

**FACTORS AFFECTING CAREGIVERS' PERCEPTIONS
OF THE MODE OF TRANSPORT FOR SCHOOL GOING
CHILDREN IN RURAL AREAS: *A CASE STUDY OF
EMMAUS AREA***

By

Thokozani Mbatha

**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
in the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social
Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg.**

2005

Acknowledgments

Firstly, I would like to thank the National Department of Transport for financing my study through the Eastern Centre of Transport Development.

A special thanks to my supervisor, Ms Moya Bydawell for her advice, support and patience throughout my undertaking of this study.

Special thanks also to Mrs Darlene Holtz for her administration of finances required to conduct the study.

I would like to extend my appreciation also to the fieldworkers, Khanyisile Mkhize and Bonisiwe Hlongwane for their dedicating their time in the field, and also to all the respondents who took part in this study.

Special thanks to Miss Thokozani Nkomonde for her assistance and support.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family for all the support they have given me over the years.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
Chapter 1.....	2
Introduction.....	2
Objectives	2
Definition of key terms.....	3
Justification.....	5
Chapter 2.....	6
Literature Review.....	6
2.1 Accessibility and Mobility	6
2.2. Schooling in rural areas	12
2.3. Caregivers involvement in their children's education.....	15
2.4. Caregivers' views on children's mode of travelling.....	19
2.5. Study area.....	21
Chapter 3.....	23
Methodology	23
3.2. Sampling	25
3.3. Data analysis	27
3.4. Experiences in the field.....	27
Findings	29
4.1. Demographic Profile of Respondents.....	29
4.2. Socio-Economic characteristics of the respondents	30
4.3. Caregivers' experiences with the mode of travelling to school.....	35
4.4. Modes of Transportation.....	35
4.5. Profile of school going children	38
4.6. Parental participation in children's education.....	38
4.7. Children's experiences when travelling to schooling.....	42
4.8. Mode of travelling and schooling.....	50
4.9. Caregivers views' on the role of transport for school going children	53
Chapter 5.....	58
Discussion of Findings	58
5.1. Local modes of transportation.....	58
5.1.1. Children's experiences with traveling to school.....	60
5.1.2. Factors affecting the choice of the mode of transport.....	63
5.1.3. Parents and Teachers on children's education.....	64
5.1.4. Caregivers' position on children transport needs and safety.....	65
Conclusion.....	69
Bibliography.....	71

Appendices	76
A: Questionnaire	76
B: Area Map.....	86

Chapter 1

Introduction

It is one of the government's objectives to redress the inequalities that existed prior to the formation of the democratic state in South Africa. This is reflected in government national departments' policies, the National Department of Transport being one of them. Hence the vision of the National Department of Transport, as outlined in their policy, is to create transport infrastructure that is safe, reliable, effective and efficient to meet the needs of passenger customers (National Department of Transport Strategic Plan, 2002/2003). Yet, transport for learners in rural areas remain an overlooked issue in South Africa while the shortage of schools and classrooms is a well-recognized problem (Song, 2003).

It is argued that transport allows people to move more easily from one place another. Transport enables people to reach social facilities like clinics, hospitals, work places and educational facilities much easier. Therefore without a fully developed transport infrastructure, people will find it difficult to access these facilities. Access to education is one priority by the South African government to ensure that children have access to education, regardless of their socio-economic background. The South African Department of Education aims to provide education of high quality for all learners; advance the democratic transformation of society and contribute to the eradication of poverty (South African Schools Act, 1996). The abovementioned policy objectives inform much of government's initiatives to remedy the inequalities of the past and to redistribute services to the previously disadvantaged. Transport can play a role in this regard. One cannot, however, presume that transport alone will ensure that children access schools easily in rural communities while overlooking other factors that also impact on how children experience education.

Objectives

- The objectives of the study were to investigate how caregivers in rural areas see the role and importance of transport in their children's education;
- To identify factors that determine caregivers' identification of possible modes of transport for their school-going children.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This section will be divided into different sub-sections dealing with literature on the following issues: the accessibility of major services in rural communities as well as issues affecting the mobility of rural people in order to access those services; issues that affect schooling in rural areas; the role of caregivers in a children's schooling as well as their views on the children's education and the mode of transport used by children to go to schools.

2.1 Accessibility and Mobility

Access to basic services is a major problem facing rural communities in South Africa. Jordaan, (1997:02) defines the term 'accessibility' as referring to 'an ability of individuals or communities to afford access to opportunities that are connected by a transport network on which transport modes operate at certain levels of service'. Children who live together in a specific locality, for instance a village, would experience similar problems in terms of how they access educational facilities.

In their study conducted in various rural areas in the United States, Coleman, Thompson-Smith and Richards, (1999:01), observed that access to services is not a problem facing service providers and school districts, but it is a problem for parents and their children. The inability of districts to provide services for parents and children in rural areas is a problem facing South Africa as well.

There are many obstacles that make service delivery in rural areas a difficult task. Coleman et al, (1999:01) maintain that terrain, climate, distance and funding are some of the major barriers affecting service delivery in rural communities in the United States. Bad terrain and

remoteness of rural communities could also be a factor affecting service delivery in South Africa. Another problem facing rural communities is inadequate transport infrastructure. It is said that access to transport is a fundamental issue that affects many aspects of our daily lives (Bucks CC-Economic Development, 2003). The South African government transport policy states that 'through transport, rural South Africans will be enabled to affordably and conveniently access markets, employment, economic activity, health care, welfare services, communication systems and retail services' (Moving South Africa, 2003). The government acknowledges the role transport can play in allowing people to access services. However, this vision is hindered by the lack of access roads to the main road networks in rural communities (ibid).

According to the Human Rights Watch (2004), lack of services also impacts on the availability of transport infrastructure in a given area. The document maintains that there is a connection between the availability of services and the improvement of transport infrastructure. Some rural communities do not have services, e.g. employment places, markets, retail services, which could facilitate the provision and upgrading of the transport infrastructure. Therefore this contributes to the shortage of the motorized modes of travelling operating in these areas. As a consequence, lack of services results in public transport not being available for rural school children to utilize as well (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

But the availability of services as a determinant in improving and upgrading the transport infrastructure will not alone result in rural people accessing these services, even if they are provided. For instance, Maunder, Davis, Bryceson, Howe, Mbara and Onweng, (2003) state that 'mobility of men, women, children and goods depends on the availability, affordability and efficiency of such transport systems.' Even if the transport infrastructure is there, it is

useless if people can still not afford to utilize it. But what is more important is that the availability of transport infrastructure provides rural people with an opportunity to engage in different activities (Maunder *et al*, 2003). Transport can be an enabling factor for how and when people do certain activities e.g. looking for a job, transporting children to school, going to hospitals and so forth.

One of the problems facing transport planners is the operational cost of building and maintaining the transport infrastructure in rural areas (Doran, 1996; Roebuck and Burton, 2003). Transport infrastructure once built needs to be maintained so that people keep benefiting from it. Operational and maintenance costs can be minimized by finding other options in improving the rural transport infrastructure without these becoming a burden to the government. These methods require the full participation of local people in building and maintaining the roads, e.g. Zibambele Road Maintenance Project (Department of Transport, KZN). Doran, (1996:38) argues that labour intensive methods should be adopted instead of using expensive mechanized equipment and rural people could benefit by having income opportunities through working by constructing community roads.

In order to address the problem of mobility in rural communities, the government plans to create and improve the on-and-off the road transport infrastructure, for example low access bridges, footpaths and sidetracks (South Africa Year Book 2003/4). This is because most travel and transporting by rural people are done by along paths and tracks (Doran, 1996:38). Improving and maintaining paths and roads by local people could also benefit children, as some have to travel along paths, which are not easily passable, thus exposing them to dangers.

Furthermore, trying to meet the rural communities' transport needs has prompted others to suggest the promotion of the non-motorized modes of transportation. Maganya (1997:02) suggests that 'even though in some countries (including South Africa) these non-motorized modes of transport are used, there has been little research aimed at improving the existence of these modes of travelling through deliberate and conscious programmes that encourage the use of these modes of transport'. Non-motorized modes of travelling can include animal drawn carts, bicycles, walking and rickshaws etc. Doran (1996:08) argues that the usage of these modes of transportation increases mobility. Moreover, former South African Transport Minister, Mr Abdulah Omar, also advocated the promotion of the usage of the non-motorized modes of transport (National Department of Transport Strategic Plan 2002/2003; National Department of Transport Business Plan, 2002/2003).

According to Rama, (1999:65), transport planners have paid very little attention to walking. This is significant as walking seems to be the dominant mode of travel for most school goers in rural areas. The reason being that walking as a mode of travelling, although requires physical energy, it is economically and universally accessible compared to other modes of travelling. Paul, (2002:60) however argues that even though walking is a safe and cheap mode of travelling, it can be subject to risks. In his study conducted in a Ugandan village, local people perceived risks associated with walking in a number of ways. These included accidental falling, injury from thorns and sharp objects, tripping over potholes and being bitten by snakes and insects (ibid). Walking, just like other modes of transportation, requires an improvement in infrastructure for it to be an efficient mode of travelling by rural people, particularly children. In addition, Turner, Apt, Grieco and Kwakye, (1998) argue that the relationship between walking and good health which exists in Western societies, does not hold true in Africa when that walking involves major load bearing on a daily basis. Women

and girl children in rural communities cannot benefit from this mode of travelling, as they are primarily the ones who have to carry the loads while travelling long distances. The loads can be wood, water and other household's activities men rarely do.

Animal-drawn carts are another mode of travelling that has been proposed as an alternative in addressing the problem of mobility in rural areas. Mahapa, (2000:13) argues that carting has socio-economic benefits for the operator and the community and is the cheapest means of transporting goods in rural communities. Animal-drawn carts are seldom used to transport people, but mainly goods. Carts are cheaper to operate compared to the costs of operating motorized modes of transportation. Carting, as an alternative mode of travelling, has its operational problems. One of the problems is that it is the mode of transport that can often only operate seasonally. Mahapa, (2000:13) found that in the Northern Province most carters maintained that too much rain during the wet season, roads become impassable for animals and that creates dangers and carting therefore deteriorates. Carting, as a non-motorized mode of travelling, also requires an improvement in road infrastructure. Also this mode of travelling as it relies on animals for pulling, suffers during the dry winter months if animals do not have much to eat and therefore it cannot be relied upon during that time (ibid).

Bicycles have recently been advocated, in South Africa as means by which rural school children can benefit through their promotion and availability. Song, (2003:06) argues that bicycles could reduce the number of hours spent by children when travelling to schools therefore increasing their access to education and mobility. He further states that subsidising bicycles is ten times cheaper than subsidising school busses in South Africa (ibid). The promotion of bicycles as an alternative mode of transport is meant to minimise the cost of operating public transport for school going children in rural areas. By promoting bicycles as

an alternative mode of travelling, other family members benefit as the bicycles can be used after school, and as a result the whole household become mobile at the same time saving on other transport costs (Song (2003:09). However, gender differences within the household could influence how the household members use the bicycles.

The ownership and the usage of these modes of transport is an issue that is often overlooked. For instance, Doran, (1996:46) states that ‘those who have access to transport are entitled to use, whereas those controlling it determine who has access to it’. In most cases, issues of power come into play in deciding who should or should not have access to a mode of transportation available in a household. Women tend to suffer the most as their affairs and that of their children might be controlled by other household members; husbands, mothers-in-law and senior kin or groups outside the household (Ibid, 1996:46). Therefore, the need arises to ensure that in promoting these non-motorized modes of transport, women and girl children’s needs be taken into consideration. For instance, Turner; Apt, Grieco and Kwakye, (1998) argue that, “a fashion has begun within transport and development to promote ‘non-motorised modes of transport’ as an obvious good – a good which fits with environmental politics of Western societies – without due consideration being given to the need to move the rural transport burden of African women off their heads and away from their bodies.” (Online: www.geocities.com/margaret_grieco/womenont/gen_tran.html)

Other problems relate to how women are expected to operate and use these modes of travelling. In his study conducted in Uganda, Iga, (2002:54) observed that African communities have different beliefs regarding how women have to sit while riding a bicycle or a motorcycle. Such beliefs prevent women and girl children from accessing these modes of travelling. Besides preventive elements in the households regarding who has access to the

modes of travelling, the community at large has its expectations and rules concerning how certain modes of travelling are used based on gender differences. Identifying these constraints is necessary as Turner et al (1998) argues that the social, cultural and economic organisation of a locality has consequences for its transport context and transport culture. Such factors could have enormous effect regarding who has access to the abovementioned modes of travelling in some of the rural communities, with the larger segment of the population – particularly women and girl children – being denied access to these modes of travelling.

2.2. Schooling in rural areas

Access to education is a major problem facing children in most of the developing countries. Wright (2001:15) estimated that there are approximately over 110 million school-age children in the world who are not attending school. He argues that this should be a matter of concern as it is a threat for a world that already has to cope with over 800 million illiterate adults (ibid). The majority of children who do not go to school are those from disadvantaged communities. In South Africa, there are an estimated 435,000 schooling age children in rural areas between the ages 7 and 15 years who are not attending school (Song, 2003:02). This despite the fact that the National Department of Education has put in place legislation that aims to provide quality education for learners that will enable them to realize their full potential so they can contribute and participate in developing the country (Department of Education, 1996).

A number of factors makes it difficult for government to improve schooling in rural areas as Song maintained, “Despite this prioritisation by the government, in many areas the state of education remains poor and the overall backlog in terms of provision of classrooms and

qualified teachers remains enormous, with an estimated 77, 000 teachers still un-or under-qualified and a total of 67, 000 additional classrooms required” (Song, 2003:01). Even if children do go to school, the quality of education they receive could not match up with the required standards set up by government. Lack of transport could influence the willingness by professional teachers to work in rural areas. In the context of India, distances and isolation from the centre or the nearest town are some of the barriers preventing qualified teachers applying for posts in rural areas (Miles, 2000). She further states that this is a predicament prevalent in all countries, not just India alone. As a result, children in rural communities do not receive the quality of education enjoyed by children in urban areas, as most qualified teachers prefer to work there (ibid).

Some children find it much easier to access education centres, while for others this is more difficult. For instance in most poor communities, learners may not be able to reach centres of learning because there are no transport facilities or the roads are not in good condition and this situation therefore violates their right to education (National Department of Education, 1997:12; Human Rights Watch, 2004). In her study conducted in Pietermaritzburg, Rama (1999:64) found that choice of the mode of travelling is related to race and locale. She found that walking and travelling by minibus taxi is more common among black school-goers in rural areas whereas travelling by private car is more common for white school-goers in urban areas (ibid). The reason for this may be as a result of higher private car ownership among White parents. Due to non-availability of public transport, in some places, bakkies have been adopted as means to transport school children. However, the KwaZulu Natal Department of Transport has indicated their intention to phase out the operation of bakkies as modes for transporting school children, as most of them are not roadworthy – therefore putting children’s lives in danger (KwaZulu Natal Department of Transport News Report, 2003).

Although race and locale determine the ownership and usage of these modes of travelling such as private cars, taxis or buses, other factors influencing the usage of these modes travelling cannot be ignored. Physiological differences, for instance, can determine the opportunities available to children and how they access facilities. Black children with physical disabilities are largely excluded from the education system because, among other reasons; the poor transport infrastructure in rural areas does not allow them easy access to the centres of learning (Department of Education, 1997:13; Integrated National Disability Strategy, 1997:32). These children are therefore excluded from enjoying the opportunities that education offers of which, according to Giddens (2001:492), education plays a function of infusing in people the values of the larger industrial society such as independence and participation in economic activities.

Household daily activities also influence how and when children access education. May, Woolard and Klasen, (2000) state that some children (girls particularly), especially those from poor households, are kept out of school to assist at home with household chores, such as collecting water and fire wood. Lack of transport makes it difficult for these children to carry out these activities easily as they often have to walk long distances while carrying the water or the wood on their heads. As a result, if the girls are expected to assume the roles of cooking, cleaning and child-care, this leaves them with no time for homework (May *et al*, 2000:33). Engaging in extensive household activities deprives the girl child access to education. In addition to this, there have also been reports of some girls not going to school because the remoteness of the area makes the young girls vulnerable to assault (Institute for Democracy in South Africa, 2004). Lack of transport to schools ultimately exacerbates this problem faced by young girls in rural areas in accessing education.

Poverty also plays a role in determining how children access education. Children in rural areas walk long distances sometimes with nothing in their stomachs (Wright, 2001). Hunger affects how children perform at school. It is difficult for children to learn if they are hungry, malnourished and have to walk long distances to school (Wright, 2001, May et al, 2000). As a result lateness, absenteeism, school dropouts increase. Many parents in rural communities, because of the abovementioned factors, may delay the time at which their children are supposed to enter school (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

Linked with poverty is the issue of affordability. In a study conducted by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (2004) at eMsinga area in Northern KwaZulu Natal, children reported that “even if they did not have to pay for fees or buy uniforms, they would be unable to attend school for lack of transport/taxi fare, or because they would have to go to school on an empty stomach” (Institute for Democracy in South Africa, 2004). These children as a result are denied their right to education.

2.3. Caregivers involvement in their children’s education

There is enormous literature on parental involvement in their children’s education. But Mittler (2000:152) argues that many parents still feel excluded from decisions being made or proposed in schools their children attend, as well as those taken at local or central government levels. The South African National Department of Education legislated the involvement of parents in running the schools their children attend. Parents are elected to be part of the governing bodies that run the functioning of the school. It is stipulated that public school governance requires a partnership based on mutual interest and confidence among the many constituencies, which make up and support the school (Department of Education, 1996). The government presumed that by involving parents, the goals of improving

children's education will be met and that parents will not feel excluded in the decision-making processes affecting their children.

Engaging parents as co-governors is informed by the assumption that parents who feel cut off from school might believe the worst and accept misconduct as a norm (Stoll & Fink, 1996:163). Therefore parents who feel like partners would listen to school people and act as critical friends (ibid). However, this optimistic view of seeing parents fully engaging themselves in school activities overlook other factors that make it impossible for parents to assume these roles. Trying to involve parents in their children's education has made some parents to perceive themselves as being required to assume the role of a teacher. Beresford (1992:49) states for instance that, if parents perceive their involvement as assuming the role of being an educator, they tend to be isolated and full of doubts about their roles.

Feelings of isolation could emanate from many of their previous experiences. Belonging to a powerless social class, as can be the case here in South Africa, makes many people to experience public sector authority as intimidating and alien (Beresford, 1992: 49). Beresford further argues that these structured institutions (schools) can remind parents of their own anxieties and disempowering school days characterised by incomprehensible language and terminology (ibid). Feeling powerless is one of the factors preventing parents from interacting with school authorities. As a result parents are excluded from fully taking part in the matters affecting their children at schools.

Apart from being expected to take part in activities their children do at school, parents are expected by teachers to engage with their children at home. Parents are expected to assist their children with schoolwork. But this idea sometimes neglects the fact that learning at

home is not a one-way process (Goodie, 1987; Mayall, 1999). It is not always the case that parents teach children. Parents learn a lot from their children and their activities open a new vision for a new world for parents as well (ibid, 110). Learning from children can be more important for parents who have never been to school themselves. Illiterate parents have a problem helping their children at home as they do not have the basic skills. It is because of the nature of this learning within the family that makes parents not to see themselves as educators, but to assume the conscious role of being a parent (ibid). Mayall, (1999:205) further argues that 'at home socialization takes place in a social context governed by personal relationships within which negotiation is a legitimate and normal activity, which structures knowledge, activity and experience'. Parents would therefore partially engage themselves in monitoring what their children do, especially with regard to schoolwork. This is because mothers value their children's independent activity both as evidence that their children are becoming capable of doing things by themselves or because this independence relieves a burden on parents (Mayall, 1999: 205). As a result parents might not see a need to fully participate in what their children do.

Economic factors also prevent parents from fully interacting with the schools. This can be true for those parents who are financially disadvantaged. Mthembu, (1999:43) observed in her study conducted in Clermont Township, that parents were more reluctant to attend school meetings if that meant they had to donate some funds to the running of the school. This cannot be a problem faced by schools in townships only, but in rural areas as well. The reluctance by caregivers not to respond quickly when called upon to attend such meetings could emanate from the fact that the majority are unemployed – hence choosing not to engage with the school at all. Involving parents could be beneficial to both the child and the school, but social, economic and educational factors should not be trivialized as these also

to how and when parents participate in their children's development. For instance, unemployment could have an impact on how much time parents invest in their children school activities. In this regard, conditions at exosystem would have an impact on the conditions at microsystem, in this case the family relations between the parent and the child. This could also affect how the parent would interact with the school, as has been indicated of parents who wouldn't attend parents' meetings if it meant they have to contribute financially to the running of the school. Hence deciding to keep away from the school as a result of these external factors, which in most cases are beyond their control, but indirectly affecting their contact with school and their contributing to their children's education.

2.4. Caregivers' views on children's mode of travelling

The literature on how parents influence the choice of the mode of transport for their school going children is limited. In their study on rural school transportation in the United States, Howley and Smith (2000:10) observed that caregivers are seldom considered and hardly ever consulted when decisions are made about rural school transportation and planning. In the South African context, one can argue that transport for school going children is conceptualised based on caregivers' ability or inability to afford and organize the mode of transport. Although the issues of affordability by caregivers to finance the mode of transport need to be emphasised, other factors that might impact on the improvement and sustenance of these modes of travelling by caregivers need to be explored.

Planning for the transport needs of school going children could depend on the level of participation, not only by individual caregivers, but also the community as a whole. Howley and Smith (2000:10) states that 'the interests of children, families, and communities remain largely unconsidered to an extent that the basis for evaluating related claims about the

influence of rural school transport have not been elaborated at all'. Initiatives at a general level include the formation of parents' councils, parental representation on school boards' management and in school planning (Hanafin and Lynch, 2002: 37). Most transport programmes do not encourage the participation of the community members in their planning and implementation, including those programmes aimed at improving school going children's mobility. Song, (2003) argues that for an outsider to define needs and priorities for a community is always difficult and usually unproductive. In most cases, communities are in a better position to recognise and define their own priorities; including the planning of transport programmes (ibid). Involving the communities in identifying their own priorities could assist the transport planners not to invest in transport infrastructure, which will later be neglected and, or not be sustained.

On issues affecting school going children and transportation, in most cases parents are required to assist in educating children on road safety matters. Educating parents to be responsible in teaching their children road safety is a right thing. But children who benefit the most from road safety programmes are mainly those from urban areas. Safety on the road for school children is believed to be the problem mainly prevalent in urban areas. But Flaherty (2001:06) states that in Papua New Guinea many parents in rural areas were concerned about the long distances their children have to cover on foot each day, due to the prevalence of sexual abuses on young girls.

Fear can also arise regarding the mode of travelling children use to go to schools, such as bicycles. Kwamusi, (2002:61) states that 'there is an element of risk and a lack of safety in rural transport in both cycling and walking'. He further indicates that collisions occur more often on feeder roads and on classified road networks. The prevalence of these accidents

calls for full participation of parents and traffic officials to ensure that children using these modes of travelling are safe when using these modes of travelling.

There are also attitudinal factors preventing parents not to see the role transport can play in their children's education. Doran, (1996:50) states, for instance, that most rural women in Zambia do not see travelling long distances as a problem because, their mothers and grandmothers did it and survived. With such attitudes, transport for school going children is not given high priority.

2.5. Study area

An effort was made to try and locate specific information for communities from where respondents were sampled, i.e. KwaVimbukhalo, Situlwana, Mhlathuza and Endiya, without success. Information obtained from the census of 2001 provides demographic information for the whole of ward 12, i.e. Bergiville under which Emmaus falls (Statistics South Africa, 2001). There are 7 schools situated south of Emmaus Mission (Appendix B). Four of these are high schools and three of them are primary schools. With regard to educational level in ward 12, 915 adults over 20 years had no schooling, 945 had primary education, and 870 had secondary education, 543 had grade 12 and 363 had tertiary education (Statistics, South Africa, 2001). The predominant modes of travel for work or school are by foot 2754 and Minibus/Taxis 264 (ibid). In the case of Emmaus area, there is only one main tarred road (P394) and many untarred community access roads used by locals to access the main tarred road. The Emmaus area is mountainous and the majority of households still engage in subsistence agricultural activities and the keeping of livestock.

There are approximately 1587 households in ward 12. Of these, 1167 them are formal, 30 informal, and 381 traditional. Electricity is the main source of energy for lighting for most of these households (1038), followed by candles (489) and paraffin (42). Most households get water from the community stand over 200 metres away. 393 of the households have an annual income between R4801-9600 and 363 had none, while only 6 households get an annual income between six hundred and fourteen thousand rands. (Stats, SA. 2001).

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1. Method

This was an exploratory study. To the researchers' knowledge, very few studies have been conducted on factors determining and, or influencing parents' choices of the mode of transport for their school going children in rural areas. Since exploratory studies rarely yield definite answers, the study therefore tries to formulate more precise questions that future research can answer (Neuman, 2000:21). Both the questionnaires and interviews were used to gather information. The questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions asked the respondents about their demographic information and the socio-economic information that could be quantified. Neuman, (2002:260), states that using both closed-ended and open-ended questions in a questionnaire help interviewers to create rapport with the respondents, thus allowing for more open and honest responses. Inclusion of open-ended questions allowed the respondents to elaborate on some of the responses given in the closed-ended questions for more in-depth information.

The researcher and two trained fieldworkers administered the questionnaire to the respondents. The questions were communicated in Zulu to the respondents as all the printed versions of the questionnaire were in English. This was meant to minimize misunderstandings as the respondents were asked questions and answered in their own language. Terre Blanche & Kelly (in Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999:128) state that this method is helpful if some people feel uncomfortable filling in the questionnaire. Being uncomfortable could emanate from respondents either not understanding the questionnaire or being illiterate. The shortcomings of translating English to Zulu language could, sometimes,

make some words lose their contextual meaning when translated. Translating the questionnaire from one language to the other can be difficult for novice interviewers. For instance they may find it difficult to link what the respondents say in relation to the questions asked, as there is always a high possibility that the interviewers and the respondents could easily misinterpret the questions. For these reasons, care was taken to ensure that the researcher went through the questionnaire with the fieldworkers so they understood what each item required.

Two focus group interviews -using interview guides with open-ended questions – were conducted with the teachers from eZinyonyana Primary School and Mthende High School. The aim of conducting focus group interviews were to obtain more information about the social processes in specific settings where people live (Neuman, 2000). Focus groups are also useful in exploratory studies – such as this one – either to generate ideas for hypotheses or to interpret results – in this case they will be used in the interpretation of results. In this study, the aim was to have teachers give their views on the role of transport in accessing educational facilities by children. Krueger (1994:19) argues that focus groups produce qualitative data that allow participants to give their views and perceptions on the matter under discussion without being restricted by closed questions that are characteristic of the quantitative strategy.

Not only did the researcher obtain verbal responses from focus groups, non-verbal data was obtained from the observations that were made by the researcher. These observations included non-verbal responses from the participants in the focus groups, their body language as well as listening not only to explicit responses, but implied responses as well.

Even though the interviews were tape-recorded, Neuman (2000: 361) provides that “a great deal of what researchers do in the field is to pay attention, watch, and listen carefully... The researcher becomes an instrument that absorbs all the sources of information.” This then ensures that good qualitative field data is obtained.

3.2. Sampling

126 caregivers were interviewed from four communities - KwaVimbukhalo, Mhlathuza, Endiya and Situlwana - in the Emmaus area. A non-probability sampling technique was used to locate the respondents. This technique is normally used when there is no sampling frame available (van Vuuren and Maree in Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999:279), as in this case. In this study purposive and snowballing sampling techniques were used to locate the respondents. Snowball technique is a method used for identifying and sampling cases in a network (Neuman, 2000:199). With this technique the researcher begins with a few people who in-turn will refer the researcher to other people that are relevant to the topic. The technique appeared useful as the interviewers asked the respondents to help identify other households where there might be respondents with school going children. In the household, the respondents selected themselves based on whether they had school going children or not under their supervision.

Snowballing though has its own shortcomings, it did saved interviewers' time of knocking on the door for each and every household where there might not be children going to school or parents to be interviewed. It can be said that the interviewers had to trust respondents themselves in assisting the interviewers to locate other respondents for interviewing. Given

the nature of this rural area, the researcher felt that this technique would allow the interviewers to easily locate the respondents.

Purposive sampling technique was used to locate the participants (teachers) for interviewing. Purposive method of sample selection is often used in exploratory research (Neuman, 2000:198). Neuman (2000) states that purposive sampling can be used when a researcher wants to identify particular cases for in-depth investigation without any intention of generalising to the larger population as well as in selecting members from a specialised population.

Permission to interview the teachers was obtained from the principals from both eZinyonyana Primary and Mthende High schools. Each focus group consisted of four teachers. The vice-principal from eZinyonyana Primary selected the teachers who participated in an interview. Other teachers, according to the vice-principal, had already started teaching in their classes and therefore could not participate in the interview. All the participants in this group were females.

The teachers from Mthende Primary School were interviewed during teatime. Even though most teachers gather in the teachers' staff room during that time, only four teachers were willing to participate in an interview, others citing work that they still had to catch up with. Of those who participated, three of them were males and one was a female teacher. The interviews lasted approximately thirty minutes as the teachers had to rush back to their classes. The tape recorder was used, despite limited time, the interviewer managed to cover all the questions on the interview guide.

3.3. Data analysis

The coded data was entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences for analysis. This statistical package is mainly used for the analysis of quantitative data. The descriptive statistical analysis was done as well as run in order to generate relationships between variables concerning the respondents' demographic situation and their views/perceptions on the mode of travelling used by their children when travelling to school.

The focus groups interviews were transcribed. The content analysis method was used to analyse the transcripts. Firstly the data was read to locate the key categories that were then used to identify themes as they emerged from the data. This data was analysed in context with data obtained from non-verbal cues, as well as the context in which the data was collected i.e. the fact that this was a rural community.

3.4. Experiences in the field

The study was conducted during the preparations to the national elections, which were to take place in April 2004. There were political campaigns taking place where the study was conducted just as everywhere in the country. Most people were very suspicious of outsiders who do not reside in the area as they thought that person might have been sent to mobilize the votes for certain political parties. Not only did the researcher have to defend himself from this suspicion, but the assisting fieldworkers, being locals, were sometimes also subjected to this suspicion as well. This led to fieldworkers avoiding some of the households where they thought chances were high for them being questioned

about their intentions on why they were doing the interviews or why the study was conducted. An effort was made though to gain the respondents trust by explaining that there were no political agendas behind the study.

Also the researcher, being unknown by locals, was not easily welcomed in some households as the majority of the households visited were involved in illegal business activities, which for confidentiality reasons, cannot be named here. Other respondents would even confess that they are not comfortable answering the questions since they are not sure whether the researcher has come to investigate what they do or to arrest them. Again in these situations the researcher had to thoroughly explain the objectives and aims of the study to the respondents until they were – hopefully – convinced that the researcher had no bad intentions.

Chapter 4

Findings

4.1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

126 respondents participated in this study. 86.5% (109) of them were females and 13.5% (17) were males. The respondents, as indicated in the sampling section, were self-selected. The majority 34.1% (43) were between the ages 26-35 years.

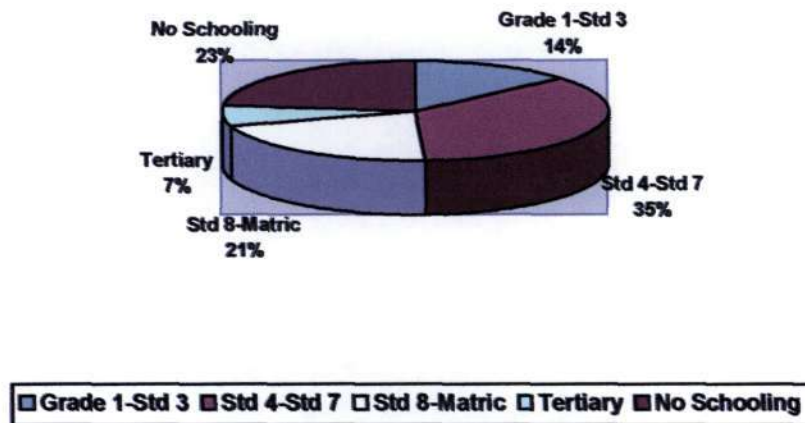


Figure 1: Educational level of Caregivers

Figure 1 shows that the majority 38% (45) of caregivers interviewed had an educational level between Standard 4 to Standard 7; 23% (29) had never received formal education; 20.6% (26) had an educational level between standard 8 to Matriculation; 13.5% (17) had an educational level between grade 1 to standard 3 and 8% (9) them had received tertiary education. This finding indicates that the majority of caregivers interviewed went to school up to standard seven, but a quarter of them

had never been to school. This may then have a bearing on how much value they put in education for their children.

4.2. Socio-Economic characteristics of the respondents

Respondents were asked to describe their position within their households. 45.2% (57) referred to themselves as 'mothers' within their households; 25.4% (32) said they were daughters-in-law within their households and 11.9% (15) referred to themselves as fathers within their households. The majority of female respondents either referred to themselves as 'mothers' or as 'daughters-in-laws'. This is not surprising as it is a common practice in rural areas for a daughter-in-law not to refer to herself as a mother, especially if being a mother signifies being a head of the household and a decision maker. It emerged also from the respondents who still reside with their mothers-in-laws that they sometimes do not have much of a say on the raising of their children, as this is a prerogative of a mother-in-law.

Having described their position within the household, respondents were then asked to rank themselves according to their contribution to the household livelihoods. Respondents were given three choices from which to choose, starting from being a primary breadwinner, secondary breadwinner or being none of these. 51.5% (65) referred to themselves as primary breadwinners, 17.5% (22) as secondary breadwinners and 31% (39) said they were neither primary nor secondary breadwinners. To the respondents, being a primary breadwinner meant being a provider, someone on which most family members look up to if they needed things such as food, clothing and other household necessities.

Table 1: Respondents' contribution in the household, by their position within the household

Position within the household	Would you consider yourself as a...?						Total	
	Primary Breadwinner		Secondary Breadwinner		None of these			
		%		%		%		%
Household father	13	86.7	0	0	2	13.3	15	100
Household mother	37	64.9	12	21.1	8	14.0	57	100
Daughter-in-law	11	34.4	5	15.6	16	50	32	100
Son	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3	3	100
Daughter	3	15.8	4	21.1	12	63.2	19	100
Total	65	51.6	22	17.5	39	31.0	126	100

Table 1 illustrates the relationship between the respondents' position within the household and their contribution to the household livelihoods. 86.7% (13) of those who referred to themselves as fathers also said they were primary breadwinners within their households. Those who referred to themselves as mothers within their households, 64.9% (37) of them said they were primary breadwinners in their households as well, 21.1% (12) of them were secondary breadwinners and 14% (8) were neither of the two. Table 1 also shows that 50% (16) of those who referred to themselves as daughters-in-laws said they were neither primary nor secondary breadwinners within their households. This finding also demonstrates how those who referred to themselves as daughters-in-law do not deem themselves as primary breadwinners in their households.

Respondents were then asked to state which person they regard as a principal decision maker within the household. Their responses are as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Principal decision-makers, by gender

Decision makers		Males (n)	Females (n)	Total (%)
Myself	36	11	25	29.0
My husband	30	0	30	24.2
My mother-in-law	18	0	18	14.5
My father-in-law	3	0	3	2.4
Both my in-law parents	1	0	1	0.8
My brother	6	2	4	4.8
My sister	16	0	16	12.9
Me and my wife	1	1	0	0.8
Me and my husband	2	0	2	1.6
My father	4	1	3	3.2
My mother	2	0	2	1.6
My daughter	2	0	2	1.6
My son	3	2	1	2.4
Total	124	17	107	100

Table 2 shows that the majority of respondents 29% (36) referred to ‘themselves’ as principal decision makers within their households. Of those who referred to ‘themselves’ as principal decision makers, 64.7% (11) among males said so and 23.4% (25) among female respondents. 24,2% (30) of female respondents referred to their husbands as principal decision makers, other 14.5% (18) of female respondents referred to their mothers-in-law as primary decision makers, 12.9% (16) said their sisters make decisions.

Noticeable here is that husbands and mothers-in-law retain more power when it comes to decision making within the household. Mothers-in-law were reported to play this role by daughters-in-law who still share the homestead with their in-laws. Principal decision makers decide what needs to be done within the household and also regarding the raising of children. There were insinuations, from some female respondents, that as biological mothers, they do not have the power to suggest on which, how and when their children do certain activities,

including home work as children are expected to come back home and do other activities, like collecting water and cooking in the case of girls or looking after livestock in the case of boys.

Regarding the maintenance of livelihoods, 81% (102) of respondents said they had fields to plough. When asked how the fields contribute to their livelihoods, the frequent answer was that fields provide them with *impuphu* (mealie-meal); only 5 respondents said they sell the surplus to other people. 52.4% (66) said they had livestock in their households. When asked how the livestock contributes to their households' livelihood, they said cows provide them with milk and meat for household consumption. They sometimes use cows to plough the fields and to slaughter for ceremonial purposes. Only 28.6% (36) of the respondents said they had a vegetable garden in their households.

Respondents were asked to list other economic activities that they involve themselves in. They had to choose from the given list of activities and state how each activity contributes to the household livelihoods. 13.5% (17) make and sell craft, 9.5% (12) sell craft that has been made by other family members. When asked if they do house thatching, only 12.7% (16) respondents said they do thatching. Women are also involved in house thatching, especially *oqhugwane* (Zulu huts). These women (9), when asked if they make any income from thatching, said they do not generate money from it; they do thatching only when they have been asked by their neighbours to come and assist. 10.3% (13) of the respondents said they sell fruits and vegetables, 4.8% (6) sell clothes, 6.3% (8) do hairdressing and 1.6% (2) respondents said they make a living by working in other people's homes. Selling clothes, hairdressing and working in someone else's household are not the common income generating activities among the respondents interviewed. Generally, the majority of

respondents interviewed do not engage themselves in other income generating activities, but subsistence agricultural activities. Economic activity shows low economic status of respondents.

People engage themselves in many activities whether for income generating purposes or not. These activities are prioritised according to their importance within the household. Therefore, caregivers were asked how they prioritise the execution of certain activities within their households. They had to state whether the execution of an activity was of low, medium or high priority in a household. They were given a list of ten activities, which had to be ranked according to their priorities of execution. Extra space was provided to allow respondents an option to add activities if those were not included on the given list. The responses are as shown in Table 3. The table also compare how male and female respondents prioritise the execution of these activities.

Table 3: Activities ranked in order of priority by respondents

Activity	Low	F	M	Medium	F	M	High	F	M
	Priority %			Priority %			Priority %		
Collecting wood	26.2	26.6	23.5	4.8	5.5	0	69.0	67.9	76.5
Collecting water	13.5	10.1	35.3	4.0	4.6	0	82.5	85.3	64.7
Doing household chores	10.6	11.9	5.9	42.3	35.8	41.2	47.1	52.3	52.9
Building houses	46.2	53.2	52.9	26.9	26.6	0	26.9	20.2	47.1
Working on the fields	26.9	25.7	11.8	4.8	3.7	5.9	68.3	70.6	82.4
Working on the garden	61.5	63.3	58.8	3.8	2.8	5.9	34.6	33.9	35.3

F= % Females

M=% Males

Table 3 shows that both male and female respondents prioritise water and wood collection. Apparent here is that 35.3% of male respondents said water collection is of lower priority for

them. Both male and female respondents gave high priority on working on the fields. Giving high priority on working on the fields might have been influenced by the fact that the respondents were interviewed during the summer months when they were mostly engaged in agricultural activities. Working on gardens was not given high priority, which is to be expected as the majority (71.4%) of the respondents said they do not have gardens.

4.3. Caregivers' experiences with the mode of travelling to school

Caregivers who said they went to school, when asked which mode of transport they used to get to school, 94.4% (90) walked; 5.6% (5) used public transport. They were asked about their experiences regarding travelling to school when younger. 63.4% (59) said how they got to school never affected their school or household activities; 23.7% (22) said it affected their household chores as one female respondent from KwaVimbukhalo puts it: *"the distance really affected my household activities, especially in winter as the days are much shorter and so I would arrive late at home and not be able to do my household chores"*. 9.7% (9) said both their schoolwork and household chores were affected and 3.4% (3) said it affected their schoolwork. But generally, the majority 63.4% (59) of the respondents interviewed, both males and females, had no problem walking to school.

4.4. Modes of Transportation

Respondents were asked if they have any modes of transport available in their households. These could be motorized or non-motorized modes of transportation. 12.7% (16) said they had a car/bakkie in the households. 87.3% (110) said they do not have either car or bakkie. When asked who uses the car/bakkie, they said 'the owner' uses that mode of transport. Asked to list the things in which the car/bakkie is used for, 6 said it is used as a personal transport by 'its owner', 4 said bakkies are used for water or wood collection and 6 said

bakkies are used to transport people to the Central Business District. The latter function of these vehicles suggests income-generating activities for those who own them.

5.6% (7) of the respondents said they have a tractor in the household. Asked who uses the tractor, respondents said its 'owner'. The question, however, did not specifically ask the respondents to clarify who 'the owner' was, but one assumed they referred to the person who bought that mode of transport. Only 6.3% (8) of the respondents said they have a bicycle in their households and 93.7% (118) said there was no bicycle/s in their households. On who uses the bicycle, 3 female respondents said children use these bicycles to travel to school.

8.7% (12) had an oxen-drawn cart or sleigh in their households and 91.3% (115) said they do not have animal drawn carts. 3 male and 6 female respondents said the owner uses the cart. 42.1% (53) said they have a wheelbarrow in their households and 57.9% (73) said they had no wheelbarrows in their households. Responding on who uses the wheelbarrow, 96.2% (50) of them said everybody within the household uses the wheelbarrow; 3.8% (3) of them said 'the owner' uses the wheelbarrow. According to the respondents, the wheelbarrow is mainly used for water collection, building material and fertilizer.

The above findings indicate that the majority of the respondents do not have any mode of transportation in their households except walking. In addition, it seemed as none of the abovementioned modes of transport are primarily used to transport school children as none of the respondents mentioned that.

Table 4 presents the responses on how much money the respondents thought they spent on public transport per year by their community of origin.

Table 4: Money spent on transport per year, by respondents' community of origin

Name of Community	Money spent on transport per year								Total	
	Small amount		Reasonable amount		Excessive amount		None			
		%		%		%		%		%
KwaVimbukhalo	11	22.4	30	61.2	6	12.2	2	4.1	49	100
Mhlathuza	8	34.8	14	60.9	1	4.3	0	0	23	100
Endiya	19	57.6	14	42.4	0	0	0	0	33	100
Situlwana	13	61.9	7	33.3	1	4.8	0	0	21	100
Total	51	40.5	65	51.6	8	6.3	2	1.6	126	100

In all four communities, respondents said they do not spend much money on public transport, as Table 4 shows. There could be many reasons for this. It might be that the respondents do not frequently visit the Central Business District, either to shop, go to work, look for a job or to do other activities that require them to use public transport. It could also be that even if public transport is available, they cannot afford it – hence opting to walk to their destinations.

4.5. Profile of school going children

The total number of school going children for respondents interviewed was 285. More than half 53.6% (146) of these pupils were boys and 46.4% (139) of them were girls. The majority 40.1% (113) of them were from KwaVimbukhalo, 18.8% (53) were from Mhlathuza, 24.5% (69) from Endiya and 16.7% (47) were from Situlwana.

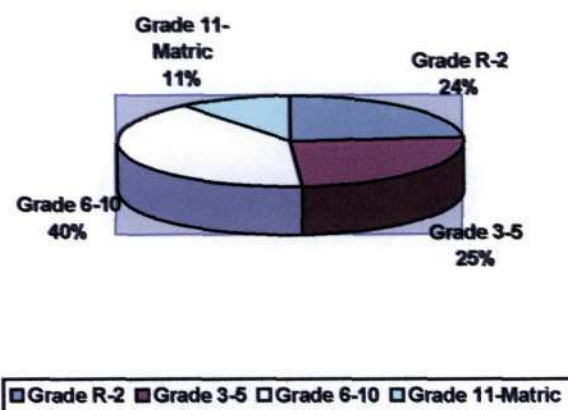


Figure 2: Children's school grades

Figure 2 illustrates the grades these children are in as reported by the respondents. 40% (115) of the children were in grade 6 to grade 10; 25% (73) were in grade 3 to 5, 24% (67) were in grade R to grade 2 and the remaining 11% (30) were in grade 11 to Matric. The majority 40.9% (114) of these children were between the ages 5 to 10 years; 36.2% (101) were between 11 and 15 years, 22.2% (62) between 16 and 20 years and 0.7% (2) of these children were 21 years and above.

4.6. Parental participation in children's education

Parents and teachers had different views and experiences regarding children's schooling. As they had done on ranking of activities within the household, parents were also given a list of activities to choose from in order to learn how they prioritise school activities at home and

the activities that require them, as parents, to interact with the schools. Their responses are as presented in table 5.

Table 5: Parents rankings of school children related activities in order of priority

Activity	Low	F	M	Medium	F	M	High	F	M
	Priority %			Priority %			Priority %		
Helping children with school work	7.7	7.3	5.9	7.7	5.5	11.8	86.5	87.2	82.4
Attending community meetings	14.4	12.8	5.9	21.2	16.5	23.5	64.4	70.6	70.6
Attending parents meetings at school	16.3	11.9	23.5	24.0	20.2	23.5	59.6	67.9	52.9
Giving children time off to study	4.8	3.7	11.8	13.5	11.9	23.5	81.7	84.4	64.7

F= % Females

M= % Males

In Table 5, the majority 86.5% (109) of respondents said they give high priority to helping children with schoolwork. 81.7% (103) of them said giving children time off to do their schoolwork is also given high priority.

These statements might have been influenced by a number of factors. Firstly, it might be that respondents may have thought the researcher was looking for an answer that corresponds with how they value education. Secondly, these responses might have been influenced by what they have learnt or expectations from the previous projects that were done in the area on child education prior to and during the execution of this study. For instance, when asked to rate the community members' (including themselves) involvement in their children's education starting from 'good' to 'very poor', 80% (100) of them said community members'

involvement in children's education was good, 14.4% (18) said they don't know, 3.2% (4) rated it as poor and 2.4% (3) rated community members' involvement as very poor. It should be pointed out that caregivers also seemed to equate community members' involvement in children's education as an ability to attend school meetings when called upon.

Teachers on the other hand, viewed parental interest in education differently. In their opinion, some parents do not seem to care much about education for their children as one high school teacher puts it: *"Jah, I mean it's as if they don't see a need, you see... you even hear their responses, maybe if there are some problems you will hear things like 'ahi, it makes no difference my child, why should you study anyway', I mean lets say a child is only doing standard 4, and they would say 'Ayi, mina umntanami ngiyamyekisa uyogana'" ("No, my child has enough education now, she needs to get married")* [Teachers' group: Mthende High School].

Teachers believed parents do not value education because they do not see its importance: *"ya, so what I can say is that parents here don't see a need why their children should get educated"*. Teachers also believed that parents who do not see the importance of educating their children, emanates from the fact that some parents do not believe that education can change their children's lives: *"they don't see any difference between someone who has been to school and someone who has never been to school, you know!"* [Teachers' group: Mthende High School].

Some teachers also seemed to relate parental involvement as having parents represented on school governing structures. For instance, teachers were asked to describe their relationship with parents of the children they teach in their classes. For some teachers, the interaction

with parents has to be through these established structures: *“and the other thing is that we do now include parents in school committees, for instance like school governing bodies, so there are structures that we have here that also consists of parents”* [Teachers group: Mthende High School]. Teachers are also aware that the established governing bodies require that teachers know their communities very well: *“Ehh, what is more important is that if we know our community, then we are able to work closely with the community members”* [Teachers group: Mthende High School].

Teachers also believed that their relationship with parents can be strengthened if they work together with parents: *“Ohh, to put it short, what I can say is that our relationship with parents is not good, we don’t work together.”* [Teachers group: Ezinyonyana Primary School]. As a result, teachers experience resistance from parents to fully participate in school activities: *“lets say sometimes you have given a child some homework and the parent would just say ‘Ei, I don’t get paid for doing this, what’s the job of teachers’? You see, ya... so I can really say that our relationship with the children’s parents is not that good at all”* [Ibid].

Sometimes teachers would gauge parental involvement on how quick the parent responds when their child has a problem regarding performance at school: *“it sometimes happen that a teacher has a problem with the child, and maybe in that case the teacher needs a parent to solve that problem and writes a letter informing the parent, and the response from the parent will be like, ‘Ayi, I’m working, I don’t have time to go to school”* [Ibid].

For some teachers, lack of involvement was blamed on parents not having been to school themselves: *“Ya, sometimes you see it in the way they do things, you see, you’ll find that they cannot really see what is going on, but not all of them, you see, because they are not*

educated! [Teachers group: Mthende High School]. These statements are indicative of some of the factors teachers perceive as illustrative of how parents do or do not involve themselves in their children's education in that area with illiteracy cited as one of these preventive factors.

4.7. Children's experiences when travelling to schooling

According to the respondents (Caregivers, 97.4% (278) of the children travel on foot to and from school; 1.8% travel on bicycles and 0.7% of these children use public transport, mainly taxis. When asked to estimate how long their children take to get to school, 53.7% of them thought their children travel more than one hour; 43.9% believed their children travel less than one hour and 2.6% were not sure. Moreover, the researcher observed that the communities' proximity to schools to which these children go to differ. For instance, children from KwaVimbukhalo as well as those from Situlwana communities travel more than 3 kilometres to get to schools, in the case of those who attend at Zinyonyana Primary and Mthende High schools. Children from Endiya community do not travel a long distance when going to these two schools as the community is nearer to these two schools. However, each household is situated differently in relation to the school.

Table 6 shows the respondents perception of time it takes their children to get to school in relation to the communities' proximity to schools where children attend. It should be highlighted that children who attend at Ezinyonyana Primary and Mthende high school have to climb a steeper mountain when going to these two schools (see Appendix B). The mountain is steeper from the northwest side to the abovementioned schools, which is the side that has more footpaths leading to these two schools for children coming from Endiya, Mhlathuza and Situlwana communities.

Table 6. Time taken to get to and from school, by community of origin

Name of Community	Time taken to get to and from school						Total	
	Less than 1 hour		More than 1 hour		Don't know			
		%		%		%		%
KwaVimbukhalo	17	15	96	85	0	0	113	100
Mhlathuza	36	67.9	10	18.9	7	13.2	53	100
Endiya	64	92.8	5	7.2	0	0	69	100
Situlwana	7	14.9	40	85.1	0	0	47	100
Total	124	44	151	53.5	7	2.5	282	100

As Table 6 indicates, the majority 29.9% (96) of children who their parents thought travel more than one-hour to school are those from KwaVimbukhalo and Situlwana 85% (40). The majority of children who travel less than one hour to and from school, as reported by respondents, are those from Endiya 92% (64) and Mhlathuza 67% (36) communities.

Table 7: Time taken to get to and from school by gender of a child

Time taken to get to school	Sex				Total	
	Boys		Girls			
		%		%		%
Less than 1 hour	70	56	55	44	125	100
More than 1 hour	71	46.4	82	53.6	153	100
Don't Know	5	71.4	2	28.6	7	100
Total	146	51.2	139	48.8	285	100

The child's gender could have also influenced how caregivers perceived time it take their children to get to school. Even though the difference between the two genders might not be that significant, but Table 7 shows that boys 56% (70) were more likely to be reported as travelling less than an hour compared to girls 44% (55). Caregivers' perceptions of time it takes children to get school to school based on a child's age are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Time taken to get to school, by age categories

Age category	Time taken to get to school						Total	
	Less than 1 hour		More than 1 hour		Don't know			
		%						%
5-10 yrs	43	37.7	69	60.5	2	1.8	114	100
11-15 yrs	41	40.6	56	55.4	4	4.0	101	100
16-20 yrs	39	62.9	23	37.1	0	0	62	100
21+ yrs	2	100	0	0	0	0	2	100
Total	125	44.8	148	53.0	6	2.2	279	100

As the table above illustrates, 60.5% (69) of children between the ages 5 to 10 years and 11 to 15 years 55.4% (56) were said to be travelling more than one hour to get to and from school. Very few children between the ages 16 and above were reported to be travelling more than one hour. The younger the child, the more likely the caregiver would think he/she travels more than one hour to get to school.

Respondents were asked if their children ever miss school. 50.4% (61) of them said 'yes' and 49.9% (60) said 'no'. Table 9 shows how the respondents reported their children as missing school by age categories.

Table 9: Children missing school by Age

Age category	Do your children ever miss school?				Total	
	Yes		No			
		%		%		%
5-10 yrs	32	66.7	16	33.3	48	100
11-15 yrs	20	45.5	24	54.5	44	100
16-20 yrs	7	26.9	19	73.1	26	100
21+ yrs	1	100	0	0	1	100
Total	60	50.4	59	49.6	119	100

Children between the ages 5-10 years (66.7%) were the majority of children who were frequently reported to miss school. Children between the age categories 16 to 20 years, according to respondents, do not miss school as frequently as the younger ones. Admissions on the missing of school by children can also be looked at based on caregivers' community of origin as presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Children missing school, by Community of origin

Name of Community	Do your children ever miss school?				Total	
	Yes		No			
		%		%		%
KwaVimbukhalo	29	67.4	14	32.6	43	100
Mhlathuza	13	56.5	10	43.5	23	100
Endiya	11	31.4	24	68.6	35	100
Situlwana	7	36.8	12	63.2	19	100
Total	60	50.0	60	50.0	120	100

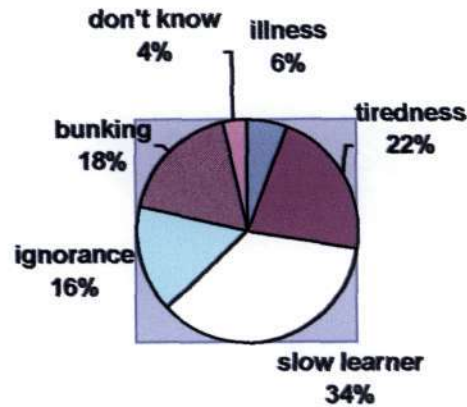
The majority 67.4% (29) of caregivers from KwaVimbukhalo and Mhlathuza 56.5% (13) admitted that their children do miss school. 68.6% (24) caregivers from Endiya said their children do not miss school. The reasons given by respondents as to why children miss are as follows: illness 75.5% (108), households chores 7% (10), the school it is too far 9.1% (13), children sometimes miss school because it's a grant collection day 7% (10) and that children are bunking 1.4% (2). Table 11 illustrates how the respondents from different communities gave reasons as to why their children miss school:

Table 11: Reasons for missing school, by children's community of origin. (% Responses)

Reasons for missing school	Community of Origin								Total	
	Vimbukhalo		Mhlathuza		Endiya		Situlwana			
		%		%		%		%		%
Illness	57	54.3	21	20	15	14.3	12	11.4	105	100
Household chores	6	60	2	20	0	0	2	20	10	100
School too far	9	69.2	1	7.7	2	15.4	1	7.7	13	100
Grants collection day	9	90	1	10	0	0	0	0	10	100
Bunking	1	50	0	0	1	50	0	0	2	100
Total	82	58.6	25	17.9	18	12.9	15	10.7	140	100

Looking at Table 11, illness appeared to be the main reason given by respondents from the above-mentioned communities why their children miss school. But the majority of children who were reported to be missing school because of illness were those from KwaVimbukhalo. It was not established whether children would sometimes fake illness because of the distance they had to travel to school. Moreover, of the thirteen children whose caregivers reported them as missing school because it is too far, nine of these children were from KwaVimbukhalo community. Nine of the children from KwaVimbukhalo were said to miss school if it's a grant collection day. When probing why children have to miss school on a grant collection day, caregivers gave various reasons. For instance, some respondents said older children had to remain at home and look after the young children while the adults are away, in cases of children who stay with their grandparents. Or children would not go to school if they had to accompany a person who is collecting the grant.

Respondents were asked if their children ever fail at school. Of those who responded to this question, 54.5% (67) admitted to their children failing at school and 45.5% (56) said their children do not fail. The reasons given by respondents for failure are as follows:



■ illness ■ tiredness □ slow learner □ ignorance ■ bunking ■ don't know

Figure 3: Reasons why children fail at school

As the above graph shows, being a slow learner (34%), tiredness (22%), bunking (18%) and ignorance (16%) were major reasons given by respondents on why their children fail at school. These reasons were given as an open-ended response. Therefore the graph shows the frequency percentage of the reasons as cited by respondents. Table 12 below display the reasons given by respondents on why children fail at school by children's age categories.

Table 12: Reasons for children failing at school, by age category. (% Responses)

Reasons for failing at school	Age categories								Total	
	5-10 yrs		11-15 yrs		16-20 yrs		21 + yrs			
		%		%		%		%		%
Illness	3	9.4	1	5.6	0	0	0	0	4	6.6
Tiredness	9	28.1	5	27.8	3	30.0	0	0	17	27.9
Slow learner	7	21.9	7	38.9	4	40.0	0	0	18	29.5
Ignorance	4	12.5	4	22.2	1	10.0	0	0	9	14.8
Bunking	7	21.9	1	5.6	2	20.0	1	100	11	18.0
Don't know	2	6.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3.3
Total	32	100	18	100	10	100	1	100	61	100

Nine children (28.1%) between the ages 5 to 10 years were said to be failing because of tiredness; 7 (21.9%) fail because they are slow learners; and the other 7 (21.9%) fail because they bunk the classes as one parent put it: *“Ayi cha, ukuthi bayadoja laba, bavele baqube nje khona la endleni”* (“the children do leave home for school but they end up not getting there because they hide somewhere behind the rocks on their way to school”).

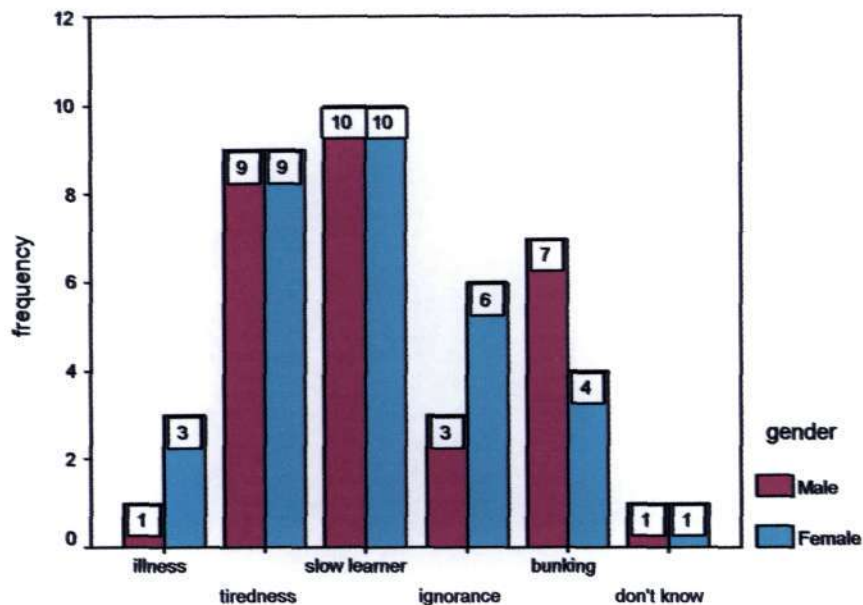


Figure 4: Reasons for children failing at school by gender

In figure 4, according to caregivers, both girls and boys were believed to be failing as a result of being a slow learner as well as tiredness. The graph also shows how parents believed their children fail because they bunk. Caregivers believed that boys bunk school frequently compared to girls as one primary school teacher reiterated: *“I know some of them won’t admit it, but they do hide behind the rocks and not come to school, and they would just go back home not having attended the school on that day”*. [Teachers group: Ezinyonyana Primary School]. Although the teachers did not explicitly state whether this behaviour was

prevalent among all the children, it appeared that parents and the teachers are aware that children do sometimes bunk the classes.

Some teachers, however, believed that children under-perform at school because of poor family relations: *“Okay...ehh, firstly what I can say is that maybe there’s no good relationship between parents and their children, or maybe parents themselves don’t have a good relationship at home, and so I think that also affects the child at home which might lead to the child not concentrating on their school work”*. [Teachers group: Ezinyonyana Primary School]. Children who are believed to be coming from good families would do better at school: *“those who manage are those who are naturally bright, you see, even though they are bright, but I also think their background is good, maybe they have good parents who value education or who have been to school themselves and they are able to assist their kids with school work”* [Ibid]. According to teachers, children with parents who value education and assist with homework, perform better at school. It seemed teachers would sometimes find it easier to attribute children’s failure at school due to their poor family backgrounds. Poor family backgrounds in this regard could include, among other things, bad relationships between parents; or parents being uneducated, therefore not helping with schoolwork. As a result these factors – some teachers believed - would influence and affect the child’s performance on schoolwork both at home and at school.

4.8. Mode of travelling and schooling

As indicated earlier, the majority 97.5% (278) of the children walk to school. Respondents were asked to list some of the problems associated with walking to school. The problems given are as presented in Table 13.

Table 13: Problems associated with walking to and from school by gender and community of origin

Problems	Frequency of a response	%	M	F	Vimb.	Mhl.	Endi	Situl.
Criminals	28	15.1	11	17	18	4	1	5
Loneliness	6	3.2	3	3	1	3	1	1
Lateness	16	8.6	10	6	9	0	5	2
Tiredness	28	15.1	12	16	12	0	2	13
Lightning	20	10.8	9	11	16	2	1	1
Over flooding rivers	18	9.7	13	5	5	1	4	8
Bullying	12	6.5	8	4	8	2	3	0
Mud and dirtiness	19	10.2	11	8	2	6	9	2
Nothing	25	13.4	12	13	0	7	16	2
Road accidents	6	3.2	3	3	0	2	2	3
Injuries	8	4.3	6	2	0	2	2	4
Total	186	100	98	88	71	29	46	40

Vimb.=Vimbukhalo

Mhl.=Mhlathuza

Endi.=Endiya

Situl.=Situlwana

Major problems experienced by children when walking to schools, according to caregivers, are criminals, tiredness, lateness, lighting in summer, mud and dirtiness and flooding rivers. Asked to state how walking affect children's activities at school or at home; 44.2% (65) of the children were reported as not being affected in doing their household chores and school activities; 36.7% (54) affected their household activities and 19.0% (28) affected their school work.

Table 14: Perceptions on walking as affecting children's activities by community of origin

Name of Community	How does the mode of traveling affect your child's activities?						Total	
	Can't do household chores		Does not affect their activities		Can't do school work			
		%		%		%		%
Vimbukhalo	30	52.6	12	21.1	15	26.3	57	100
Mhlathuza	5	20.8	18	75.0	1	4.2	24	100
Endiya	5	13.9	30	83.3	1	2.8	36	100
Situlwana	13	46.4	5	17.9	10	35.7	28	100
Total	53	36.6	65	44.8	27	18.6	145	100

The majority of children who were reported as unable to do household chores and schoolwork are those from KwaVimbukhalo and Situlwana communities. One caregiver had this to say: *"I don't even bother asking them to do something because I know they are tired, I just do everything all by myself"*. Very few children from Endiya (the closest area to eZinyonyana Primary and Mthende High Schools) were affected by walking in doing their household chores and schoolwork. But teachers believed walking affects the young children the most as one primary teacher commented: *"but I've noticed it to those in grade one because they walk long distances"*, and as a result: *"it takes them time to actually concentrate on what the teacher is saying because they are still tired and their brains are tired as well"* [Teachers group: Ezinyonyana Primary School]. Seemingly, the school rules also add to the problem: *"if they come late they are punished and so one can see that that also makes things even worse, the child will not concentrate in class, you see"* [Ibid].

children” [Teachers group: Ezinyonyana Primary School]. Moreover, the sports that are happening after school do not appeal to some students: *“Because the only popular sport here is soccer and if you don’t play soccer then there are no other sports activities that they can engage themselves in”* [Teachers group: Mthende High School]. Most children also do not take part in sports activities because: *“they will arrive late to their homes and not be able to go and fetch water, you see, and if you ask them to come early in the morning, they would give you the same response”*, and: *“in winter they fear criminals and the school is too far for them”* [Teachers group: Mthende High School].

4.9. Caregivers views’ on the role of transport for school going children

In order to understand the respondents’ perceptions of the role of transport in their children’s education, they were asked to disagree or agree with the statement, “I feel that the availability of transport can improve my child’s performance at school” and their responses are as presented in the Figure 5.

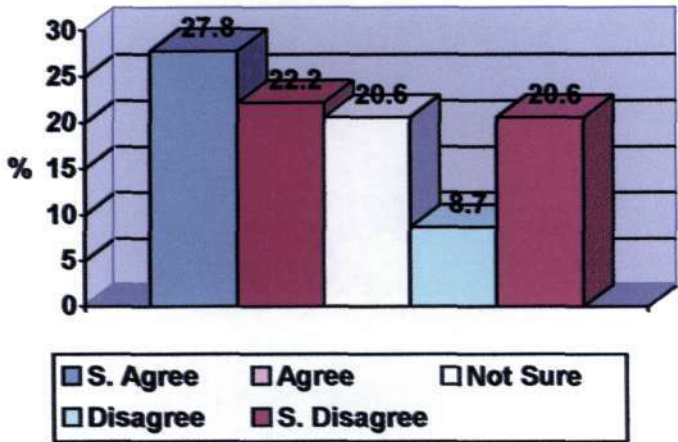


Figure 5 I feel that the availability of transport can improve my child’s performance at school.

The majority of caregivers believed that the availability of transport could improve their children's performance at school. Others, however, did not believe that transport could improve children's performance at school as one parent commented: *"Transport availability won't make different really, it depends on how they study or how smart the child is"*. Other respondents who disagreed with the statement also shared this view – that performance at school depends on how bright or hard working the child is.

Communities' proximity to schools seemed to have influenced how caregivers agreed or disagreed with the previous statement. Their responses by their community of origin are as presented in Table 16.

Table 16: Respondents views on the availability of transport for their children, by community of origin

Level of agreement	Community of Origin								Total	
	KwaVimbukhalo		Mhlathuza		Endiya		Situlwana			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly agree	18	36.7	2	8.7	2	6.1	13	61.9	35	27.8
Agree	19	38.8	6	26.1	2	6.1	1	4.8	28	22.7
Neutral	2	4.1	9	39.1	10	30.3	5	23.8	26	20.6
Disagree	5	10.2	2	8.7	4	12.1	0	0	11	8.7
Strongly disagree	5	10.2	4	17.4	15	45.5	2	9.5	26	20.6
Total	49	100	23	100	33	100	21	100	126	100

Not surprisingly, the majority of caregivers who perceive their communities as being far away from schools, those from KwaVimbukhalo and Situlwane, agreed with the statement. When asked which mode of transport they would prefer for their children travelling to school; 47.6% (59) of them said they would still prefer their children to walk to school,

46.0% (57) said they would prefer public transport (taxis in particular); 4.0% (5) said they would prefer school buses and 2.4% (3) said bicycles.

Caregivers were asked what they think should be done to improve the travelling situation of their children to school, based on their identified problems associated with walking. 36.8% (46) said children need to be provided with transport, particularly school buses; 24.0% (30) said the school should be built near the communities as one respondent from KwaVimbukhalo commented: *"I think they should build the schools near our communities because even if there is transport, some of us cannot still afford it, the school should be built nearer"* and 39.2% (49) believed that nothing can be done to improve the situation. The issue of affordability was the main concern for caregivers even if transport was available. This concern is reflected on their responses when asked who should provide transport for their children; 62.7% (42) said the government should provide transport for school children; 23.9% (16) felt that community members should provide transport - community members being everyone that lives in that community, other than but including parents; 10.7% (7) said parents should provide transport and 1.5% said the councillor needs to provide transport.

Teachers also felt that the far away communities should have their own schools to cater for children coming from these communities as one primary school teacher puts it: *"ehh... ya with the issue of distance, I really think they should get a school nearer to them, this school is too far from them, especially for those coming from KwaVimbukhalo"*, and: *"or maybe they need to be provided with transport"* [Teachers group: Ezinyonyana Primary School]. Some teachers, even though seemed to sympathise with the children who travel long distances to school, were more concerned about losing jobs if these developments take place as one high school teacher commented: *"Ya, but if you look at it, if there can be other*

schools at KwaVimbukhalo, Nokopela and Situlwana, that will mean this school will have to close down, because really most of the pupils who attend here are from these areas and so that is why I think if they can upgrade this road then children would be able to use a taxi to come to this school" [Teachers' group: Mthende High School].

Caregivers were also asked to agree or disagree with the statement, which reads; 'Parents need to accompany their children to and from school'. 15.9% (20) strongly agreed with the statement, 21.4% (27) agreed with this statement; 34.1% (43) of them were not sure whether parents should accompany their children or not, 15.9% (20) disagreed with this statement and 12.7% (16) strongly disagree with the statement and some of them citing practical barriers preventing them from accompanying their children to school: *"we would like to accompany our children to school but we cannot because we have other household chores to do"*. Though parents are preoccupied with other household activities, they believed that children should take care of themselves. This is reflected on their responses on who they think should be responsible for children's safety when travelling to school. 34.3% (48) of them felt that children had to look after themselves; 45% (63) said parents should be responsible for their children's safety; 18.6% (26) said teachers should ensure children are safe.

On probing why teachers should ensure children's safety, one respondent - representing the views of others who also shared this belief - had this to say, *"Because teachers spent most time with the children, and I expect the teacher to tell me if something happens to my child"*. This statement reveals how parents confused their children's safety inside the school premises and children's safety while travelling to school. Only 1.4% (2) respondents said community members should ensure children are safe.

Responding to the statement, 'I feel that my child is safe when travelling to and from school'; 7.1% (9) strongly agreed with the statement, 19.0% (24) agreed, half 50% (63) of them were not sure, 15.9% (20) disagreed and 7.9% (10) strongly disagreed with the statement. Even though a quarter of the caregivers disagreed with the previous statement, noticeable here is that half of them were not sure of their children's safety when travelling to school. This is despite their awareness of the problems associated with walking to school.

Chapter 5

Discussion of Findings

Transport plays a crucial role in allowing people to reach places much easier. This also applies for children who happen to walk long distances to reach the centres of learning. However, parents have a role to play on how and when their children access transport services. Therefore, the objectives of the study were to learn how the caregivers perceive the importance of transport as determinant in their children's access to school; to establish their beliefs of the role of transport as it affects children's performance at school, and to identify factors influencing the caregiver's on choices for the suitable modes of travelling for their school going children.

5.1. Local modes of transportation

The predominant modes of travelling in the Bergville area, of which Emmaus is part, are walking and public transport, mainly taxis (Statistics South Africa, 2001). Most people use taxis to travel to the CBD and other destinations, as many of them do not own private transport. This is because ownership and usage of transport, that is motorized modes of transport, could be influenced by a number of factors. Rama (1999) in her study, for instance, found that people's choice of transport is influenced by their race and locale – which in South Africa determines access to economic opportunities. The findings in the present study also confirms Rama's study in that only 12.7% (16) of the respondents said they had a car or a bakkie in their households and 6.3% (8) had bicycle/s.

In the Emmaus area, it emerged that bakkies are sometimes used as public transport, particularly in the communities that are remote from the main road as there are few taxis

operating in these communities. For instance, KwaVimbukhalo and Situlwana communities are not as close to the main road (P394) as compared to Endiya community (refer to appendix B). As a result, very few taxis diverge from the main road to these communities. There are multiple factors that could restrain local transport operators to commute people to these remote areas, thus leaving that activity to be carried out by bakkie operators. One of the reasons for a limited public transport going to these areas could emanate from the fact that access roads to these communities are not in good condition - they are gravel. The other reason is that there are not many economic activities happening in these areas except subsistence agricultural activities, hence little public transport operating in these communities. The non-availability of services means there will be minimal transport operating in a given area or community (Human Rights Watch, 2004). Minimum public transport operating in the abovementioned communities could also limit the transport options available for school going children to easily reach schools apart from other obstacles that will be discussed later.

The usage of animal drawn carts or sleighs - according to the respondents - is not a common mode of transportation in their communities. For instance, only 8.7% (12) respondents said they had an animal drawn cart or sleigh as a means of transportation in their households. According to the national census of 2001, it appeared that very few people in this area make use of animal drawn carts or sleighs as modes of transportation (Statistics South Africa, 2001). Of those who said they had this mode of transportation, it is mainly used for transporting fertilizer to the fields and for harvesting. As indicated in the findings section, no respondents mentioned that carts or sleighs are used for transporting school children.

The ownership and usage of certain modes of transport seems to be dependent on the *type* of transport that is available in a household. For instance, caregivers who said there was a car/bakkie in their households kept saying '*umnikazi wayo*' ('the owner') uses that mode of transport. The same was also said of animal drawn carts and sleighs, with an exception of wheelbarrows of which almost everyone in a household had access to, including children and women. The wheelbarrow being relatively inexpensive compared to other modes of transport meant that almost everyone in the household had access to it.

Doran, (1996:46) observed that those who have access to transport are entitled to use it and that those controlling it determine who has access to it. But controlling access to the mode of transport by 'its owner', for example a car, might stem from the fact that not everyone in the household knows how to operate it. For instance, young children and women who might not have yet acquired their driving licences could not be allowed to drive a car, hence not having access to it. This indicates that the value of the mode of transport and how simple or difficult it is to operate could affect who has access to it within the household.

5.1.1. Children's experiences with traveling to school

The findings provide that 97.4% of the children walk to school every day, compared to 1.8% that use bicycles and 0.7% that use public transport. Other studies have also shown that the majority of children in rural areas walk to school (Rama, 1999; Song, 2003; Pillay, 2003). This is disturbing when one considers that 53.7% of these children travel for more than an hour to get to school (most of them between the ages 5 and 15 – Table 8). The majority of the children – 40.9% - are between the ages 5 and 10 years of age and 36.2% are between 11 and 15 years old. Figure 2 shows that the majority of them are in grade 10 or less. Considering the ages of these children, the distance travelled on foot to school may be too

much as some teachers have noticed: *“ehh... ya with the issue of distance, I really think they should get a school nearer to them, this school is too far from them, especially for those coming from KwaVimbukhalo”* [Teachers group: Ezinyonyana Primary School]. This may be the case, particularly for those children who come from Situlwana and KwaVimbukhalo who attend at Zinyonyana Primary School. As indicated in the findings, the approximate distance is 4 kilometres to schools combined with the steepness of the mountain. Children from Endiya, though do have to travel long distances, but they also have to bear the climbing of mountain to school which could contribute to their tiredness, especially the younger ones.

Caregivers seem to be aware of the problems associated with children walking to school. Table 14 shows that along with tiredness, parents see criminals as the biggest problem associated with walking to school. Criminals are reported to hide in the vegetation along the paths and take advantage of school children, especially the teenage girls. Caregivers reported that teenage girls are in danger of being abducted on their way to school for forced marriages. In addition there is concern about the flooding of rivers that are either situated close to the paths, or that have to be crossed on the way to school. Mud and dirtiness are also a problem. Lightning strikes during the summer months were also a concern. Children have nowhere to hide and the chances of being struck by lightning are very high.

It appeared that the majority of caregivers, though aware of the problems associated with walking, did not attribute much of their children's failure at school to the distance walked. For instance, 34% percentage of the reasons given as to why children fail at school was that children are slow learners (Figure 3). Even though 22% of the reasons given were that children fail because of tiredness, 18% of the reasons were that children fail because they bunk. Communities' proximity to schools and age of a child also played a role on how

caregivers and teachers perceived the effects of walking on children's performance at school. For instance, caregivers from areas furthest from schools – KwaVimbukhalo and Situlwana – were more likely to assert that their children fail because of tiredness, this can be looked at in relation to communities' proximity to schools (see Appendix B).

Some teachers, however, had explicitly made a connection between a child being a slow learner and tiredness. The distance children travel, according to teachers, has an impact on how they would perform and concentrate in class: *"...but I have noticed it to those in grade one because they walk long distances",* and therefore: *"it takes time for them to actually concentrate on what the teacher is saying because they are still tired and their brains are tired too."* [Teachers' group: eZinyonyana Primary School].

The caregivers also attributed their children's failure on bunking classes, and the teachers are aware of this problem as well. A connection was made by the teachers between bunking and the punishment children receive when they arrive late at school: *"if they come late, they are punished and so one can see that that also makes things even worse, and the child will not concentrate in class as a result, you see."* [Teachers group: eZinyonyana Primary School]. Another reason for children bunking might stem from the distances they have to travel to get to school. Caregivers, however, did not seem to relate bunking and the distances their children travel to school.

5.1.2. Factors affecting the choice of the mode of transport.

If the caregivers are aware of the problems associated with walking to school, what alternatives do they have? What influences their choice of transport for their school going children? There are a number of factors to be looked at when it comes to caregivers' choice of the mode of transport for their school going children.

According to the respondents, 94.4% of them walked to school themselves when they were younger. 63.4% reported that walking affected neither their school nor household activities. In her study on rural women in Zambia, Doran, (1996:50) found that most of the women did not see walking long distances as a problem as their mothers and grandmothers did it and survived. For instance, in Table 14, 44.8% of the respondents believed that walking to school does not affect their children at school or household activities. This may be indicative of why 47.6% of the caregivers would still prefer their children to walk to school. This response, however, varied based on caregivers' proximity to schools (see Table 14).

The question on who makes decisions in a household is very important in this study. This may be the person that decides how the money is spent and how much may go towards children's education, or sometimes transport for going to school. 29% of the respondents see themselves as principal decision makers, while 24.2% report that their husbands are the decision-makers. Mothers-in-law also seem to wield some decision-making powers (as illustrated in Table 2)

The choice of the mode of transport could be influenced by a number of factors, other than a caregiver's position within the household. Although in Table 1 the majority of caregivers view themselves as primary breadwinners, this does not necessarily translate in them

deciding on what mode of transport their children use to go to school. It seemed that the issue of affordability, among other factors, also contributes on how much money caregivers would spend on school transport. In Table 4, for instance, caregivers declared that they spend little money on transport per year. Even though the present study could not establish how much would be little for each caregiver, but caregivers – knowing their own financial positions – believed that they do not spend much money of transport. Since the majority of their children also walk to school, caregivers do not spend money on school transport either.

5.1.3. Parents and Teachers on children's education

There were differences regarding how the teachers view caregivers' participation in their children's education and how the caregivers viewed their participation. According to the teachers interviewed, parents do not put much value in education for their children. Teachers attributed this on that some caregivers had never received any formal education themselves: *"some parents would even say that they have never been to school but they have everything so what's the use of sending a child to school anyway?"* This means that not only do caregivers take for granted their children's education, according to teachers; they also do not seem to be able to make a relationship between education and success in life. In addition to this, May et al (2000:36) indicates that 'education is judged by the poor in terms of its relevance as well as by issues of access and quality, and that relevance is seen primarily in terms of the likelihood of eventual access to employment'. If caregivers do not see education as maximizing their children's chances of eventual access to employment, they might not put much value into it.

Table 5 provides that caregivers rank helping their children with schoolwork highest - in order (list) of priorities - as well as giving their children time off to study. It is difficult to

conclude from this claim by caregivers that they do value their children's education. Table 5 also show that parents prioritised attending school meetings when called upon. As indicated in Table 5, parents' claims on giving high priority in helping children with school work and attending parents meetings at school when called upon, could have been influenced by other studies conducted on child education prior and during the execution of this study. This therefore makes it difficult for one to presume that parents do in fact assist their children with schoolwork as they have claimed they do.

For instance, primary school teachers from eZinyonyana complained that parents are reluctant to take part in activities requiring them to attend schools. This prompted the teachers to believe that parents do not want to work with the teachers thus leading to a strained relationship between the two.. But according to Beresford, (1992:49) if parents see themselves as assuming the role of being an educator, they tend to be isolated and full of doubts about their roles. Parents might not fully understand what the teachers expect of them, hence resisting participating in school activities. It could also be that as Mayall, (1999) argued, that parents value their children's independent activity and therefore parents see no need of why they should interfere instead of allowing children to do their own things.

5.1.4. Caregivers' position on children transport needs and safety

While aware of the dangers associated with walking to school, some parents did not see this as compelling them to accompany their children to school as they have other things to do: *"we would like to accompany our children to school, but its not possible because we have other household chores to do."* This is shown by their responses on how their children's safety can be ensured, where 34.3% of them said children should look after themselves. This is despite their conscious awareness that parents should ensure their children's safety as 45%

of them reported, while 18.6% said teachers need to ensure that children are safe. The fact that the majority of them thought caregivers should ensure their children's safety does not translate into caregivers accompanying their children to school as indicated by some of their responses on the practicality of carrying out this task. Hence expecting the teachers to look after their children or the older children to look after the young children on their way to and from school.

The respondents mentioned a number of solutions on how their children's schooling experience can be improved. 36.8% of respondents suggested children should be provided with transport to school. This was emphasised by caregivers from KwaVimbukhalo and Situlwana (the furthest places of residence). 24.0% of respondents said they think the school should be built nearer the communities where these children come from whereas the majority (39.2%) believed nothing could be done to change the situation. Even though they believe their children should be provided with transport, they thought government should do this as 62.7% indicated. Those who said the school should be built nearer raised the issues of the affordability of transport: *"I think they should build the school near our communities because even if there is transport, some of us cannot still afford it, the school should be built nearer."* This shows that as most of the respondents are not employed, it would be difficult for them to afford to pay for transport for their school going children, hence asking the government to provide this service.

Some caregivers suggested the schools should be build near their communities, especially the majority of the respondents from KwaVimbukhalo community. But it surfaced from other informal conversations with other respondents that the unavailability of land, among other things, hinders the process of building schools nearer their communities. The study

could not verify this claim that some people do not want to give up their piece of land for the school to be built there, as this land is their only means of survival as they cultivate it. Until this issue of land is resolved, according to these respondents, it will still be not easy to build the school in their community.

On the other hand, the teachers – though also for the provision of transport – were concerned about the lack of good roads to the schools: *“even yourself (pointing to the interviewer), you are very fortunate because it’s not raining today, there is no mud, otherwise you wouldn’t have climbed this mountain, you can’t walk there, you see, and what I think is that they should at least try and upgrade the road”* [Teachers group: Mthende High School]. Lack of transport infrastructure, according to teachers, is another problem they thought prevents transport operators (taxis) from transporting children to schools.

The challenges facing children and their schooling at Emmaus, according to their caregivers, may be very similar to those faced by other rural communities in South Africa. For the people that live in these areas, lack of a proper transport infrastructure denies them access to important services. Lack of proper transport infrastructure could be as result of the area itself being mountainous, and not having properly maintained access roads, among other factors, contribute to the non-availability of transport for adults as well as for school going children. One of the aims of the Department of Education is to develop people by providing them with high quality education. Department of Transport, on the other hand, aims to provide a reliable and efficient transport system that will enable learners – amongst others – to access schools. These are good development goals, and are needed in a country like South Africa that still needs to redress the problems of the past. But, until both departments carry out their aims and start the delivery of the key services – schools and an efficient transportation

system - school-going children will continue to experience problems and will have difficulty taking advantage of a new and democratic South Africa.

Conclusion

The study has looked at how the caregivers perceive the importance of transport for their school going children in the Emmaus area, focusing in four communities – KwaVimbukhalo, Situlwana, Endiya and Mhlathuza communities. It emerged that caregivers are aware of the challenges associated with the mode of travelling for their children to school, especially walking. Though caregivers maintained that they do involve themselves in their children's education, the teachers saw the involvement of parents as minimal, if at all.

Caregivers from KwaVimbukhalo and Situlwana communities as well as the teachers saw the role transport can play in their children's education. They believe that if transport can be available, their children can do better at school as they would not arrive tired which sometimes affect their concentration in class. This was most felt by respondents from KwaVimbukhalo and Situlwana community. This is despite the fact that their children are not affected by walking in doing their school and household activities. But this hope of being provided with transport was also shattered by the fact that the roads are not good enough condition for transport to operate regularly. This was the main worry for the teachers. Caregivers on the other hand see the provision of transport as a good thing, only if they do not have to pay for it, as most of them cannot afford to pay transport fares. They believe that the government should provide this service.

The issues of land distribution seemed to play a role on the construction of schools nearer the communities from where the children travel long distances to schools. Until the issues of land are resolved nothing can be done. This also shows that the provision of transport alone will not address the problem of rural children experience with schooling. Other things need to be looked first, especially the provision of good infrastructure e.g. roads and the

availability of land to build the schools. Song (2003) maintained that communities themselves are in a better position to define their own priorities. This also can help transport planners to know what priorities are there instead of defining those priorities for communities, hence investing programmes not prioritised by local people.

Though caregivers were concerned about their children's safety, they maintained that children should look after themselves or that the teachers should play a role in ensuring that children are safe when travelling to school. Due to their engagement with household activities, they find it very impossible to accompany their children to school.

Though caregivers see the importance of transport in accessing education, there are many issues that need to be resolved first and according to them, the government should be the initiator of these solutions. They place development solely in the hands of the government and its departments with very little consideration of what they, as caregivers, can do to contribute in this regard.

Bibliography

Baresford, E. (1992) *The Politics of Parental Involvement*. In Allen, G and Martin, I. (Eds.) *Education and Community*. London: British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data.

Bridges, D. (1987) 'It's the ones who never turn up that you really want to see': The 'Problem' of the Non-Attending Parent. In John Bastiani (Ed.) *Parents and Teachers: Perspectives on Home-School Relations*. England: NFER-NELSON

Bucks CC-Rural Strategy-Transport: Chapter 7

Avail. At: www.buckscc.gov.uk/economic_development/rural_life/rs_ch7.htm

Coleman, T.J. et al (1999) *Rural service delivery: Unique challenges, creative solutions*. 41(1) available at: <http://web20.epnet.com/citation.asp?tb>

De Vaus, D. A. (1996) *Surveys in Social Research*. London: UCL Press

Department of Education: *National Education Policy Act, 1996* (NO. 27 OF 1996), Pretoria

Department of Education: *South African Schools Act, 1996*(Act NO. 84 OF 1996), Pretoria

Department of Education (1997) *Quality Education for All: Overcoming barriers to Learning and Development*. Report of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NOSNET) and National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS). Pretoria.

Department of Education (1996) White Paper 2: *The Organisation, Governance and Funding of Schools*. Pretoria

Available at: www.gov.za/whitepaper/1996/education2.htm

Department of Transport KZN, (2003)

Available at: www.kzntransport.org.co.za

Doran, J. (1996) *Rural Transport*. London: Intermediate Technology Publicans Ltd.

Flaherty, T. A. (2001) *Unlocking the Past and Forging New Directions Towards Gender Equity in Papua New Guinea*. Published paper presented at Equity and Diversity in Education Conference at Oxford, September 2001

Giddens, A. (2001). *Sociology*. Oxford: Polity Press

Goodie, J. (1987). Parents as Educators. In John Bastiani (Ed.) *Parents and Teachers 1: Perspectives on Home-School Relations*. England: NFER-NELSON Publishing Company Ltd.

Jordaan, P.W. (1997) *Measuring Accessibility: A case Study in the Northern Province*. Paper presented at the South African Transport Conference, September 1997

Hanafin, J. and Lynch, A. (2002) Peripheral voices: Parental involvement, Social Class and Educational Disadvantage. *British Journal of Education*, 23 (1)

Hawtin, M; Hughes Geraint and Percy-Smith, J (1994) *Community Profiling: Auditing social needs*. Buckingham: Open University Press

Howley, C.B and Smith C. R. (2000) *Rural Education: An agenda for Studying Rural School Busing*. West Virginia: AEL, Inc

Human Rights Watch, (2004) *Obstacles to the right to education on commercial farms*.

Chapter 3. Avail at: www.hrw.org/reports/2004/southafrica0504/4.htm>

Iga, H. (2002) Bicycles *Boda Boda* and Women's travel needs. In Fernando, P and Porter, G. (Eds) *Balancing the Load: Women, Gender and Transport*. London: Zed Book Ltd.

- Kwamusi, P. (2002) Gender and Safety in Rural Transport. In Fernando, P and Porter, G. (Eds.) *Balancing the Load: Women, Gender and Transport*. London: Zed Book Ltd.
- Krueger, R.A. (1994) *Focus Groups: A practical Guide for Applied Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage
- Maganya, J. (1997) “*Appropriate Means of Transport in Rural Areas in Developing Countries*”. Paper presented at the South African Transport Conference, September 1997
- Mahapa, S.M. (2000) *Carting in the Northern Province: Structural and Geographical change*. In Development Southern Africa, Vol 17, issue 2, Page 235
- Maunder D, A. Davis, D. Bryceson, J. Howe, T. Mbara and T. Onweng (2001) *Sustainable Livelihoods, Mobility and Access needs in Urban and Peri-Urban Areas*. Paper presented at the 20th South African Transport Conference, 16-20 July.
- May J., Woolard I. and S. Klasen (2000) The Nature and Measurement of Poverty and Inequality. In May J. (Ed.) *Poverty and Inequality in South Africa: Meeting the Challenge*: David Philip Publishers
- Mayall, B (1999). Children in action at Home and School. In. M. Woodhead, D. Faulkner and K. Littleton (Eds.) *Making sense of Social Development*. London: The Open University
- Miles, S. (2000) *Overcoming Resource Barriers: the challenge of implementing inclusive education in rural areas*. Workshop paper presented at: A symposium on Development Policy entitled, “Children with Disabilities and the Convention on the Rights of the Child”, Gustav Stresemann Institute, Bonn, Germany, October 27 – 29, 2000
Available at: www.eenet.org.uk/theory_practice/bonn_1.shtml
- Mittler, P. (2000) *Working Towards Inclusive Education*. London: David Fulton Publishers
- Institute for Democracy in South Africa (2004). *Monitoring Child Socio-Economic Rights in South Africa: Achievements and Challenges. Children in traditional rural communities: Msinga/Weenen, northern KwaZulu-Natal*
Available at: www.idasa.org.za/gbOutputFiles.asp?writecontext=Y&RID=881

Moving South Africa Document (1996) *Strategy Recommendations: Rural Customers*. Available at: www.transport.gov.za/projects/msa

Mthembu, T. (1999) *Parental Involvement in Academic and Non-Academic Activities in a Secondary School in Clermont: A Case Study*. Unpublished Masters of Education In Psychology of Education Dissertation submitted at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

National Department of Transport Business Plan (2002/2003). Pretoria

National Department of Transport Strategic Plan, 2002/2003. Pretoria.

Neuman, W.L. (2000) *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. USA: Allyn and Bacon

Paul, K. (2002) Gender and Safety in Rural Transport. In Fernando P. and Porter, G (Eds) *Balancing the Load: Women, Gender and Transport*. London: Zed Books Ltd.

Pillay, R. (2003) *The role of transport in accessing social services for women (Child Support Grant Beneficiaries) in rural areas: A case study of the Lions River Pay Point*. Unpublished Bachelor of Social Science Masters Dissertation Submitted at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg

Rama, S. (1999) *The influence of Transport on the life experiences and life chances of school goers in PMB*. A Bachelor of Social Science Masters Thesis submitted at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

Roebuck, C.S and S. Burton. (2003) *An overview of recent research into Rural Transport matters: A Sociological Perspective*. Paper presented at the Southern African Transport Conference, July 2003.

Smith P.K. and H. Cowie. (1988). *Understanding Children's Development*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd

Song, L. K. (2003) *The potential of bicycles as a means of transport for learners in rural South Africa*. Paper presented at the Southern African Transport Conference, July 2003.

Statistics South Africa

Available at: www.statssa.gov.za/census2001/atlas_ward2/index.html

Stoll, L. and D. Fink. (1996) *Changing our Schools*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

South Africa Yearbook. (2003/4). Tenth Edition. Government Communications: Pretoria

Teachers' Focus Group interview, Mthende High School: Emmaus, Bergville

Teachers' Focus Group interview, eZinyonyana Primary School: Emmaus, Bergville

Terre Blanche M. and K. Kelly. (1999). Interpretive Methods. In: Terre Blanche, M. and K. Durrheim (Eds.) *Research in Practice: Applied Methods for Social Sciences*. Cape Town: UCT Press

Van Vuuren, D. and A. Maree. (1999). Survey Methods in Market and Media Research. In: Terre Blanche, M. and K. Durheim (Eds). *Research in Practice: Applied Methods for Social Sciences*. Cape Town: UCT Press

Turner, J; Apt, N; Grieco, M and Kwakye, E.A. (1998) *Users not Losers: Gender Representation in Transport Design and Operation*. Paper presented at WCTR, Antwerp, July 1998

Available at: www.geocities.com/margaret_grieco/womenont/gen_tran.html

Wright C. (2001) *Exclusion in Education*: Published paper presented at the Equity and Diversity in Education Conference held at Oxford, September 2001

Appendices

A: Questionnaire

Respondent Name.....

Interviewer.....

Date of interview.....

(Read Out)

Hello, my name is (write in your name).....and I want to ask you some questions about yourself and your feelings. There are no right or wrong answers, and everything you say is important. We really want to know what you think and how you feel. Try and answer as honestly as you can. Remember, what you say is confidential and no one will ever be able to find out what you said.

Section A

I would like you to tell me about yourself.

1. Name of your village/area.....

2. Sex [1] Male [2] Female

3. Age category: [1] below 18 yrs
 [2] between 18-25 yrs
 [3] between 26-35 yrs
 [4] between 46-55 yrs
 [5] above 56 yrs

4. Would you please tell me the last class/standard of school you passed?

.....

5. How did you travel to school? do you remember?

.....

6. How did the distance affect your activities at home and at school?

.....

.....

.....

Section B

Now I would like to ask you some questions about your household.

7. How would you describe your position in this household?

.....

.....

8. Would you consider yourself as a,

- [1] Primary breadwinner
- [2] Secondary breadwinner
- [3] None of the above?

9. Who would you consider as a principal decision maker in this household?

.....

10. What kind of decisions does that person usually make?

.....

.....

.....

11. Who is mostly affected by those decisions?

.....

.....

Does this household undertake the following activities?

Agricultural activities	Yes	No	How does it contribute towards your livelihood/income?
A vegetable garden			
Fields			
Livestock			
Other			

Business activities	Yes	No	How does it contribute towards your livelihood/income
Make craft			
Sell craft			
Do thatching			
Hairdressing			
Make and sell clothing or shoes			
Sell fruit and vegetables			
Do some domestic work for somebody else			
Sell building material			
Other (specify			

13. Please tell me how you prioritise the following activities:

Household activities	Low Priority	Medium Priority	Top Priority
Collecting wood			
Collecting water			
Household chores			
Building houses			
Working on the fields			
Working on the garden			
Other (specify)			
Interpersonal activities			
Helping children with school work			
Attending community meetings			
Attending parents meetings			
Giving children time off chores for school work			

14. Please give a list of things in order of amount on which this household spent money per year: [1] smaller amount [2] reasonable amount [3] excessive amount

Food	
Clothes	
Fuel	
Adult transport	
Entertainment	
School uniform	
Children's stationery	
Fertilizer	
Agricultural supplies	
Children's transport	
School fees	
Other (specify)	

15. Does this home has any of the following modes of transportation (Please say 'Yes' or 'No')

	Yes	No	Who uses this mode of transport?	For what purposes?	Who looks after this mode of transportation?
car or bakkie					
bicycle					
motorcycle					
tractor					
onkey-drawn rt					
xen-drawn cart					
wheel barrow					
ther (specify)					

Section C

Now I would like to ask you some questions about your child/children.

16. Would you please tell me the number of children under your care that attend school:

ld's name	Sex	Age	Grade	Time taken to get to school	Name of School	Mode of Travelling to school	Daily or sometimes

17. Does your child/children ever miss school?

[1] Yes

[2] No

[3] Don't know

18. If yes, what are the main reasons for each child/children missing school?(parents should give names of the child/children and the interviewer must **tick the response**)

Childs name	illness	Household chores	School too far	It's pension/ grant day	Other reasons- please state
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					

19. Would you please tell me the advantages of using the current mode of transport for each child?

.....

.....

.....

20. What would you say are the problems associated with the current mode of transport for each child?

.....

.....

.....

.....

24. How does the current mode of transport affect your child/children's daily activities? (at home or at school)

.....

.....

.....

25. What are the experiences for children when travelling to and from school using the current mode of transport? Please give examples of stories you've heard or happened.

.....

.....

.....

.....

21. Which mode of transport would you prefer for your child/children's travelling to school?

.....

.....

.....

22. What do you think should be done to improve the current mode of transport for your child/children?

.....

.....

.....

26. Who do you think should be responsible for your child/children safety when travelling to school?

.....

Why?

.....

27 Have any of the children failed a grade? [1] Yes [2] No

If yes, what are the common reasons for your child/children failing at school?

.....

29. Do your child/children stay at school for after school activities?

- [1] Yes
[2] No

Why?

.....

.....

34. Are there children staying with other family members away from this household?

[1] Yes

[2] No

If yes, what are the reasons for that arrangement?

.....

Section D

*Please tell me whether you **agree** or **disagree** with the following statements:*

30. Parents need to accompany their children to and from school.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

31. I always feel that my child is safe when travelling to and from school.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

32. Children don't get tired when travelling to school.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

33. Children don't get tired when travelling in groups to and from school.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

34. I feel that the availability of transport can improve my child/children's performance at school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

How would you rate the following

35. How would you rate your community members involvement in child/children's education?

Outstanding	Good	Don't Know	Poor	Very Poor
-------------	------	------------	------	-----------

36. How would you rate the community's roads in terms of allowing children easy access to school?

Outstanding	Good	Don't Know	Poor	Very Poor
-------------	------	------------	------	-----------

Why do you say so?

.....

.....

Is there something you want to add to what we have been discussing?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!!

Abstract

The role transport plays in enabling people access to services is very important. However, transport for school going children in rural areas has not been given much attention. Transport programmes aimed at improving access to schools by rural children cannot be successful in their formation and implementation without the full participation of parents. Therefore, the objectives of the study were to learn about the factors influencing caregivers' choices of the modes of transport for their school going children and to establish how caregivers view the importance of transport for their school going children, particularly in rural areas.

One hundred and twenty six respondents were interviewed in this study. Two focus group interviews were conducted with teachers from eZinyonyana Primary and Mthende High Schools. It transpired that the majority of children walk to school. Most parents are aware of the problems associated with walking. However, the majority of them did not believe that walking could impact on their children's performance at school. This belief, though, differed with parents who perceive themselves too distant from school, hence believing that walking can affect their children's performance at school. Also, the majority of caregivers from communities furthest from schools believed that the availability of transport could improve their children's performance at school. They expected the government to provide transport for learners as most of them felt that even if transport can be made available, they could not still afford it since they are not employed. Although aware of the dangers associated with walking, some parents did not feel they could accompany their children school. This task was entirely left with the older children who are supposed to look after the younger ones on their way to and from school.

Definition of key terms

For the purposes of the current study, some key terms were defined as they specifically relate to the purposes of the study.

'Accessibility' refers to 'an ability of individuals or communities to afford access to opportunities that are connected by a transport network on which transport modes operate at certain levels of service' (Jordaan, 1997:02).

'Basic services' can include, among other things; health care, education or employment centres.

'Caregivers' sometimes referred to as *'respondents'* mean the individual persons who took part in this study, and who themselves, declared that they had children under their supervision who attend school.

In defining *'communities'*, Hawtin, Hughes and Percy-Smith (1994:33) suggest that a word *'community'* typically refers to an idea that there is something common to a group or section of the population. Thus *'communities'* may be based on geographical areas or localities ranging in size from a single street through estates, neighbourhoods, wards, other smaller administrative areas such as school catchments areas and parishes, villages, towns, districts, counties to nations and even group of nations' (Ibid, 1994:33).

'Public transport' in this study will refer to taxis and buses as the predominant mode of transport in the Emmaus area.

There is no precise definition of what constitute a *rural area*. This study therefore adopted the definition given by the South African National Department of Transport, which defines '*rural areas*' as scattered areas with low density of assets (Moving South Africa, 2003).

'Transport infrastructure' mean roads, taxi or bus stops and other infrastructure, which make it easier for the mode of transportation to be operated and be accessible by community members.

'Modes of transportation/travelling' refers to motorized (taxis, private cars, buses etc) and non-motorized modes of transportation (carts, sleighs, rickshaws, wheelbarrows, walking etc.).

'School going children' mean children who attend school from grade R to grade 12.

Justification

Attempting to develop rural communities by overlooking the provision of necessary transport infrastructure, particularly for school children, can undermine the development process. Transport for school going children, among other things, remains an important element that needs to be looked at if education has to be accessible to all. But, in trying to improve the situation for rural school children through efficient and accessible means of transport, effort has to be made to try and understand the socio-economic backgrounds of the households from where they are coming. This means that children's family backgrounds and that of the community at large need to be assessed in order to learn more about the dynamics at play, which could impede the development process. This study therefore tries to identify some of the perceptions and dynamics at play, which might, or might not prevent parents from supporting measures aimed at improving the transportation problem of school goers in rural settings. It aims to add to the body of knowledge on rural development, particularly as this relates to transport for school children.

impact on how caregivers participate in their children's education. May *et al*, (2000:36) indicates that 'education is judged by the poor in terms of its relevance as well as by issues of access and quality, and that relevance is seen primarily in terms of the likelihood of eventual access to employment.' These attitudes might affect the level of involvement by parents in their children's education, let alone taking seriously the issue of transport as it affects their children's access to school.

Bronfenbrenner (in Smith and Cowie, 1988:09) explains how the ecological factors can interact in determining human development. According to Smith and Cowie (1988:08), 'ecology' refers to the environmental settings which the person or organism is experiencing, or is linked to directly or indirectly (ibid). Bronfenbrenner (in Smith and Cowie, 1988) provides the levels through which development takes place, starting with the microsystem of which home and school falls, the mesosystem, followed by the exosystem for example parents' employment conditions, and the macrosystem which represents things such as government's policies, culture and so forth. Smith and Cowie, (1988:08) provides that most research is carried out at level of one micro system, for instance relations between parents and their children, or at schools between teachers and pupils.

Bronfenbrenner's theory, in this study, provides an insight in understanding children's family backgrounds as well as some cultural dynamics which could impact on how communities view the importance of transport for children. Culture, as it falls under macrosystem has been influential in determining gender roles and perceptions regarding the ownership and the usage of transport modes as indicated from the previous sections. Bronfenbrenner's theory suggest that in order to understand parental involvement, at all the levels, micro to macrosystem levels need to be understood as they might influence the level

Not all the teachers though believed walking can affect children's perform at school: *"Yes, eh for me, I don't think the distance can affect how the child performs at school, even us used to travel long distances to school, you know, so I don't see how the distance can affect the child's performance in class"* [Teachers group: Ezinyonyana Primary School].

When the caregivers asked if their children do any after-school activities while still at school, 36.7% (45) of them said 'yes' and 63.5% (80) said 'no'. Of the children who remain at school, the caregivers said they do the following activities: to study, play sports, collect water for their teachers or to clean the school. Table 16 presents the respondents' reporting of their children's participation in after school activities by community of origin.

Table 15: Children participation in after school activities by community of origin

Name of Community	Do your children stay at school for after school activities?						Total	
	Yes		No		Don't know			
		%		%		%		%
KwaVimbukhalo	16	33.3	32	66.7	0	0	48	100
Mhlathuza	7	30.4	15	65.2	1	4.3	23	100
Endiya	11	31.4	24	68.6	0	0	35	100
Situlwana	10	52.6	9	47.4	0	0	19	100
Total	44	35.2	80	64.0	1	0.8	125	100

The majority of respondents in each one of these communities said their children do not participate in any after school activities. The activities normally done after school are carried out during the school hours as one primary school teacher puts it: *"Yes we do have activities but we make sure we arrange them during the school hours so that when it's time to go home, nobody remains here, we don't do any activities after school because we think about the distance that the children have to travel home and also it's better if they go with other*