

EDRS 6900: RESEARCH PROJECT

**An Investigation into Form Two Students' Perceptions of their Parents'
Involvement in their Education both Pre and Post their SEA Examinations**

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Education [Concentration in Youth Guidance]

Of

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Abstract

This study is an investigation of students' perceptions of their parents' involvement in their education both pre and post their Sea Examinations. The study involved six (6) Form 2 students and attempts to answer three research questions on what are these students' perceptions of their parents' involvement in their education; how sustained is this involvement, and what are the impacts of this involvement on their performances.

The study uses the qualitative paradigm, employing the phenomenological case study as its specific research design. Semi-structured interviews and document analysis are the two methods used to collect data for this study and the data was analysed using narrative analyses and grounded theory methodology.

The results of the study indicated that there is a decline in the depth of parental involvement as children move from the primary to the secondary school. Although they are still involved and do show an interest in their children's schooling, the involvement is more of a guiding nature than a hovering nature.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

“Even as kids reach adolescence, they need more than ever for us to watch over them.

Adolescence is not about letting go. It is about hanging on during a bumpy ride”.

The above quote by Ron Taffel (n.d.), a US writer and psychologist is relevant and timely given the importance of parents in the lives of adolescents. As a mother of two, a young adult daughter and a teenaged son as well as a teacher of adolescents for twenty four years, I see myself as a ‘*wearer of two hats*’. The quote reiterates my constant call for parents to hold on to and be involved with our children as they go through every phase of their lives. It has been my observation that this view is not shared by all parents, some of whom believe that they need to reduce their involvement with their children’s education, as they leave the primary school and enter the secondary school.

Another observation we as educators have made is how this transition of students from the primary school to the secondary school can be an exciting and keenly anticipated one for some students, whereas for others, this transition can be a rather challenging and an even traumatic experience. This view has been alluded to by Eccles, Midgley, Wigfield & Buchanan, 1993; Isakson & Jarvis, 1999 as cited by Chen and Gregory, 2010 where they stated that “the transition to high school, coinciding with adolescence can be a particularly difficult time for many students. They further stated that “growing social pressures, increased academic responsibility, and a heightened desire for autonomy make adolescence a developmentally

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challenging period”, (2010). Therefore as Taffel quoted earlier, and which is also my sentiment, this transition from primary to secondary school is a time for hanging on with our children for this “bumpy ride” and not letting go as some of our parents do.

At the primary school, observations of teachers show us that parents tend to show a lot of interest, ‘watch over’ and be deeply involved in the education of their children. This is to ensure that they get the best preparation to ensure that they are successful in attaining a place in a “prestigious” secondary school. These parents believe that, the better prepared their children are, the better are their chances to succeed and ‘be placed’ in their school of first choice or a ‘good’ school. Parents therefore show greater involvement when children are in the Standards 4 and 5 levels, because their children are being prepared for entry into secondary school. As a result of this *deep involvement of parents* many of their children perform extremely well at the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) Exam. Although they all may not score in the top 100 of their year body, many of these students do score very high in this exam and as a result, may be placed in 1st or 2nd choice secondary schools.

As stated earlier however, parental involvement in their children’s education tends to dwindle as these children leave the walls of the primary schools and move to secondary schools. For some of these parents, it may be the thinking that the transition has been completed so their deep involvement is no longer necessary. This observation was compounded in an article written by Lennox Bernard, who reported that “parents’ interest in schooling waned after students were placed in secondary schools and moved from passivity and indifference to hostility and aggression, depending on the child’s placement”. He further reported that, “there were anecdotes

about parents' refusal to visit the schools when summoned, unwillingness to validate homework activities and expressions of helplessness in parenting", (Bernard, 2012).

This apparent decline in parental involvement at a time when it is most crucial, given the challenges of adolescent changes as well as the changes in the structure of the teaching now faced by these students, have me very concerned about this issue of parental involvement. These concerns have therefore driven me to explore this phenomenon and have therefore influenced my decision to conduct a phenomenological case study on this issue. My study involved obtaining the views of six Form 2 students, who have recently left primary school and have now spent almost two years in secondary school. They were therefore very appropriate for me to learn more about this phenomenon through the eyes of these students. My aim was to obtain their perceptions and views, based on their experiences of their parents' involvement in their education both pre and post primary school, in order to make meaning of these experiences. These meanings can in turn be used to inform school practices on the benefits of this phenomenon, 'parental involvement', based on the views of these second formers at Tonmah High School.

Background

The phenomenon of parental involvement, its level at different stages of their children's education and its effect on children's success in school has been the subject of various discussions and studies for many years now. As reported in a study done by the National PTA, "educators' efforts to involve parents usually decrease as children enter middle school and high school, and that parents are generally less involved in their children's education as their children

grow older”, (2000, p.21). In another study done by Catsambis and Garland, they also reported that “parental involvement dramatically declines as students enter the middle grades and even more so as they enter high school. During high school parents become less involved with monitoring students’ individual behaviors and more concerned with their learning opportunities at school”, (Catsambis & Garland, 1997). A few years later, Glasgow & Whitney also expressed a similar view when they stated that, “parents are a child’s first teachers, but somehow parents lose some of that notion as the child grows, especially after the child leaves elementary school. Slowly, the parents turn over the teaching to the schools,” (2005, p. xiii).

In the regional arena, this decline in parental involvement post primary school was also alluded to in a study done by Consultant Una M. Paul on behalf of UNESCO on “*School-related and Non-school Factors that Impact Negatively on Form 1 Pupil Performance ...*” in 4 Eastern Caribbean countries. In this study, Paul concluded that “...pupil difficulties in the transition from primary to secondary, ‘*parent non-involvement*’ in children’s school work, [their] incapability of giving guidance and direction in follow-through school work and homework” were some of the problems which accounted for the poor performance of Form 1 pupils, (Paul, 1997).

School Background

Tonmah High School which is in the North Eastern Education District is considered a “good school” and it is a first choice for many students. Many top performing students are assigned to this school. The SEA scores of the students who are assigned to this school usually range from 70% to 90%, with an average of 84%. The students, therefore, who pass for Tonmah

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High School usually, have A Grades. For this group of students who were assigned to Tonmah High School in 2011, the student with the highest percentage was 86% whereas the student who earned the lowest percentage was 74%, (see Table 1, Appendix # 1, p. x).

Tonmah High School has been educating children from East Trinidad for over 50 years. During this period it has been able to secure success rates of over 75% where students pass 5 or more O'Level subjects, with Grades 1 and 2. Within the last ten years however, there has been a decline in the quantity and/or quality of the academic performance of the students at O'Levels, (see Table 2, Appendix # 2, p. xi). This decline is of great concern to administrators and teachers, especially those teachers who have been at the school for more than 10 years.

I have been a teacher at this school for twenty-two years and have observed that besides a decline in pass rate and/or a decline in the quality of passes, there has been a decline in parental involvement in their children's education as well as participation in school activities. Reports have indicated that attendance at PTA meetings has also declined over this same period. This decline in the academic performance of these students at Tonmah High School has been observed from as early as the Forms 1 and 2 levels. Based on the grades earned at the SEA exam and the grades in Forms 1 and 2, there seems to be a decline in the percentages and this decline is of great concern me.

Statement of the Problem

Research indicates that “when parents are involved in their child's academic endeavors, their children are more likely to succeed in school” (Moore, 2009). At Tonmah High School however, there seems to be a decline in the sustained parental involvement in their children's

education after they have entered Secondary School. There also appears to be a decline in the academic performance of students at Tonmah High School from as early as the Forms 1 and 2 levels and this has been of great concern to teachers and school administrators.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to:

- a) Investigate the perceptions of students of Form 2 at Tonmah High School of their parents' involvement in their education both pre and post their SEA exam
- b) To assess the impact of this involvement of parents on the total functioning of these students

Research Questions

The research is guided by the following research questions.

Over-arching Question

How do Form 2 students perceive the involvement of their parents in their education over the last four years and how has this involvement impacted on their total functioning?

Sub-questions

- 1) What are students' perceptions of their parents' involvement in their education?
- 2) To what extent is parental involvement sustained over these years?
- 3) How has parental involvement impacted on the total functioning of these students?

Significance of the Study

The results of this study could serve as a benchmark that could enable measures to be put in place to increase and/or strengthen the involvement of parents in the education of their children both at school and at home.

The findings could also be used to advise parents of the need to place a greater value in a *sustained* involvement in their children's education.

Based on the achievement of the two measures above, once implemented, it is my ultimate hope that this would eventually lead to the improvement of the future academic success, performances and development of the students at Tonmah High School.

This study could also add to the literature that already exists on parental involvement and student achievement.

Organization the of Paper

This research paper is presented in five chapters as well as an appendix section. This first chapter gives an introduction to the study as well as some background to the study. It also outlines the statement of the problem, the purpose and significance of the study and the research questions that have guided this study. Chapter two reviews the literature surrounding the issue of parental involvement, looking for example, at its forms and effects on student performance. In Chapter three, the methodology employed in the study is described, including the research design, the sampling strategy, the data collecting instruments used, the data analysis process as well as the limitations encountered in the study. Chapter four outlines the actual analysis of the data and the findings which emerged. In Chapter five, these findings are discussed and some

recommendations are made regarding these findings. In the appendix section, a number of documents which support the study are presented.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This study is an investigation of the perspectives of six Form 2 students of their parents involvement in their education both pre and post primary school. The aim of the study is to see how these students view the involvement of their parents in their education from primary school to secondary school and also to determine the effect of this involvement in their total functioning to date. Doing this study is very important to me, since I believe that parents' involvement in the education of their children throughout their school life is pivotal in their children's overall success. This chapter is therefore a review of the literature on parental involvement and students' wellbeing from international, regional and national perspectives. Firstly, some definitions on parental involvement are examined. Then I will focus on literature which looks at the forms of parental involvement followed by some theories supporting parental involvement. Finally in this review, I will examine the literature on the impact of parental involvement on students' total functioning.

Parental Involvement Definitions

The term *parental involvement* in their children's education is used very often in educational discussions and is conceptualized based on the context of these discussions. Redding (1992) defines *parental involvement* as,

parent engagement in learning activities, mostly although not exclusively in the home.

Involvement is not limited to actual learning tasks. It includes the notion of the 'curriculum of the home' – the 'patterns of habit formation and attitude development that prepare a child for academic learning and (that sustain) the child through the years of schooling' (Redding, 1992 as cited in Coleman, 1998, p. 2).

Hill (2009) later highlighted the definition of parental involvement in the 'No Child Left behind Act', of the 107th Congress in 2002, which states that "the participation of parents in regular, two-way and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities". She further added that parental involvement in education involves "parents' interactions with schools and with their children to promote academic success", (Hill, et al, 2004, as cited in Hill, 2009).

Also, in 2009, Harris, Andrew-Power & Goodall postulated that "the terms parental '*engagement*' and '*involvement*' [although] often used interchangeably [may] mean different things". They have stated that "parents can be 'involved' in school activities without being 'engaged' in their children's learning". To them, "*parental involvement* means parents coming in to school either informally (e.g. to bring children into school or to provide some information for the school) or formally (e.g. for parents evening, meetings or adult learning classes)" whereas "*parental*

engagement occurs where parents are actively involved in supporting learning in the home through extension or support activities, homework or online activities” (p. 12).

In my study, the term parental involvement encompasses all the meanings expressed above, since it is my view that parents need to play an active role in the school life of their children in order to make it easier for these children to successfully go through this journey of schooling and ultimately their life journeys.

Forms of Parental Involvement

The literature identifies a several forms or types of parental involvement. Some of these have been discussed during my discussions with the students during the study. Burke, for example, suggested that parental involvement involves,

reading together, asking the children about their day at school and their performance in each subject, assisting with homework and projects, tutoring with materials and instruments provided by the school, regular communication with teachers for feedback on the child's progress, and being actively involved in school activities through volunteering and attending school functions and meetings, (Burke, 2010).

The Michigan Department of Education supports some of these ways of parental involvement but has identified other ways of parental involvement. They suggested that parents should “establish a daily family routine, monitor out-of-school activities, model the value of learning, self-discipline, and hard work, express high but realistic expectations for achievement, encourage children's development/ progress in school, and encourage reading, writing, and

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discussions among family members,” (2002). Parents who engage in these activities will contribute to their children’s achievements.

Another researcher, Saunders (2007), also identified other ways parents can get involved in their children’s education. She believes that parents should “attend parent-teacher conferences; volunteer at school; attend school events; help with homework, or simply encourage student achievement”. She further added that by “regulating the amount of television children were allowed to watch within a week, (Bali, Demo, & Wedman (1998), cited in Saunders, 2007, p. 9), can determine the grades students achieve. Chen (2008) also outlined several ‘*tips*’ for parents to become involved in their children’s education. In addition to some of those suggested earlier, she adds that parents should,

attend and actively support school activities, volunteer in classrooms, on fieldtrips, or for special events, continue to be involved as your child is in middle and high school, attend parent-teacher meetings, talk with your child about school on a daily basis, if a problem arises, address it quickly by requesting a meeting with the teacher, advise the teacher of any issues at home that may affect the child's school performance, encourage your child on successes and support them. Chen further suggested that by “doing even one thing on the list can make a difference in your child's academic progress” (Chen, 2008).

The various forms of parental involvement outlined above are in no way exhaustive of what is pertained in the literature, but to me represent those that can exert significant effects on the total functioning of students.

Theories on Parental Involvement

The literature has also highlighted a number of theories pertinent to this phenomenon of parental involvement. One of the most popular theories of parental involvement is one developed by Joyce Epstein, which involves “six types of involvement to improve school climate and student success”. Epstein and her associates (2009) describes these types as *parenting* which involves how schools work to increase families’ understanding of child and adolescent development; *communicating* which involves ways to increase two-way connection about school programs and students’ progress; *volunteering* which involves mobilizing parents and others who can share their time and talents to support the school, teachers and student activities at the school or in other locations; *learning at home* activities to provide families with information about the academic work that their children do in class, how to help their children with homework, and other curriculum-related activities and decisions; *decision making* activities so as to enable families to participate in decisions about school programs that affect their own and other children; and *collaborating with the community* which involve activities to encourage the cooperation of schools, families, community groups, organizations, agencies, and individuals, (Epstein & Associates, 2009, p. 58-59). They suggested that these six types of involvement can “help students reach academic and behavioral goals”, (p. 60), or as stated in an article by the Michigan Department of Education “help all youngsters succeed in school and in later life”, (March, 2002, p. 3).

Moore in her dissertation of 2009 highlighted another theory which supports parental involvement. This theory proposed by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) suggested that parents become involved for three constructs, (see Figure 1 below).

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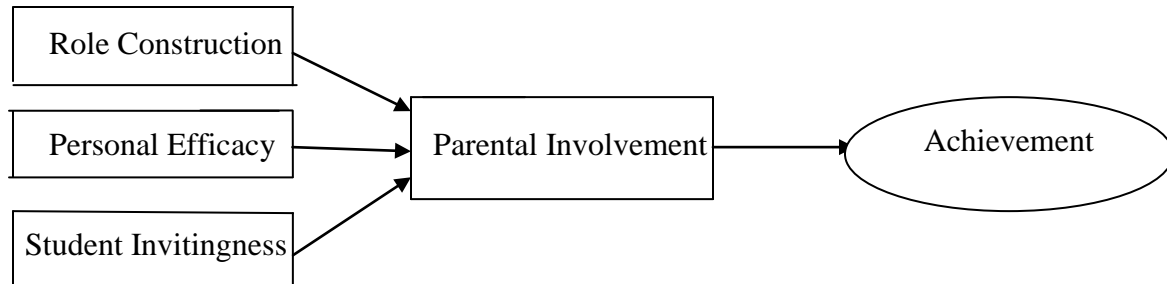


Figure 1– Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s Model of Parental Involvement (as cited in Moore, 2009, p. 29)

The first construct is “*parents’ role construction*’ determined by how involved parents believe they are supposed to be ... based on their attitude, beliefs, and values as well as societal beliefs of how parents should behave”. Bracke & Corts adds to this construct by suggesting that “if parents believe that “good parenting” means that they should take an active role in their children's education (role construction) then there is a greater likelihood that parents will take an active role in their children's education”, (Bracke & Corts, 2012). The second construct is

‘*self- efficacy*’ [where] parents are motivated to become involved in their child’s education based on how influential they can be in producing a positive outcome. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) found when self-efficacy theory is applied to parental involvement based on a child’s education, parents will make their involvement choices by proactively thinking through their behaviours and what outcomes will likely be a result of the actions that they might employ.

‘*Student invitingness*’ is the third construct where “parents become involved due to invitations, requests, and opportunities that schools provide for parents’ parental involvement”. Hoover-

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Dempsey and Sandler, in their research found that “the first two constructs exert more influence on parental involvement than the third construct” in bringing about student achievement, (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) as cited in Moore, 2009, p. 29).

Another theory of parental involvement was one conceptualized by Wendy S. Grolnick and her colleagues, (1994 & 1997). Like Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, Grolnick et al identified three dimensions of parental involvement, “based on how parent–child interactions affect students' schooling and motivation”. The first dimension, ‘*Behavioural involvement*’ refers to parents' public actions representing their interest in their child's education, such as attending an open house or volunteering at the school. ‘*Personal involvement*’ includes parent–child interactions that communicate positive attitudes about school and the importance of education to the child. ‘*Cognitive/intellectual involvement*’ refers to behaviours that promote children's skill development and knowledge, such as reading books and going to museums. According to this theory, “parental involvement affects student achievement because these interactions affect students' motivation, their sense of competence, and the belief that they have control over their success in school,” (Grolnick et al as cited in Education Encyclopedia, n.d.).

Effects of parental involvement on children’s total functioning

As stated earlier, the involvement of parents in the education of their children’s education is a key determinant of their total functioning as well as the future successes of these children. For over fifty years, researchers, observers and even government officials all around the world have done studies or have made observations on the enormous effects these involvements

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parents have had or could have on the successes of their children. This section deals with some of these effects as they have been mentioned in the literature over the last fifty years.

Firstly, Bond (1973) highlighted the view of London's Minister of Education, Edward Short in 1970, who had stated that "...an extremely important element in a child's progress is the attitude towards his schooling of his parents. If they are interested and willing to help – not nagging, fussy and neurotic help ..., his progress will be greater" (p. 44).

Bond also looked at the effects of parental involvement as outlined in the results of The Plowden Report based on a study done, also in England. According to this report, "teachers are linked to parents by the children for whom they are responsible. The triangle should be completed and a more direct relationship established between teachers and parents. Parents should be partners in more than name, their responsibilities [should be] joint instead of several", (Bond, 1973, p. 43). At Tonmah High school, parents should be made aware of this 'triangle' they form with their children and their children's teachers and so develop the 'links' needed to sustained their involvement in their schooling. This would help to enhance the total functioning of their children.

Over twenty years later, Coleman in 1998 also spoke of a 'triad conception' [of parental involvement]. He stated that

within the classroom setting there are in fact three actors ever present – the teacher, the student and the parent(s), who are 'present' in the sense that the beliefs, attitudes, and habits of mind of the family are thoroughly embedded in the mind of the child. The interactions amongst these three actors largely determine the student's willingness and readiness to learn; predict student satisfaction and commitment to school and schooling;

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and hence largely shape both the attitudes towards school and learning, and the level of achievement of the child ... The 'teachability' of the student... [is] largely derived from interactions within [this] triad, (Coleman, 1998, p. 1).

Kellaghan *et al.*, 1993 also added that "it is the family environment/curriculum of the home {e.g. conversations about school experiences} and NOT family income or family education ... it is not **who parents are** but **what parents do** to encourage and facilitate learning that makes a difference to students" (Kellaghan *et al.*, 1993 as cited in Coleman, 1998, p. 10). In further support of his view, Coleman quoted Oakes and Lipton, who in 1990 had claimed that "when parents support learning at home, their children are almost guaranteed to do well at school ... what really matters is the values you communicate and the consistent encouragement you provide your child", (Oakes and Lipton, 1990, p. 233 as cited in Coleman, 1998, p. 15). Coleman later concluded that "it is not who parents are that are important, but what they do, with and for their children, to prepare them for success in school", (Coleman, 1998, p. 145).

In the United States in 2007, a study done by the Department for Children, Schools and Families looked at the involvement of both mothers and fathers. In this study they found that "mothers are more likely than fathers to say that they felt 'very involved' in their child's education (2007, p.4). They however posited that "Fathers have a critical role to play in ensuring positive outcomes for their children", such as "better exam results, a higher level of educational qualifications, greater progress at school, higher educational expectations, more positive attitudes (e.g. enjoyment) and better behaviour (e.g. reduced risk of suspension or expulsion) at school". This involvement of fathers they added "is important not only when a child is in

primary school but also when they are in secondary school and regardless of the child's gender (i.e. for sons as well as daughters)" (2007, p. 6).

Anfara & Mertens, (2008), editors of an article, written in the *Middle School Journal* highlighted a number of researchers' views on parental involvement. Firstly, increasing parent involvement, according to Myers and Monson (1992), is a positive initiative because students learn more in schools where parents become involved and offered their support. A review of the research on parental involvement reveals that parent involvement positively affects students' achievement; attendance; self-esteem, behaviour; graduation; emotional well-being; and life goals. Not only has a compelling connection been found between student achievement and parent involvement, but it is also interesting to note that these benefits cross lines of family income and parent education level.

They then stated that "Henderson and Mapp, (2002) revealed in an analysis of 51 studies that students with above average parent involvement had academic achievement rates that were 30% higher than those students with below average parental involvement". In another study, he cited Henderson and Berla, (1994) who "found that the most accurate predictors of student success in school were the ability of the family (along with the help and support of school personnel) to (a) create a positive home learning environment, (b) communicate high but realistic expectations for their children's school performance and future careers, and (c) become involved in their children's schooling". They later quoted Henderson and Berla who wrote in the opening statement of their book, *A New Generation of Evidence: the Family is Critical to Student Achievement* that "the evidence is now beyond dispute. When schools work together with

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families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school, but throughout life; (p. 1)". Anfara & Mertens therefore concluded that "the research is clear that children benefit when their parents participate in and are supportive of their schooling", (Anfara & Mertens, 2008, p. 58-64).

Yet another researcher/author, Chen (highlighted earlier), aptly summarizes the effects of parental involvement. She posited that,

The more intensively involved the parents are, the greater the positive impact on academic achievement. Parental involvement not only enhances academic performance, but it also has a positive influence on student attitude and behaviour. A parent's interest and encouragement in a child's education can affect the child's attitude toward school, classroom conduct, self-esteem, absenteeism, and motivation. Parental involvement can make a positive difference at all age levels.

Parental involvement tends to be the greatest with young children and tends to taper off as children get older...; however, that involvement of parents of middle and high school students is equally important. In high school, for example, a parent's encouragement can influence whether a child stays in school or drops out. Similarly, a child may consider going to college more seriously when parents show interest in the child's academic achievements and talk with the child about the benefits of a college education, (Chen, 2008).

In this statement, Chen has also strongly suggested the need for parents to be constantly involved in their children's education, not only at the primary level, but throughout their years of

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schooling. This deep involvement would, in essence, determine not only the success of their children but also how long they remain in school.

Another study which highlighted the effects of parental involvement was that done by Harris, Andrew-Power & Goodal (2009). The results of which were reported in their book concluded that “students reporting high parent engagement and a high sense of belonging, or high parent engagement and high teacher support, performed better at secondary school in the initial phase of transition than students who reported low support at any of the three levels”. They further argued that “if children don’t have the support of their parents, this transition phase is more difficult” (Harris et al, 2009, p.16). Harris et al further stated that “... the support parents show for learning and achievement is the single most important contributory factor to increased student achievement. In terms of raising school performance, parents matter significantly”. In their study, they also highlighted a plan of the government called the ‘*Children’s Plan*’ which was designed as a guide for policy makers. As Harris et al (2009) reported, this plan “reinforces the need to involve parents in order to secure greater wellbeing of young people, and also to secure higher achievement, ...the more engaged parents are in their children’s learning, the more likely their children are to achieve academic success”, (Harris et al, 2009, pp. 2-3).

They further stated that student achievement increases, “when parents are actively involved in the learning process. ... Parents ... influence how young people think about education, ..., their ... engagement in learning is crucial if improving learning outcomes for each student ... is to be more than an aspiration”, (Harris et al, 2009, pp. 8-9). Like Bond (1973) and Coleman (1998) earlier, Harris et al also shared the view that there is the need for an ‘*interaction of the three*’, namely the teachers, the students and the parents in this phenomenon of parental

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involvement, (see figure 2 below). To this end, they had stated that “parental engagement is an iterative process. It involves parents interacting with the school, parents interacting with their children, the school interacting with both parents and students, and finally with parents being engaged in the student’s process of learning. None of these interactions stand alone; they affect each other” (Harris et al, 2009, p. 60).

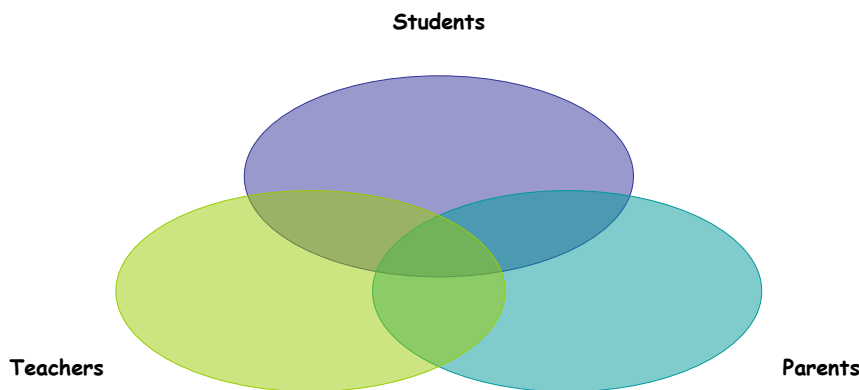


Figure 2 – Diagram showing interaction of Students, Teachers and Parents (adapted from Harris et al, 2009, p. 62).

In 2008, Houtenville & Smith Conway reported their findings based on data from the ‘infamous’ National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS). Their results suggested “that parental effort has a strong positive direct effect on student achievement that is large, relative to the effect of school resources” [and] that “parental effort[plays a] potentially critical role... in the production of student achievement”, (2008, pp.438 & 451). More recently in 2010, Chen and Gregory also highlighted the effects of parental of several researchers when they stated that, ‘a number of studies have shown that students whose parents are more involved in their schooling

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earn higher grades (Sewell & Hauser, 1980; Stevenson & Baker, 1987), have better school attendance (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002), and have fewer discipline problems (Deslandes & Royer, 1997; Lee, 1994; Sheldon & Epstein, 2002) than do their peers whose parents are less involved”, (2010).

In a research done in North California State University, Brigham Young University and the University of California, the researchers found that, “parental involvement is a more significant factor in a child’s academic performance than the qualities of the school itself...”

According to the study,

These researchers looked at how “*family social capital*” and “*school social capital*” pertained to academic achievement. Family social [is] the bonds between parents and children, such as trust, open lines of communication and active engagement in a child’s academic life. School social capital captures a school’s ability to serve as a positive environment for learning, including measures such as student involvement in extracurricular activities, teacher morale and the ability of teachers to address the needs of individual students. [They] found that students with high levels of family social capital and low levels of school social capital performed better academically than students with high levels of school social capital but low family social capital (2012).

Dr. Toby Parcel, a co-author of the work on the research concluded that, “while both school and family involvement are important, the role of family involvement is stronger when it comes to academic success,” (2012).

In the regional and local arena, although the research in this area is not widespread, there are however some researchers and commentators who have documented their views on the

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effects of parental involvement. Grace Camille Munroe, Ph.D, reporting on a study done on Parental involvement in Education in Jamaica summarized that “the benefits of parental involvement for the child” are that “the child becomes motivated, develops the ability to work independently, develops positive learning habits and interacts well with his/her teacher”, (Sept/Oct/Nov 2008).

In the CXC-Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment (CPEA) Handbook for Parents, they have suggested that,

There is no one more important than you, parents, when it comes to your children’s success in school... , when parents get involved in supporting their child’s learning, they complete their homework more often, do better in school, have better attendance, have better relationships with children at school and are more likely to be successful. Children with parents who are more involved in their learning do better in school than those with parents who are less involved, (2011, p.2).

Taneisha Burke writing in the *Jamaica Gleaner News* stated that “parental involvement in the nurturing of a child’s education and overall development is one of the core indicators of later achievement”. She further stated that “it is through this involvement that children understand and appreciate the importance of a solid education”, (Burke, 2010).

At a National Spelling Bee Finals in Guyana in 2011, Education Minister Shaik Baksh said that “the success of students throughout their school years, hinges strongly on parental support”. He further emphasized that “many of the top performers and other successful students at both the primary and secondary levels were able to do well because their parents paid a vested

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interest in their education”, (Baksh as cited in KNEWS, 2011). In Trinidad, Bernard, 2012 after conducting a workshop with principals and vice principals, concluded that,

There are numerous benefits to parent involvement in schooling. The parent is made aware of any learning difficulties of the child and corrective interventions or referrals and is exposed to the learning requirements of the teacher. Apart from pacing the academic progress of the child, it motivates the teacher to perform at his/her optimum. Finally it provides comfort to the child, parent and teacher that there is love and respect for the individual, but above all parent involvement is crucial in building a learning society, (Bernard, 2012).

Most of the views of the authors and the results of the studies as seen in the body of literature reviewed have concluded that there is a positive relationship between parental involvement and successful or improved student performances at school. Furthermore, it was revealed that this involvement tend to fall as children get older or as they enter high (or secondary) school but this however should not be the case since parental involvement is crucial during the entire period of a child’s schooling, if that child is to be successful. This view is supported by a study done by Beavers and Dewberry entitled, *Parental Involvement: How Necessary Is It?* They concluded that,

The success of a student does not totally fall on the shoulders of the parents; there are plenty of success stories where the parents were not involved. However, the road to success will not be as bumpy with the love and support of a parent. Parents have to show their children that they will ride that road to success with them. The road to success may

seem bumpy at times, but with the companionship of a parent the end of the road can be paved with gold, (Beavers & Dewberry, 1997).

As all of the literature have suggested therefore, parents by their involvement in their children's education form the third link in the triangle with their children and their children's teachers in creating that setting necessary for the success of their children.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methods used to conduct this study with these six students as I attempt to investigate their perceptions of their parents' involvement in their education. It includes a description of .the type of research method, the rationale for using this method as well as some philosophical assumptions of this method. It then describes the specific research design, the population and sampling technique, the instruments used to collect the data, ethical considerations, limitations and delimitations. The chapter ends with the description of the data management and analysis.

Type of Study

The study uses the *qualitative methodology* to investigate students' perceptions of their parents' involvement in their education and how this involvement enhance their total

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functioning. Qualitative research is used to “describe events and persons scientifically without the use of numerical data” (Best & Kahn, 2006, p. 79). According to Creswell, a qualitative study is “an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting” (Creswell, 1994, p.1-2). This study of things in their natural setting, according to Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 3 as cited in Merriam, 2009, p 13, is an attempt “to make sense of, or interpret, phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them”. Qualitative research is therefore exploratory, and is used when we don’t know what to expect, to define the problem or develop an approach to the problem. It’s also used to go deeper into issues of interest and explore nuances related to the problem at hand” (Mora, 2010). The aim of this study therefore seeks to get a deeper understanding of and to make meaning of these students’ perceptions of the involvement of their parents in their education, both pre and post secondary school. The findings of this study can be used to develop an approach to foster greater involvement of parents at Tonmah High School with a view of improving the future academic performances of the students at the school.

This qualitative study involved certain philosophical assumptions. Firstly was the issue of *ontology*, which is “concerned with what is real or the nature of reality” (Lichtman, 2009, p.20). According to Creswell, “for the qualitative researcher, the only reality is that constructed by the individuals involved in the research situation” namely, the researcher, those individuals being investigated, and the reader or audience interpreting the study” (Creswell, 1994, p.5-6). This reality, Creswell further stated tends to be “subjective and multiple” (p.5). With this study, what were real were the various levels and forms of involvement these students experienced

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from their parents and the subjective and multiple meanings given to these involvements by these students themselves, as well as by me, the researcher.

Secondly was the issue of *epistemology* which deals with “the nature of knowledge, or how we know what we know” (Lichtman, 2009, p. 245), and looks at the relationship of the researcher to that being researched. In a qualitative study, “researchers interact with those they study, whether this interaction assumes the form of living with or observing informants over a prolonged period of time, or actual collaboration’ (Creswell, 1994, p.6). In this study with these students, although I do not teach Form 2, I was able to gather some information about them from their form teachers as well as from perusal of their report books.

The third assumption is that of the issue of *axiology*, which is concerned with “value and judgments” (Lichtman, 2009, p.243). As Lichtman stated, “it is neither possible nor desirable for [qualitative] researchers to keep their values from influencing aspects of the research study (2009, p. 20). This view is supported by Creswell who stated that the “qualitative researcher admits to the value-laden nature of the study and actively reports his or her values and biases, as well as the value nature of information gathered from the field” (1994, p. 6). The information, gathered, according to this last paradigm, would therefore be subjective, with preference being given to my values with regards to what is being reported. Before interviewing the students, I did not have any preconceptions of their parents’ specific involvement in their education. What were evident; however, were my own views as well as that of some of my colleagues, of the seemingly apparent decline in parents’ involvement in their children’s education post primary school. These views affected how I conducted the interviews in terms of asking probing

questions in some instances when I thought there was more to some of the answers the students had provided me with at first.

This study of these students therefore lent itself to all of the three philosophical assumptions or principles of a qualitative study, as outlined above.

The Research Design: Phenomenological case study design

The specific qualitative tradition used in the study was the *phenomenological case study design*. This design allowed me to make meaning of this phenomenon – parental involvement (through the eyes of these students), and its impact on student achievement. It was therefore more appropriate so as to enable me to arrive at a deeper understanding of these students' perception of their parents' involvement in their education by getting information directly from them. Furthermore, this approach is one “in which human experiences are examined through the detailed description of the people being studied” (Creswell, 1994, p.12), and “involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning” (Dukes, 1984, Oiler, 1986 as cited in Creswell, 1994, p.12). Creswell (2013) further added that “a phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon” [where] “phenomenologists focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon” (Creswell, 2013, p. 76).

In this study, the lived experiences of six Form 2 students of Tonmah High School was studied in order to get an understanding or ‘make meaning’ of how these students perceive the involvement of their parents in their education both before and after entering secondary school.

The aim was therefore to “study the lived experiences of individuals with the primary goal of describing the experience” (Lichtman, 2009, p.69). In this study, six students from the top, middle and lowest levels from the SEA Intake list of students into Tonmah High School were purposely selected to participate in the study.

Population and Sample

The students for this study were chosen from the current Form 2 class at Tonmah High School and so represent the group of students who did the SEA Examinations in 2011 and were placed at Tonmah High School based on their results in that exam. These students came from several ‘feeder’ primary schools for Tonmah High School. All students assigned to Tonmah High School had SEA scores in the 70th percentile and higher of their schools. Ninety-seven (97) students, forty-eight (48) boys and forty-nine (49) girls were assigned to Tonmah High. They were placed in three Form 1 classes. At the end of their first year at Tonmah High School these students were promoted to Form 2 in those same groupings. During these two years however, the number of students at this level increased as a result of transfers into the school, bringing the number to one hundred and five (105) students, fifty-three (53) boys and fifty-two (52) girls.

Six (6) students from this population of one hundred and five (105) students were purposefully selected to participate in this phenomenological case study. This involved selecting these six (6) students, comprising two students each from the top, the middle and the bottom of the 2011 SEA Exam placement entry list of students to Tonmah High School. This type of sampling was therefore *stratified purposeful sampling* which involves “a combination of sampling strategies such that subgroups are chosen based on specified criteria, and a sample of

cases is then selected within these strata", (Mertens, 1998, p. 263). In so doing I would be able to obtain the perceptions of students from a wider cross section of the students within that year group and not just from one level. This would therefore provide the rich thick data necessary to make meaning of this phenomenon through the eyes of these students. Coincidentally, these six (6) students were made up of three boys and three girls and they were all evenly spread across the three Form 2 classes.

Profile of Students

To obtain the information to compile these profiles of these students, some questions were asked at the beginning of each interview before delving into the specific questions of actual parental involvement. In so doing pseudonyms (chosen by each student) were assigned to each student.

Abiel, a female is thirteen years and lives with both her parents and a brother. She is the fourth of four children and has two older brothers and one older sister. She attended a Presbyterian Primary School in the east. She was in the top two of the 2011 SEA List of the students placed at Tonmah High School.

Damien, a male student is fourteen years and lives with his mother, stepfather, grandmother and younger brother. He is the first of two children. He also attended a Presbyterian Primary School located not too far from Tonmah High School. He was in the bottom two of the 2011 SEA List of the students placed at Tonmah High School.

Isaiah, a male student is fourteen years old and lives with his mother and father. He is an only child. He attended two Private Primary Schools, one up to Standard Three and the other

from Standard Four. He was in the middle two of the 2011 SEA List of the students placed at Tonmah High School.

Jessica, a female student is thirteen years old and lives with both her parents and her brother. She is the older sister to her one brother. She attended a Girls Government Primary School in the east. She was in the middle two of the 2011 SEA List of the students placed at Tonmah High School.

Michael, a male student is fourteen years old and lives with his mother and stepfather. He has three sisters and four brothers and is sixth in his family. He like Damien attended the same Presbyterian Primary School. He was in the bottom two of the 2011 SEA List of the students placed at Tonmah High School.

Randelle, a female student is thirteen years old. She lives with her mummy, brother, sisters, grandparents and two uncles. She is the second of four children and has one older sister, one younger sister and one younger brother. She attended a mixed Government Primary School which is located very close to Tonmah High School. She was in the top two of the 2011 SEA List of the students placed at Tonmah High School.

Instrument and Instrumentation

The main source of collecting data was by conducting *interviews* with these six students. The use of interviews to collect data in this study was most appropriate because of their “adaptability” when being conducted, since the interviewer “can follow up a respondent’s answers to obtain more information and clarify vague statements. They also can build trust and rapport with respondents, thus making it possible to obtain information that the individual

probably would not reveal by any other data-collection method”, (Gall and Borg, 1996, p. 289).

Cohen, Manion and Morrison further suggested that ‘interviews enable participants ... to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view”, (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000, p. 267).

The format used was a guided interview which consisted of twenty questions in a general format used with each of the six students, (see Appendix #5, p. xviii). However, some questions had sub-questions and at times I had to ask probing questions, depending on the responses given by each student as the interviews unfolded. The first six questions were to put the students at ease and also served to give me some information to formulate a profile of each student. The other fourteen questions asked the students about a number of issues surrounding my research questions in order to help in my investigation of these students’ perceptions of parental involvement.

Another source used to collect data on the students was that of *documents*. These included the *2011 SEA Intake listing* which was used to obtain the marks of the students in order to do the stratified purposeful sampling as well as to determine their change in academic performance post primary school. The *school records* such as report books were also used in order to obtain the marks and grades obtained by these six students over the first five terms at Tonmah High School, (see Table 1, Appendix #1, p. x)

Data Collecting Process

Before conducting the actual interviews, I met with the six students, and chatted with them about general topics. This was done to develop a *rapport* with them in order to ensure that

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they would be relaxed and comfortable when the actual interviews were conducted. During this chat, I informed the students of the reasons for talking with them which was to conduct interviews with them to find out their views on parental involvement in the education of their children. I also informed them that this would help educators to have a better understanding of young people's views on this phenomenon of parental involvement, since it is becoming more and more important in the educational arena that the views of young people are vitally important when making decisions that affect their well-being. They were further informed that the information would be used in a study that I was engaged in at the University of the West Indies (UWI) and that their names would not be included in the study.

When the actual interviews were conducted with each of the students separately, they were again apprised of the reason of the interview with them. I also informed them that none of the sessions would last more than forty-five minutes. They were also informed that whatever they said would be kept strictly confidential and so would not be discussed with either their teachers or any member of administration. They were again given the assurance that the information would be used in a study that I was engaged in at UWI and that their names would not be included in the study. This was to allay any fears or doubts they might have in answering the questions honestly and openly. They were however asked to provide a pseudo name or pseudonym for ease in the analysis of the information collected from them. They were also informed that their answers would be written in order to have a record of their answers to be able to combine all the information later on.

The interviews were conducted over a four-week period, where each student was interviewed at least twice, since one encounter was not enough to complete the interviews. These

interviews were conducted mainly during the luncheon interval as was my original plan. However I had to meet with them before the start of class at times to complete some of the interviews. These time constraints as well as other hindrances within the school calendar and the plant itself contributed to this lengthy interview period. Even after the interviews were conducted, I had to check back with them in order to clarify some answers or even to get additional information. The lack of a taped version of the interviews may have caused me to have to check back with these students from time to time. (See limitations).

Ethical Considerations/Issues

“Research does involve collecting data from people, about people”, (Punch, 2005 as cited in Creswell, 2009, p.87), whereas Lichtman goes further to state that “much of qualitative research involves interaction with individuals”, (Lichtman, 2009, p. 52). This therefore means that, “researchers need to protect their research participants; develop trust with them; promote the integrity of research [and] guard against misconduct and impropriety...,” (Israel & Hay, 2006, as cited in Creswell, 2009, p. 87). These ethical issues were considered in the conduct of this study. Firstly, permission was sought from the school principal via a letter, (see Appendix#3, p. xiv) to conduct the study with students and to obtain school records, thus “gaining the agreement of individuals in authority... to provide access to participants of research sites” (Creswell, 2009, p.90).

Furthermore, letters were also sent home to parents seeking permission to conduct the interviews with their children before commencing any of the interviews with these students and assurances were also given to parents and students of the privacy, anonymity and confidentiality

of any information provided (see Appendix #4, p. xvi). As stated earlier, the students were also assured that their names would not be used anywhere in the write-up of the study. These assurances were to ensure that, these students participating in the study had, according to Lichtman, “a reasonable expectation that privacy will be guaranteed . . . , [their identities] will not be revealed [and] “that information provided to the researcher will be treated in a confidential manner” (Lichtman, 2009, pp.54-55). All students were also informed that they had the right to withdraw at any time from the study.

Limitations

I do not teach Form 2, and so found it difficult at times to get the students to interview them. Several activities held in the school during this period as well as finding suitable rooms to conduct the interviews further added to the delay in the conduct of the interviews. Another limitation was the fact that I did not record the interviews because when I attempted to do so with the first student, she looked a bit uncomfortable, so I stopped. I therefore did not attempt to do so with the others, fearing the same response and I felt that the interview conditions should be the same for each student. This therefore could have led to the slowing down of interviews as well as my omissions in writing every word of the responses.

Delimitations

The study was conducted with six (6) students, comprising two students each who gained the highest, the middle and the lowest scores at the 2011 SEA exam and are currently in Form 2

at Tonmah High School. The information obtained cannot be generalized since these experiences are unique to these students and their parents.

Data Management and Analysis

Upon completion of my interviews, the process of *data management* began which involved me organizing the data I collected during the interviews, checking them for completeness in order for me to start the process of analyzing and interpreting the data (Gay and Airasian, 2003, p.230). In so doing I was able to check back with the students to clarify some of their answers or get additional information where necessary. Marshall and Rossman defines *data analysis* as “the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data” whereas “qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data; it builds grounded theory” (1994, p. 111).

In order to analyze the data which was obtained from the interviews conducted with the students, it was therefore most appropriate to use the *Grounded Theory Methodology*. According to Strauss and Corbin, “grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. ...it is discovered, developed and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. One does not begin with a theory, [and] then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge” (1990, p. 23). In this study conducted with these six students to obtain their views on the phenomenon, parental involvement, the use of the grounded theory methodology helped me to analyze the data which they provided me with from the

interviews. In so doing, the meanings which they have of this phenomenon was able to emerge from their answers.

To achieve this however involved the *transcribing* of the raw data from the interviews, creating *narrative analyses* (or short stories) of each student from these transcripts and then the *coding* of this data into meanings or concepts (see Appendices # 6 and #7, pp. xxi & xliii). These narrative analyses have been used to 'tell stories' of these students' perceptions which helped in the interpretation of 'epiphanies' of these stories (Lichtman, 2009, p. 88), as I "search for meaning in the stories" (Denzin (1989) cited in Lichtman, 2009, p. 88). With these narrative analyses, I was able to organize the data elements into a coherent developmental account, [by ... synthesizing of the data rather than a separation of it into constituent parts" (Hatch & Wisniewski, Eds., 1995). "*Coding* is the process of examining the raw qualitative data which will be in the form of words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs, and assigning codes or labels," (Raeder, 2007). It is therefore "the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualized, and put back together in new ways. It is the central process by which theories are built from the data", (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 57). The "goal of coding is to "fracture" (Strauss, 1987, p. 29) the data and rearrange it into categories that facilitate the comparison of data within and between these categories and that aid in the development of theoretical concepts"(Maxwell, 1996, p. 78-79).

In analyzing the data, the questions and therefore the responses of the students were grouped into thirteen headings, namely: relationship with parents, care provided by parents, parents' relationship and communication with teachers, parents' visits to school, ways or activities of parental involvement in schooling or school life, approval or disapproval and

impact(s) of parental involvement in schooling or school life, parental involvement at Primary School, parental involvement at Secondary School, students' expectations of parents' involvement, parents' provision of commodities/ facilities/amenities to assist with school work, parents' discussion or communication about schooling and school life , parents' interest and assistance with learning at home, and students' like or dislike of general aspects of parental involvement . These enabled me to create the stories of the students with respect to their perceptions of their parents' involvement in their education. These groupings also assisted me to identify the codes 'hidden' in the responses of the students. Both the interview transcripts and the narrative analyses (stories) were used in this process of coding.

Using *in vivo*, *repeated words* and *constant comparative* methods (Taylor & Gibbs, 2010), these codes were then used to form categories or themes. All these helped to make meaning and have a deeper understanding of how these students perceived their parents' past and current level of involvement, as well as what they perceive this involvement ought to be.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Introduction

This study was conducted to investigate how six Form Two students perceive the involvement of their parents in their education over the last four years and how has this

involvement impacted on their total functioning. In this chapter, the findings that emerge from my analysis of the data are presented as I seek to answer the research questions. The first section gives the demographics of the students based on the responses given by them to the first seven questions of my interviews with them. The second section presents the findings coming out of the data obtained from the students' responses to the other thirteen questions. They are presented under the thirteen groupings as outlined in data analysis process identified in Chapter 3. The major themes that emerged from these students' responses as they chatted with me about their perceptions of their parents' involvement in their school life will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Findings

As indicated in my introduction above, this first section gives the findings of the demographics of the six students. These demographics are outlined in Table 1. As seen in the table, the SEA scores of the students range from 74% to 86%. However for the first five terms that they have been at Tonmah High School, only Abiel has been scoring above 70%. The other students, with the exception of Jessica, who attained 70% in Term 2 of Form 1 have all attained below 70% over all of these five terms. Another interesting finding is that none of the students chose Tonmah High School as their first choice. However, Abiel indicate, "but I like it here" whereas Isaiah stated, "but I like it here; it cool and I have made some good, close friends".

In this second section the other findings are organized and presented under the thirteen headings (as indicated previously), all of which are linked to the research questions which have guided the study. The over-arching question asks 'How do Form 2 students perceive the

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involvement of their parents in their education over the last four years and how has this involvement impacted on their total functioning'? This was supported by three sub-questions, together with the matching groupings of the students' responses as well as the specific interview questions and these are shown in the Table 3, (see Appendix # 8, p. lxvii). The following are the actual findings as obtained from the responses of the students regarding their perceptions of their parents' involvements in their education.

Relationship with parents

The responses to this question were quite varied. Abiel has a close relationship with her mother whereas the relationship with her father is more of a supportive nature, for according to her, "Daddy is there to drop me places ... and ... take me to buy stuff". Damien although he doesn't live with his father, gets along well with his father, but with his mother the relationship is problematic. Isaiah who is an only child has a loving, close and open relationship with his parents but however pointed out, "I have a better relationship with my father". Jessica has a normal and agreeable relationship with both of her parents. Michael, who lives with his mother and stepfather has an unpredictable relationship with his mother and admitted that, "sometimes I feel ashamed to talk to my mother because certain things I want to tell her I just can't ... she would start to 'loud up' nah, so I prefer not to tell her some things". Randelle has a closer relationship with her mother than her father, because as she said, "I live with my mummy and so I see her more often".

Level of Parental Care

Abiel's daily needs as well as her educational needs are taken care of by her mother with some assistance from her bigger sister. However her father offers financial support when necessary. Damien's mother takes care of his daily needs but his educational needs are shared by his parents, where as he divulged, "Mummy and Daddy have an agreement, he would buy my books and she would buy my uniform". Isaiah's mother takes care of his most of daily and educational needs, since his father leaves home very early for work. Both of Jessica's parents share the responsibility of taking care of her daily as well as educational needs, but however explained that, "My mother does not work so she does most of the work, but they both cook at different times". Michael's daily and educational needs are taken care of by his mother, but his stepfather would cook sometimes. His father however provides financial support towards these needs. As for Randelle, her daily and educational needs are taken care of by her mother, grandmother and uncles. As she says "Mummy works so when I go home my grandmother takes care of me ... but my mummy and uncles they all help sometimes".

Relationship and Communication between Parents and Teachers

Four of the students, Abiel, Damien, Jessica and Michael claimed that there is no relationship between their parents and their teachers. Isaiah described their relationship as normal, whereas Randelle thinks it is a good relationship. All six students revealed that communication between their parents and their teachers may be mainly letters informing them of Parent's Day or other activities or events at the school. Abiel, however said that her mother and Form Teacher had telephoned each concerning details of a '*Heroes Foundation*' outing when she was in Form. Michael also admitted that a letter was sent home informing his parents about

him wearing a 'pencil pants', which was against the school's uniform dress code in order for them to address this infringement.

Parents' Visits to School

Like the communication between parents and teachers, parents' visits to the school also occur infrequently. For all of the students the main reasons for these visits are for Parents' Day and PTA meetings. However Abiel's father came in during this term, "to drop something I left at home, my TD note book", and Randelle's mother "... just came in to talk to my teachers to find out how I'm going in school" she explained. As for attendance at PTA meetings however, only Damien and Jessica's mothers have attended all since they have been in Tonmah High School. Abiel's response was, "only in Form One, never since I'm in Form Two. I'm not sure why", whereas Isaiah admitted, "well they use to come often at first but they have stopped now because of some statement made by the principal". Michael's response was, "sometimes, not this term though, but in Term 1 and Term 2" and Randelle said "not this term, but a few last term and in Form 1".

Ways or Activities of Parental Involvement

There were varying responses to the question relating to this topic. Abiel said that they help her with projects. Damien, Isaiah and Michael said that their parents contributed money for the school's bazaar and walkathon. Damien and Isaiah also added that they help them with solving problems, and as Damien said, "certain problems I don't know" and as Isaiah said, "If I have a problem, they would help especially my Dad ... like Maths and Science". Michael divulged that he likes how "everyday she [his mother] tries to push me and tell me to get a good

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education. I find that is very excellent. I like this because sometimes when I'm not doing well in school, she is the only one to give me confidence". Jessica thinks that her mother should ask more questions when she comes to Parents' Day meetings. As for Randelle, she likes when who mother comes into school to find out about her.³

Approval or Disapproval and impact of Parental Involvement

Abiel likes them to help her with her projects because as she claims, "they help me with getting good presentations, putting things together and so". Damien and Isaiah believes that the help they get in solving problems, "gives me a better understanding of what I'm doing not just doing something and don't really know what I'm doing" says Damien whereas Isaiah says, "they would help me to learn better and would give me other examples to help me". Michael says that he likes his mother's words of motivation because as he says, "sometimes if I'm doing a test, I would think about what she said and try to do my best". He however admits that he does not always approve of or like her to push him to do work, because as he explains, "sometimes if I'm playing (and don't want to stop), I don't want to hear her or sometimes when she is under heavy alcohol", adding that, "if I do anything wrong and she drink alcohol then she would beat me then". Jessica believes that if her mother asks more questions at meetings, "she would find out more about me, what I need to work on, my behaviour, how in doing in my work, so she can tell me things to improve my work and I will try to improve". Randelle likes when her mother comes in to find out about her because, "it made me feel important and to know that she cares about my education. It would make me feel to do better so when she comes in she'll get a good report of how I'm doing in my classes".

Parental Involvement in Standards 4 & 5

All six students declared that their parents were very involved in their school life when they were in Standards 4 and 5. Abiel however said that “mostly Mammy” was involved. She also added that, “she use to come and wait for dismissal to carry me to lessons. She use to help me write essays and Daddy would explain Maths when I didn’t understand. They use to ask me if I understand my work, telling me to revise if I want to pass for my first choice school”. They however did not come into the school often, “well except for school choices and for graduation stuff and so”. Damien said that, “they were there right through out to help me with anything I had to do”, and that his mother would come in “unexpectedly sometimes to see how I was doing”. Damien received lessons “right in school with my teacher” and at home, “they use to help too with Maths and English, like with essays”. He also added, “I think they was involved because they wanted me to do my best and get A⁺ right through and pass for my first choice”.

Isaiah’s parents were very involved in his schooling at primary school and went into the two private primary schools which he attended several times; when they were called in when he was involved in fights or to check on how he was going. They sent him to lessons three days per week and the reason for this as he puts it, “I think so that I would get to pass for my first choice school”. Jessica remarked, “Both my parents were interested. They were more interested in what happened with me in primary school. They visited more often, because I use to talk a lot. I use to take lessons in Creative Writing and I did lessons in school in the other subjects. Especially in Standard 5, they were more interested because they wanted me to pass for my first choice school”.

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Michael said, "They were strict over me then Miss. My mother would come and check my teacher and find out how I'm doing. She use to get my auntie to help me with my Home Lesson because she use to be busy planting her crops and so. I also use to stay in school some days for lessons with my Standard 5 teacher". Randelle stated, "They were real into my work because it was SEA time. They made sure I did all my work, send me to lessons, make sure I hand in all my work and do all my projects and stuff. My Mummy use to come in to check on me and she would talk to my teacher".

Parental Involvement in Secondary School

Five of the six students admitted that their parents are still involved in their schooling but they are not as involved as before. Abiel said, "They are still involved now but I think they were more involved in Primary School". She added that what do they do now is, "to tell me not to waste time and try to read ahead and be constant in studying because the work I'm doing now would dictate my path for my future". About his parents' involvement now, Damien said, "Same way, they were always involved from the beginning. They help with Home Work, check my books and make sure I'm doing my work. So I think they are just as involved. It may be a little less eh, but they are still very involved". Jessica commented, "My mother is more interested now than my father. They tell me to try and do better so I could come out with good passes so I could get a good job like a doctor, an accountant or a nurse or something and not end up frying chicken in KFC".

Like the others, Michael said, "Miss well it change, it not all that it use to be from before, adding, "well mih mother use to come and check mih teachers when I was in Primary School but now she would only come in for Parents Day. Now she would ask me if I have Home

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Work”, admitting that, “most of the time I will tell her ‘no’ because she would be on me (harassing me) to go and do it and if I’m doing something I don’t like to stop – like playing ... with my friends. Of her mother’s involvement now, Randelle revealed, “Well not really involved as before because she is working and since she is a single parent she has to work (harder) but I wish she could be home earlier to help me”. Isaiah is the only student who sees no reduction in his parents’ involvement and quipped, “They still support me all the way in everything. They attend to me immediately, they don’t tell me to wait or just a second or anything like that”.

Students Expectations of Parents’ Involvement

Five of the six students believe that their parents should be involved in their school life now, just as they were when they were in Primary School. Abiel expects the same involvement because “I may make the wrong decisions and so I need them to guide me. I maybe wouldn’t do what I’m supposed to do the best way”, adding, “well I don’t have experience but they do and so they could give me the positive as well as the negative outcomes of what I do”. Damien thinks it should be the same as before, but gave no reason why. Isaiah however stated, “I would like them to support me and check my work because I’m afraid if they stop I would start slacking off and not do my work and I wouldn’t be able to achieve my goal in life which is to be a pilot”.

Jessica commented, “Well I think they should be involved in everything I do in school, like my grades in each subject, also if I’m involved in any sport. Well I was in Track & Field but my grades were dropping and my father said I should stop for a while. But I don’t have a problem with them being involved; actually I want them to be involved”. As for Randelle’s expectations, she stated, “I would like them to be more involved in my life and to know more about what is going on in my life in school and at home when they are not around, so if I am

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having any problems they would be able to help”, further explaining that “is not everything you’ll be able to work out on your own and so parents would talk to us about it and see how they could assist. For example, if you are not treated well in school like bullying, they could come in and talk to the teachers and the parents”. Michael, the only student who does not believe his parents should be too involved stated, “I just want them to check up on me once in a while not all the time like how it was before because, well I don’t know if they would be under alcohol because that would be embarrassing”.

Provision of Commodities and Amenities

All six students indicated that their parents provide most of the things they need to assist them with their school work, including notebooks, stationery, computer, internet, additional reading/reference books, study desks, study rooms, quiet area for studying and lessons if necessary. As Abiel stated, “I have the school computer, I have a study desk in my room and sometimes I could use the dining room if I want more space, adding, “I am only taking Maths lessons now”. Damien said, “Besides the government computer we have another one. I have a study room, the place is quiet but I don’t really like quiet; and I don’t need lessons right now”. Isaiah divulged, “We have two computers besides the government one. I use to attend lessons last term”, but has stopped now and [my parents] also allow me to borrow books from the Public Library”.

Jessica stated that “[my parents] buy stuff for me at the beginning of the term and later on they’ll give me money if I need. I don’t need any lessons right now and my study desk is in my room”. Jessica however admits that she would like an iPod, so she could do research on the internet when she is not at home. Michael however revealed that, “the computer is the one from

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the school. I don't have a study room or study desk or a quiet place for studying. I study and do my Home Lesson in the gallery [and] I don't go to any lessons right now". He does not want a study room since he believes "that is not possible right now". Randelle said, "My study room is my bedroom which I share with my sister. Our internet is down since we have limited service in the area I live, [so] sometimes I would have to go to the Internet Café if I have to do research [and] I'm not taking any lessons right now".

Parents' Discussion and Communication about School

There were varied responses to how frequently these students' parents discussed or communicated with them about school work or their day at school as well as these students' like or dislike of this practice. Abiel's response was, "My mummy, everyday but my daddy, sometimes. My mummy would ask if I had Home Lesson and how was my day. She would ask jokingly, 'were you being a 'good pig' today'". Abiel likes them to do because she believes "they are trying to find out how I'm going or how I'm performing in school in my academics and if I'm behaving". Damien said his mother asks him about school "Every day", adding that she would ask, "Like what I do in school, if I have Home Lesson and so". He too likes them to do so because as he stated, "it show that they have interest in me and what I'm doing in school"

Isaiah's response was, "Every day, they would ask 'how was your day, what subjects you did, did you get your work correct? Stuff like that'". As to if he likes them to do so, Isaiah said, "It depends. Like if there is a problem I have and they'll try to tell me something different to what I think I should do, I don't always like that. I like to do things my way sometimes, but sometimes I may need their guidance or advice".

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Jessica's response however was, "sometimes, whenever they have the time". She however said she would like them to because "I need somebody to talk to about school, like what happen in school". Michael said his mother asks him about school, "Every day; she would ask if I have Home Work, if I had any test today and so". As to whether he likes them to Michael stated, "It depends. If they are under heavy alcohol, they will make a short story into a long story" [and] would change the discussion and start to talk about girls". Randelle said, "My grandparents and my mother, everyday, but my Dad, once or twice weekly". She added that she likes them to since "it shows that they care about what going on in my life. Even if my mummy is tired, she would make sure we do all our school work".

Parental Interest and Assistance at Home

Five of the six students revealed that they are assisted with their school work at home but all of them are shown some level of interest when they are doing their work. As Abiel stated, "Yes they assist. My dad helps me with Maths; Mummy would help me with English like essays. My brother helps me with TD some time". She added that "[they] do not sit with me but they'll ask how I'm going, if I'm almost done and so. Mummy will ask when that due, while Daddy would ask if I'm going to my bed soon". As Damien indicated, "If I ask for help like TD, my father would help. He would sit with me sometimes and Mummy would help me with English, like with essays and so". Isaiah stated, "Yes they show an interest. Like when I'm finished they would ask to see it to see if I did it right, and my Dad and I would sit together to do work because he is doing a course right now in COSTATT. Both my Dad and my Mom help me but my Dad most of the times, because he is there with me".

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Jessica claimed that “They show interest but they cannot assist because they don’t know some of the things we are doing. My mother would say ‘we never learn ‘nothing’ about that’. My mom shows the interest because she is home most of the time, not all the time but often”. Michael however stated “If I’m having trouble I will ask them. They don’t just come and ask me if I need help. If it is research they help because I will need stuff. But nobody sits with me when I’m doing Home Lesson and I do get trouble sometimes with Maths especially. My big sister would help. I would ask my mummy, but if she don’t understand, she would tell me to go and ask my big sister, who lives close by”. Randelle’s response was “Yes, but not all the time, sometimes because I don’t always need help. But they would ask how I’m going. They assist me with Science especially”. Randelle said she is assisted and shown interest by “My Granny, my Mummy, my big sister and my uncles”.

Students’ Likes and Dislikes of General Aspects of Parental Involvement

The students were asked their views about several general aspects of how their parents should get involved in their school life in this question. On the question of parents helping with home lessons, all six students responded ‘yes’. Abiel believes this is necessary to help her concentrate and stay focused, while Damien feels “if I don’t understand it wouldn’t make any sense so they help me to understand”. Jessica said, “So I could understand my work better” whereas Michael said, ‘Yes’ because sometimes when I need help and my sister is not at home, I have to wait until she comes home”. Randelle stated that, “they would help me to understand things better and help me to figure out things better”. Isaiah however did not give a reason for his response.

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About their parents sitting with them while studying, four students responded 'no', while one two students said 'sometimes'. Abiel said, "No not really, but if I'm revising, I would like them to pick me up with work sometimes" whereas Isaiah claimed, "I don't really need them to sit with me but sometimes we sit together because they are doing courses as well". Jessica's response was, "No, I need peace and quiet" whereas Michael's response was, "No Miss because I would lose my focus". Damien however said, "Yes, so if I run into problems they right there to help, but not all the time though" and Randelle also said, "Sometimes, because I know she [her mummy] is tired or might be doing something, but not all the time I would need help".

Two students said they would like their parents to arrange lessons for them while four students said 'no'. Abiel who said 'Yes', stated "but I already go to Maths lessons on Saturdays" whereas Jessica who also said "Yes, to help me with some of my work, especially Science". Damien stated, "They would if I want but I don't want lessons right now" and Isaiah also said 'No, because I kinda really know and understand everything that my teachers are doing right now". Randelle stated, "I don't feel I need lessons right now or at this point in time" and Michael who also said 'no', said no, "because they would be pressuring me too much to do lessons work and school work at the same time".

On the question of their parents providing a quiet place for them to study at home Abiel, Isaiah, Jessica and Randelle said 'yes', but they all have quiet places to study at home already. Michael said yes also "because I live close to the highway so I would be hearing a lot of noise studying in the gallery" but he indicated in an earlier response that getting a 'quiet' study room would not be possible at this time. Damien, the only student who responded 'no' to this question admitted, "I like to study with music".

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Four students believe that their parents should communicate with their teachers regularly. Damien explained “I do not hide anything from them so it’s ok for them to talk to my teachers”. Isaiah said “Yes, especially because I like to talk too much, so I want them to know because I want to stop”. Jessica says “so they will tell them how I’m doing, if I’m improving or not”. Randelle believes that in so doing, “they’ll find out how I’m doing in school so they could help me in the areas I’m not doing well in”. Abiel however doesn’t see the need for any regular communication saying “To talk about what, because everything is OK so far”. Michael said “No because if I am failing a subject they would get to find out and then I would have to study more”. He said he wants to study, “but not how I expect they would tell me to study”.

All six students believe their parents should attend parents’ day meetings. Abiel claimed that, “they sure to get valuable information on how I’m doing at school from all my teachers and so would help me to improve, if necessary”. Damien said he wants “to show them that I’m actually doing ‘good’ in school”. Michael wants her to come so that she’ll be more educated about the school, not really about me alone”. Randelle said that they should come for the same reason given to the question on regular communication. Both Isaiah and Jessica said that their parents already attend but gave no reasons why they should attend.

When asked about their parents visiting their school unexpectedly, three students said ‘no’. Isaiah said “well I won’t really like that to happen, because sometimes at school, if you’re playing and talking in class they might just show up at that time and see”. Jessica stated, “No, next thing I’m doing something I’m not supposed to be doing”. Michael who responded quickly said, “Not at all Miss, because my mother might be under alcohol that would be real embarrassment”. Damien however said, “Yes they could come if they want; I have no objections

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against that, because, as I said before, I don't hide anything from them". Abiel simply said, "I don't mind" and Randelle said, "not really, but I don't think I would mind".

All six students want their parents to discuss their academic performance with them. Abiel believes, "they would tell me what subjects I need to work on more" while Damien says, "So they will know what I'm actually doing in school". Jessica said they should do so "not to make me feel ashamed or anything but how and why I should do better. This would give me more encouragement". Randelle thinks "if I'm not doing 'good', they'll help me to do better and they could get a tutor to help me or somebody who could help me". Michael would like them to also, "but not all the time like when she is under alcohol". Isaiah said his parents they already do that, but did not give any reason why.

Five students would like their parents to talk to them about their relationships with their classmates, whereas as one student said no. Abiel thinks that in doing so "they could tell me if that person is a good person to be around because I might not see it but they could advise me" Damien hesitatingly said, "Well they will know the kinda relationships I does carry on with people". Isaiah related, "I have a friendly relationship with most people in my class so I wouldn't mind, because I don't have a girlfriend since I don't have any time for that. But if I tell my parents something about a girl they would ask me if I like her and make jokes with me about that". Jessica says she wants "to let them know who are my close friends or my best friend" whereas Randelle said that she wants them "to know what kinda people I am associating with. Michael stated however that he doesn't want them to because "they'll get to know too much and may use one of my friends as a spy".

They all want their parents to talk to them about things other than their school work. They want them to talk with them about sports, music, going out with friends, TV shows, video games, music. In talking about going out, Damien pointed out, "So they will know where I'm going and so" whereas Jessica believes they should talk to her about, "how to behave when I go out". Randelle said they should talk about other things because "you don't always want them as a parent but someone to talk about" these other things.

Finally about their parents participating in school activities, the responses were also varied. The two who said a definite yes were Abiel, who said, "so that they can contribute more to the school like fundraisers and so" and Randelle and as she puts it, "to show that they support the school". Damien said "Well if they want to. It would be up to them if they want to" and this answer was echoed by Jessica who also stated, "Yes, but only if they want to". Isaiah claimed that "they [his parents] would not come but would contribute financially". Michael however responded, "No Miss, because I wouldn't feel free to do things and be myself".

Summary of Findings

In this chapter the findings of data collected from the interviews were presented in two sections; one with the demographics of the students and the other with the categories of the responses that speak directly to the students' perceptions of parental involvement. These findings are to answer the research questions of the study as I seek to make meaning of this phenomenon of parental involvement as expressed by these six Form 2 students.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

In Chapter one I outlined the purpose of this study which was to “investigate the perceptions of six Form 2 students of THS, of their parents’ involvement in their education both pre and post their SEA exam and to assess the impact of this involvement on the total functioning of these students”. One over-arching question and three sub-questions were also designed in order to guide me in this investigation. After employing a phenomenological case study design under the qualitative paradigm and a series of in depth interviews to collect data from these students, I then created narrative analyses and coded the data in order to determine these students’ perceptions of this phenomenon. After carefully scrutinizing the data I summarized the findings under thirteen broad groupings. From these findings six major categories or themes emerged. They formed the basis of my discussion of these findings below. The students’ responses that support these conclusions are illustrated the relevant boxes in Appendix #9, pp. lxviii-lxxiii. The chapter concludes with some recommendations and concluding statements.

Discussion of Findings

Relationship with Mother and Father

The natures of the relationships these students have with their parents appear to vary by gender, and in some cases, have changed when they moved from primary to secondary to school. The girls tend to have a closer relationship with their mothers while the boys tend to have a closer relationship with their fathers, (see **Box # 1**, Appendix #9, p. lxviii). The United States Department for Children, Schools and Families however disputes this practice. They instead posited that fathers' involvements in education are critical at both the primary and secondary levels in order to ensure positive outcomes for their children, regardless of their gender (2007).

Relationship between parents and teachers

There is no relationship between these students' parents and their teachers and very little communication between them. The main form of communication is letters of notice for meetings like Parents' Day or PTA or other forms of general information. Interaction between parents and teachers are therefore mainly at these meetings. Some of the students believe that communication is necessary only if there is a problem or they are in some kind of trouble, (see **Box # 2**, Appendix #9, p. lxviii). In the literature Bond (1973), Coleman (1998) and Harris et al (2009) all shared the view that there is the need for an '*interaction of the three*', namely the teachers, the students and the parents in this phenomenon of parental involvement. They reminded us of this interactive process between parents and teachers and the need for parents to be involved in their children's learning.

Parental Involvement in Primary School

The findings revealed that the parents were very involved in the education when they were in Primary school. Most of them visited their children's school quite often to check on their progress and all of them attended lessons to enhance their performances. The main reason for this deep involvement was for their children to excel at their SEA Examination, (see **Boxes # 3A & B**, Appendix #9, p. lxix). This finding is supported in the literature by Chen (2008) who posited that parents are greatly involved in their children's education when they are young but tend to reduce this involvement as they grow older, (Chen, 2008).

Parental involvement in Secondary School

There is a definite change in the level of parental involvement in the school life of these students now that they are in secondary school. However Isaiah who is an only child still gets a lot of attention from his parents. Unlike when they were in primary school when all of them took lessons, only one student takes Maths lessons right now and another wants to take Science lessons but is not given the opportunity to do so. There seems to be no urgent need for lessons at this level of secondary school. Parental visits to school are only for Parents' Day and PTA and the findings also reveal that most of these parents' attendance at PTA meetings has declined, (see **Box #4A**, Appendix #9, p. lxx). Chen (2008) however had also pointed out that parental involvement of middle and high school students are as equally important as for primary school students since their continuous encouragement could influence how long a child remains in school, (2008).

The parents and in some cases bigger siblings however assist with Home Work but mostly when their assistance is sought. The parents show interest in their school work but not

all of them discuss their school day with them every day. These parents all ensure that their children are provided with the commodities and amenities they need to assist them in their school work as far as possible. One interesting change in the type of parental involvement is where parental advice is now given to a couple of these students. These parents now see their role as more as 'guiding' instead of 'hovering', and can also cause their children to succeed, (see **Box # 4B**, Appendix #9, p. lxx). This decision is supported by Oakes and Lipton (1990) who posited that the values parents communicate to their children and the consistent encouragement they give them are what matters most, (Oakes and Lipton, 1990, p. 233 as cited in Coleman, 1998, p. 15).

Students' Expectations of Parental Involvement

The students all want their parents to be involved in their school life as well as their non-school life. They would like their parents to communicate with their teachers more regularly, continue to attend Parents' Day and even visit their school unexpectedly. More importantly they want their parents to talk with them about their school life, discuss their academic performance with them more regularly as well as talk with them about other non- school aspects. These students all believe that their parents' involvement in their education should be sustained throughout their schooling. This they believe would give them some assurance of parental care which would help them to perform and behave in ways that would promote and enhance their total functioning. Throughout the interviews, sentiments were expressed by these students that convey their expectations of their parents' sustained involvement in their education, (see **Box # 5**, Appendix #9, p. lxxi). Harris et al (2009) alluded to this sustained parental involvement when they suggested that the single most important contributory factor that can raise children's school performance and enable

them to achieve academic success is their parents' support and engagement in their learning, (Harris et al, 2009, pp. 2-3).

Impacts of Parental Involvement

The deep involvement of these parents at the primary school level resulted in all of these students attaining over 70% in the SEA Examination in 2011, (see Table 1, Appendix #1, p. x). During the first five terms at Tonmah High School, however, only one student, the girl at the top of the 2011 SEA listing, was consistently able to attain 70% in each of these five terms. The other five, with the exception of one girl in term 2, failed to attain 70% and over during this same period. Although these parents (and other family members) showed an interest or helped with Home Lesson from time to time, this level of involvement proved to be insufficient in order to bring about greater academic achievement.

Although the students appear to be quite aware of the positive impacts (see **Box # 6A**, Appendix #9, p. lxxii), that their parents' involvements can have on their performances; these however have not been reflected in the performances of five of the six students in the study. The absence of lessons, the infrequent visits to schools to talk to teachers and the reduced involvement may have contributed to these lower percentages. Burke (2010) had suggested however that parents' regular communication with teachers for feedback on their children's progress and active involvement in school activities could be what is needed also to bring about some improvements in the academic performances of these students. The findings of the study may however not be the only reasons for these academic results of these students.

The findings also reveal that one boy's mother's personal negative habit has affected his relationship with her as well as his perception of her involvement in his education. Michael's responses reveal a rather erratic or unpredictable relationship with his mother, whom he claims to be "under heavy alcohol" at times. He outlined a number of contrasting statements as he discussed his perception of her involvement in his education. At times he praised his mother for her assistance and care as well as her interest in his wellbeing, but at other times he expressed reluctance for her involvement because of this 'habit' he claims she has. Some of these contrasting statements are highlighted in **Box # 6B**, (Appendix #9, p. lxxiii).

Summary

All three research sub-questions were addressed in the discussion of the findings above. On the first question of students' perceptions of their parents' involvement in their education, themes one, two, three and five addressed this question. The second question which inquired about the extent of parental involvement was addressed in themes one, two, four and five. The third question, which sought to find out the impacts of parental involvement, was addressed in theme six. In doing this discussion, pertinent elements of the literature reviewed in Chapter two were referred to, based on their relationship or relevance to the particular finding as I sought to find the answers to my research questions in this investigation.

Recommendations

This section presents a few recommendations in order to address some of the concerns which emerged from this investigation of these six students' perceptions of their parents' involvement in their education, pre and post their 2011 SEA Examination.

- ✓ In order to promote the importance of the role of sustained parental involvement from the primary level right through the secondary level, workshops for parents can be arranged by the school using suitably qualified persons to conduct these workshops.
- ✓ The channels of communication between the teachers and parents should be increased and should not just focus on Parents' Day and PTA meetings. Parents should be advised and encouraged by administrators and teachers to communicate with teachers and visit the school outside of these meeting times. This would give more regular feedback on their children's progress in order to correct any deficiency.
- ✓ Strategies should be implemented so as to re-kindle parents' responsibility to sustain their attendance at PTA meetings. Some feedback on parents' desires on the format and content of these meeting should be sought in addressing this.
- ✓ Parents are to be encouraged to communicate with and motivate their children to cultivate and engage in more individualistic forms of study. This could replace the "Lessons Culture" which was a major aspect of the students' learning process in the primary school.

Conclusion

As I come to the end of this study, I reflect firstly on my personal interest in selecting this topic which is my own deep involvement in the education and total functioning of my two children. In addition to this, I also reflect on my observation as stated in my introduction, that some parents do not share this sentiment of mine and this has caused me great concern. These therefore led to my conceptualization of the topic for this study which was “to investigate form two students’ perceptions of their parents’ involvement in their education both pre and post their sea examinations”.

To conduct the study I employed the qualitative research method, using a phenomenological case study as my specific research design. Because of the limited time to conduct the study, I purposefully selected six Form two students from a population sample of one hundred and five students of Tonmah High School, located in the North Eastern Educational district in Trinidad. Over a four-week period interviews were conducted with these six students in order to gather the data from them regarding this phenomenon.

After carefully milling through the interview transcripts of the students responses, and composing narrative analyses (or stories) of these responses, using the grounded theory methodology, I arrived at several codes which emerged from these responses. These codes were organized into six themes or categories which were used to answer my three research questions and so enable me draw certain conclusions with respect to my investigation into this phenomenon.

From the results of the study I can conclude that parents are deeply involved in the education of their children at the Primary level and that the main reason for this is for this is to

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ensure that they pass for their first choice school. In this study, although none of these students passed for their first choice school, all of them scored over seventy percent in the SEA Examinations of 2011.

Furthermore, as the students move over to the secondary school, five of them (83%) indicated a reduction in their parents' involvement in their education. Although these parents assist with Home Lesson, show interest in their children's schooling and general well-being and offer words of advice, they do not 'hover' over them as was the case when they were in primary school. For the first five terms at secondary school five of the six students failed to score over 70% at the end of these five terms. One can therefore conclude that this reduction in parental involvement may have caused this reduction or may have partly contributed to it together with other contributing factors. This later finding therefore has implications for further studies on "contributing factors of low student performance".

In doing this study I was therefore able to gather the views of six young persons, on this phenomenon of a 'parental involvement'. I cannot generalize these results (views) to all Form 2 students at Tonmah High School or at any other secondary school. However, it is my hope that I, as at teacher at this school, can use the results of this study to influence my thinking as I help in developing and implementing policies and practices at THS that could bring about 'relevant' and 'sustainable' parental involvement. This, I further hope could bring about improvements in the academic performances of the students at Tonmah High School, and by extension, their total functioning.

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STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Appendix # 1

TABLE I

*Demographics of Students' including**2011 SEA Scores and End of Term Scores (Forms 1 and 2)*

Name of Student	Age	Gender	Family structure	THS was first choice	SEA Score					Form 1 Results			Form 2 Results	
					Raw Math Mark (100)	Raw Eng. Mark (100)	Raw Essay Mark (100)	Total (220)	%	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 1	Term 2
Abiel	13	F	Nuclear	No	95	82	12	189	86%	73%	83%	72%	74%	86%
Randelle	13	F	Extended	No	94	77	14	185	84%	58%	49%	54%	47%	53%
Isaiah	14	M	Nuclear	No	83	81	12	176	80%	51%	62%	41%	39%	67%
Jessica	13	F	Nuclear	No	87	76	12	175	80%	62%	70%	50%	46%	69%
Michael	14	M	Nuclear	No	81	76	11	168	76%	60%	50%	49%	43%	47%
Damien	14	M	Nuclear	No	74	75	14	163	74%	61%	66%	58%	51%	32%

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Appendix #2

TABLE II

*Tonmah High School**CSEC Results - 2007 - 2008*

SUBJECTS	2007									2008								
	% Pass	GRADE								% Pass	GRADE							
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	U	ABS		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	U	ABS
AS Math	32%			1	6	1		10	7	17%	1		1	2	1		22	3
Biology	90%	6	12	9	2				1	81%	7	9	9	4			1	1
Caribbean History	47%		3	5	5	1		1	2	60%		5	1					4
Chemistry	59%	1	5	14	8	4			2	70%	5	6	10	5	3			1
Clothing & Textiles	80%	2	4	2		1			1	100%			3					
Economics	58%		3	8	6	2				65%	1	2	8	4	1			1
Elec Doc Prep & Man	91%	12	14	4	2				1									
Elec & Elec Tech	41%		5	2	5				5	43%		2	1		2		1	1
English A	82%	11	35	40	15	3			1	70%	19	29	28	22	2	2		6
English B	86%	4	15	5		4				24%	2	8	14	25	34	7		11
Food & Nutrition	70%		5	2	2				1	90%	4	8	6					2
Geography	71%		22	27	12	2			2	45%		4	6	10	2			
Human & Social Bio										69%	2	4	3	4				
Integrated Science	90%	1	27	19	1				4	67%		6	10	4	1			3
Info Technology	52%		5	8	5	4		1	2	16%	1	2	3	6	3		15	7
Mathematics	69%	18	23	33	14	13			7	64%	21	23	25	13	13			13
Music	25%		1					2	1	67%		1	1				1	
Office Administration	71%	1	9	14	4				6	79%	2	4	5	2				1
Physics	36%		5	17	13	5			3	74%	5	9	12	7	2			
Principles of Accounts	81%	10	14	10	5	2			1	44%	5	6	9	10	9		1	5
Principles of Business	77%	6	23	12	7	1		1	3	81%	2	17	24	7				3
Social Studies	78%	3	9	19	2			4	3	57%	1	6	14	10			3	3
Spanish	65%	3	5	14	10	2				60%	1	12	16	7	7	1		4
Technical Drawing	85%	5	9	9	2				2	94%	7	5	5	1				

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

*Tonmah High School**CSEC Results - 2009 - 2010*

SUBJECTS	2009									2010								
	% Pass	GRADE								% Pass	GRADE							
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	U	ABS		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	U	ABS
AS Math	14%				1	2		18		12%			1		2		19	3
Biology	83%		4	16	3	1				100%	4	8	9					
Caribbean History	19%			3	3	7			3	50%			6	4	2			
Chemistry	88%		6	15	2	1				92%	2	5	5	1				
Clothing & Textiles	100%			1						100%	2							
Economics	80%		5	7	2				1	60%	1	3	2	2	2			
Elec Doc Prep & Man	88%	3	5	7		1			1	89%	4	6	7	1				1
Elec & Elec Tech	86%	1	4	1					1	44%		4		3	1			1
English A	91%	14	29	37	5	1			2	83%	35	30	12	11	1			4
English B	42%	3	17	17	23	21	2		5	60%	22	21	12	14	10	8		5
Food & Nutrition	100%		5	2						85%	3	4	4	1	1			
Geography	31%			11	19	5			1	59%		10	12	8	5			2
Human & Social Bio	95%	2	10	7	1					81%	4	5	8	4				
Integrated Science	92%	2	13	7					2	86%	3	21	7	2				3
Info Technology	71%	2	8	7	4				3	42%		3	7	5	2		2	5
Mathematics	76%	16	27	24	11	7			3	65%	19	29	12	18	12			2
Music																		
Office Administration	91%		3	7	1					23%		1	2	7	1		2	
Physics	70%		8	13	4	1			4	80%	3	10	11	6				
Principles of Accounts	75%	4	8	12	3	4			1	43%	5	2	10	3	4		2	14
Principles of Business	83%	8	18	14	5			1	2	71%	2	12	16	6	2		1	3
Social Studies	88%		12	9	1			1	1	71%	1	11	8	4			1	3
Spanish	68%	1	6	8	4	3				42%		1	10	8	6			1
Technical Drawing	85%	4	10	3	2				1	74%	3	9	8	2	1			4

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

*Tonmah High School**CSEC Results - 2011 - 2012*

SUBJECTS	2011									2012								
	% Pass	GRADE								% Pass	GRADE							
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	U	ABS		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	U	ABS
AS Math	13%			1	1	2		23	3	17%			3	6	9			
Biology	100%	1	8	9						83%	1	6	8	3				
Caribbean History	88%	2	5		1					75%		3	6	1	2			
Chemistry	46%	1	2	10	11	4				38%		4	4	9	3			1
Clothing & Textiles	100%	2	1	1						100%	1	1						
Economics	64%	3	2	9	4	4				63%		7	3	3	2			1
Elec Doc Prep & Man	83%	5	12	2	1	1			2	68%	3	10	4	4	2			2
Elec & Elec Tech	40%		1	3	2	1			3	50%	1	4	2	6				1
English A	96%	42	27	16	4					79%	16	29	28	17	1	1		
English B	59%	15	23	14	21	12	1		2	51%	8	25	13	20	17	3		5
Food & Nutrition	100%		11	1						100%	1	1	2					
Geography	59%		3	20	13	3			1	51%		9	12	16	2		1	1
Human & Social Bio	67%	3	5		3	1				75%	1	2	12	3				2
Integrated Science	97%	5	12	13	1					77%	5	15	4	4			1	2
Info Technology	56%		5	10	6	1		1	4	59%		4	12	9				2
Mathematics	83%	19	26	29	10	5				72%	11	27	29	12	11	2		1
Music	100%		1							100%	1							
Office Administration	88%	3	2	2					1	44%			4	2				3
Physics	57%	1	4	15	11	3			1	85%	2	5	10	2	1			
Principles of Accounts	67%	6	6	14	8	3	1		1	62%	4	5	15	9	3			3
Principles of Business	88%	10	17	8	3	1		1		87%	5	17	12	3	1			1
Social Studies	61%		4	7	4	1		1	1	72%		18	8	4			3	3
Spanish	86%	2	5	12	2	1				72%		9	12	4	3			1
Technical Drawing	79%	6	8	1				4		71%		7	8	4				2

Appendix #3

14 April 2013

The Principal,
Tonmah High School,
Marie Street,
Aripo,

Dear Madam,

Request for permission to conduct interviews with students of Form 2

I, Odette O'Neil-Kerr, Teacher III, hereby request your permission to conduct interviews with some students of Form 2 in order to assist me in my study, as part of my Research Project for the completion of my Masters in Education Degree. The name of my study is "*Students' perception of their parents' involvement in their education as they transition from the Primary to the Secondary School and the effects of this involvement*".

The purpose of my study is to investigate these students' experiences, understandings and expectations of their parents' involvement in their education both prior to and after they have entered secondary school and to determine the relationship of this involvement on these students' academic achievements and performances.

It is my hope that the results of this study could serve as a benchmark which could be used to inform school practices concerning greater parental involvement which could in turn

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

result in the improvement in students' academic achievements and performances at Tonmah High School.

The conduct of the interviews is expected to last over a two-week period, with each interview lasting about 45 minutes and will be conducted during the luncheon interval.

I give you the assurance that:

- Consent letters would be obtained from parents prior to the conduct of the interviews with the students
- No interview would be conducted with the students during class time, except in the absence of a teacher, if necessary
- All information obtained from the students will be used for the purpose of the research study only
- The names of the students will not be used in any part of the study or the Final Report
- The participation of the students is entirely voluntary and so they are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

I now wish to take this opportunity to thank you in advance for granting me permission to conduct this study with the students of your school.

Yours sincerely,

Odette O'Neil-Kerr
Teacher III

cc. Vice Principal
Tonmah High School

Appendix #4

Tonmah High School
Marie Street
Aripo

14 April 2013

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

I, Mrs. O'Neil-Kerr, Teacher III at the above named school is currently pursuing my Masters in Education Degree (with a Concentration in Youth Guidance), at the University of the West Indies. As part of this programme, I am doing a Research Study entitled, "*Students' perception of their parents' involvement in their education as they transition from the Primary to the Secondary School and the effects of this involvement*".

To do this study, I have to conduct interviews with some students of Form 2 in order to obtain their views about their perception of parental involvement in their education, in order to understand how they themselves feel about their parents' involvement in their education. As a parent myself, it is my belief that parents play a crucial role in communicating with and educating their children as well as cooperating with teachers so as to provide a productive and conducive environment for the academic achievements, performances and general development of their children.

Furthermore, the results of this study could serve as a benchmark which could be used to inform school practices concerning greater parental involvement which could in turn result in the improvement in students' academic achievements and performances at Arima Central Secondary School.

To this end, your son/daughter/ward _____ has been selected as one of the students to be interviewed for this Research Study. The interview is expected to last about 45 minutes and will be conducted during the luncheon interval.

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I give you the assurance that:

- No interview would be conducted with your child/ward during class time, except in the absence of a teacher, if necessary
- All information obtained from your child/ward will be used for the purpose of the research study only
- The name of your child/ward will not be used in any part of the study or the Final Report
- The participation of your child/ward is entirely voluntary and so he/she is free to withdraw from the study at any time.

I now wish to take this opportunity to thank you in advance for your permission to conduct this study with your child/ward.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. O'Neil-Kerr
Teacher III
Tonmah High School

I _____ do / do not give permission for my
son/daughter/ward _____ to participate in interviews for the
Research Study identified above.

Signature: _____

Appendix #5

Interview Questions

1. How old are you?
2. Who do you live with?
3. Do you have brothers and sisters? How many?
4. What position are you in the family?
5. What Primary School did you attend?
6. Was this school your first choice school? If no which school was?
7. How would you describe your relationship with your parents?
8. Who is responsible for taking care of (a) your daily life and (b) your educational life/aspects?
9. a) Could you describe the relationship between your parents and your teachers?
b) How often do they communicate with each other? What do they communicate with each other about?
c) What means of communication do they use (telephone, letters/notes, internet)?
10. a) When was the last time your parent(s) came into school?
b) What was the reason for them coming in?
c) Do your parents attend PTA meetings at your school? If yes, why? If no, why not?
11. Do you know of any ways or activities your parents try to get involved in your education or cooperate with your teachers in some way? (Could be in the home, the school itself or in the community)
12. Do you like or dislike these ways or activities your parents engage in, in order to be involved in your education? Why do you like or dislike these activities?

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

13. What impacts (positive or negative) do these parental involvements have on you?
(Please give details).
14. How would you describe your parents' involvement in your education at primary school? (Could ask about before and during Standards 4 and 5).
15. How would you describe your parents' involvement in your education, now that you are in secondary school?
16. What are your expectations of your parents' involvement in your education?
17. a) Of the following options, which one(s) do your parents provide for you to assist you in your school work?
- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|----------|
| Notebooks | Stationery | Computer | Internet |
| Additional reading/reference books | Lessons | Study desk | |
| Study room | Quiet area for studying | | |
- b) Are there other things you think you need to help you with your school work but your parents do not provide for you?
18. a) How often do your parents communicate/ discuss with you about your school work/day at school?
- | | | | |
|-------|-----------|-------|----------|
| Never | Sometimes | Often | Everyday |
|-------|-----------|-------|----------|
- b) Do you like them to communicate/discuss your school life with you?
- | | | | |
|------|---------|------------|--------------|
| Like | Dislike | It depends | I don't care |
|------|---------|------------|--------------|
- Please explain your answer.
19. a) Do your parents assist you or show an interest when you are doing your homework or studying at home? If yes, how do they assist or show an interest? If no, why not?
- b) Who assists you/or shows an interest with your home lesson or other studies at home? (Why that person(s)? / Why no one?)
20. Of the following aspects of parental involvement, which one(s) would you like/dislike your parents to do for you or perceive your parents should / should not do for you and why?
- a) Help you with your home lessons
- b) Sit with you when you are studying

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

- c) Arrange lessons classes for you
- d) Provide a quiet place for you to study at home
- e) Communicate with your teachers regularly
- f) Attend parents' day meetings
- g) Visit you school unexpectedly
- h) Discuss your academic performance with you
- i) Talk to you about your relationships with you classmates
- j) Talk to you about things other than your school work
- k) Participate in school activities
- l) Any other aspect (please specify)

Appendix #6

Coded Interview Transcripts (All Students)

(Colour Codes for Themes/Categories)

Relationship with Mother and Father
Relationship between Parents and Teachers
Parental Involvement in Primary School
Parental Involvement in Secondary School
Students' Expectations of Parental Involvement
Impacts of Parental Involvement

1. How old are you?

Abiel - I am 13 years

Damien - I am 14 years

Isaiah - I am 14 years old Miss

Jessica - I am 13 years

Michael - Miss, I'm 14 years old

Randelle - I am 13 years

2. Who do you live with?

Abiel - Both my parents and my brother

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Damien - Mih mother, grandmother stepfather and brother

Isaiah - With my Mom and Dad

Jessica - Both my parents and my brother

Michael - Miss I live with my mother, stepfather and (brothers and sisters).

Randelle - With my mummy, my brother, my sisters, my grandparents and uncles.

(How many uncles?)

Two.

3. Do you have brothers and sisters? How many?

Abiel - Yes two brothers and one sister

Damien - Just one brother

Isaiah - No, I'm an only child

Jessica - Yes, one brother, nine years and no sister(s)

Michael - Yes Miss, I have 4 brothers and 3 sisters

Randelle - I have one brother, 6 years, and 2 sisters, 11 and 16 years.

4. What position are you in the family?

Abiel - 4th, I am the last

Damien - I am the first, he is younger

Isaiah - (Not Applicable)

Jessica - First

Michael - I'm the 6th in the family?

Randelle - 2nd

5. What Primary School did you attend?

Abiel – GCP School

Damien - AM P School

Isaiah – AP School up to STD 3, then NDP School in Aripo.

Jessica - AGG School

Michael - AMP School

Randelle – ANG School

6. Was this school your first choice school? If no which school was?

Abiel - No, I think this was my 4th choice. SGHS was my first choice, but I like it here

Damien - No, HVC was my first choice. I didn't choose that you know, is my mother who choose that school. I wanted to go to TCE.

Isaiah - No Miss, HVC. This school was my 4th Choice. But I like it here; it cool and I have made some good, close friends.

Jessica - No my second choice, BH, the one in TC was my first choice. (Why?) I had just liked that school. I was told the teacher (does) teach 'good' there.

Michael - No Miss, it was my last choice, HCC was my first choice.

Randelle - No, this school was my last choice. SJC, in PS was my first choice.

7. How would you describe your relationship with your parents?

Abiel - With my mummy I close with her. Daddy is there to drop me places like when I have hockey and if he have to take me to buy stuff.

Damien - Well me and my father does get along very well but me and my mother does have little problems.

(What kind of problems?)

Like staying out late, not coming home at a certain time.

(So who do you go out with?)

With my friends who live in the area and sometimes cousins.

So your Dad doesn't have a problem with that?)

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Well yea but it easier to talk to my daddy than my mother.

(So how often do you see your daddy?)

I visit him every weekend.

Isaiah - That's a good question. It is a loving one, we are close, and we talk freely and don't hold back anything. If I have a problem I would talk to them. But I have a better relationship with my father than my Mom though.

Jessica - It is good, or normal, no arguments. We agree on with everything.

Michael - Well Miss sometimes I feel ashamed to talk to my mother because certain things I want to tell her I just can't. It might be (easier) but it's her attitude.

(What about her attitude?)

How she would get on after I tell her anything, she would start to 'loud up' nah, so I prefer not to tell her some things.

Randelle - I'm closer with my mummy than my daddy. Because I live with my mummy and so I see her more often.

8. Who is responsible for taking care of (a) your daily life and (b) your educational life/aspects?

Abiel - With my daily life my mummy, she would buy school stuff for me, my mummy and sister buy clothes for me, I would go with them though. My mummy buys books and stationeries and stuff

(And your daddy, what does he do?)

Daddy would give Mummy money

Damien- My mother takes care of me.

(What about your school stuff?)

Mummy and Daddy have an agreement, he would buy my books and she would buy my uniform.

Isaiah - My Mom since my Dad leaves home early to go to work in Port of Spain but he gets home 3 sometimes 5 or so. My Mom buys my books etc. and drops me to school. My Mom would iron for me sometimes like if I'm tired or have plenty work to do.

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Jessica - Both my mother and father are responsible. My mother does not work so she does most of the work, but they both cook at different times.

Michael - Mostly my mother, she would wash for me but I would iron my clothes. Sometimes my mother would cook, sometimes my stepfather. My mother buys my books and uniform. I travel to school. My mother gives me money to come to school.

(What about your real father?)

He gives us money and he would visit sometimes.

Randelle - Mummy works so when I go home my grandmother takes care of me. My grandmother cook and mummy would wash and so. But my mummy and uncles they all help sometimes.

(What about your school life?)

They all help me to do some of my school work, to help me understand my work.

9. a) Could you describe the relationship between your parents and your teachers?

Abiel - Well there's no relationship really, there's no need to I guess.

Damien - There's no relationship, well none that I could think of really.

Isaiah - Normal, nothing has happened for them to call them as yet.

Jessica - Well my Mom does not talk much, and so she would not ask questions in the meetings and I don't give trouble so she doesn't have to.

Michael - There is no relationship; my Mom just came in for Parents Day.

Randelle - Well good, my mummy came in and spoke to my Form Teacher once in Form 1.

b) How often do they communicate with each other? What do they communicate with each other about?

Abiel - When I was in form 1 my Form Teacher called my Mom to talk to her about the Heroes Foundation. And on Parents Day when I was in Form 1 also

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Damien - There's no reason for any communication.

(No letter was sent home for them to come in for anything?)
No, not really, except for Parents Day or so.

Isaiah - Only for Parents Day, this term and in Form 1.

Jessica - Not often since I came to this school. Just once for Parents Day.

Michael - Not often. Last term they sent home a note/letter to tell them about my 'pencil' pants.

Randelle - Just the one time when she came in (and well Parents Day in Form 1).

c) What means of communication do they use (telephone, letters/notes, internet)?

Abiel – Telephone - my Mom called to get details about an outing with the Heroes Foundation, and a note when I was sick in Form 1.

Damien- Well just those letters.

Isaiah - Letters from school

Jessica - Well only notes like when I'm absent.

Michael - Well only letters for Parents Day and so.

Randelle - Well the visit and well letters for Parents Day

10 a) When was the last time your parent(s) came into school?

Abiel - Sometime this term.

Damien - This term, for Parents Day.

Isaiah - Parents Day, this term.

Jessica - Last PTA Meeting.

Michael - My Mom came in Parents Day this term.

Randelle - Last term, my Mom came in.

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b) What was the reason for them coming in?

Abiel - To drop something I left at home, my TD note book

Damien - Well my mother was really expecting to hear that I was doing bad but she was surprised when everyone told her that I'm doing well, I just need to come to school more often.

(So why did she expect to hear that were doing bad?)

Well she say I does behave bad at home nah so she thought that I would behave bad in school too.

Isaiah - Miss well when I was in primary school right, I use to talk excessively so when they come in to meet my teachers, they wanted to know if I'm talking a lot still and if I'm doing my work. Miss they understand that I may need to talk since I'm an only child and so may need to talk when I'm in school.

Jessica - To find out what is happening in the school, I guess.

Michael - Well to meet my teachers, to see good grades and to hear a good report about me.

(So did she get both?)

She got good reports but bad grades.

(So what did she tell you?)

Randelle - To talk to my teachers to find out how I'm going in school.

(Was she called to come in?)

No she just came in.

c) Do your parents attend PTA meetings at your school? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Abiel - Only in Form One, never since I'm in Form Two. I'm not sure why.

Damien - Yes, Mummy comes all the time. (To find out what's happening in the school).

Isaiah - Well they use to come often at first but they have stopped now because of some statement made by the principal.

Jessica - Yes, my mother, to know what is happening in school.

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Michael - Sometimes, not this term though, but in Term 1 and Term 2. She wanted to find out about the school uniform and to meet some of the teachers, but she met only one teacher.

Randelle - Not this term, but a few last term and in Form 1. To find out what going on in the school.

11. Do you know of any ways or activities your parents try to get involved in your education or cooperate with your teachers in some way? (Could be in the home, the school itself or in the community)

Abiel - No, not really

(What about Walkathon?)

No because that was a school day

Damien – Well, just money for bazaar and the Walkathon Card.

(So they didn't attend any of these?)

No they just give me the money.

Isaiah - Well they contribute by giving donations to our bazaar and money for walkathon.

Jessica - Nothing that I know of.

Michael - Only like the bazaar last year and money for the walkathon card this term.

Randelle - My Mom came to PTA Meeting in Form 1.

12. Do you like or dislike these ways or activities your parents engage in, in order to be involved in your education? Why do you like or dislike these activities?

Abiel - Yes like with projects, if I need help for them.

Damien - Yes well I like when they get involved, because they help me with certain problems I don't know.

Isaiah - Well if I have a problem they would help especially my Dad, so I like that, like Maths and Science, he is good in these areas.

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Jessica - At Parents Day I think she should ask more questions.

Michael - Well yes because every day she tries to push me and tell me to get a good education. I find that is very excellent. I like this because sometimes when I'm not doing well in school, she is the only one to give me confidence.

Randelle - Yes I like when she came in, it made me feel important and to know that she cares about my education.

13. What impacts (positive or negative) do these parental involvements have on you? (Please give details).

Abiel - Well they help me with getting good presentations, putting things together and so.

Damien - Well it gives me a better understanding of what I'm doing not just doing something and don't really know what I'm doing.

Isaiah - They would help me to learn better and would give me other examples to help me

Jessica - Well she would find out more about me, what I need to work on, my behaviour, how in doing in my work, so she can tell me things to improve my work and I will try to improve.

Michael - Sometimes if I'm doing a test, I would think about what she said and try to do my best. Sometimes if I'm playing (and don't want to stop) I don't want to hear her or sometimes when she is under heavy alcohol.

(Alcohol? But this would only be on the weekend?)

No miss, during the week too, she would buy from the shop in the area.

(You mean like one beer and so?)

No Miss anything, rum, wine, puncheon. Like if I do any wrong and she drink alcohol then she would beat me then.

(So she wouldn't beat you if she didn't drink alcohol?)

Not so Miss.

Randelle - It would make me feel to do better so when she comes in she'll get a good report of how I'm doing in my classes.

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

14. How would you describe your parents' involvement in your education at primary school?
(Could ask about before and during Standards 4 and 5).

Abiel - Very involved, but mostly mummy. She used to come and wait for dismissal to carry me to lessons. She use to help me write essays and Daddy would explain Maths when I didn't understand. They use to ask me if I understand my work, telling me to revise if I want to pass for my first choice school.

(Did they come into the school at anytime?)

No, not really, well except for school choices and for graduation stuff and so.

Damien - They were there right through out to help me with anything I had to do.

(Did they come into your school?)

Yes they came in unexpectedly sometimes to see how I was doing.

(Did they send you to lessons?)

I had lessons right in school with my teacher. They use to help too with Maths and English, like with essays.

(Why do you think they were so involved?)

I think they was involved because they wanted me to do my best and get A⁺ right through and pass for my first choice.

Isaiah - I use to go to Atwell's up to Standard 3. I was overworked there. And people use to bully me and I use to get in trouble when I fight back and they (the teachers) use to call in my parents and I would get scolded when I get home. I use to complain (about the bullying) but they didn't use to do anything. Then my parents took me out and sent me to another private school (New Dawn Preparatory School in Arima) in Standard 4 and 5. It's a very small school, you wouldn't know it Miss.

(So did they get involved or had to come in at this school?)

They came in a few times to check on me yes, but the work wasn't challenging and was only 2 other students.

They sent me to other lessons on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturdays. It was hard to get up early on Saturdays though.

(Why did they send you to these extra lessons?)

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I think so that I would get to pass for my first choice school, but the Composition was hard. But of the three of us who did the exam, I did the best.

Jessica - They were more interested in what happened with me in primary school. They visited more often, because I use to talk a lot. I use to take lessons in Creative Writing and I did lessons in school in the other subjects. Especially in Standard 5, they were more interested because they wanted me to pass for my first choice school. Both my parents were interested.

Michael - They were strict over me then Miss. She would come and check my teacher and find out how I'm doing.

(How often?)

Like once a week.

(What else she did?)

She use to get my auntie to help me with my Home Lesson because she use to be busy planting her crops and so. I also use to stay in school some days for lessons with my Std 5 teacher.

Randelle - They were real into my work because it was SEA time. They made sure I did all my work, send me to lessons, make sure I hand in all my work and do all my projects and stuff.

(Did she come in to the school?)

Yes my Mummy use to come in to check on me and she would talk to my teacher.

15. How would you describe your parents' involvement in your education, now that you are in secondary school?

Abiel – They are still involved now but I think they were more involved in Primary School.

(So what do they do now?)

They tell me not to waste time and try to read ahead and be constant in studying because the work I'm doing now would dictate my path for my future.

Damien - Same way, they were always involved from the beginning. They help with Home Work, check my books and make sure I'm doing my work. So I

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think they are just as involved. It may be a little less eh, but they are still very involved.

Isaiah - They (still) support me all the way in everything. They attend to me immediately, they don't tell me to wait or just a second or anything like that.

Jessica - My mother is more interested now than my father. They tell me to try and do better so I could come out with good passes so I could get a good job like a doctor, an accountant or a nurse or something and not end up frying chicken in KFC.

Michael - Miss well it change, it not all that it use to be from before.

(How so?)

Well mih mother use to come and check mih teachers when I was in Primary School but now she would only come in for Parents Day. Now she would ask me if I have Home Work but most of the time I will tell her 'no'

(Why???)

Because she would be on me (harassing me) to go and do it and if I'm doing something I don't like to stop – like playing football or cricket or sometimes catch and hide & seek with my friends.

Randelle - Well not really involved as before because she is working and since she is a single parent she has to work (harder) but I wish she could be home (more often/earlier) to help me.

(So what about your Dad?)

My Dad calls but he doesn't visit. I would visit him during the vacation in July – one month with Daddy, one month with Mummy.

16. What are your expectations of your parents' involvement?

Abiel - Well Miss I think they should be involved because I may make the wrong decisions and so I need them to guide me. I maybe wouldn't do what I'm suppose to do the best way.

(Why?)

Well I don't have experience but they do and so they could give me the positive as well as the negative outcomes of what I do.

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Damien – Well I think it should be the same as before.

Isaiah - I would like them to support me and check my work because I'm afraid if they stop I would start slacking off and not do my work and I wouldn't be able to achieve my goal in life which is to be a pilot.

Jessica - Well I think they should be involved in everything I do in school, like my grades in each subject, also if I'm involved in any sport.

(So what sport are you involved in?)

Well I was in Track & Field but my grades were dropping and my father said I should stop for a while. But I don't have a problem with them being involved; actually I want them to be involved.

Michael – I just want them to check up on me once in a while not all the time like how it was before. Because, well I don't know if they would be under alcohol because that would be embarrassing.

Randelle - I would like them to be more involved in my life and to know more about what is going on in my life in school and at home when they are not around.

(Why?)

So if I am having any problems they would be able to help.

(How can they help?)

Miss because is not everything you'll be able to work out on your own and so parents would talk to us about it and see how they could assist.

(Give me an example)

For example, Miss if you are not treated well in school like bullying, they could come in and talk to the teachers and the parents

17. a) Of the following options, which one(s) do your parents provide for you to assist you in your school work?

Notebooks

Stationery

Computer

Internet

Study room

Lessons

Study desk

Quiet area for studying

Additional reading/reference books

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Abiel – I have the school computer. I have a study desk in my room and sometimes I could use the dining room if I want more space. I am only taking Maths lessons now.

Damien - Well they provide all of these. Besides the government computer we have another one. I have a study room, the place is quiet but I don't really like quiet; and I don't need lessons right now.

Isaiah - We have two computers besides the government one. I use to attend lessons last term. They also allow me to borrow books from the Public Library.

Jessica - They buy stuff for me at the beginning of the term and later on they'll give me money if I need. I don't any lessons right now. My study desk is in my room.

Michael – The computer is the one from the school. I don't have a study room or study desk or a quiet place for studying. I study/ do my Home Lesson in the gallery. I don't go to any lessons right now.

Randelle – My study room is my bedroom which I share with my sister. Our internet is down since we have limited service in the area I live. Sometimes I would have to go to the Internet Café if I have to do research. I'm not taking any lessons right now.

- b) Are there other things you think you need to help you with your school work but your parents do not provide for you?

Abiel – No, not really

Damien – No, they already provide everything I need.

Isaiah – No, nothing really

Jessica – Yes an iPod, so I could search the internet when I'm out.

Michael – No Miss.

(What about a study room?)

(He hesitates) **No Miss because that not possible right now.**

Randelle – Nothing right now, Miss

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18. a) How often do your parents communicate/ discuss with you about your school work/day at school?

Never Sometimes Often Everyday

Abiel – My mummy, everyday but my daddy, sometimes. My mummy would ask if I had Home Lesson and how was my day? She would ask “were you being a good pig today? (Jokingly)” (She laughs)

Damien – Everyday.

(What would they ask you?)

Like what I do in school, if I have Home Lesson and so.

Isaiah – Everyday, they would ask ‘how was your day, what subjects you did, did you get your work correct? Stuff like that

Jessica - Sometimes, whenever they have the time.

Michael – Every day; she would ask if I have Home Work. If I had any test today? And so

Randelle – My grandparents and my mother, everyday, but my Dad, once or twice weekly.

- b) Do you like them to communicate/discuss your school life with you?

Like Dislike It depends I don't care

Please explain your answer.

Abiel – I like them to because (she pauses to think), they are trying to find out how I'm going or how I'm performing in school in my academics and if I'm behaving (but they'll still find out).

Damien – Yes I like it because it show that they have interest in me and what I'm doing in school.

Isaiah – It depends. Like if there is a problem I have and they'll try to tell me something different to what I think I should do, I don't always like that. I like to do things my way sometimes, but sometimes I may need their guidance or advice.

Jessica – Yes I like them to because I need somebody to talk to about school, like what happen in school.

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Michael – It depends. If they are under heavy alcohol, they will make a short story into a long story.

(Tell me more).

Well we would start to talk about school work then they would change the discussion and start to talk about girls.

(Why?)

Because they suspect I have a girlfriend.

(So do you have a girlfriend?)

Yes Miss I have a girlfriend in school.

(Ok we wouldn't get into that right now).

Randelle – I like them to. It shows that they care about what going on in my life. Even if my mummy is tired, she would make sure we do all our school work.

19. a) Do your parents assist you or show an interest when you are doing your homework or studying at home? If yes, how do they assist or show an interest? If no, why not?

Abiel – Yes they assist. My dad helps me with Maths; Mummy would help me with English like essays. My brother helps me with TD some times.

(Do they sit with you?)

Not sit with me but they'll ask how I'm going, if I'm almost done and so.

Mummy will ask when that due, while Daddy would ask if I'm going to my bed soon.

Damien – If I ask for help like TD, my father would help. He would sit with me sometimes and Mummy would help me with English, like with essays and so.

Isaiah – Yes they show an interest. Like when I'm finished they would ask to see it to see if I did it right. And my Dad and I would sit together to do work because he is doing a course right now in COSTATT.

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Jessica – They show interest but they cannot assist because they don't know some of the things we are doing. My mother would say 'we never learn nothing about that'.

Michael – If I'm having trouble I will ask them. They don't just come and ask me if I need help. **If it is research they help because I will need stuff. But nobody sits with me when I'm doing Home Lesson and I do get trouble sometimes with Maths especially.**

Randelle – Yes, but not all the time, sometimes, because I don't always need help. But they would ask how I'm going. **They assist me with Science especially.**

- b) Who assists you/or shows an interest with your home lesson or other studies at home? (Why that person(s)? / Why no one?)

Abiel – Everybody, if necessary (see above)

Damien – Both my Mummy and Daddy.

Isaiah – Both my Dad and my Mom, but my Dad most of the times. Well because he is there with me.

Jessica – My mother shows the interest because she is home most of the time, not all the time but often.

Michael – My big sister would help. I would ask my mummy, but if she don't understand, she would tell me to go and ask my big sister (who lives close by).

(So what about your stepfather?)

I don't really ask my stepfather for any help.

Randelle – My Granny, my Mummy, my big sister and my uncles.

20. Of the following aspects of parental involvement, which one(s) would you like/dislike your parents to do for you or perceive your parents should / should not do for you and why?

- a) Help you with your home lessons

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Abiel – Yes if necessary, to help me concentrate and stay focused.

Damien – Yes, because if I don't understand it wouldn't make any sense so they help me to understand.

Isaiah – Yes but they are already doing that.

Jessica – Yes, so I could understand my work better.

Michael – Yes because sometimes when I need help and my sister is not at home, I have to wait until she comes home.

Randelle – Yes because they would help me to understand things better and help me to figure out things better.

b) Sit with you when you am studying

Abiel – No not really, but if I'm revising, I would like them to pick me up with work sometimes

Damien – Yes, so if I run into problems they right there to help, but not all the time though.

Isaiah – I don't really need them to sit with me but sometimes we sit together because they are doing courses as well

Jessica – No, I need peace and quiet.

Michael – No Miss because I would lose my focus.

Randelle – Sometimes, because I know she is tired or might be doing something, not all the time I would need help.

c) Arrange lessons classes for you

Abiel – Yes, but I already go to Maths lessons on Saturdays

Damien – They would if I want but I don't want lessons right now.

Isaiah – No, because I kinda really know and understand everything that my teachers are doing right now.

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Jessica – Yes, to help me with some of my work, especially Science.

Michael – No because they would be pressuring me too much to do lessons work and school work at the same time.

Randelle – I don't feel I need lessons right now or at this point in time.

d) Provide a quiet place for you to study at home

Abiel - I have that already

Damien - Not really, because I like to study with music.

Isaiah - My neighborhood is already quiet so that is already there for me.

Jessica - I already have a quiet place, in my room.

Michael - Yes Miss because I live close to the highway so I would be hearing a lot of noise studying in the gallery.

(So what about your room?)

My room is close to the highway too.

Randelle – Yes, but I already have a quiet place

e) Communicate with your teachers regularly

Abiel – To talk about what? Because everything is OK so far.

Damien – Yes because I do not hide anything from them so it's ok for them to talk to my teachers.

Isaiah – Yes especially because I like to talk too much, so I want them to know because I want to stop.

Jessica – Yes, so they will tell them how I'm doing, if I'm improving or not.

Michael – No because if I am failing a subject they would get to find out and then I would have to study more. (So you don't want to study more?) Yes Miss but not how I expect they would tell me to study.

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Randelle – Yes so they'll find out how I'm doing in school so they could help me in the areas I'm not doing well in.

f) Attend parents' day meetings

Abiel – Yea because they sure to get valuable information on how I'm doing at school from all my teachers and so would help me to improve (if necessary)

Damien – Yes to show them that I'm actually doing good in school.

Isaiah – Yes, and they already do

Jessica – Well yes, my Mom already comes.

Michael – My Mom already come. But I would want her to come so that they'll be more educated about the school, not really about me alone.

Randelle – Yes well for the same reason given above.

g) Visit your school unexpectedly

Abiel – I don't mind.

Damien – Yes they could come if they want; I have no objections against that.

(Why?)

Because, as I said before, I don't hide anything from them.

Isaiah – No, well I won't really like that to happen, because sometimes at school, if you're playing and talking in class they might just show up at that time and see. That's something psycho parents do

Jessica – No, next thing I'm doing something I'm not supposed to be doing.

Michael – Not at all Miss. No Miss because my mother might be under alcohol that would be real embarrassment.

Randelle – Not really, but I don't think I would mind.

h) Discuss your academic performance with you

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Abiel – Yes so they would tell me what subjects I need to work on more

Damien – Yes, so they will know what I'm actually doing in school.

Isaiah – Yes and they already do that Miss.

Jessica – Yes, not to make me feel ashamed or anything but how and why I should do better. This would give me more encouragement.

Michael – Yes, but not all the time like when she is under alcohol.

Randelle – Yes so if I'm not doing good, they'll help me to do better and they could get a tutor to help me or somebody who could help me.

i) Talk to you about your relationships with your classmates

Abiel – Yea because they could tell me if that person is a good person to be around because I might not see it but they could advise me.

Damien – (He hesitates) Yea Miss. Well they will know the kinda relationships I does carry on with people.

Isaiah – I have a friendly relationship with most people in my class so I wouldn't mind, because I don't have a girlfriend since I don't have any time for that. But if I tell my parents something about a girl they would ask me if I like her and make jokes with me about that.

Jessica – Yes, to let them know who are my close friends or my best friend.

Michael – No, because they'll get to know too much and may use one of my friends as a spy.

Randelle – Yes to know what kinda people I am associating with.

j) Talk to you about things other than your school work

Abiel – Yea like sports like hockey (because I play hockey), music, going out with friends to the mall, talking to me about my family and stuff like that.

Damien – Yea Miss. Like sports like football.

(And what about you going out with friends?)

Yea Miss well that too. So they will know where I'm going and so.

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(So where do you go, not clubs I hope?)

Nah Miss I have to get ID to go there. We does go like mall and so.

(Which one?)

Gulf City, Mid Centre Mall

(So far, so why not Trincity Mall, which is closer?)

Yea well we does go there sometimes too Miss, but not so often.

Isaiah – Yea like TV shows we look at and my Dad and I play video games so we talk different strategies and stuff.

I have a really good relationship with my Dad and we go places together and I talk about my problems with him.

Jessica – Yes, like how to behave when I go out.

Michael – Yes Miss like games, sports like cricket and football. Nothing else really. Well my mother she is not that type of person.

Randelle – Yea because you don't always want them as a parent but someone to talk about friends, going out music, TV shows and so.

k) Participate in school activities

Abiel – Yes so that they can contribute more to the school like fundraisers and so.

Damien – Well if they want to. It would be up to them if they want to.

Isaiah – They would not come but would contribute financially.

Jessica – Yes, but only if they want to.

Michael – No Miss. Because I wouldn't feel free to do things and be myself.

Randelle – Yes to show that they support the school.

l) Any other aspect (please specific).

Appendix #7

Narrative Analyses (Stories) of Students' perceptions of Their parents' involvement in their education

(Colour Codes for Themes/Categories)

Relationship with Mother and Father
Relationship between Parents and Teachers
Parental Involvement in Primary School
Parental Involvement in Secondary School
Students' Expectations of Parental Involvement
Impacts of Parental Involvement

Abiel, the 'Good Pig'

Tonmah High School was not Abiel's first choice, "*but I like it here*" were her words. As our discussion moved into her relationship with her parents, Abiel told me, "*With her Mummy I close with her. Daddy is there to drop me places like when I have hockey and if he has to take me to buy stuff*". Her Mummy takes care of her daily life and would buy school stuff for her, but both her mummy and sister buy clothes for her. However she would go with them

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though. Her mummy also buys books, stationeries and stuff for her but “*Daddy would give Mummy money*” she pointed out.

Her parents do not come into her school often, and at the time of the interview the last time one of them came in was “*to drop something I left at home, my TD note book*”. About any relationship between her parents and her teachers, Abiel stated “*there’s no relationship really, there’s no need to I guess*”. The last communication was when she was in Form 1 when her Form Teacher called her Mom to talk to her about the Heroes Foundation outing and on Parents Day when also when she was in Form 1.

Abiel does not know of any activities her parents get involved in at her school and have attended Parent Teachers Association (PTA) Meeting “*only in Form One, never since I’m in Form Two*”, but she said she is not sure why (they have stopped). Her parents however get involved in activities that would help her in her education such as helping her with projects, if she needs help from them. She likes this involvement because “*they help me with getting good presentations, putting things together and so*”.

At Primary School, Abiel said her parent were “*very involved, mostly Mummy. She use to come and wait for dismissal to carry me to lessons. She use to help me write essays and Daddy would explain Maths when I didn’t understand. They use to ask me if I understand my work, telling me to revise if I want to pass for my first choice school*”. They however did not come into the school often except for meetings, school choices and graduation stuff and so.

Now that Abiel is in Secondary School, she says her parents are still involved, but “*I think they were more involved in Primary School*”. Abiel says now “*they tell me not to waste time and try to read ahead and be constant in studying because the work I’m doing now would*

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dictate my path for my future". As for Abiel's expectations of how involved her parents should be she says *"I think they should be involved because I may make the wrong decisions and so I need them to guide me. I maybe wouldn't do what I'm suppose to do the best way"*. When asked why she feels that way her response was *"well I don't have experience but they do and so they could give me the positive as well as the negative outcomes of what I do"*.

Abiel's parents provides everything she needs right now to assist her with her school work including notebooks, stationery, internet access, additional reading/reference books. She has the computer which was given to her by the government in Form One and she has a study desk in her room but she quickly pointed out *"sometimes I could use the dining room if I want more space"*. She is currently attending Maths lessons, so there is nothing else she needs to help her right now.

On the question of communication with her about school, Abiel said that her mummy would ask her about school every day but her daddy would ask her sometimes. She added *"My mummy would ask if I had Home Lesson and how was my day? She would ask "were you being a 'good pig' today? Jokingly, though"*. (Abiel laughs). When asked if she likes them to communicate or discuss her school life with her, her response was *"I like them to because"*, (she pauses to think), *"they are trying to find out how I'm going or how I'm performing in school in my academics and if I'm behaving (but they'll still find out)"*.

When asked about her parents assisting or showing an interest when she is doing homework or studying at home, Abiel says *"Everybody would assist if necessary. My dad helps me with Maths; Mummy would help me with English like essays and my brother helps me with TD some time"*. Although they don't sit with her, *"they will ask how I'm going, if I'm almost*

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done and so. Mummy will ask when that due”, (the assignment or home lesson that is) “while Daddy would ask if I’m going to my bed soon”, Abiel stated.

As far as her parent’s involvement in her education, Abiel believes that her parents should help her with her home lessons “if necessary, to help me concentrate and stay focused”. She does not want them to sit with her all the time when she is studying, “but if I’m revising, I would like them to pick me up with work sometimes”. She also believes that her parents arrange lessons classes for her and provide a quiet place for her to study at home, but added that “I already go to Maths lessons on Saturdays” and that she already has a quiet place to study.

When asked about communicating with her teachers regularly, Abiel does not believe that is necessary, and quickly pointed out, “to talk about what? Everything is OK so far”. She even said that she doesn’t mind if they visit her school unexpectedly. She however is of the view that they should attend parents’ day meetings because as she said “they sure to get valuable information on how I’m doing at school from all my teachers and so would help me to improve (if necessary)”. They should also participate more in school activities “so that they can contribute more to the school like fundraisers and so”.

When at home, Abiel would like her parents to discuss her academic performance with her so that “they could tell me what subjects I need to work on more”. She would also like them to talk to her about her relationships with her classmates since she feels “they could tell me if that person is a good person to be around because I might not see it but they could advise me”. Finally, Abiel would like her parents to talk to her about things other than her school work, “like sports like hockey (because I play hockey), music, going out with friends to the mall, talking to me about my family and stuff like that.

Damien, the 'limer'

Getting to conduct my interviews with Damien was one of my biggest challenges in this study, because of his frequent absences from school. After several attempts, I was finally able to complete my sessions with him. Although Damien's first choice was not Tonmah High, his first choice school also was not 'his choice'. He was quick to point out that "*HC was my first choice. I didn't choose that you know; is my mother who choose that school. I wanted to go to TCE*".

Damien lives with his mother and stepfather, but claims he has a better relationship with his father instead of his mother. He admitted, "*Well me and my father does get along very well but me and my mother does have little problems*". When questioned further of these problems, Damien responded, "*Like 'staying out late' with my friends who live in the area and sometimes cousins and not coming home at a certain time*". When asked if Dad does not have a problem with (him staying out late), he then admitted "*well yea but it easier to talk to my daddy than my mother*". He then indicated to me that he visits his daddy every weekend. With respect to his daily and his and his educational needs, Damien reported, "*my mother takes care of me, but Mummy and Daddy have an agreement, he would buy my books and she would buy my uniform*".

As we moved on to talk more about his school life, firstly to find out about his parents relationship with his teachers, Damien told me that "*there's no relationship, well none that I could think of really*". He further added that they do not communicate often since "*there's no reason for any communication*" and that the last communication was a letter to inform them about the upcoming Parents Day.

Incidentally that was the last time his mother came into the school. When asked why his mother would want to come to Parents Day, Damien truthfully admitted, "*well my mother was*

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really expecting to hear that I was doing 'bad' but she was surprised when everyone told her that I'm doing well, I just need to come to school more often". When I asked why she would expect to hear that he was doing 'bad', he again truthfully admitted, *"well she say I does behave 'bad' at home nah so she thought that I would behave bad in school too"*. Damien however informed me that *"Mummy comes to PTA meetings all the time to find out what's happening in the school"*.

When asked about any other ways or activities his parents get involved in at his education or cooperate with his teachers in some way, Damien's response was, *"well just money for bazaar and the Walkathon card"*. When asked if his parents any of these, his response was, *"no they just give me the money"*. He also went on to state that *he likes when they get involved, because "they help me with certain problems I don't know"* and this he added, *"gives me a better understanding of what I'm doing not just doing something and don't really know what I'm doing"*.

The discussion then went back to Damien's parent's involvement in his school life when he was in Standards 4 and 5. As he puts it, *"they were there right through out to help me with anything I had to do"*, adding that *"they [even] came in unexpectedly sometimes to see how I was doing"*. They however did not have to send him to lessons, since as he said, *"I had lessons right in school with my teacher"*, but added that, *"they use to help too with Maths and English, like with essays"*. When I asked him why did he think they were so involved, Damien's response was, *"I think they was involved because they wanted me to do my best and get A⁺ right through and pass for my first choice"*.

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Now that Damien is at Tonmah High School, he describes his parents' involvement in your education as the *“same way [as when he was in Primary School], they were always involved from the beginning. They help with Home Work, check my books and make sure I'm doing my work. So I think they are just as involved. It may be a little less eh, but they are still very involved”*. As for his expectations, Damien's response was, *“well I think it should be the same as before”*.

Damien indicated that his parents provide all that he needs to assist him in his school work. He added that *“besides the government computer we have another one. I have a study room, the place is quiet but I don't really like quiet; and I don't need lessons right now”*. Damien said that his parents discuss his school work or his day at school with him every day, (once he comes to school), asking him what he did in school, if he had Home Lesson and so on. He likes them to do this because as he said, *“it show that they have interest in me and what I'm doing in school”*. When asked if his parents assist him or show an interest when he is doing your homework or studying at home, Damien said that both his Mummy and Daddy do. As he said, *“if I ask for help like TD, my father would help. He would sit with me sometimes and Mummy would help me with English, like with essays and so”*.

Damien's overall perception of his parent's involvement in his education is that they should be involved in all aspects. When it comes to helping him with his home lesson or sitting with him while studying he believes they should *because “if I don't understand it wouldn't make any sense so they help me to understand”*, and *“if I run into problems they right there to help, but not all the time though”*. As far as sending him to lessons, Damien said they would send if he

wants, *“but I don’t want lessons right now”*. In terms of providing him with a quiet place for you to study at home, he told me, *“not really, because I like to study with music”*.

Damien would like his parents to communicate with your teachers regularly as well as attend parents’ day meetings, because as he puts it, *“I do not hide anything from them so it’s ok for them to talk to my teachers”* and *“to show them that I’m actually doing good in school”*.

When asked about them visiting his school unexpectedly, his frank response was, *“yes they could come if they want; I have no objections against that, because, as I said before, I don’t hide anything from them”*. It can therefore be understood that Damien would like his parents to discuss his academic performance with him as well as talk to him about his relationships with his classmates, for as he said, *“so they will know what I’m actually doing in school”* and *“well they will know the kinda relationships I does carry on with people”*. (He however, hesitated when he gave this last answer).

In terms of talking to him about things other than his school work, his response was, *“Yea Miss. Like sports like football”*. I however went on to ask him about them talking to him about going out with friends. His response was, *“Yea Miss well that too, so they will know where I’m going and so”*. I could not help asking him, *“So where do you go, not clubs I hope”*? His answer (which shocked me) was, *“nah Miss I have to get ID to go there. We does go like mall like Gulf City, Mid Centre Mall and so”*. I again inquired, *“so far, so why not Trincity Mall, which is closer?”* to which he responded *“yea well we does go there sometimes too Miss, but not so often”*. In wrapping with Damien, when I ask him if he would like his parents to participate more in school activities, he nonchalantly responded, *“well, if they want to. It would be up to them if they want to”*.

Isaiah, the 'only child'

Isaiah, who attended two different private primary schools, admitted very early to me that Tonmah High School was his 4th choice and that HVC was actually his first choice. He then told me *“but I like it here, it cool, and I have some good, close friends here”*. As we went deeper into the interview, and started to talk about his relationship with his parents, Isaiah, with a smile stated, *“That’s a good question. **It is a loving one, we are close,** and we talk freely and don’t hold back anything. If I have a problem I would talk to them. **But I have a better relationship with my father than my Mom though”***. In terms of taking care of his daily life as well as the educational aspects of his life, Isaiah’s response was, *“my Mom, since my Dad leaves home early to go to work in Port of Spain but he gets home 3 sometimes 5 or so. My Mom buys my books etc. and drops me to school. My Mom would iron for me sometimes like if I’m tired or have plenty work to do”*.

As we moved on to discussing the relationship between his parents and his teachers, Isaiah described it as *“**normal [since] nothing has happened for them to call them as yet”***. He further added that the last communication was *“only for Parents Day, this term and in Form 1 [via] “Letters from school”*. This Parents Day, this term, Isaiah informed me the last time both parents came into school. When asked, what was their reason for coming in, Isaiah’s unashamed response was, *“ Miss well when I was in primary school right, I use to talk excessively so when they come in to meet my teachers, they wanted to know if I’m talking a lot still and if I’m doing my work. Miss they understand that I may need to talk since I’m an ‘only child’ and so may need to talk when I’m in school”*. With regards to his parents attending PTA meetings, he later told me

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that *“they use to come often at first but they have stopped now because of some statement made by the principal”*.

In terms of other ways or activities his parents try to get involved in his education or cooperate with his teachers in some way, after a little hesitation Isaiah said, *“well they contribute by giving donations to our bazaar and money for walkathon”*. When asked about any other ways or activities his parents engage in, in order to be involved in education and whether he likes them or not, his response was, *“well if I have a problem they would help especially my Dad, so I like that, like Maths and Science, he is good in these areas”*. He then added that *“they would help me to learn better and would give me other examples to help me”*.

When we went on to discussing his parents' involvement in his education at primary school, Isaiah had a lot to say. He said,

I use to go to AW's up to Standard 3. I was overworked there. And people use to bully me and I use to get in trouble when I fight back and they (the teachers) use to call in my parents and I would get scolded when I get home. I use to complain (about the bullying) but they didn't use to do anything. Then my parents took me out and sent me to another private school (N D Prep School) in Standard 4 and 5. It's a very small school, you wouldn't know it Miss.

I then asked how involved were they, if they came in at this school or sent him to lessons, he responded, *“they came in a few times to check on me yes, but the work wasn't challenging and was only 2 other students. They sent me to other lessons on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturdays. It was hard to get up early on Saturdays though”*. When asked, why he thought they sent him to

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these extra lessons, he quickly answered, *"I think so that I would get to pass for my first choice school, but the Composition was hard. But of the three of us who did the exam, I did the best"*.

When I then asked Isaiah about his parents' involvement in his education, now that he is in secondary school, he confidently said, *"They still support me all the way in everything. They attend to me immediately, they don't tell me to wait or just a second or anything like that"*. As for his expectations, he told me, *"I would like them to support me and check my work because I'm afraid if they stop I would start slacking off and not do my work and I wouldn't be able to achieve my goal in life which is to be a pilot"* his school work, Isaiah informed me that his parents provide everything he needs at this time, adding that, *"we have two computers besides the government one. I use to attend lessons last term. They also allow me to borrow books from the Public Library"*.

In terms of how frequently his parents communicate or discuss his school work or day at school with him, Isaiah's response was, *"every day, they would ask 'how was your day, what subjects you did, did you get your work correct'? Stuff like that"*. He admitted that he doesn't like this all the time though and went on to explain, *"It depends. Like if there is a problem I have and they'll try to tell me something different to what I think I should do, I don't always like that. I like to do things my way sometimes, but sometimes I may need their guidance or advice"*. When asked about his parent's assistance and interest when he is doing his homework or studying at home, Isaiah said, *"Yes they show an interest. Like when I'm finished they would ask to see it to see if I did it right. And my Dad and I would sit together to do work because he is doing a course right now in COSTATT"*. He further added, *"both my Dad and my Mom, but my Dad most of the times because he is there with me"*.

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Isaiah's overall likes or dislikes of his parents' general involvement in his education is varied. In terms of helping him with his home lessons, he says he likes them to, adding "*but they are already doing that*". He admitted, "*I don't really need them to sit with me but sometimes we sit together because they are doing courses as well*". As for them arranging extra lessons for him, he said, "*no, because I kinda really know and understand everything that my teachers are doing right now*". Providing a quiet place for him to study at home is not necessary since as he puts it, "*my neighborhood is already quiet so that is already there for me*".

In terms of communicating with his teachers regularly, he quickly responded, "*yes especially because I like to talk too much, so I want them to know because I want to stop*". Although he likes them to attend Parents' Day meetings, which "*they already do*", he however does not want them to visit his school unexpectedly and said to me, "*well I won't really like that to happen, because sometimes at school, if you're playing and talking in class they might just show up at that time and see. That's something psycho parents do*".

When it comes to on discussing his academic performance with his parents, Isaiah's response was "*yes and they already do that Miss*". He also has no problems with his parents talking to him about his relationships with his classmates and went on to tell me "*I have a friendly relationship with most people in my class so I wouldn't mind, because I don't have a girlfriend since I don't have any time for that. But if I tell my parents something about a girl they would ask me if I like her and make jokes with me about that*". Towards the end of our discussion, Isaiah said that his parents do talk to him about things other than his school work, "*like TV shows we look at and my Dad and I play video games so we talk about different strategies and stuff. I have a really good relationship with my Dad and we go places together*".

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and I talk about my problems with him". Lastly, with respect to his parents' participation in school activities, Isaiah's bluntly responded, *"they would not come but would contribute financially"*.

Jessica, the 'no frying chicken in KFC' girl!

Tonmah High School was Jessica's second choice. Her first choice was BE, and as she told me quite honestly, *"I had just liked that school. I was told the teachers 'does' teach good there"*. Jessica describes her relationship with her parents as *"good, or normal, no arguments. We agree on with everything"*. As she told me, both her parent are responsible for taking care of her daily life and her educational life, she added, *"my mother does not work so she does most of the work, but they both cook at different times"*.

In describing the relationship between her parents and her teachers, Jessica stated, *"well my Mom does not talk much, and so she would not ask questions in the meetings and I don't give trouble so she doesn't have to"*. She said that they do not communicate often with each other *"since I came to this school, just for Parents Day"*, [and] *"well only notes like when I'm absent"*. When asked 'when was the last time her parents came into school?' she told me that her mother came to *"the last PTA Meeting, to find out what is happening in the school, I guess"*, she then added.

When asked of any other ways or activities her parents try to get involved in her education or cooperate with her teachers in some way, Jessica, after thinking a bit, briefly responded, *"nothing that I know of"*. In terms of anything she likes or dislikes of the ways or the activities her parents engage in, in order to be involved in your education, Jessica stated, *"At*

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Parents Day I think she [her mother] should ask more questions". She further explained, "well she would find out more about me, what I need to work on, my behaviour, how in doing in my work, so she can tell me things to improve my work and I will try to improve".

I then asked her to describe her parents' involvement in her education at primary school. To this question Jessica responded,

They were more interested in what happened with me in primary school. They visited more often, because I use to talk a lot. I use to take lessons in Creative Writing and I did lessons in school in the other subjects. Especially in Standard 5, they were more interested because they wanted me to pass for my first choice school. Both my parents were interested.

Now that Jessica is in secondary school, she says, *"My mother is more interested now than my father. They tell me to try and do better so I could come out with good passes so I could get a good job like a doctor, an accountant or a nurse or something and not end up 'frying chicken in KFC'".*

In terms of her expectations of her parents' involvement, Jessica revealed, *"Well I think they should be involved in everything I do in school, like my grades in each subject, also if I'm involved in any sport".* When I inquired if she is involved in any sport, she answered, *"Well I was in Track & Field but my grades were dropping and my father said I should stop for a while".* She went on to reiterate, *"But I don't have a problem with them being involved; actually I want them to be involved".*

When asked of the things her parents provide for her to assist her with her school work, such as notebooks, stationery, computer, internet, lessons, study desk, study room study desk

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and so on, Jessica explained, *“They buy stuff for me at the beginning of the term and later on they’ll give me money if I need. I don’t any lessons right now. My study desk is in my room”*.

When asked if there is anything else she thinks she needs to help her with her school work, (with her eyes widening), her response was, *“Yes an iPod, so I could search the internet when I’m out”*.

We then moved on to the question of how often her parents communicate or discuss school work or day at school with her, to which she responded, *“sometimes, whenever they have the time”*. She further added, *“I like them to because I need somebody to talk to about school, like what happen in school”*. In terms of her parents assisting her or showing an interest when she is doing homework or studying at home, Jessica responded, *“They show interest but they cannot assist because they don’t know some of the things we are doing. My mother would say ‘we never learn nothing about that’”*. She further told me, *“My mother shows the interest because she is home most of the time, not all the time but often”*.

In the last part of the interview, where I sought to get a general overview of Jessica’s perception of her parents’ involvement in some more specific aspects of her education, she gave me the following responses. Jessica said although she would like her parents to help her with her home lessons, *“so I could understand my work better”*, she however does not like them to sit with her when she is studying, since she puts it, *“I need peace and quiet”*, when she is studying. So when I later asked about her parents providing a quiet place for her to study at home, her response that, *“I already have a quiet place, in my room”* was understandable. She also would like them to arrange lessons for so as *“to help me with some of my work, especially Science”*.

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Jessica would like her parents to communicate with her teachers regularly, *“so they will tell them how I’m doing, if I’m improving or not”* as well as attend Parents’ Day meetings, but as she reminded me, *“my Mom already comes”*. She would not however like them to visit her school unexpectedly, saying, *“Next thing I’m doing something I’m not supposed to be doing. Nah I wouldn’t like that”*. As far as her parents participating in school activities, Jessica said she would like them to, *“but only if they want to”*.

At home she would like them to discuss her academic performance with her, explaining, *“Not to make me feel ashamed or anything but how and why I should do better. This would give me more encouragement”*. She would also like her parents to talk to her about her relationships with her classmates, since doing so would *“let them know who are my close friends or my best friend”*. With respect to talking to her about things other than school work, Jessica would like them to do so, *“like how to behave when I go out”*.

Michael, the boy with the ‘pencil pants’

Tonmah High School was Michael’s 4th choice and his 1st choice was HCC, but he is enjoying being at THS. Although Michael lives with his mother, stepfather and siblings, his ‘parental interactions’ at home is mainly with his mother and his bigger sister, therefore his description of parental involvement focuses mainly on his mother.

When asked to describe his relationship with her, his response was, *“Well Miss sometimes I feel ashamed to talk to my mother because certain things I want to tell her I just can’t. It might be (easier) but it’s her attitude”*. Asking him to explain, he added, *“how she would get on after I tell her anything, she would start to ‘loud up’ nah, so I prefer not to tell her*

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some things". In terms of who is responsible for taking care of his daily life and his educational life, Michael answered, *"mostly my mother, she would wash for me but I would iron my clothes. Sometimes my mother would cook, sometimes my stepfather. My mother buys my books and uniform. I travel to school. My mother gives me money to come to school"*. I then inquired about his biological father, and he then told me that, *"he gives us money and he would visit sometimes"*.

In describing the relationship between his parents and teachers, Michael said, *"there is no relationship; my Mom just came in for Parents Day"*. He further said that they do not communicate with each other often, except *"last term they sent home a note/letter to tell my mother about my 'pencil pants'"* and *"well only letters for Parents Day and so"*.

When asked 'when was the last time someone came into school'? Michael's response was, *"My Mom came in on Parents Day this term"*. I then asked him 'what he thought was her reason for coming to Parents' Day', he stated, *"Well to meet my teachers, to see good grades and to hear a good report about me"*. So did she get both? I asked, *"She got good reports but bad grades"*, (So what did she tell you?) *"She told me I had to improve my work or she'll take me out ah school"*. In response to his mother attending PTA meetings and the reason for her attending, Michael responded, *"Sometimes, not this term though, but in Term 1 and Term 2. She wanted to find out about the school uniform and to meet some of the teachers, but she met only one teacher"*

As to whether he knows of any other ways or activities your parents try to get involved in your education or cooperate with your teachers in some way, Michael said, *"Only like the*

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bazaar last year and money for the walkathon card this term". Michael further said that he likes how his mother engages herself in order to be involved in your education, because as he puts it,

Every day she tries to push me and tell me to get a good education. I find that is very excellent. I like this because sometimes when I'm not doing well in school, she is the only one to give me confidence". He went on state that the impact of this on him is that *"Sometimes if I'm doing a test, I would think about what she said and try to do my best, [but] sometimes if I'm playing (and don't want to stop) I don't want to hear her or sometimes when she is under heavy alcohol.*

In a bit of shock, I quickly inquired, "Alcohol?? But this would be on the weekend"? But he responded, *"No Miss; during the week too, she would buy from the shop in the area"*.

After inquiring again if he meant like one beer and so? Michael confirmed *"No Miss anything, rum, wine, puncheon. Like if I do any wrong and she drink alcohol then she would beat me then"*. When I asked him if she wouldn't beat you if she didn't drink alcohol? Michael's simple response was, *"Not so Miss"*.

As we moved on to describing his parents' involvement in his education at primary school, Michael stated, *"They were strict over me then Miss. She would come and check my teacher and find out how I'm doing, like once a week"*. He further added that *"She use to get my auntie to help me with my Home Lesson because she use to be busy planting her crops and so. I also use to stay in school some days for lessons with my STD Five teacher.*

As to their involvement in his education now that he is in secondary school, he replied, *"Miss well it change, it not all that it use to be from before"*. He further added, *"Well mih*

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mother use to come and check mih teachers when I was in Primary School but now she would only come in for Parents Day. Now she would ask me if I have Home Work but most of the time I will tell her 'no'. When I asked 'Why'? Michael's answer was, *"Because she would be on me (harassing me) to go and do it and if I'm doing something I don't like to stop – like playing football or cricket or sometimes catch and hide & seek with my friends.* In terms of his expectations, Michael stated that *"I just want them to check up on me once in a while not all the time like how it was before.* Because", [he hesitates], *"well I don't know if they would be under alcohol, because that would be embarrassing.*

Michael claimed that his parents provide all that he needs to assist him in his school work, explaining to me that, *"the computer is the one from the school. I don't have a study room or study desk or a quiet place for studying. I study and do my Home Lesson in the gallery and I don't go to any lessons right now"*. He added that there is nothing else that he needs right. I then asked him if he wouldn't want a study room or a quiet place to study, after hesitating a bit, his response was, *"No Miss because that not possible right now and by me always noisy Miss because we live close to the highway"*.

When at home, Michael said his mother asks him about his school work or his day at school every day. As he said, *"She would ask if I have Home Work. If I had any test today and so"*. When I asked him if he likes this, he said to me, *"It depends. If they are under heavy alcohol, they will make a short story into a long story"*. Asking him to explain, he added, *"Well we would start to talk about school work, and then they would change the discussion and start to talk about girls, because they suspect I have a girlfriend"*. He then admitted to me that he does have a girlfriend in school. However we did not discuss this any further.

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Still on the aspect of his parents' involvement in his education at home, I then asked him if his parents assist him or show an interest when he is doing homework or studying at home. His response to this was *"If I'm having trouble I will ask them. They don't just come and ask me if I need help. If it is research they help because I will need stuff. But nobody sits with me when I'm doing Home Lesson and I do get trouble sometimes with Maths especially"*. He went on to say, *"My big sister would help. I would ask my mummy, but if she don't understand, she would tell me to go and ask my big sister, who lives close by"*. I asked him about his stepfather helping him but he answered, *"I don't really ask my stepfather for any help Miss"*.

Towards the end of the interview, I asked Michael about his views about some general aspects of his parent's involvement in his school life. As to helping him with home lessons, Michael would like his mom to help him *"because sometimes when I need help and my sister is not at home, I have to wait until she comes home"*, however he does not like anyone to sit with him when he is studying, because as he puts it, *"I would lose my focus"*. On the question of lessons, he wouldn't like them to arrange lessons for, adding that *"they would be pressuring me too much to do lessons work and school work at the same time"*. He would also like to have a quiet place to study at home because as he said earlier, *"I live close to the highway so I 'does' be hearing a lot of noise studying in the gallery"*. When asked about his room, he said to me *"My room is close to the highway too"*.

Michael would not like his parents to communicate with your teachers regularly "because if I am failing a subject they would get to find out and then I would have to study more". When asked if he doesn't want to study more, he responded, *"Yes Miss, but not how I expect they would tell me to study"*. Although his mother already attends Parents' Day meetings,

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he would like her to continue coming, *“so that they’ll be more educated about the school, not really about me alone”*. When asked about visiting him at school unexpectedly, he quickly responded, *“Not at all Miss. No Miss because my mother might be under alcohol that would be real embarrassment”*. He also does not want them to participate in school activities *“because I wouldn’t feel free to do things and be myself”*.

Michael likes them to discuss his academic performance with him, *“but not all the time like when she is under alcohol”*. He does not like them to talk to him about his relationships with his classmates because *“they’ll get to know too much and may use one of my friends as a spy”*. Although he would like her to discuss things other than his school work, like games, sports like cricket and football, he says that his mother is not that type of person.

Randelle, (‘... you don't want them as a parent alone ...’)

Randelle’s first choice was SJC and Tonmah High School was her last choice. As the start of our interview, Randelle and I talked about some general stuff. We then went on to describing Randelle’s relationship with her parents. She said, *“I’m closer with my mummy than my daddy. Because I live with my mummy and so I see her more often”*. About who takes care of her daily life, Randelle, Michael responded, *“Mummy works so when I go home my grandmother takes care of me. My grandmother cook and mummy would wash and so. But my mummy and uncles they all help sometimes”*. As to her school life, she told me, *“They all help me to do some of my school work, to help me understand my work”*.

As for the relationship between her parents and her teachers, she responded, *“Well good, my mummy came in and spoke to my Form Teacher ..., to talk to my teachers to find out how I’m*

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going in school". As she explained, she wasn't called in, "*she just came in*". She added that it was "*just that one time she came in, and well Parents Day in Form 1, she suddenly remembered*". She also said that her mom attended PTA Meeting in Form 1. About what she likes about the ways or the activities her parents engage in, in order to be involved in her education, "*I like when she came in, it made me feel important and to know that she cares about my education*". She further explained that this involvement would "*make me feel to do better so when she comes in she'll get a good report of how I'm doing in my classes*".

We then moved on to describing her parents' involvement in her education at primary school. Randelle said, "*They were real into my work because it was SEA time. They made sure I did all my work, send me to lessons, make sure I hand in all my work and do all my projects and stuff*". She continued, "*my Mummy use to come in to check on me and she would talk to my teacher*". In terms of their parents' involvement in her education, now that she is in secondary school, Randelle responded, "*Well not really involved as before because she is working and since she is a single parent she has to work harder but I wish she could be home more often or earlier to help me*". I then asked her about her Dad's involvement, to which she replied, "*My Dad calls but he doesn't visit. I would visit him during the vacation in July – one month with Daddy, one month with Mummy*".

As to what are Randelle's expectations of their involvement in her education, she said, "*I would like them to be more involved in my life and to know more about what is going on in my life in school and at home when they are not around*". When asked why, she told me, "*So if I am having any problems they would be able to help*". She further explained, "*Miss because is not everything you'll be able to work out on your own and so parents would talk to us about it and*

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see how they could assist, for example, Miss if you are not treated well in school like bullying, they could come in and talk to the teachers and the parents of the child to see if it could stop.

Randelle's parents provide most of the things that they possibly can to assist her in her school work right now. As she explained, *"My study room is my bedroom which I share with my sister. Our internet is down since we have limited service in the area I live. Sometimes I would have to go to the Internet Café if I have to do research and I'm not taking any lessons right now"*.

As for communicating or discussing her school work or day at school with her, Randelle, said, *"My grandparents and my mother, everyday, but my Dad, once or twice weekly"*. She went on to say, *"I like them to. It shows that they care about what going on in my life. Even if my mummy is tired, she would make sure we do all our school work"*. When asked about who assists or shows an interest, when she is doing her homework or studying at home, Randelle said, *"My granny, my mummy, my big sister and my uncles"*. She went on to add however, *"but not all the time, sometimes because I don't always need help, but they would ask how I'm going. They assist me with Science especially"*.

I then sought to get Randelle's general perception of her parents' involvement on a number of aspects concerning her school life. With regards to helping her with her home lessons, she claimed that she would like them to help her because *"they would help me to understand things better and help me to figure out things better"*. She said that although she would like her mother to sit with her sometimes, she understands that she can't always do so because as she said, *"I know she is tired or might be doing something, not all the time I would need help"*. She doesn't want them to arrange lessons classes for you, saying, *"I don't feel I need lessons right*

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now or at this point in time” and she would like them to provide a quiet place for her to study at home, *“but I already have a quiet place”*, she added.

Randelle would like her parents to communicate with her teachers regularly as well as attend Parents’ Day meetings, *“so they’ll find out how I’m doing in school so they could help me in the areas I’m not doing well in”*. She said she doesn’t really want to visit your school unexpectedly, and then quickly added, *“But I don’t think I would mind”*. She thinks that they should participate in school activities, since she believes this would *“show that they support the school”*.

She further told me that she would also like them to discuss her academic performance with her, because as she says, *“if I’m not doing good, they’ll help me to do better and they could get a tutor to help me or somebody who could help me”*. She likes them to talk to her about her relationships with her classmates, so that they’ll *“know what kinda people I am associating with”*. At the end of our discussion, Randelle said she likes her parents to talk to her about things other than school work saying, *“you don’t always want them as a parent alone, but someone to talk about friends, going out music, TV shows and so”*.

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Appendix #8

Table 2: Research Questions, Groupings and Interview Questions

Sub-Q 1: What are students' perceptions of their parents' involvements in their education?	Interview Questions	Sub-Q 2: To what extent is parental involvement sustained over these years?	Interview Questions	Sub-Q 3: How has parental involvement impacted on the total functioning of these students?	Interview Questions
Relationship with parents	7	Parents' visits to school	10	Approval or disapproval and impact(s) of parents involvement in schooling or school life	12 & 13
Level of parental care	8	Parental involvement at Secondary School	15	Ways or activities of parental involvement in schooling or school life	11
Parents' relationship and communication with teachers	9	Parents interest and assistance with learning at home	19		
Parental involvement at Primary School	14	Parents' discussion or communication about schooling and school life	18		
Students' expectations of parents' involvement	16	Students' like or dislike of general aspects of parental involvement	20		
Parents' provision of commodities and amenities to assist with school work	17	Ways or activities of parental involvement in schooling or school life	11		
Parents' discussion or communication about schooling and school life	18				
Students' like or dislike of general aspects of parental involvement	20				
Approval or disapproval of parental involvement in schooling or school life	12 & 13				

Appendix #9

Themes and Matching Students' Responses

Box #1: Relationship with Mother and Father

Examples of Responses

Damien – “Me and my father does get along very well”.

Isaiah – “I have a better relationship with my father than my mother though”.

Randelle – “I’m closer with my Mummy than my Daddy; I live with her and see her more often”.

Jessica – “My mother is more interested now than my father”.

Box # 2: Relationship between parents and teachers

Examples of Responses

Abiel – “... there’s no need to I guess”. “To talk about what”? Everything is OK so far.

Isaiah – “... nothing has happened for them to call them as yet”.

Jessica – “... I don’t give trouble so she doesn’t have to [ask questions at meetings]”.

Damien – “There’s no reason for any communication”.

Michael – “Last term they sent home a letter to tell them about my ‘pencil’ pants”.

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*Boxes # 3A & B: Parental Involvement in Primary School*Examples of Responses: Set A

Abiel – “she used to come and wait for dismissal to carry me to lessons”.

Damien – “They were there right through out to help me with anything I had to do. She came in unexpectedly to see how I was doing. I had lessons right in school with my teacher”.

Isaiah – “They came in a few times to check on me ... They sent me to lessons on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays”

Jessica – “They were more interested in what happened with me in primary school. They visited more often. I use to take lessons in Creative Writing and I did lessons in school in the other subjects”.

Michael – “They were strict over me then Miss. She would come and check my teacher to find out how I’m doing. She use to get my auntie to help me with my Home Lesson. I also use to stay in school some days for lessons with my Std 5 teacher”.

Randelle – “They were real into my work because it was SEA time. They made sure I did all my work, send me to lessons, make sure I hand in all my work and do all my projects and stuff. Mummy use to come in to check on me and she would talk to my teacher”.

Examples of Responses: Set B

Abiel – “They use to ask me if I understand my work, telling me to revise if I want to pass for my first choice school”.

Damien – “I think they was involved because they wanted me to do my best and get A⁺ right through and pass for my first choice”.

Isaiah – “I think so that I would get to pass for my first choice school”

Jessica – “They were more interested because they wanted me to pass for my first choice school. Both my parents were interested”.

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Boxes # 4A & B: Parental involvement in Secondary SchoolExamples of Responses: Set A

Michael – “Miss well it change, it not all that it use to be from before.
Mih mother use to come and check mih teachers when I was in Primary School but now she would only come in for Parents Day.

Randelle – “Well not really involved as before because she is working and since she is a single parent she has to work (harder) but I wish she could be home (more often/earlier) to help me”.

Abiel – “My mummy, everyday but my daddy, sometimes”.

Jessica – “Sometimes, whenever they have the time”.

Randelle – “My grandparents and my mother, everyday, but my Dad, once or twice weekly”.

Examples of Responses: Set B

Abiel – “They tell me not to waste time and try to read ahead and be constant in studying because the work I’m doing now would dictate my path for my future”.

Jessica – “They tell me to try and do better so I could come out with good passes so I could get a good job like a doctor, an accountant or a nurse or something and not end up frying chicken in KFC”.

Box # 5: Students' Expectations of Parental Involvement

Examples of Responses

Abiel – “Well Miss I think they should be involved because I may make the wrong decisions and so I need them to guide me. I maybe wouldn't do what I'm 'suppose' to do the best way. Well I don't have experience but they do and so they could give me the positive as well as the negative outcomes of what I do”.

Isaiah – “I would like them to support me and check my work because I'm afraid if they stop I would start slacking off and not do my work and I wouldn't be able to achieve my goal in life which is to be a pilot”.

Jessica – “Well I think they should be involved in everything I do in school, like my grades in each subject, also if I'm involved in any sport. Well I was in Track & Field but my grades were dropping and my father said I should stop for a while. But I don't have a problem with them being involved; actually I want them to be involved”.

Randelle – “I would like them to be more involved in my life and to know more about what is going on in my life in school and at home when they are not around. So if I am having any problems they would be able to help. Miss because is not everything you'll be able to work out on your own and so parents would talk to us about it and see how they could assist”.

(Visits)

Damien – “Yes to show them that I'm actually doing 'good' in school”.

Randelle – “Yes I like when she came in, it made me feel important and to know that she cares about my education”.

Randelle – “Yea because you don't always want them as a parent but someone to talk about friends, going out, music, TV shows and so”.

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(Communication)

Abiel – “I like them to because they are trying to find out how I’m going or how I’m performing in school in my academics and if I’m behaving”.

Damien – “Yes I like it because it show that they have interest in me and what I’m doing in school, and so they will know what I’m actually doing in school”.

Jessica – “Yes I like them to because I need somebody to talk to about school, like what happen in school”.

Randelle – “I like them to. It shows that they care about what going on in my life”.

Boxes # 6A & B: Impacts of Parental Involvement

Examples of Responses: Set A

(Impacts of communication with teachers or visits to school)

Randelle- “Yes so they’ll find out how I’m doing in school so they could help me in the areas I’m not doing well”.

Abiel – “Yea because they sure to get valuable information on how I’m doing at school from all my teachers and so would help me to improve (if necessary)”.

Jessica – “At Parents Day I think she should ask more questions. Well she would find out more about me, what I need to work on, my behaviour, how in doing in my work, so she can tell me things to improve my work and I will try to improve”.

Randelle – “I like when she came in, it made me feel important and to know that she cares about my education.
It would make me feel to do better so when she comes in she’ll get a good report of how I’m doing in my classes

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(Impacts of Discussions and Assistance at Home)

Abiel – “Yes so they would tell me what subjects I need to work on more”.

Jessica – “Yes, not to make me feel ashamed or anything but how and why I should do better. This would give me more encouragement.

Randelle – “Yes so if I’m not doing good, they’ll help me to do better and they could get a tutor to help me or somebody who could help me”.

Abiel – “Yes like with projects, if I need help for them, they help me with getting good presentations, putting things together and so”.

Isaiah – “Well if I have a problem they would help especially my Dad. They would help me to learn better”.

Examples of Michael’s Responses: Set B*(Contradictory Effects of a Parent’s Involvement)*

“Well, Miss sometimes I feel ashamed to talk to my mother because certain things I want to tell her I just can’t. It might be (easier) but it’s her attitude. How she would get on after I tell her anything, she would start to ‘loud up’ nah, so I prefer not to tell her some things”.

“... I don’t want to hear her or sometimes when she is under heavy alcohol”.

(On unexpected visits to school) “Not at all Miss. No Miss, my mother might be under alcohol that would be real embarrassment.

(On discussion of academic performance) “Yes, but not all the time like when she is under alcohol”.

“I just want them to check up on me once in a while not all the time like how it was before ... well I don’t know if they would be under alcohol because that would be embarrassing”.

“Well yes because every day she tries to push me and tell me to get a good education. I find that is very excellent. I like this because sometimes when I’m not doing well in school, she is the only one to give me confidence”.

“Sometimes if I’m doing a test, I would think about what she said and try to do my best”.