principals whose schools did not perform satisfactory, the principals blame the teachers, the teachers blame the principals, the parents blame the teachers, and the teachers in return blame the parents; thus, the habit of stakeholders blaming one another because the students failed the national exam is a perennial state of affairs. Furthermore, a problem may exist where some principals, teachers and parents hold divergent views on the issue of empowering the child to get a quality education. Consequently, this study examined whether these important stakeholders hold similar or divergent views or both in relation to their respective roles in educating the children who attend these two primary schools in the parish of Clarendon, Jamaica.
Two major research questions were used to guide the study and to collect the relevant data which were coded thematically to generate the findings of the study. These research questions were:

RQ1: How do principals, teachers, and parents perceive their respective roles in relation to the education of children at two Jamaican schools – one rural and one urban?

RQ2: To what extent do the perceptions of principals, teachers and parents differ in regard to their respective roles in relation to children accessing quality education at two Jamaican schools – one rural and one urban?

Fifty participants were interviewed: 13 from the rural school and 37 from the urban school. The interviewees included the principals from both schools, as well as teachers and parents. Their responses were analyzed, presented, and summarized in Chapter 4. The primary purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings and to draw conclusions based on these findings. The chapter commences with a preamble of the study, a discussion of the findings, implications: implications for further research, implications for practice, implications for the Ministry of Education (MOE), implications for school administrators/educational leaders, implications for teacher education in teachers’ colleges and universities, implications for in-service teachers, implications for parents, and the conclusions.

The Results Viewed Through the Lens of the Research Questions

In connection to research question 1, the findings of the study revealed that the respondents (principals, teachers and parents) who were interviewed from the rural and urban schools had both similar and different perceptions about their respective roles in children’s education.
Areas of Agreement

Leadership

The data findings concerning research question 1, show that most of the respondents/interviewees agreed that each stakeholder (principal, teacher and parent) being a part of the leadership process in primary education, has a leading role to play in the child’s academic life by owning and executing his/her responsibility/role. This finding concurs with the literature review of Chapter 2 which shows that the principal (Principal as Instructional Leader, 2008, p. 1; Principals – Parents Involvement Center, 2012), teachers (Cox, n.d., Cullingford, 1955 & Matalon, 2004), and parents (Bempechat, 1990; Cimagala, 2019; Price, 2017; Parents Are A Child’s First Teacher, 2011; & LDA Learning Disabilities Association of America: Parents Are their Child’s First Teachers, 2013) do have a quintessential and leading role to execute in the academic life of the child. These core functional roles of stakeholders cannot be neglected if the child is going to attain quality education. Hence, the social theory of answerability/responsibility/role, postulated by Bakhtin (1981; 1986; 1990), which is the theoretical framework of this study, also connects with the findings of the research and the literature review, which states that responsible individuals who are aware of their respective roles or functions have core, fundamental or leading roles to execute, so that, the ultimate good can be achieved. These leading roles/responsibilities according to Bakhtin must be performed by the one who is answerable to do so and should not be left to be shouldered by another individual who is not responsible to execute it.

Thus, fitting this theory into these contexts (the role of principal, teacher, and parent) shows how important it is for each stakeholder (principal, teacher, and parent) to be a leader in
the execution of his/her role in order for the child to get quality education which is viable.

Simply put, stakeholders (principals, teachers, and parents) are leaders in their own respective contexts; this contextual leadership functionality must be own and executed by each stakeholder (Bakhtin, 1981; 1986; 1990) so that the child who is at the center, and who is the most essential stakeholder in this state of affairs, can benefit from stakeholders’ contributions towards his/her education.

**The Role of the Principal**

Both rural and urban stakeholder-participants agreed that the principal’s main role is instructional leadership and facilitation. This finding emerged as a result of research question 1 which was structured to capture the views of both rural and urban interviewees. Almost all of the respondents agreed that the principal is seen as an instructional leader and facilitator of teaching and learning. This is consistent with the literature presented in Chapter 2 that informs us that the role of the principal covers the following functionalities:

- General school leadership
- Planning and implementing the school’s curriculum
- Consistent and termly academic staff development
- Teaching and learning
- Supervision of classrooms
- Classroom praxis and learning theories
- Safety and security planning for a student-friendly learning environment
- Selecting the academic staff and students
- Having educational workshops
- Having on-going symposia and seminars for teacher up-grading
• Teacher evaluation throughout each grade

• Strategic, holistic and comprehensive Financial planning, budgeting, and school finances for material and resources needed to advance students’ learning (Collier, 2012).

Furthermore, research in the literature review has shown that regardless of the broad functionalities the principal has to perform, there are some important, specific, student-centered academic functions which are the main tasks of the principal as an instructional leader and facilitator, as far as the academic success of students is concerned. These fundamental student-centered academic tasks are:

• Resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment that is conducive to learning.

• Advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

• Facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

• Use multiple sources of data as diagnostic tools to assess, identify and apply instructional improvement to enhance students’ academic achievement.

• Create a culture of continuous learning for adults tied to student learning.

• Demand content and instruction that ensure student achievement of agreed-upon academic standards.

• Lead schools in a way that places student learning at the centre. (Principal as Instructional Leader, 2008, p. i)

The principal, according to earlier research cited in the literature review, sets the tone for the school, creates an environment for teaching and learning, pedagogy and teamwork between
partners, and facilitates both teachers and parents in acquiring the skills to work together
effectively and collaboratively for the academic success of students (Principals – Parents
Involvement Center, 2012).

Although there was general agreement about the role of the principal, there were
contrasting views about how this role is enacted in both rural and urban environments. The rural
principal was adamant that the Ministry of Education (one of the chief stakeholders) was not
providing needed resources for the smooth running of the school. According to the principal, a
rural principal wears more hats than an urban principal. In the urban school there are more
human resources from whom the principal can pull a pool of individuals/professionals to lighten
his/her workload. One outcome of this is that the urban principal has more time to devote to
discipline, classroom supervision and general administration being the instructional leader that
everyone believes has a critical role to execute throughout the school. The rural principal also
suggested that urban schools are treated better than rural schools. He says, “Because of the
limited funds given to rural schools by the Ministry of Education, not all the resources needed by
teachers are provided.” He goes on to say, “The role of the rural principal is completely different
from the role of the urban principal, in that, in a rural school, the principal wears many hats and
has to be everything, whereas, in an urban school this state of affairs does not seem to exist; and
more resources, such as human, physical and financial are provided.
These sentiments are consistent with previously cited literature (Miller, 2015; Stewart, 2017;
Thaffe, 2013).

The rural principal consistently returned to his criticism of the Ministry of Education. He
believes the Ministry’s irresponsibleness affected the smooth running of the school and that this
government educational agency fails to execute its responsibility by not providing the relevant
resources for the school to function as it ought to. One clear outcome of this is that the rural principal cannot accomplish the role of academic or instructional leader as he would like to which everyone believes is critical.

This issue of accountability is central to Bakhtin’s (1981; 1986; 1990) social theory of Answerability, as cited in Graue (1999), which is the theoretical framework of this study. Bakhtin states that one is answerable (answerability) to one’s duty that one is responsible to do, and that one should not expect another individual to carry out such a duty. Graue, in further discussion of this theory, tells us that Bakhtin’s theory of Answerability is “non-transferable” in the context of “you cannot expect anyone to do what is yours to do.” She used this social theory in her research work to demonstrate the kind of stakeholder-partnership that should exist among stakeholders in education – each stakeholder executing his/her responsibility/role to enable the child to pursue academic progress/excellence on his/her own. This kind of partner-relationship, according to Graue, should exist between two social institutions – school and home.

As such, all major stakeholders (Ministry of Education, school board, Parent Teacher Association (PTA), principals, teachers and parents) in primary education at both schools, who are not answerable to nor addressing (executing) their respective roles as stakeholders, need to put into practice Bakhtin’s theory. The implication of the results is that this is noticeable in the rural school, in that, children at this school seem not to be getting the kind of education that they deserve.

**The Role of the Teacher**

Both rural and urban respondents agreed that the role of the teacher has to do with being a facilitator of learning, imparter of knowledge, and an assessor of students’ academic work. Those who saw the teacher in this context were the rural and urban principals, rural and
urban teachers, and rural and urban parents who represented 70% of all the informants interviewed with respect to research question 1. While the teacher has a plethora of roles to fulfill, the respondents interviewed seem to compartmentalize the role of the teacher under three broad categories: facilitator of learning, imparter of knowledge and students’ academic assessor.

The teacher being a facilitator could probably mean moving away from the old styles of teaching and allowing students to discover things for themselves while the teacher guides them through the lesson and facilitates them. Being an imparter of knowledge could mean that the teacher shares his/her knowledge to the students through the lessons that he/she prepares from the curriculum. However, while the literature review harmonizes with the findings of the research, Cullingford (1995) in the same literature cautions us about the impartation of knowledge to students while practicing our pedagogy. According to this author, to perform the role of a teacher professionally the teacher has to be a “mentor” which is absolutely more than just imparting knowledge to students. Cullingford therefore concluded that teachers as a “mentor” means that teachers will try their utmost to bring out what is best in their students. Another researcher concurred with Cullingford (1995) on the same issue by saying that being an excellent “mentor” means that teachers will make their students feel beloved, motivated, belonged, comfortable, invaluable, at ease, and highly appreciated and valued in the classroom (Matalon, 2004). Thus, while the impartation of knowledge to students may be a good thing, teachers in the classroom (as well as all stakeholders who are connected to these schools) need to be cognizant of the fact that imparting knowledge to students should be accompanied by mentorship (mentoring students).

The idea of the teacher being the students’ academic assessor means that teachers are serious about their pedagogy. This implies that assessing the child after the lesson is taught is the
fundamental tool that a teacher should use to test the child to find out whether he/she apprehends the lesson that is taught. Thus, teaching without assessment is probably poor pedagogy, in that, it lacks evaluation or feedback.

These views of the role of the teacher are consistent with the literature review in Chapter 2. Both the present findings and the literature review speak about the teacher as a facilitator of learning, an imparter of knowledge and also an assessor of student’s academic work. Moreover, the literature also mentions that teachers should be mentors (Cox, n.d., Cullingford, 1955 & Matalon, 2004).

**The Role of the Parent**

As regards to research question 1, core parental roles of parents were also revealed by the findings. These include: sending the child to school daily, providing lunch/lunch money for the child, assisting the child with homework, visiting the school in order to check-up on the child’s academic performance, and attending PTA meetings. Of the 50 subjects who were interviewed, 90% (rural and urban principals, teachers and parents) agreed that these are the main functions of parents, in relation to children’s education at both rural and urban schools.

Authentically speaking, these core roles that parents are expected to perform are really imperatives, in that, without the execution of these roles by parents on the behalf of their children, there is a possibility that their children will not get the kind of quality education that they deserve. Parents, as one of the chief stakeholders in education, should try their utmost to fulfill these roles, working in collaboration with their principals, teachers and their own children, in order to empower them socially, ethically and academically. These ideas were held by almost all the interviewees in both schools.
As before, the social theory of Answerability, postulated by (Bakhtin 1981; 1986; 1990) connects with the findings of the research, which states that parents have core or fundamental roles to execute on their children’s behalf, for their ultimate academic good which is a sound education. These roles according to Bakhtin must be performed by the one who is answerable to do so, and should not be left to be shouldered by another individual who is not responsible to execute it.

Studies in the literature review (Chapter 2) have also coincided with the findings of the study. Researchers have postulated that in order for parents to carry out their parental role effectively, they need to be cognizant of their children’s behavioral and academic progress (Lloyd-Nestlings, 2006; Korkmazs, 2007; Matuszny et al., 2007). Thus, communication with the school about students’ behavior, learning, and overall academic performance should be consistent (Howard, 2007; Msengis, 2007; Reynolds, 2010); and in performing these core functions/roles on their children’s behalf, they would be putting into practice what Bakhtin’s (1981; 1986; 1990) social theory recommended.

There was also a general agreement that the first teacher of the child is his/her parent and not the classroom teacher; thus, the classroom teacher is the second teacher of the child if the child is enrolled in a private or public institution. Rural and urban respondents (principals, teachers and parents) of both schools who represented 75% of those who were interviewed agreed that the parent is indeed the first teacher of the child.

These findings may be surprising to some stakeholders in primary education. Teachers are paid professionals who sometimes are blamed by parents if their children are not performing academically. However, these findings support the idea that parents are just as responsible to educate their children as the classroom teacher, seeing that they are the child’s /children’s first
teacher. Parents, therefore, need to cultivate an early social, congenial, and academic environment at home for their children, which will give them an early academic start to meet their second teacher on the first day of their school life and beyond. Hence, the lesson for stakeholders who were not privy to this information is that the child has two teachers – the parent at home and the teacher at school. As a consequence, both teachers and parents should work together in alliance and partnership so that the child can achieve his/her ultimate goal which is quality education.

These results are also consistent with Bakhtins’s (1981; 1986; 1990) theory of answerability. Hence, if parents take ownership of their roles/responsibilities and execute them (being their children’s first teachers), rather than relying on other stakeholders to do what they should have been doing, their children will benefit. On the contrary, if they fail to be the first parents of their children, they could probably be found wanting (based on Bakhtin’s theory), having known their responsibilities/roles and failing to perform them.

The Role of Corporal Punishment/Discipline

Another revelation of the findings in reference to research question 1, which focused on the roles of stakeholders in children’s education, was that thirty-five or 75% of the 50 participants who were interviewed agreed that the principals and teachers should be rigid disciplinarians for the enhancement of students’ learning. Some rural and urban respondents even agreed that the principals and teachers at both schools should apply corporal punishment on students in order to pressure them to take their academic work seriously and excel academically. Several comments about this were presented in Chapter 4. Two examples are given below. As a consequence, this rural parent expressed her views in this manner, “The role of the principal is to discipline and scold my child, as long as he does not bruise his eyes or any other parts of his
body; and to discipline and put pressure on my child to learn his lesson. This comment was followed by the perception of another rural parent who said, “I still believe in corporal punishment. The Ministry of Education should not remove it from the classroom completely. Not abandoning corporal punishment, the child will have manners, respect the teacher, behave in school and focus more on the lessons given to him/her by the teacher.”

In our Jamaican culture the term “discipline” carries two connotations: “discipline” in terms of ensuring that the child is mannerly, respectful, patriotic, obedient, well behaved, honest, decent, balanced, proper, orthodox, obeying the country’s laws, training the child how to focus on his/her lesson and to be interested in his/her academic work; to have a positive image of self and education. However, the term “discipline” is also used in another Jamaican context to mean “flogging” or “punishing” the child to learn in school and to behave at home. There are even those persons in Jamaica who still hold on to the traditional view that the rationale for certain schools outperforming others is that the principals and teachers are disciplinarians, which means that they flog or punish the children, which according to them helps the children to learn. How sad it is that this kind of practice still exists in Jamaica, even though the Ministry of Education has been cautioning principals and teachers not to execute such a practice. The truth is that children should not be forced to learn by corporal punishment nor coercion, but by pedagogical facilitation and mentoring (Cullingford, 1995; Matalon, 2004).

Major Areas of Disagreement

The Issue of Accountability/Responsibility/Answerability

Regarding research question 1, which continues to look at the respective roles of major stakeholders in children’s education, based on their perceptions, the findings of the study show
both agreements and disagreements among rural and urban stakeholders at both rural and urban primary schools.

However, while there were numerous areas of agreement as presented above, it would be incorrect to say that all three groups of stakeholders are in complete agreement. Many examples of this were presented in Chapter 4 and would not be repeated here. In general, these disagreements seem to center on the issue of blame and accountability (or answerability as discussed by Bakhtim, 1981; 1986; 1990); that is, while many respondents agree that they have some responsibility for the education of children, there were disagreements among them as to who is ultimately responsible (or whose role it is) to ensure that the child gets quality education. Thus, they place the major role/responsibility for failure on others, whilst divorcing themselves from all such failures. This takes all of the possible permutations: parents blaming teachers and principals; teachers blaming parents; principals blaming the Ministry of Education, etcetera.

The core issue in all of this, is that, not all stakeholder-respondents seem to perceive or understand their respective roles in children’s education, and that the education of children must reside in partnership between all stakeholders: principals, teachers, parents, and even students, and that this is important for a holistic academic development and empowerment of the child for further education and the world of work. Thus, a number of researches in the literature review (Chapter 2) corroborate with the above findings, that in order for a child to attain quality education, all three stakeholders (principal, teacher, and parent) need to form an alliance in partnership (Fuller, 2008; Ramirez, 1999; American Federation of Teachers, 2007). Authentically speaking, no single stakeholder is ultimately responsible for a child’s education; all stakeholders are responsible.
The extent to which the perceptions of principals, teachers, and parents differed in regard to their respective roles in relation to children accessing quality education at two Jamaica schools - one rural and one urban, was the investigative intent of research question 2. Having investigated this construct through the instruments of observation and interviews, the findings of the study revealed agreements and disagreements among the views/perceptions of stakeholders at both schools. However, all the agreements and disagreements that the findings of the study revealed, mentioned in Chapter 4, will not be discussed here, but only those that are of major concerns and are a threat to the proper functioning of both schools.

**Areas of Agreement**

**The Role of Communication**

Over 70% of the respondents agreed that a serious parent-principal-teacher-communication-relationship is urgently needed at both schools. A wide cross-section of stakeholders interviewed at both schools called for a healthy communication relationship among the parents, teachers and principals, having realized that this may ultimately affect their children’s education. An abundance of studies in the literature review also correlate with the findings of the study (Cameron & Lee, 1997; Baker, 2001; Eberly, Joshi, Konzal & Galen, 2010; Epstein, 2001; Rich, 1987; Saunders, 2008; & American Federation of Teachers, 2007). Ramirez (1999) also opined that teachers having known how to communicate successfully with parents will most likely empower both the school and the home. This same principle also goes for parents, in that, if they know how to communicate successfully with teachers this will also bring about a healthy communicative-relationship between the school and the home. As a consequence, he said that in order for children to learn academically to succeed in school and in life, they need parents and teachers who are willing to communicate and embrace one another in
relation to what they are teaching in their different and separate domains (home and school). This, according to Ramirez is where the parent-teacher-communication-relationship comes in and evolves to boost students’ academic advancement (Ramirez, 1999).

The findings of the study seem to suggest that stakeholders at both schools shirk their roles/ responsibilities by failing to communicate consistently among themselves about imperative issues that are fundamental to both schools, which could ultimately affect their proper functioning and the whole process of teaching and learning. Thus, Bakhtim (1981;1986;1990) theory cautions against the shirking of one’s role or responsibility which is his/her own task to execute; this theory, it would appear, found stakeholders at both institution wanting, in that, they need to develop healthy communication habits to build their schools holistically which may in the long run help to empower their children academically.

**Lack of Parental Involvement**

The lack of parental involvement in relation to children’s education at both schools was one of the disturbing findings that the data revealed. Moreover, this was more dominant at the rural primary school than at the urban primary school. Most of the teachers, parents and the two principals from both schools, who represented 90% of the participants interviewed, unanimously vented their feelings about the lack of parental involvement. This parental syndrome is a serious issue at both schools which probably needs immediate attention. Teachers at both schools complained about parents not visiting their schools consistently to dialogue with the principals and teachers in relation to their children’s academic progress. Some teachers complained that a number of parents turn up at school only two times for the academic year; at the beginning of the academic year and at the end of the school’s academic year when it is time for graduation. The
lack of parental involvement especially in the rural school presumably emanates from serious socio-economic conditions experienced by some parents.

There is an abundance of studies done on the lack of parental involvement, barriers to parental involvement, and strategies to eradicate barriers to parental involvement in the literature review. Barge and Loges (2003) said that parents need to be involved in the communication process with teachers to heighten their children’s education. Halsey (2005) said that there are some teachers who have seen parents who have no interest in getting involved in their child’s education, which could contribute to serious communication problems between the teacher and the parent. He said that there are some parents who would want to be involved in their child’s education, but some are faced with serious socio-economic challenges. He concluded by saying that many parents are not involved in their children’s education because they are not cognizant of the educational benefits and opportunities that parental involvement can generate.

On the contrary, Cameron and Lee (1997) informed us that there are times when parents’ workload prevents them from communicating with teachers about their children in school, and it is just not feasible for parents to meet with teachers after their work hours. Research has further shown that when parents’ socio-economic status is low, and they are not able to read and write, they have little or no interest in getting involved in their children’s education (Raccah’s & Elyashiv’s work (as cited in Lopez et al., n.d.).

The findings of the study and several studies mentioned in the literature review concerning the lack of parental involvement point to Bakhtins’s theory of answerability. The findings and the literature have shown that parental involvement appears to be at its lowest level at both institutions (especially at the rural school); hence, Bakhtin’s theory informs us that once one knows and owns his/her responsibility (answerability), then the correct thing to do is to
transfer one’s responsibility into action. Hence, to further improve parental involvement in these schools parents probably need to put into action the theory of Bakhtin (1981; 1986; 1990).

**The Role of Partnership**

One of the consistent findings focused on the necessity of a vibrant stakeholders’ partnership in support of children’s education at both schools was stakeholders’ partnership in children’s education. One respondent (rural principal) who was very passionate in his comments on the issue said that “education in general is a partnership that stakeholders entered into.” Bakhtin’s (1981; 1986; 1990) social theory of answerability addresses the issue of stakeholder partnership for children’s education in the context of each stakeholder in the partnership of education need to stand up to his/her responsibility by executing his/her role. The findings concerning stakeholder partnership for children’s education are also consistent with the literature review of Chapter 2. Henderson et al. (2007) demonstrated that to get parents fully involved in the school to form a dynamic partnership of parental democratic practice, the following systems must be put in place by the principal who leads the school: the first of these mechanisms is giving parents the autonomy to demonstrate their democratic right and enabling them to participate in a system that is equitable, functional and beneficial to all stakeholders, giving their own views on issues of importance. Hoover-Dempsey, Sandler, Green and Walker (2007) went further to posit that invitations from schools is another mechanism that principals can utilize to motivate parents to work in stakeholder-partnership with the school in order to empower students’ learning abilities. Epstein (2001) also stressed the importance of good communications between teachers and parents in order to maintain a healthy parent-teacher-stakeholder-partnership, which is fundamental for the ongoing enhancement of children’s educational
development. Hence, for holistic partnership to be viable among stakeholders at these schools Bakhtim’s (1981; 1986; 1990) theory is quintessential for such a practice.

**Major Area of Disagreement**

**Poor Communication among Stakeholders**

Another major finding of the study in connection to research question 2, is poor communication among stakeholders at both schools. The data showed that one rural parent admitted that if homework was not given to her child by the teacher, she would argue with the teacher. In Jamaica, the word “argue” as used in this context is a colloquial term which means “to curse someone.” Hence, what this teacher was actually saying is that if the teacher does not give homework to her child, she would “curse” her. Another rural parent said that the rural principal does not want to communicate with parents on the road, and when parents visit the school to communicate with him, he cannot be found on the school’s compound (principal absenteeism).

Yet, another respondent (an urban teacher) reported that there are some principals who are unprofessional in their modus operandi, especially when they are talking to their teachers. According to this teacher, this kind of behavior displayed by principals could affect the teaching and learning processes in the classroom. One urban parent was very blunt in her remarks; she said that the teachers at the urban school are nice, but that the present principal is not as nice as the former principal. She said that the present principal is not approachable.

These are the empirical findings from the raw data which show that healthy communication at both schools among key stakeholders seem to be lacking, which is certainly not good for school functioning or governance, and the teaching and learning process, which take place in the classroom.
The literature review somehow dovetail with the findings of the study, in that, several researchers in their studies in the literature review (Chapter 2) talked about the importance of good communication among stakeholders in building a healthy school environment to enhances students’ learning (Barge & Loges, 2003; Chiu & Xihua, 2008; DePlanty, Coulter-Kerr, & Duchane, 2007; Englund, Luckner, Waley, & Egeland, 2004; Friedel, Cortina, Turner, & Midgley, 2006; Graham-Clay (n. d.); Henderson & Berla, 1994; Hong & Hsiu-Zu, 2005; Jeynes, 2005; Jung-Sook & Bowen, 2006; Lontos, 1992; Lopez, Udell, Lozano, and Mendez (n.d.); McBride, Schoppe-Sullivan, & Moon-Ho, 2004; Renihan & Renihan, 1994; Sarason, 1995; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005; Stein, Goldring, & Zottola, 2008; Swap, 1993; Wenfan & Lin, 2005; Wilson, 2009).

The literature in Chapter 2 also talked about barriers to communication (Anderson, 2000; Baker, 2001; Berger, 1995; Carrasquillo & London, 1993; Chavrin, 1989; Katz, 1996; Pena, 2000; (Rich, 1987; Steinberg, Lamborn & Narling, 1992; Taylor, 1993; Wanke, 2008) which concur with the findings of the study, in that, it appears from the findings of the study, that communication barriers exist at both institutions, and that there are serious threats to the tenets of a healthy stakeholder communication system among the institutions’ stakeholders. It is therefore a challenge when the social systems of any institution of learning are blocked by communication barriers, so that, stakeholders within such an institution cannot see eye to eye to work together as a team in order that the children who attend that institution may get the kind of quality education that they truly deserve.
Implications for Implementation

In this section, the implications of the findings of the study are discussed. The implications for further research are followed by implications for practice, implications for the Ministry of Education (MOE), implications for school administrators/educational leaders, implications for teacher education in teachers’ colleges and universities, implications for in-service teachers, and implications for parents.

Implications for Further Studies

The purpose of this investigative narrative qualitative multi-site study was to investigate the perceived phenomenon of principals’, teachers’ and parents’ perceptions about their respective roles in children’s education at two primary schools (one being rural and the other being urban) in the parish of Clarendon. The findings of the study revealed agreements and disagreements among the different categories of stakeholders, concerning their respective roles/responsibilities in relation to children’s education at both rural and urban schools. The following are implications based on the findings of this study:

- The sample for this study was small and restricted. Only one rural school and an urban school were selected and used in the study. Only 50 participants together from both schools were interviewed. Thus, the replication of further studies could be executed in different geographical settings (selected primary and secondary schools) using a larger sample size across a more extensive or broader geographical region. The rationale for further studies on this topic is that this phenomenon may be a cause for concern for the education sector in Jamaica, in the region and the wider global diaspora. If this research is done, this could presumably give a more comprehensive finding on this study’s topic.
In addition, a number of stakeholders in education, especially at the primary level, would perhaps welcome these studies done on this same topic.

- The literature in the field of education appears to be limited on this research topic. Having more studies done on this topic could make an invaluable contribution to the literature in the field of educational research, especially at the graduate and postgraduate levels.

- The majority of stakeholder-respondents did not mention that children are also stakeholders in the education process and that they also have a responsibility/role to perform in the process of obtaining their own education. As such, more research is needed in this area of study which focused on “the role of students in their own education.” The Ministry of Education, administrators/educational leaders, school boards, PTAs, teachers, parents and students could probably benefit immensely from these research projects.
Implication for Practice

The findings of this study have fundamental educational implications for some key stakeholders in the educational sector of primary education. The Ministry of Education always emphasize the importance of principals and teachers conducting themselves professionally in the community and at school; not to mention avoiding absenteeism on the job. However, one of the complaints made by some parents which the findings of the study revealed is that the rural principal does not stop on the road when parents want to communicate with him, but instead drives along without paying attention to parents who are key stakeholders at the school. Parents reported that this is not the only problem with the principal, but that there are occasions when they visit the school the principal cannot be found.

One urban teacher, in reference to the urban principal indirectly during the interview, complained that some principals have a way of talking down to teachers rather than speaking to them professionally; and some urban parents also complained that the urban principal is not a people person nor is she approachable.

Both principals seem to have been found wanting in the area of professionalism. Thus, taking these research findings into account the rural principal needs to practice the following professional ethics:

- Stop on the road whenever it is possible to talk with parents about their children’s education, in that, a child obtaining quality education is really a partnership between the school and the home (principal, teacher, parent, and student).
- Be present at school to execute his leadership duties, which are: instructional leadership, and being a facilitator to the teachers, parents and students in every respect.

The urban principal, on the other hand, needs to:
• Practice the ethical principles of professionalism, humaneness, and approachableness on the job, always bearing in mind that if parents withdraw their children from the school or the teachers resign their jobs in order to teach at other schools, her job as principal will become obsolete.

Additionally, the unprofessional behaviors of both principals warrant caution at the level of the school board and professional training at the National College of Education and Leadership. The professional development unit at the Jamaica Teacher’ Association could also help them in these areas of professional deficiencies.

**Implication for the Ministry of Education**

The rural school principal complained about the modus operandi of the Ministry of Education not sending enough resources (human, financial, material-curricula, instructional aids, etcetera) at the beginning of the new academic year and during the new academic year (September). This, the principal said, caused a big set back at his school. Not having enough funds and teaching aids forced both he and his staff to improvise in order for the school to remain functional. He also complained about the Ministry of Education’s treatment of his school (rural school) in comparison to other urban schools. As a consequence, the following implications are suggestions which could probably minimize the lack of resources at this school, and the treatment of this school equally as other urban primary schools.

• The Ministry of Education needs to send enough resources (human, material-curricula, instructional aids, financial, etcetera) so that the school can function as it ought to; the Ministry of Education (one of the chief stakeholders) has failed to execute its responsibility and needs to stand up to its obligation/role/responsibility being one of the chief stakeholders of education.
The Ministry of Education also needs to treat not only this rural school equally (equally in terms of giving each school enough resources based on the size of its population), but all government owned schools should be given enough resources. To put it simply, all schools’ boards, principals, teachers, parents, and students should be treated on the same egalitarian ground.

**Implications for School Administrators/Educational Leaders**

It seems that the two principals have somewhat different perceptions on what the role of the classroom teacher should be. The rural principal pointed out quite clearly what the role of the teacher should be, whilst the urban principal gave a circumlocutory response. If a principal who should be both instructional leader and facilitator is not cognizant of the definitive role of the classroom teacher, this seems to be a huge problem for his/her academic staff and more so his/her students. Through the chairman of the school board, the Code of Regulations which outlines the operationalization of the school, empowers the principal to select or recommend the academic staff. It is also his/her responsibility to place the teachers at their respective classes, based on their academic qualifications and competencies. Thus, it would appear that if a principal is not able to extrapolate the roles of his/her teachers it may be possible that the appropriate teaching and learning activities may not be taking place. Hence, in order to minimize this dilemma, the following implications are warranted:
• The school board could recommend that the principal pursue an upgrading principal
course, specifically with the National College of Educational Leadership (NCEL). This is
the Ministry of Education national training institute in Jamaica for aspiring and new
principals, and even longstanding principals, who are weak in educational administration,
school and instructional leadership.

The rural principal also complained that the Ministry of Education is not giving his
school enough resources in comparison to urban schools who have been blessed with enough
resources from the Ministry of Education. This dilemma that this school has been experiencing
could probably be minimized if the principal is willing to take the following initiatives:

• In order not to depend on the Ministry of Education totally for human, financial and
material resources, the rural principal in collaboration with the outer community, could
put an annually fund-raising policy in place to generate funds to off-set his school at the
beginning of every new academic year and also throughout the school’s academic year.

• In addition, he could also send letters of donation requesting funds from the business
sector in his community, bauxite companies, members of parliament, municipal
councilors, PTA, and the Past Student Association (PSA). This, perhaps, could help his
school until the Ministry of Education sends the school’s subventions (funds),
pedagogical aids, curricula, human and material resources, etcetera, which are normally
insufficient or late.

**Implications for Teachers’ Colleges and Universities**

Teachers colleges and universities in Jamaica have a major role to play in helping to
prepare the nation’s teachers. Most of our qualified trained teachers are products of our teachers’
colleges and universities. Hence, if our teachers’ colleges and universities offer a poor teacher
education curriculum to teachers whom they have trained, then the students whom they teach
will presumably be denied quality education. From the findings of the study, there is a call for a
better partnership between the school and the home. Communication between the school and the
home seems to be lacking at both schools. Parents need to visit their schools more often to check
on their children’s academic progress, while the teachers also need to find out why parents are
not making regular visits to these schools. Teachers need to bear in mind that if parents do not
send their children to school the tenure of their employment is endangered; hence, they need to
go the extra mile to get all stakeholders on board. These implications if implemented could
possible help to alleviate this problem which seems to be systemic:

- Our Jamaican teachers’ colleges and universities could infuse into their teacher education
curriculum a compulsory course entitled “Stakeholders’ Education for Primary Schools.” This
course, if implemented at our teachers’ training colleges and universities, could be pursued by all
student-teachers who have entered a teachers’ college or a university for certification through its
Bachelor of Education degree program. The components of this course could cover the following
units/areas:

1. The purpose, rationale and significance of stakeholder Primary Education
2. The History of Stakeholder Education in Jamaica
3. Why Stakeholder Education?
4. The Roles of Stakeholders (all stakeholders) in Primary Education
5. Stakeholders’ Communication and Parent-Teacher Partnership for Primary Schools
6. Major Stakeholders in Primary Education: The Ministry of Education, School Board,
   Principals, Teachers, Parents and Students
7. A research paper which could focus on “The Role of Stakeholder in Primary Education.”
This course could be covered in one semester. The importance of this course is that it would prepare teachers who have graduated from a teachers’ college or a university to have a better understanding of stakeholders (especially parents) whom teachers have to work with. Additionally, this course would further empower teachers to deal with the many stakeholder problems they themselves and parents have to encounter. Teachers would also be more competent to work with parents in building the kind of parent-teacher-partnership that is needed. This kind of partnership in which parents communicate with teachers about their children’s strengths and weaknesses could empower the teachers at both schools to better understand their children’s learning abilities. Ultimately, in pursuing this course, teachers would be better able to facilitate parents and students (especially) in knowing what their respective roles are, and probably minimize substantially the differing views among stakeholders in relation to children’ education, which the findings of the study revealed.

**Implications for In-Service Teachers**

The results indicated that some teachers who seem to hold on to the same inhumane traditional view as some parents, that discipline (which in this context seems to mean corporal punishment) should be used on students to reinforce learning. However, there are several other methods which can empower students to learn other than this outdated method/practice. As was said previously, students should not be punished by corporal punishment nor by coercion, but should be taught to learn by the professional and pedagogical methods of mentoring and facilitating. Hence, there appears to be an urgent need at both schools to eradicate this kind of mind-set among teachers that corporal punishment can enhance learning in students. Both principals (rural and urban) could probably do the following:
• Invite officials from the Ministry of Education or from one of the teachers’ colleges or universities to put on a series of seminars/symposia/workshops which focus on appropriate teaching methods in the classroom.

• Request the assistance of a psychologist to explain the psychological effects of corporal punishment on students when used to reinforce learning in students. This presentation could be done in a workshop or seminar setting. These fundamental steps if used could probably help these teachers to have a more modern or civilize perspective on this state of affairs.

**Implications for Parents**

Lack of parental involvement is one of the findings which is a cause for concern at both rural and urban institutions. Both rural and urban teachers complained passionately about the large number of parents who seem to have no interest in their children’s academic progress. There is also an implication for parents at both schools who believe that corporal punishment is a good method for the enhancement of students’ learning. As a result:

• Parents at both schools need to visit their respective school consistently in order to keep pace with their children’s academic progress

• Attend PTA monthly meetings

• Attend workshops and parenting seminar that are sometimes put on by the school or Ministry of Education

• Show up for Open-Day so that they can observe the creative work and other exhibits of their children that are put on display

• Visit their children’s Sport Day at school to support them in Athletics and other sports activities;
• Attend Read Across Jamaica Day at their respective schools

• Visit the school on Report Day to discuss their children’s academic strengths and weaknesses with the teachers

• Accompany their children on school excursions to educational, scientific, cultural, religious, historic and heritage sites. Having actualized these healthy parental activities/responsibilities could probably help to bridge the gap that exists between the teachers and parents at both schools

• The parents who believe that corporal punishment is good to enhance students’ learning could be helped through seminars put on by the school and Ministry of Education. Request could be made for the assistance of a school psychologist and education officer to explain the psychological effects of corporal punishment on students when used to reinforce learning in students. Parents also need to know that corporal punishment is against the law in the Jamaican education system, and that this could land teachers in jail if they use this method to intimidate students in order for them to learn. These fundamental steps if used could probably help parents at both schools to have a more modern or civilize perspective on this state of affairs.

• The findings also revealed that some parents seem to be unaware of their respective roles; hence, they do not see a disparity between their role and the role of the principal. In order for a child to access quality education all stakeholders should be on board, each knowing his/her designated responsibility in order to execute it. If parents at these two primary schools or parents at other primary schools in Jamaica are unaware of their roles and do not know the difference between their roles/responsibilities and the principal’s role, this could probably affect the child’s present and future education.
Likewise, different and narrow perceptions concerning the role of rural and urban principals exist at both schools. Some of the respondents’ responses concerning what they expect the rural and urban principals to do have no relation with the principals’ job description. This is a serious cause for concern; hence, both schools (separately) could put a policy and a short intervention program in place to sensitize the parents, the PTA and the outer community of the real roles/responsibilities of all stakeholders (principals, teachers and parents). They could request the help of the education officers (school inspectors) at the Ministry of Education, and graduate and postgraduate researchers who might have conducted researches on parental involvement or parent education. If this is done, all of the various stakeholders might have a better perspective on what their role is in relation to others.

Conclusion

Major Findings of the Study

The findings of the study that emerged in connection to research questions 1 and 2, show agreements and disagreements among stakeholders (principals, teachers, and parents) based on their perceptions about their respective roles in children’s education at the rural and urban schools studied. However, all the agreements and disagreement among stakeholders mentioned in Chapter 4 will not be reiterated here, but only those that are of major concerns.

Hence, in Chapter 4, both in numbers and percentages, the majority of rural and urban stakeholders agreed that:

1. Stakeholders (principal, teacher and parent) being a part of the leadership process in primary education, have a leading role to play in educating the children at both schools by executing their respective duties/responsibilities/roles.
2. The principal’s main role is instructional leadership and facilitation – in this context, the principal is seen as instructional leader and facilitator of teaching and learning.

3. The role of the teacher has to do with facilitating learning, imparting knowledge, and assessing students’ academic work.

4. The core parental roles of parents that are essential for children to access quality education are: sending the child to school daily, providing lunch/lunch money for the child, assisting the child with homework, visiting the school in order to check-up on the child’s academic performance, attending PTA meetings, parenting seminars and other essential functions pertaining to their children’s education.

5. The principals and teachers at both rural and urban schools should be rigid disciplinarians to enhance learning in students.

6. A serious principal-teacher-parent communication-relationship is urgently needed at both schools among principals, teachers and parents to avoid the subsequent negative effects the lack of healthy communication among stakeholders may cause in the process of children accessing quality education.

7. The lack of parental involvement in relation to children’s education at both schools was a serious cause for concern, and therefore needs immediate attention.

8. A vibrant stakeholders’ partnership in support of children’s education at both schools is urgently needed if quality education for children at both schools is taken seriously.

Concerning the above major agreements among the majority of stakeholders (rural and urban), which the findings of the study revealed, the inevitable question is: what these areas of agreement could mean to stakeholders in primary education at both schools? Having agreed on the above mentioned issues or state of affairs, could mean, that rural and urban stakeholders in
primary education have now begun to view quality education for the children who attend these
two schools (rural and urban) from the same vantage point, even though their geographical
location or space is different. These major agreements among stakeholders could translate into
students performing exceptionally well at both schools if stakeholders continue to view their
children’s education from the same vantage point, rather than being divisive on fundamental
issues in primary education.

On the other hand, there are also some troubling findings that are of major concerns,
which came to the forefront in Chapter 4, and will still be repeated here, because of the negative
impact they may have on stakeholders at both schools (rural and urban), and on quality education
that each child who attends these two schools deserves. Hence, these troubling findings are
deduced and listed below for your perusal; these are:

- Quality education: the role/responsibility of all major stakeholders as well as students
  (eight respondents agreed; these were the rural principal, urban principal, one rural
  teacher, four urban teachers and one urban parent who represented 16% of the 50
  participants who were interviewed)

- Quality education: the role/responsibility of principals, teachers and parents (six
  respondents agreed). The respondents who held on to this perception were two rural
  teachers, two urban teachers and two urban parents representing 12% of the 50
  respondents)

- Quality education: the role/responsibility of the principal and teachers (three respondents
  held on to this view who are an urban teacher, an urban parent, and a rural parent who
  represented 6% of the 50 subjects who participated in the study).
• Quality education: the role/responsibility of teachers and parents (five respondents agreed: two urban teachers and three rural parents who represented 10% of the 50 informants interviewed.

• Quality education: the role/responsibility of teachers (Five respondents or 10 % of the 50 respondents interviewed seemed to believe that the accessibility of quality education for children rests solely on the teachers at both schools. These respondents were two urban parents and three rural parents.

• Quality education: the role/responsibility of parents (Twenty-one (21) interviewees who represented 42% of the 50 participants who held onto this perception were: one rural parent, 16 urban parents and four urban teachers). This is by far the largest parentage of stakeholders who held this view.

• Quality education: the role/responsibility of students (two respondents both urban parents, indicated that it is the child who is ultimately responsible to ensure that he/she gets quality education. The respondents who agreed on this perception represented 4% of the 50 subjects who were involved in the study)

• Poor school functioning: The feedback from participants who were involved in the study showed vividly that poor communication exists among stakeholders (principals, teachers, and parents) at both rural and urban schools, in that, thirty-five (35) rural and urban stakeholder-participants who represented 20% or seven rural participants and 80% or 28 urban participants (combined together) agreed on the above state of affairs. Furthermore, these persons interviewed represented 70% or 35 of the 50 stakeholder-participants from both rural and urban schools who were immersed in the study.
• Poor parental involvement/participation was another grave concern that was mentioned by subjects at both primary schools. Forty-five rural and urban stakeholder-participants (combined together) who represented 22.2% or 10 rural participants and 77.8% or 35 urban participants agreed that parental involvement is poor at both schools, especially at the rural primary school. Additionally, these respondents represented 90% or 45 participants of the 50 subjects (rural and urban) who were interviewed face to face.

• Poor stakeholders’ partnership. A total of 37 rural and urban stakeholder-participants (combined together) representing 29.7% or 11 rural participants and 70.3% or 26 urban participants who also agreed on the issue of poor stakeholders’ partnership that exists at both primary schools studied; this further represented 74% or 37 of the 50 stakeholder-interviewees (both rural and urban).

Thus, an average total of 39 rural and urban stakeholder-participants (combined together) from both schools, which represented 78% of the 50 respondents interviewed agreed that communication, parental involvement/participation, and stakeholders’ partnership among rural and urban stakeholders at both schools were poor and lacking.

What then, are the major findings of the entire study? In summarizing and deducing these findings, it can be concluded that the majority of stakeholders (principals, teachers and parents) who were interviewed at the rural and urban primary schools agreed on what their respective roles in children’s education should be, but disagreed as to who is ultimately responsible to see that the child gets quality education. In looking at those who agreed, most of the participants who participated in this study agreed that:

1. The role of the principal has to do with instructional leadership and being a facilitator of human, material, financial, and physical resources, etcetera.
2. The role of the teacher has to do with facilitating students’ learning, imparting knowledge to students, and assessing/evaluating students’ learning.

3. The core roles of parents are: preparing their child/children for school, paying attention to their children’s attire and deportment, providing daily lunches for them, seeing that they are punctual for school, ensuring that their children’s class work and home work are done, making sure that their children’s academic work is assessed by the teacher, providing all the resources the child needs for learning enhancement and empowerment, encouraging the child to study, monitoring consistently the child’s attendance at school, attending PTA and parenting seminars, and being involved in an ongoing dialogue with teachers pertaining to the child’s academic performance and many others.

Nonetheless, even though parents agreed that they do have a multiplicity of roles/responsibilities to execute on the behalf of their children’s education, and pointed out their parental duties in their responses during the respective interviews, the findings of the study showed that they fail to transfer their responsibilities into praxis, in that, they are not being involved in their children’s education holistically and persistently.

Moreover, the literature review, Bakhtin’s (1981; 1986; 1990) social theory of answerability which forms the theoretical framework or base of this study (including the data findings), all alluded to the phenomenon that parental involvement is tantamount to children accessing quality education. Consequently, all three sources mentioned above have pointed to the fact that the parents at both primary schools (rural and urban) are lacking in their responsibilities when juxtaposed to these three empirical sources.

However, regardless of the above-mentioned agreements, it must be pointed out vividly that there were also sharp disagreements among stakeholders on the issue of who is ultimately
responsible to ensure that the child gets quality education. There were those who strongly believed that this ultimate responsibility should be shouldered by the principal, teachers, parents and students as a whole; the principal, teachers and parents - leaving students out of the equation; teachers and parents only; teachers only – they probably held on to this perspective seeing that the Ministry of Education employs teachers for this purpose; parents only – there were stakeholders (a few teachers and parents) who voiced their opinion that educating children is the responsibility of parents, because they are the ones who brought them into the world; students only – there were stakeholders who strongly believed that after the principal, teachers and parents have executed their role, the onus finally rests on students to access quality education.

Here, the findings revealed an accountability/answerability/responsibility problem which Bakhtin’s (1981;1986; 1990) social theory addressed, in that, Bakhtin believed that each stakeholder is responsible/accountable/answerable to execute his/her role/duty by empowering and engaging the child toward quality education, rather than expecting or blaming another stakeholder to perform what is one’s own duty/role.

Other major findings unveiled by the study is: Poor school functioning in the areas of communication, parental involvement/participation, and stakeholder-partnership; these critical, fundamental, and quintessential areas are woefully lacking at both primary schools (rural and urban).

On the other hand, Schools cannot function satisfactorily if proper communication systems among stakeholders are not in place and implemented. Good communication channels, parental participation/involvement, and stakeholders’ partnership for children’s education, if they exist among stakeholders (principal, teachers and parents) are excellent pillars for the enhancement of learning in students who are aspiring to obtain quality education.
Notwithstanding, the findings of the study revealed that these fundamental pillars are lacking at both schools as far as good stakeholders’ communication, parental involvement/participation, and stakeholders’ partnership are concerned.

As a consequence, if both primary schools (rural and urban) are aspiring to deliver quality education to their children, then, they need to focus on these areas of deficiencies which the findings of the study revealed. These findings could be used as benchmarks to correct the present stakeholder deficiencies at their respective schools. This could probably steer both schools in the right direction, and thus, empower their students to achieve academically.

Reflecting critically on the findings above, this is bad news for primary education at both rural and urban schools studied; bad news in the context that rural and urban stakeholders at both schools are divided on the important issue of who is responsible to ensure that the child accesses quality education. This division amongst stakeholders seems to threaten quality education that every child at both schools deserves. So, the inevitable questions are: what could be done as a result of this finding? What could stakeholders do to empower the children at both schools with quality education?

Firstly, all hope is not lost; there is still hope, in that, the findings of this study could be used to sensitize parents about their respective roles in educating their children; this process of sensitization could be done through parenting seminars and symposia. The findings of the study could also help principals and teachers to better understand their administrative and pedagogical roles in children’s education; illuminate the understanding of students that they too as stakeholders have a fundamental role to play in their own education; inform and guide policy makers at the Ministry of Education in formulating and implementing relevant stakeholder policies in primary education to effect parental responsibilities.
And finally, all stakeholders in education are responsible to ensure that the child gets quality education, which corroborates with the literature review in Chapter 2, and Bakhtin’s (1981; 1986; 1990) social theory of answerability (dissertation’s theoretical framework) which is mentioned repetitively throughout the study, and also certain aspects of the findings of the study mentioned in Chapters 4 and 5. In other words, quality education for children is the business, role, duty, responsibility, answerability, and accountability of all stakeholders associated with these two schools; thus, all stakeholders (students too) at both institutions need to execute their respective roles by working together in alliance and collaboration to help these students achieve their desired goal which is quality education.
REFERENCE


New Deal in Education (1966). Ministry of Education, Jamaica, West Indies


Spicer, F. V. (2010) *School Culture, School Climate, and the Role of the Principal*. Dissertation, Georgia State University, [https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/eps_diss/140](https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/eps_diss/140).


Valmiki Academy (n.d.). *Writing Chapters 1-5 Ph.D & Ed.D or Any Other Doctoral Degree* (pp.42-43)


**APPENDIX A**

**DATA-PLANNING MATRIX**
Data-Planning Matrix for an Investigative Qualitative Study of How Principals, Teachers and Parents Differ in their Perceptions about their Respective Roles in Relation to Children’s Education at Two Jamaican Schools – One Rural and One Urban.

**Note:** Two school principals, 15 teachers and 33 parents from two primary schools (one rural & one urban) were interviewed throughout the research.

**Please Note:** For anonymity the names of the schools were not disclosed.

**Research Question:** How do rural and urban principals, teachers and parents differ in their perceptions about their respective roles concerning the education of children at these two Jamaican schools – one rural and one urban.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do I need to know?</th>
<th>Why do I need to know this?</th>
<th>What kind of data will address/answer the questions?</th>
<th>Where can I find the data?</th>
<th>Whom do I contact for access?</th>
<th>Time Line for acquisition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What constitutes the role of the principals, teachers and parents in relation to educating students who attend these two schools which are located in two</td>
<td>1. To find out and to assess the specific role of the principals, teachers and parents 2. Observation</td>
<td>1. Interviews with principals, teachers and parents 2. Observation</td>
<td>1. Principals’ offices, classrooms and the homes of parents</td>
<td>1. Principals 2. Teachers 3. Parents</td>
<td>1. April to May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>different geographical areas- rural and urban?</td>
<td>different geographical locations.</td>
<td>2. How do rural and urban principals, teachers and parents differ in their perceptions about their respective roles concerning the education of children at these two Jamaican schools – one rural and one urban.</td>
<td>2. To find out and to assess whether there are indeed differences in the perceptions of principals, teachers and parents as to whose responsibility/role it is to ensure that the children at these two primary schools get quality education.</td>
<td>2. Interviews with principals, teachers and parents</td>
<td>2. Principals’ offices, teachers’ classrooms and the homes of parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APPENDIX B**

**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**
The interview will be informal but is expected to involve the following open-ended questions.

**Principal Interview Protocol**

1. How is your age?
2. Which institutions did you attend and the qualifications gained?
3. How many years have you served as the principal of this school?
4. What year did this school begin?
5. What is the status of this institution – private or government owned?
6. How vibrant is the school board and how many members make up its cohort?
7. How many students are presently on role?
   a. Number of males:
   b. Number of females:
8. What is the total number of teachers on staff?
   a. Number of males:
   b. Number of females:
9. How many degreed and non-degreed teachers are on staff?
   a. Teachers with a Diploma:
   b. Teachers with a Bachelor’s Degree:
   c. Teachers with a Master’s Degree:
   d. Teachers with a Doctorate Degree:
10. How vibrant is the Parent Teacher Association?
11. What in your opinion constitutes the role of the principal in educating the children who attend this school?
12. What in your opinion constitutes the role of the teacher in educating the children who attend this school?
13. What in your opinion constitutes the role of parents in helping to educate their children who attend this school?
14. How do you compare your role as principal with the role of your teachers?
15. How do you compare your role as principal with the role of parents?
16. Who is responsible to ensure that a child gets quality education? Give reasons.
17. What else is important to understand about this school or what are the other important things you would like to add to this interview?

**Teacher Interview Protocol**

1. How is your age?
2. Which institutions did you attend and the qualifications gained?
3. How many students do you have in your class?
   a. How many are males?
   b. How many are females?
   c. What is their age range?
4. What subjects do you teach these students?
5. What in your opinion constitutes the role of the teacher in educating the students who attend this school?
6. What in your opinion constitutes the role of the principal in educating the students who attend this school?
7. What in your opinion constitutes the role of parents in helping to educate their children who attend this school?
8. How do you compare your role as a teacher with the role of the principal?
9. How do you compare your role as a teacher with the role of parents?
10. Who is responsible to ensure that a child gets quality education? Give reasons.
11. What else is important to understand about this school or what are the other important things you would like to add to this interview?

Parent Interview Protocol

1. How is your age?
2. How many children do you have?
3. What in your opinion constitutes your role as a parent in helping to educate your child/children who attend this school?
4. What in your opinion constitutes the role of the principal in educating the children who attend this school?
5. What in your opinion constitutes the role of the teacher in helping to educate the children who attend this school?
6. How do you compare your role as parent with the role of the Principal?
7. How do you compare your role as parent with the role of the teacher?
8. Who is responsible to ensure that a child gets quality education? Give reasons.
9. What else is important to understand about this school or what are the other important things you would like to add to this interview?
## APPENDIX C
### SCHEDULE OF DISSERTATION ACTIVITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schedule contacts at intended sites</td>
<td>November, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send off IRB application for Research</td>
<td>January, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awaiting Temple University IRB Approval</td>
<td>January - March 21, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temple University IRB Approval of Minimal Consent Form &amp; Project Involving Human Subjects</td>
<td>March 22, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of Data Gathering</td>
<td>May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcription of Data Complete</td>
<td>June, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Checks</td>
<td>June, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of Data (Chapter 5)</td>
<td>September, 2019 - October, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of Dissertation</td>
<td>February, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation Defense</td>
<td>March 20, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Revision &amp; Completion of Dissertation</td>
<td>May, 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D
TEMPLE UNIVERSITY IRB APPROVAL

03/22/2019

Minimal Consent Form/ Clean Copy of Revised Document

Two: Sample Of Consent Form For Prospective Participants Which Will Be Given To Them At The Initial Stage Of The Interview Consent Form for Prospective Participants ( Principals, Teachers and Parents – Rural School & Urban School)

Instructions: Kindly read this consent form. If you agree with its content please sign your name below in the space provided.

Title of the research study: An Investigation of How Principals, Teachers and Parents Differ in their Perceptions about their Respective Roles in Relation to Children’s Education at Two Jamaican Schools – One Rural and One Urban.

Name and Department of Investigator Principal Investigator: Dr. Joseph DuCette, Temple University, College of Education.

Student Investigator: Canute Livingstone McKenzie, Temple University, College of Education

Why am I being invited to take part in this research?

The participants have been invited to take part in the study because they are the principals, teachers and parents at these two primary schools - one rural and one urban. Only the two principals, teachers and parents selected (who are affiliated with these two research sites) will be included in the study.

What you should know about a research study:

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- You volunteer to be in a research study.
- Whether you take part is up to you.
- You can choose not to take part in the research study.
- You can agree to take part now and later change your mind.
- Whatever you decide, it will not be held against you.
- Feel free to ask all the questions you want before and after you decide.
- This research has been reviewed and approved
- By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any of the legal rights that you otherwise would have as a participant in a research.

Who can I talk to about this research?
If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, contact the research team by phone by calling Canute Livingstone Mc Kenzie at 876-5374736 or 876-620-5576 or email the principal investigator at jducette@temple.edu. This research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board. You may talk to them at (215) 7073390 or e-mail them at: irb@temple.edu for any of the following:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research subject.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

**Why is this research being done?**

The purpose of this study is to investigate how principals, teachers and parents differ in their perceptions about their respective roles in relation to children’s education at two Jamaican schools – one rural and one urban. The two fundamental questions that aroused interest in executing this research are: how do principals, teachers, and parents perceive their respective roles in relation to the education of children at two Jamaican schools – one rural and one urban; and to what extent do the perceptions of principals, teachers and parents differ in relation to the education of children at these two Jamaican schools.

**How long will I be in this research?**

We expect that the interview for participants will vary from 30-60 minutes for individual discussions. The estimated date for completion of the study is the summer term of June 2019.

**What happens if I agree to be in this research?**

If you agree to participate in this research study, data will be collected from the three groups of stakeholders (principals, teachers and parents) in three segments. Firstly, the two principals from the rural and urban schools will be interviewed individually by the student researcher for about 30 - 60 minutes, the teachers will be interviewed individually by the student-researcher for about 30 – 50 minutes, and parents will also be interviewed individually by the student-researcher for approximately 30- 40 minutes. With your permission, interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed, otherwise notes will be taken. After the interview has been transcribed, you will have the opportunity to review it in person during at least a 30-60 minutes follow-up interview.

Interviews will be conducted on your campus at a time based on your availability. This research will be done during March to April 2019.

**What happens if I agree to be in this research, but I change my mind later?**
If you decide to leave this study, there will be no negative consequences. Your choice to participate or to withdraw is confidential and will not be shared with other participants. If you decide to leave this research after completing any of the stages of data collection, contact the research team so that the investigator can remove your data from consideration in the study.

**Is there any way being in this research could be bad for me?**

There are no risks associated with this research. As with any study, your participation may involve risks that are currently unforeseeable. All data will be kept confidential and any personal identifiers will be deleted.

**Will being in this research help me in any way?**

We cannot promise any benefits to you or others taking part in this research. However, it is possible that through the interviews, reflection on your own role as a major stakeholder in education, this may positively change the way you perceive your role in helping to educate the children who attend this school.

**What happens to the information collected for this research?**

To the extent allowed by law, we limit the viewing of your personal information to people who have to review it. We cannot promise complete secrecy. The IRB, Temple University, and other representatives of these organizations may inspect and copy your information. To secure the data, all electronic files will be downloaded on a password-protected computer and stored in a private, password-protected folder on the student researcher's personal computer. To protect your identity, you will be assigned a pseudonym in the transcripts and you will only be referred to by that name in the study final report. Legal names and any personally identifying or sensitive information about you will be kept separate from your data from the study. Your choice to participate in the study will remain confidential and your real identity will not be shared with other participants or published in the final report. Results from this study, using pseudonyms only will be reviewed with the primary investigator.

**Can I be removed from this research without my okay?**

The student investigator or primary investigator in charge of this research can remove you from this research without your approval if you are determined to be ineligible for participation. In addition, once the 50 interviews have been conducted, any additional responses to invitations for participation will be excluded from participation.

**What else do I need to know about this research?**

If you are interested in the results of the study, you may contact the student researcher via email at canutecass@yahoo.com for more information in spring 2019 once the study is concluded and the report is completed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Participant</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Signature</th>
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<tr>
<th>Researcher’s Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
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APPENDIX E
COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2 COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

• Name: Canute McKenzie (ID: 5412789)

• Institution Affiliation: Temple University (ID: 926)

• Institution Email: canute.livingstone.mckenzie@temple.edu

• Institution Unit: Ministry of Education

• Phone: 1876-537-4736 or 1876-336-8131

• Curriculum Group: Human Research

• Course Learner Group: Social/Behavioral Research Course

• Stage: Stage 1 - Basic Course

• Description:
Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Investigators and staff involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.

• Record ID: 19019595

• Completion Date: 31-Dec-2018

• Expiration Date: 30-Dec-2020

• Minimum Passing: 75

• Reported Score*: 93

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY DATE COMPLETED SCORE
Temple University (ID: 1758) 12-Dec-2018
No Quiz  Belmont Report and Its Principles (ID: 1127) 13-Dec-2018
3/3 (100%) Students in Research (ID: 1321) 17-Dec-2018
4/5 (80%) History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490) 18-Dec-2018
5/5 (100%) Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491) 19-Dec-2018
4/5 (80%) The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502) 20-Dec-2018
5/5 (100%) Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503) 21-Dec-2018
5/5 (100%) Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504) 24-Dec-2018
5/5 (100%) Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505) 26-Dec-2018
5/5 (100%) Research with Prisoners - SBE (ID: 506) 26-Dec-2018
5/5 (100%) Research with Children - SBE (ID: 507) 26-Dec-2018
5/5 (100%) Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID: 508) 27-Dec-2018
5/5 (100%) International Research - SBE (ID: 509) 28-Dec-2018
5/5 (100%) Internet-Based Research - SBE (ID: 510) 29-Dec-2018
4/5 (80%) Research and HIPAA Privacy Protections (ID: 14) 15-Dec-2018
4/5 (80%) Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees (ID: 483) 17-Dec-2018
4/4 (100%) Conflicts of Interest in Human Subjects Research (ID: 17464) 30-Dec-2018
5/5 (100%) Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research (ID: 14928) 31-Dec-2018

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner. Verify at: www.citiprogram.org/verify/?kce413ccb-3077-450e-bdf3-1d2b507a3628-19019595

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) Email: support@citiprogram.org
Phone: 888-529-5929 Web: https://www.citiprogram.org

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 2 OF 2 COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT**

**NOTE: Scores on this Transcript Report reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- Name: Canute McKenzie (ID: 5412789)
- Institution Affiliation: Temple University (ID: 926)
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- Institution Unit: Ministry of Education
- Phone: 1876-537-4736 or 1876-336-8131
- Curriculum Group: Human Research
- Course Learner Group: Social/Behavioral Research Course
- Stage: Stage 1 - Basic Course
• Description:
Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Investigators and staff involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.

• Record ID: 19019595

• Report Date: 31-Dec-2018

• Current Score**: 93

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES MOST RECENT SCORE

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution
APPENDIX F
TEMPLE UNIVERSITY CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL FOR A PROJECT INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Date: 22-Mar-2019

Protocol Number: 25780

PI: DUCETTE, JOSEPH

Review Type: EXEMPT

Approved On: 22-Mar-2019

Committee: A1

School/College: EDUCATION (1900)

Department: EDUCATION: DEAN'S OFFICE (19010)

Sponsor: NO EXTERNAL SPONSOR

Project Title: An investigation of how principals, teachers and parents differ in their perceptions about their respective roles in relation to children's education at two Jamaican schools - one rural and one urban

The IRB approved the protocol 25780.

The study was approved under Exempt or Expedited review. The IRB determined that the research does not require a continuing review, consequently there is not an IRB approval period.

If applicable to your study, you can access your IRB-approved, stamped consent document or consent script through ERA. Open the Attachments tab and open the stamped documents by clicking the Latest link next to each document. The stamped documents are labeled as such. Copies of the IRB approved stamped consent document or consent script must be used in obtaining consent.
Note that all applicable Institutional approvals must also be secured before study implementation. These approvals include, but are not limited to, Medical Radiation Committee (“MRC”); Radiation Safety Committee (“RSC”); Institutional Biosafety Committee (“IBC”); and Temple University Survey Coordinating Committee (“TUSCC”). Please visit these Committees’ websites for further information.

Finally, in conducting this research, you are obligated to submit the following:

Amendment requests - All changes to the research must be reviewed and approved by the IRB. Changes requiring approval include, but are not limited to, changes in the design or focus of the research project, revisions to the information sheet for participants, addition of new measures or instruments, increasing the subject number, and changes to the research funding. Changes made to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects and implemented prior to IRB approval must be promptly reported to the IRB. Reportable New Information - using the Reportable New Information e-form, report new information items such as those described in HRP - 071 Policy - Prompt Reporting Requirements to the IRB within 5 days.

Closure report - using a closure e-form, submit when the study is permanently closed to enrollment; all subjects have completed all protocol related interventions and interactions; collection of private identifiable information is complete; and analysis of private identifiable information is complete.

For the complete list of investigator responsibilities, please see the HRP – 070 Policy – Investigator Obligations, the Investigator Manual (HRP-910), and other Policies and Procedures found on the Temple University IRB website: https://research.temple.edu/irb-forms-standard-operating-procedures.

Please contact the IRB at (215) 707-3390 if you have any questions.
One: Application for Human Subjects Research/IRB

1. Abstract of the study

Through the lens of the principals, teachers and parents of two primary schools (one rural and one urban), this investigative qualitative multi-site study will provide an in-depth description of how principals, teachers and parents differ in their views about their roles in relation to children’s education at two un-named Jamaican schools in the parish of Clarendon.

The rural school which is located in the upper hills of Clarendon is situated in a depopulated community that is poverty stricken and has serious socio-economic problems which have an internal impact on the school community. The school’s population consists of one principal, four teachers, and 34 students.

The urban school is located on the lower plains of Clarendon. It operates in an environment of economic viability and buoyancy and is strongly supported financially by the business community. The demography of this school consists of one principal, two vice principals, 41 teachers, and 1, 020 students.

The design of the study is qualitative in nature. The demography of the rural school is as follows: one principal, four teachers, and 18 parents; hence, the adult population total at this school is 23. From this population, 13 persons will be interviewed. These participants will be the principal, three teachers and nine parents who will make up the representative sample. At the urban school, the persons who will be interviewed are: the principal, 12 teachers (one teacher from each grade – Grades 1 to 6: Morning Shift; and one teacher from each grade - Grades 1 to 6: Afternoon Shift); and 24 parents (two parents from each grade – Grades 1 to 6: Morning Shifts; and two parents from each grade – Grades 1 to 6: Afternoon Shift) who will make up the representative sample of 37 persons, drawn from the school’s total adult population of 690 persons. This total when broken down represents the principal, two vice principals, 41 teachers, and 650 parents. The data will be collected through interviews, documentation and observations. The interview protocol/instrument will consist of demographic and background questions in addition to seven questions directly linked to the overarching research questions. These questions will be used to retrieve responses from the named participants during the data collection process. Before the execution of the interview process, permission will be sought from all three stakeholder groups who are a part of the cohort of both institutions.

For the data analysis, two forms of analysis will be employed: Inductive Analysis and Constant Comparative Analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). During the data verification process, the following procedures will be utilized: triangulation, peer-review, and member checks (Creswell, 2009).

2. Protocol Title

An investigation of how principals, teachers and parents differ in their perceptions about their respective roles in relation to children’s education at two Jamaican schools – one rural and one urban.
3. Investigator
Principal Investigator: Professor Joseph DuCette, College of Education
Student Investigator: Canute Livingstone McKenzie, College of Education

4. Objectives
The purpose of this study is to investigate how principals, teachers and parents differ in their perception about their respective roles in relation to children’s education at two primary schools (one rural and one urban) in the parish of Clarendon. In order to collect data on this research during this investigation, the principals, teachers and parents (the chief stakeholders at both schools-rural and urban) will be interviewed. The research questions guiding this study are:

i. How do principals, teachers, and parents perceive their respective roles in relation to the education of children at two Jamaican schools – one rural and one urban?

ii. To what extent do the perceptions of principals, teachers and parents differ in relation to the education of children at these two Jamaican schools?

5. Rationale and Significance
The rationale for investigating how principals, teachers and parents differ about their respective roles in relation to children’s education can be justified because of the ongoing debate on the subject of what the principal, teacher, and parent should do to enhance learning in students, thus, preparing them for the world of work. However, there appears to be more oral debates on this subject than documentation through research. Having done a thorough literature search, I have found studies that have some connection to this study, but their context and content are by and large divergent. Hence, another reason why this research is being pursued is to provide new data in this area of study and to add to the existing literature, if such a literature exists.

This ongoing debate needs to be substantiated by empirical research so that principals, teachers and parents can be clear on what exactly their role should be in educating children whom they have to interact with daily. As a result, it is my intention to conduct this research in order to make a significant contribution to the archives of teacher and parental education.

The findings of this research may be of great significance not only to the stakeholders (principal, teachers and parents) of the two primary schools where this study will be executed, but also to other primary schools that offer the same curriculum, who may use the findings/results of this study to better understand the distinct role of each stakeholder group working in collaboration to minimize the misunderstandings that may exist among them, as a result of the respective role each stakeholder has to play to empower students to learn at these schools.

The results/findings may even further help these stakeholders to work in the spirit of reciprocity to develop and implement intervention programs to empower themselves to function in their respective roles effectively. It may also provide an insight of the understanding of principals, teachers and parents in regard to effective pedagogical and parental involvement.
practices, fundamental to enhance students’ academic development. The findings may also provide schools with more effective strategies for meeting parental involvement requirements.

Finally, the study may also show strategies to improve communication among principals, teachers and parents and encourage effective parental involvement in an effort to maximize students’ academic success.

6. Resources and Setting
Under the guidance of the principal investigator, only the student researcher will participate in the data collection process. No additional researchers will be involved in this project. This study will utilize participants from two primary schools (one rural and one urban) in Clarendon, Jamaica. Interviews will be conducted at these two schools.

Documentary records such as: teachers’ attendance registers and PTA registers will be requested from the principals of both schools, and communication among teachers and parents will be observed, especially at PTA meetings. Interviews will be audio recorded for analysis.

7. Prior Approvals
Two letters were obtained from the principals of both institutions (rural primary and urban primary) granting permission to the student researcher to conduct the study at their respective locations. Two copies of these letters are submitted as supplemental material with this study protocol.

8. Study Design
a. Recruitment Methods
Fifty (50) participants are needed for this pilot research/study. Recruitment for the study will take place during mid fall 2018 (November) and interviews will be conducted subsequent to IRB approval. Participants will be carefully selected from the two study sites. The student investigator will provide the school principals with a copy of the consent form and recruitment email template. The principal investigator will then distribute the information to the appropriate participant groups (principals, teachers and parents) and they can in turn get in contact with the student investigator. This recruitment method is less harmful to subjects and will respect their confidentiality as their email addresses will not be distributed without their approval, knowledge or consent. Participants will also participate on a voluntary basis, and there will be no payment given for participation in the study. The interviews will be conducted by the student investigator and will be recorded with the consent of all participants.

b. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Only the two principals, teachers and parents selected (who are affiliated with these two study sites) will be included in the study.

c. Study’s Timelines

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Participants will be asked to complete a brief consent form which will take approximately 15 minutes. Semi-structured interviews, observation and the collection of documentary data/records will be done with participants commencing in March - April, 2019, and the transcription of data, data analysis and dissertation will be completed in April - June, 2019. Each interview that will be held with each participant will last for approximately 30 – 60 minutes. Interviews will be conducted five days a week with three participants each day.

Seeing that the rural school has a smaller population, its participants will be involved in the first segment of the interview process; three weeks will be spent interviewing and observing its participants; whilst during the second segment of the interview process, the remaining five weeks will be spent at the urban school interviewing and observing participants, seeing that the number of participants from this school who will participate in the study is larger. The researcher will therefore utilize additional time for follow-up visits to clarify and by extension verify interview responses and other observational activities done.

d. Study Procedures and Data Analysis

Data will be collected in March - April, 2019 through the utilization of semi-structured interviews and a brief background information questionnaire with a convenient sample of 50 participants (principals, teachers and parents). All 50 participants will be supplied with a copy of the informed consent form which spells out the purpose of the research/study, how to participate or withdraw, and anticipated risks that may occur. Fifty interviews will be conducted during the interview process.

Babbie (2001) tells us that in a qualitative study, there is a non-numerical examination and interpretation of all observed variables in order to unveil underlying relationships of meanings and patterns as they unfold throughout the study. Thus, a qualitative research design will be used to provide rich and in-depth insights into the state of affairs that will be investigated. A qualitative study is normally used to collect, analyze and interpret data by the observation of what participants do and say during the data collection process (Creswell, 2009).

As a consequence, a qualitative methodology will be employed by the investigator for a number of reasons. On the whole, qualitative research methods have the potential to collect quality and in-depth information about precise or distinct phenomena among groups that are not large. To be more specific, researches have shown that qualitative research methods are invaluable and useful in unveiling the meaning and interpretations that participants narrate about events they have encountered. In addition, a qualitative design will be utilized in order to obtain a better insight and holistic understanding of how behaviours are developed, and thus, taking a more comprehensive approach in looking at things from a more balanced and inclusive perspective (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003 & Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). A qualitative design methodology, therefore, caters for and strengths qualitative research (Merriam, 1998), hence, the rationale for using this methodology.
I have therefore chosen a qualitative design to address the problem and answer the research questions. Another rationale for this choice is that qualitative studies are inductive. They move from specific to general, and begin with the goal of observing, discovering and developing theories and concepts from data collected. Instruments such as interviews – interviewing participants, observation – observing behavior, and documentation – examining documents (Creswell, 2009) will be utilized throughout the process of data collection, as I have face-to-face interaction over a period of time with participants at multi-sites (homes of parents and schools selected).

The research focuses on mainly “how” and “what” questions as opposed to open-ended questions in that qualitative studies investigate the underlying meaning of an event (normally to subjects) and diligently seek their perspectives about how and why such an event happened. In this context, the subjects/participants of the study will be principals, teachers and parents. Broadly speaking, two interviews will be conducted per participant. The first interview will be detailed; the second interview will serve as a follow up to any initial questions and as a means to verify the answers provided during the first interview. Ultimately, this type of study (qualitative) will afford me the ability to collect diverse, thick data through semi-structured interviews with document analysis (Leacock, Rose, & Warrican, 2009). Furthermore, the proposed study which uses a multi - case approach will heighten the ability to evaluate models across cases and describe similarities, nuances and major disparities across these cases (Finnegan, 2008).

e. Withdrawal of Subjects

Participants will not be compelled to participate in the study. Hence, participants can withdraw from the study at any time if they so desire. They will not be penalized if they withdraw from the process. As was said previously, participants will be informed about the withdrawal procedures as part of the informed consent procedure.

f. Privacy & Confidentiality

This study will not be utilizing subjects’ Protected Health Information. To protect the data, all files that are electronic will be downloaded on a password-protected computer and stored in a confidential, secured and private folder, stored in a private password-protected folder stored on the personal computer of the researcher. To safeguard the identities of the participants, a pseudonym will be given to each participant in the transcripts, and in the study’s final report they will only be called by that name. Any identifying and legal designations or information that is sensitive about participants or subjects will be separated from participants’ data in the study.

Participants’ choice to volunteer in the research will remain confidential, and their correct identification will be withheld from other subjects and will not be published in the final report. Hence, to make participants feel secure, confident and comfortable with the study’s state of affairs, low-risk icebreaking questions at the commencement of the interview will be asked in order to build a good rapport with subjects before requesting personal information from them. If a question that is asked is not clear to participants, I will remind them to request clarification.
or added information if the occasion arises.

g. Risks to Subjects

Reasonable, foreseeable, and oncoming risk is minimal as far as this study is concerned. A risk that is foreseeable is that subjects may develop uneasiness during the interview sessions. Therefore, to reduce this risk, subjects/participants will be informed that their involvement or participation will be absolutely voluntary at the commencement of the research/study, at the initial stage of each interview, and at the very end of the research project. Subjects will also be made cognizant that undue influence or coercion will not be imposed on them, but that they will be able to stop the interview process at their convenience. Having chosen to discontinue the interview, if the occasion arises, the interviews of participants will be excluded from the study. Ultimately, interviews will be planned based on the availability of applicants and should greatly reduce interruptions as far as the general day to day activities of teachers at these two schools and parents at home are concerned. As was previously said, interviews will be held for approximately an hour. Authentically speaking, the loss of confidentiality could probably be a potential risk to some interviewees depending on how they reflect on the interview process. However, all the necessary precautions will be taken to ensure that interviewees feel confident that information divulged will not be disclosed without their permission.

h. Potential Benefits to Subjects

These two research sites (rural and urban primary schools) will benefit from this study tremendously because it will provide fundamental data on a segment of its population that may have been the first research project of its kind and magnitude to address this state of affair. The findings of this research will benefit the stakeholders (principal, teachers and parents) of these two primary schools where this study will be conducted, who will use the findings/results of this study to better comprehend and apprehend the distinct role of each stakeholder group working in collaboration to minimize the misunderstandings that may exist among them, as a result of the respective role each stakeholder has to play to empower students to learn at these schools.

The results/findings will even further benefit these stakeholders to work in the spirit of reciprocity to develop and implement intervention programs to empower themselves to function in their respective roles effectively. The data will provide an insight of the understanding of principals, teachers and parents in regard to effective pedagogical and parental involvement practices, fundamental to enhance students’ academic development. They will provide schools with more effective strategies for meeting parental involvement requirements.

Finally, the study will also provide strategies to improve communication among principals, teachers and parents and encourage effective parental involvement to maximize the academic success of students.

i. Costs to Subjects

There will be no cost to participants
j. Consent Process

Before this research is executed, it will use the Minimal Risk Informed Consent Protocol. The student researcher will explain the nature of the study and retrieve written consent forms from subjects/participants before conducting the interviews in the first week of the data collection process.
APPENDIX H
LETTER SEEKING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY (RURAL SCHOOL) (NOTE: REAL NAMES OF SCHOOL WITHHELD)

1563 Aluminum Way
Mineral Heights
May Pen
Clarendon
Jamaica, W.I.
March 28, 2019

Chairman
Rural Primary school
Rural District
Clarendon
Jamaica, W.I.

Dear Mr. Beta,

In order to complete my doctoral dissertation before the end of June, 2019, I hereby request the voluntary participation of the following subjects/participants during the data collection process, scheduled to be held at the Rural Primary and Infant School which you have permitted:

1. The Principal
2. Three (3) Teachers
3. Nine (9) Parents

Total Number of Participants/Subjects to be interviewed: Thirteen (13)

**Topic being investigated:** A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF AN INVESTIGATION OF HOW PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS, AND PARENTS DIFFER IN THEIR PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THEIR RESPECTIVE ROLES IN RELATION TO CHILDREN’S EDUCATION AT TWO JAMAICAN SCHOOLS – ONE RURAL AND ONE URBAN.

As you work out a plan/schedule with the three groups of stakeholders to facilitate me at your school, please bear in mind the deadline of the research. Hence, I would be very grateful to begin my investigation during the second week of April, 2019.

Thank you for your time, understanding, cooperation, voluntarism, collaboration and effort in facilitating this study in your school at this time, being a very hard-working and busy principal. I am sure that after the completion of this study and the findings are disseminated amongst your stakeholders, they will have a more in-depth understanding of how principals, teachers and parents perceive the education of children based on their respective roles.

Thanks.
Yours respectfully,

Canute L. McKenzie (Ed.D Doctoral Student – Temple University, U.S.A., Candidate & Researcher)
APPENDIX I
LETTER SEEKING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY (URBAN SCHOOL) (NOTE: REAL NAMES OF SCHOOL WITHHELD)

1563 Aluminum Way
Mineral Heights
May Pen
Clarendon
Jamaica, W.I.
March 28, 2019

The Chairman
Urban Primary School
Urban Town
Clarendon
Jamaica, W.I.

Dear Miss. Zeta,

In order to complete my doctoral dissertation before the end of June, 2019, I hereby request the voluntary participation of the following subjects/participants during the data collection process, scheduled to be held at Urban Primary School which you have permitted:

1. The Principal
2. Twelve (12) Teachers
3. Twenty-four (24) Parents

Total Number of Participants/Subjects to be interviewed: Thirty-seven (37)

Topic being investigated: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF AN INVESTIGATION OF HOW PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS, AND PARENTS DIFFER IN THEIR PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THEIR RESPECTIVE ROLES IN RELATION TO CHILDREN’S EDUCATION AT TWO JAMAICAN SCHOOLS – ONE RURAL AND ONE URBAN.

As you work out a plan/schedule with the three groups of stakeholders to facilitate me at your school, please bear in mind the deadline of the research. Hence, I would be very grateful to begin my investigation during the first week of April, 2019.

Thank you for your time, understanding, cooperation, voluntarism, collaboration and effort in facilitating this study in your school at this time, being a very hard-working and busy principal. I am sure that after the completion of this study and the findings are disseminated amongst your stakeholders, they will have a more in-depth understanding of how principals, teachers and parents perceive the education of children based on their respective roles.

Thanks.

Yours respectfully,
Canute L. McKenzie (Ed.D Doctoral Student – Temple University, U.S.A., Candidate & Researcher)
APPENDIX J
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL OF CONFIDENTIALITY & PRIVACY

Interview protocol

Research topic: A Qualitative Study of an Investigation of How Principals, Teachers and Parents Differ in their Perceptions about their Respective Roles in Relation to Children’s Education at Two Jamaican Schools – One Rural and One Urban.
Subjects: Principals, Teachers and Parents
Location: Two unnamed primary schools- one rural and one urban in the parish of Clarendon

Introduction

Dear prospective participants,
My name is Canute McKenzie. I am a final year doctoral student at Temple University. I will be conducting a qualitative multi-site study entitled: How Principals, Teachers and Parents Differ in their Perceptions about their Respective Roles in Relation to Children’s Education at Two Jamaican Schools – One Rural and One Urban.
This is in partial fulfillment for the Doctor of Education Dissertation in Educational Administration and Leadership. I am elated that you have agreed willingly to participate in this research project/study. A big thank you to you, having decided to accommodate me at your institution and furthermore to facilitate the interview process. The duration of the interview will be approximately 15 minutes for each applicant.
Let me assure you that whatsoever is discussed in this interview will be kept in strict confidence and I will not disclose any information retrieved from the interview session without your authorization. Be informed that your identity will not be revealed and your privacy will be safeguarded. If you consent to participate in this study, please sign the consent form which is a demonstration of your willingness to participate.
You have been chosen to participate in this research because of the number of years you have been connected to this institution. Thanks again for your willingness to participate.
Canute Livingstone McKenzie (Student Investigator)