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Proceedings

Editors

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Preface

The African Academic Research Forum (AARF), through the South Africa International Conference on Education (SAICEd) provides opportunity for researchers, academics in education and all other relevant stakeholders to gather and share ideas related to teaching and learning in the 21st century.

This Book of proceedings of the 8th edition of the conference contains full papers that have gone through a rigorous, blind peer-review process. We received a total of 62 full papers for possible presentation and publication from participants in eight countries. The final number of papers accepted was 41.

Our thanks go to the keynote speaker, the presenters of workshops, and all reviewers who, through their expertise have assisted in improving manuscripts to appear in the conference proceedings. Finally, we thank the editors who have worked very hard to produce the proceedings.

Prof A. Mji
Conference Chair

Reviewers of full papers

The organising committee of SAICEd 2020 would like to thank the following reviewers of the full papers and others whose names do not appear in the list.

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Review Process

In total, 84 manuscripts in different areas within the field of education were received. Of these manuscripts, 62 were full papers. All the full papers were subjected to a double blind review. Each paper was reviewed by at least 2 reviewers. The reviews were carried out by experts in the different fields of education based on 22 criteria of the full paper evaluation form. Following the review process, the editorial committee considered the reviewers' comments and 21 manuscripts were found to be unsuitable for publication. Reports were sent to the authors of the remaining 41 papers with suggestions of what they needed to address for the papers to be published. After receiving the re-worked manuscripts, the editorial committee finally accepted the 41 full papers for inclusion in the proceedings.

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TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT ENGAGING FATHERS IN THE EARLY EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN: A QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

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Abstract

This study explored teachers' perceptions about engaging fathers in the early education of their children in one Education District in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. Descriptive survey research, in which a sample of 78 teachers was involved, guided the study. Teachers' perceptions Questionnaire was used for data collection. Mean and analysis of variance were used to analyse the data. It was revealed that teachers had positive perceptions about the engagement of fathers in early childhood care and education. Conclusively, fathers' engagement in early childhood care and education is paramount in children's early education. It was recommended that fathers should be engaged to shoulder properly their responsibilities in the early education of their children.

Keywords: Engagement, Early Childhood Care and Education, Teachers' perceptions

Introduction

Despite that the proper upbringing of children depends on the responsibilities of both mothers and fathers, the engagement of South African fathers is insignificant compared to that of the mothers. Significant roles are played by fathers in children's social, emotional, and behavioral development (Lamb & Lewis, 2013; Panter-Brick et al., 2014 as cited in Chacko, Fabiano, Doctoroff & Fortson, 2018). In line with the above, Ramachandani et al. (2013) found that when fathers are actively involved in lives of their children, there will be fewer disruptive behavior problems over time. Not minding the significant impact of fathers' roles on the education of the children, literature shows that fathers are not well engaged in early childhood education in South Africa. According to Mufutau (2015) and Clyde (2016), fatherhood roles are not fully practiced in South Africa, most especially for the young fathers who became parents while at school due to pre-marital sex and were, therefore, incapable to be involved in the lives of their children.

Theoretical background of the study

This study was anchored on Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological System Theory. Bronfenbrenner (1979) believes that proper consideration of the entire ecological system in which growth takes place helps in the understanding of human development. Bronfenbrenner's theory defines complex 'layers' of the environment, each affecting a child's development. The "bioecological system theory" calls attention to the fact that a child's biology is a primary environment stimulating his or her development. Thus, to study a child's development, there is the need to consider both the child and the immediate environment in relation to the larger environment.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) bio-ecological system theory believes that the main relationship needs to be with someone who can offer a sense of caring that is meant to last a lifetime. This relationship must be promoted by a person or people within the immediate sphere of the child's influence. Thus, the researchers used the tenets of this theory to explore teachers' perceptions about engaging fathers in their children's early education.

Review of related empirical studies

Morgan and Young (2017) indicated that healthy behavior in children depends on fathers' parenting practices but the evidence base is limited. Improvement in some fathers' behavior appeared to contribute to increased feelings of safety and wellbeing within some families (McConnell, Barnard & Taylor, 2017). Rominov et al. (2017) found that fathers' active engagement in a child's upbringing is associated with long-term benefits for the father, their partner, and their child. Furthermore, Kadar-Satat, Szaboki, and Byerly (2017) indicated that school staff believe in the active participation of fathers in school to achieve the best education outcomes for children. One of the beneficial factors in young children's learning and development is active family involvement (Ancell, Bruns & Chitiyo, 2018). Thus, children perform better in school and are less likely to develop behavioral difficulties when fathers are actively involved (Noggle, 2019).

Morgan et al. (2019) found that meaningful engagement of fathers increases physical activity behaviour in preadolescent girls. Despite the American Academy of Paediatrics recommendations, paediatric primary care providers do not routinely engage fathers in care (Allport et al., 2019). Rahmah (2019) found that fathers with young children in Indonesia have positive attitudes towards their children's education but the domination of female presence in a childhood education setting is limiting fathers to participate in child education.

The foregoing has shown the educational implications of fathers' engagement in early childhood care and education. However, there is a paucity of empirical evidence on the perceptions of principals and teachers on the engagement of fathers in the education of the children. Thus, the researchers sought to explore teachers' perceptions about engaging fathers in children's early education in one Education District in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

Objectives of the study

The study sought to determine the:

1. Teachers' perceptions about engaging fathers in children's early education.
2. Influence of race on teachers' perceptions about engaging fathers in children's early education.
3. Influence of marital status on teachers' perceptions about engaging fathers in children's early education.

Research Questions

1. What are teachers' perceptions about engaging fathers in children's early education?
2. What is the influence of race on teachers' perceptions about engaging fathers in children's early education?
3. What is the influence of marital status on teachers' perceptions about engaging fathers in children's early education?

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: There is no significant influence of race on teachers' perceptions about the engagement of fathers in early childhood education provisioning.

H₀₂: There is no significant influence of marital status on teachers' perceptions about the engagement of fathers in early childhood education provisioning.

Methods

Research Design

The design of the study was descriptive survey research. According to Creswell (2014) survey design provides a quantitative description of trends or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population. This design has been used by Okeke, Ugwuanyi, and Mufutau (2020), Okeke, Okeke, and Ugwuanyi (2020), Ugwuanyi et al. (2020), Eze, Ugwuanyi and Okcke (2020) in similar studies.

Participants

A sample of 78 teachers drawn from the population of teachers of preschools (0-4years) and Grade R aspects of foundation phase in King William's Town Education District in the Eastern Cape Province participated in the study. The sample was composed by selecting eight (8) schools using a stratified random sampling technique at the first stage. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 78 teachers from the selected schools in the second stage.

Instrumentation and procedure

Teachers' perceptions Questionnaire structured on a 4-point scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), and Strongly Disagreed (SD) was used for data collection. The instrument had 20 item statements relating to the perceptions of teachers on engaging fathers in the children's early education.

Instruments validation

To ensure the face validity of the instrument, copies of the instrument were given to experts in instrument development for their constructive criticisms. The experts looked at the instrument in terms of the clarity of items, simplicity of vocabulary, and relevance of items to the research objectives. Based on the observations and corrections of these experts, the instrument was modified accordingly. To ensure the reliability of the instruments, the field test of the instruments was conducted. The internal consistency reliability index of the items of the instrument was obtained to be 0.94 using Cronbach's alpha method.

Ethical measures

Ethical clearance was obtained through the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) and University Research Eastern Committee (UREC) of one Eastern Cape-based University, as well as a permission letter from the Eastern Cape Department of Basic Education, Bisho, Zwelitsha to conduct the study in the schools. The researchers endeavoured to act within the ethical principles and rules during the study.

Data analyses

Data were analysed using mean and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Mean was used to answer the research questions while ANOVA was used to test the null hypotheses at 5% probability level.

Results

Research Question One: What are teachers' perceptions about the engagement of fathers in early childhood care and education provisioning?

Table 1: Teachers' perceptions about the Engagement of Fathers in ECCE Provisioning
n = 78

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Fathers should visit school to check their children's progress.	2.98	.56	Agree
2	Fathers should be interested to be a resource person in the classroom as story reader.	3.56	.87	Agree
3	Fathers should be encouraged to share knowledge and skills with school's staff and children.	3.23	.81	Agree
4	Fathers should feel free to seek for assistance from the school for the child's education.	3.05	.56	Agree
5	Fathers are expected to have aspirations for their children's educational improvement.	2.96	.42	Agree
6	Fathers should have greater awareness of children educational progress.	3.67	.65	Agree
7	Fathers are expected to know about what the school is teaching the child.	3.32	.71	Agree
8	Fathers should perceive themselves as educators at home in their children's live.	3.73	.89	Agree
9	Fathers should establish and maintain on-going and productive communication with school.	3.61	.41	Agree
10	Fathers should contribute to school aims/policies/procedures.	2.95	.84	Agree
11	Fathers should contribute to the progress of their children school.	2.91	.63	Agree
12	Fathers should use the opportunities during "drop off" and "pick up" time to know their child's teacher.	3.07	.85	Agree
13	Fathers should encourage school visitation to the home.	2.89	.89	Agree
14	Fathers should actively engage in school matters.	3.31	.63	Agree
15	Fathers in the school community are aware of their importance to be engaged in their children education.	3.42	.56	Agree
16	Fathers should appreciate being engaged in school's activities.	3.22	.69	Agree
17	Fathers are expected to have the same vision for the child like that of the school.	3.48	.84	Agree
18	There should be mutual respect between fathers and school.	3.15	.76	Agree
19	Fathers are more aware of school aims and objectives.	3.06	.75	Agree
20	Fathers should develop good relationships with school's staff.	3.12	.42	Agree
Weighted Average		65.09	9.76	Agree

Table 1 shows the mean perceptions ratings of teachers about engaging fathers in children's early education. The analysis showed that the mean ratings of teachers on items 1 to 20 are more than 2.50 criterion mean. This implies that teachers agree to the statements of the items as ways of engaging fathers in children's early education. The overall mean rating of 65.31 with a standard deviation of 9.76 implies that teachers have positive perceptions of fathers' engagement in ECCE provisioning.

Research Question Two: What is the influence of race on the teachers' perceptions about engaging fathers in children's early education?

Table 2: Mean analysis of the perceptions of teachers about engaging fathers in children's early education

Race	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Black	65	67.00	11.58	1.43
White	8	67.12	12.66	4.47
Coloured	2	62.57	4.24	3.00
Indian	3	63.66	8.32	4.80
Total	78	65.09	9.76	1.32

Table 2 shows that Black teachers had mean perception rating of 67.00 with a standard deviation of 11.53, White teachers had mean perception rating of 67.12 with a standard deviation of 12.66, Coloured teachers had mean perception rating of 62.57 with a standard deviation of 4.24 while the Indian teachers had mean perception rating of 63.66 with a standard deviation of 8.32. This indicates that teachers of the White race had the highest mean perception followed by the teachers of the Black race.

H01: There is no significant influence of race on teachers' perceptions about engaging fathers in children's early education.

Table 3: Analysis of variance of the influence of race on teachers' perceptions about engaging fathers in children's early education

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	746.407	3	248.802	1.866	.143
Within Groups	9865.542	74	133.318		
Total	10611.949	77			

Table 3 shows that there is no significant difference in the mean perception ratings teachers about engaging fathers in children's early education based on their race, $F(1, 74) = 1.866, p = .143$. Therefore, teachers had positive perceptions about engaging fathers in children's early education irrespective of their race.

Research Question Three: What is the influence of race on teachers' perceptions about engaging fathers in children's early education?

Table 4: Mean analysis of the perceptions of teachers about engaging fathers in children's early education based on marital status

Marital status	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Married	46	66.46	9.43	1.92
Single	24	65.65	12.83	1.89
Divorced	8	63.24	11.93	4.22

Total	78	65.09	9.76	1.32
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Table 4 shows that the mean perception of the married teachers is 66.46 with a standard deviation of 9.43, the single teachers had mean perception rating of 65.65 with a standard deviation of 12.83, while the divorced teachers had mean perception rating of 63.09 with a standard deviation of 11.93. This indicates that teachers who are married had the highest mean perception about engaging fathers in children's early education, followed by those who are single.

H₀₂: There is no significant influence of marital status on teachers' perceptions about engaging fathers in children's early education.

Table 5: Analysis of variance of the influence of race on teachers' perceptions about engaging fathers in children's early education

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	160.181	2	80.090	.575	.565
Within Groups	10451.768	75	139.357		
Total	10611.949	77			

Table 5 shows that there is no significant difference in the mean perception ratings of teachers about the engagement of fathers in the early childhood education provisioning, $F(2, 75) = .575, p = .565$. Therefore, all the teachers who participated in the study had positive perceptions about engaging fathers in children's early education irrespective of their marital status.

Discussions

The study sought the perceptions of teachers about engaging fathers in ECCE provisioning. The results revealed that the teachers had positive perceptions of engaging fathers in children's early education. For instance, teachers agreed that fathers should visit the school to check their children's progress; fathers should feel free to seek for assistance from the school for the child's education; fathers are expected to have aspirations for their children's educational improvement; that fathers should have a greater awareness of children's educational progress; fathers should perceive themselves as educators at home in their children's lives and fathers should establish and maintain ongoing and productive communication with school among other views. Despite these positive perceptions, studies have shown that most fathers in South Africa are uninvolved in the early education of their children (Mufutau, 2015; Clyde, 2016; Okeke, 2018).

These findings might be as a result of the fact that the teachers value education and can give whatever it takes to educate their children right from an early stage. In line with that, Burton and Osborne (2014) observed that the principals and teachers are knowledgeable about the fact that African fathers cherish their children and like to educate them because children are seen as the future of the family. These findings are in line the findings of previous empirical studies. Baker (2014) found that African American fathers who engaged in more frequent shared book reading, telling stories, singing songs had early childhood children with better reading and math scores. According to Ihmeideh (2014), in the context of taking care of

children in Jordanian society, the primary responsibility relies on mothers' role while fathers are going to be the one who is providing the family.

Glynn and Dale (2015) found that father participation is important because fathers have a positive impact on both child development and behaviour. Mathwasa and Okeke (2016) found that fathers' participation in their children's education is germane to effective early childhood education in schools. Foster et al. (2016) found that the bulk of the learning environment that children experience is from mothers' perspectives, not the fathers. Morgan and Young (2017) indicated that promoting healthy behaviour in children is dependent on fathers' parenting practices. Kadar-Satat, Szaboki and Byerly (2017) indicated that staff believes that achieving the best education outcomes for children is dependent on the active participation of fathers.

One of the beneficial factors in young children's learning and development is active family involvement (Ancell, Bruns & Chitiyo, 2018). Thus, children perform better in school and are less likely to develop behavioral difficulties when fathers are actively involved (Noggle, 2019). Morgan et al. (2019) found that meaningful engagement of fathers increases physical activity behaviour in preadolescent girls. Allport et al. (2019) found that despite the American Academy of Paediatrics recommendations, paediatric primary care providers do not routinely engage fathers in caring for their children's education. Rahmah (2019) found that fathers with young children in Indonesia have positive attitudes towards their children's education but the domination of female presence in a childhood education setting is limiting fathers to participate in child education. These findings have educational implications. The findings of this study might equip fathers with the necessary information needed for them to take active roles in the education of their children and provide the necessary support for their optimal and holistic development. National and Provincial governments as well NGOs might use the result of the study for futuristic plan of programs for fathers.

Conclusion

This study revealed that teachers had positive perceptions about engaging fathers in children's early education. Teachers are of the view that fathers should shoulder their responsibilities by discussing the importance of good education with their children.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

- Fathers should be made to understand that their active participation in the early education of their children is paramount.
- The government of South Africa should advocate for ECCE policies that layout concrete commitment and guidelines for fathers' engagement in their children's educational achievements.
- A special day event should be organised for fathers to motivate them in taking active engagement in the education of their children.

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