Teachers' Perceptions of Parental Involvement in Children's Education in Rural Limpopo Province Schools

By:

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I am indebted to the following people, who have influenced my life both directly and indirectly:

My appreciation goes to my wife, Matlala Mathekga, for her support and for being the source of my courage, and to my kids, Tshegofatso, Lefa, Mokoto and Mohale, for bringing purpose tomy life – what am I living for, if not for you? My gratitude goes to all my friends and colleagues, especially Solly Malatji, Theo Sewapa, and Enos Ramaphoko, for pushing me to the limit. I am also grateful to the two circuit managers, Mrs Moagi and Legodi, as well as principals in those circuits, for the warm welcome they gave me when I visited their schools. I must offer a special "thank-you" to the principal, staff members and School Governing Body of Miragoma Primary School, Mafa MP –you are simply unbelievable, keep it up! A special thanks goes to my principal and friend, Mr PE Ramaphoko, for his support and understanding – I want you to know that I know that a student is never greater than his master. To my kingdom brothers and my inspirations Mr ML Rababalela and the late Dr Myles Munroe from the Bahamas –words cannot explain what you have done in my life. My sincere gratitude goes to Professor Bennie Grobler, for mentoring and guiding me through my study –keep shining your light to make South Africa a better place in which to live. To my Lord and saviour, Jesus Christ – thank-you for redeeming me from death back to life, AMEN.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this to my late uncle, Malekotu Lazarus Mathekga,for the life lessons he taught me and for seeing something in me that others could not see. I only wish he was here now to ululate.

DECLARATION

I, Sontaga Steyn Mathekga, declare that ***Teachers' Perceptions of Parental Involvement in Children's Education in Rural Limpopo Province Schools*** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Sontaga Steyn Mathekga

<u>13/08/2015</u>

DATE

RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE

The questionnaire was submitted and the requested corrections were made. However, the final clearance from the ethical committee was not obtained. I have taken some trouble to go back through past emails I sent to and received from Mr Mathekga. On 2012/11/20, the first email from Mr Mathekga (via mathess@webmail.co.za) was received.

The questionnaire was forwarded to Professor Botha, who sent it to Dr Claasens. On 2014/08/03, Dr Claasens sent specified corrections that needed to be made to the questionnairein an email to Prof Botha. I forwarded this email to Mr Mathekga on 2014/08/03 (viamathess@webmail.co.za). Thereafter, I sentanother17 emails to Mr Mathekga's mathess@webmail.co.za address.

On 2015/06/23, Mr Mathekgalet me know (after obtaining my phone number from Prof Botha) that his email address had changed to sontagas@gmail.com, which was why he had not been receiving my emails. Since that time, communication has improved. His questionnaire has subsequently met all the requirements as stipulated by the University and he has made all corrections as suggested.

I feel that I have corresponded regularly with this student and that the problem arose simply due to this confusion over his change of email address. So please accept our apologies for any errors from our side.

Yours faithfully

Prof BR Grobler
Supervisor

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of parental involvement in children's education in the rural Mawa and Molototsi circuits in the Mopani district, Limpopo Province. Three-hundred-and-thirty (330) teachers participated in this research survey. The results indicated that the common perception amongst teachers was that parental involvement had positive benefits for both learner performance and social behaviour. The study also revealed that schools used involvement initiatives and strategies to a lesser extent than expected. Primary schools reported higher rates of parental involvement than secondary schools, which suggested that parents of primary school children were likelier to involve themselves in school governance than those of secondary school children. The extent to which the school used media to promote parental involvement was found to be small and moderate. The respondents also perceived certain social and economic barriers as moderate to large impediments to parental involvement.

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EXPLANATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The following are key concepts used in this study:

Teacher perceptions, parental involvement, involvement initiatives, involvement strategies, learning barriers, learner achievement, Cognitive Consistency Theory, Balance Theory, parent involvement, rural schools.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANA   Annual National Assessment

CCT   Cognitive Consistency Theory

CREATE   Consortium for Research on Education Access Transition and Equity

DoBE   Department of Basic Education

EPPE   Effective Provision of Pre-School Education

NDE   National Department of Education

NSC   National Senior Certificate

SASA   South African Schools Act

SGB   School Governing Body

SIP   School Improvement Plan

SMS   Short Message System

SMT   School Management Team

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CHAPTER 1
ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction and Background to the Study

The transformation of the education system in South Africa since the advent of Democracy in 1994 has placed parental involvement at the centre of its agenda by emphasising the role that parents must play in school activities. The *South African Schools Act* of 1996 (RSA. DoBE,1996) outlines how parents should be involved in their children's schools as well as in their education. According to the *SASA* (*ibid.*), parents have an obligation to ensure that their children of school-going age regularly attend school. The Act also espouses the empowerment and authorisation of parents to become actively involved in the formulation of school policies and the maintenance of all school property (including school grounds), engage in fundraising activities, and volunteer their time and services to the children's schools(*ibid.*). The Department of Basic Education (RSA.DoBE, 2009) came up with an initiative called the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC) to improve the quality of South African education relative to those of neighbouring countries. This campaign emphasised the establishment of partnerships amongst all education stakeholders and parents were identified as critical role players who must be involved to improve the quality of education. Among other things, the campaign calls for parents to check the quality of written work given to their children and to assist them with their homework activities by creating an environment conducive to learning in their homes. Teachers, meanwhile, are well positioned to form perceptions about whether parents regularly check the quality of the written work and homework given to learners.

Numerous researchers – such as Lemmer (2007), Mncube (2009), Simango (2006),Gurian (2008), Erlendsdottir (2010), and Berthelsen and Walker (2008) –contend that parental involvement in school activities has a positive impact on the academic performance of their children. However, in the context of South African rural schools, my observation has been that, despite the legislative framework that provides for parental involvement in school activities, parental involvement remains limited and problematic .Section 16 of the *South African Schools Act* (RSA. DoBE,1996) and the *Public Funds Management Act no. 1 of 1999*(RSA. National Treasury, 1999) provide for the involvement of parents in the governance as well as the administration of public school funds in South Africa.

During informal discussions with colleagues in rural schools, I got the overwhelming impression that teachers believe that parental involvement in their children's education was important. Despite this, however, parental attendance at important events like approving annual school budgets is often so poor that such approval has to be delayed until a sufficient number of parents are present. This may even require having to schedule such meetings several times. Hence, I felt unsure as to whether teachers and school managers in the Mawa and Molototsi circuits in the Mopani district of South Africa's Limpopo province shared the view that parental involvement has a positive influence on learner achievement. It is for this reason that I undertook the present investigation into teachers' perceptions regarding the benefits of parental involvement in their children's education as well as their impressions of the initiatives that schools take to bring about greater parental involvement in school activities.

In order for the problem statement to be clearly formulated, it is necessary to discuss aspects of parental involvement.

1.1.1   Parental Involvement

When researchers reflect on parents' involvement in their children's education, they inevitably seem to be led to contemplate how much parents *should be* involved in their children's education. Unfortunately, it is difficult to say, with any certainty, what the actual extent of parental involvement in South African schools is at present. This is because different research articles present differing views and findings on the subject. For example, the finding of Mncube's (2009:91) study of parental involvement in KwaZulu-Natal was that parental involvement varies depending on whether the school in question is situated in a rural or an urban area. Le Cordeur (2015:11), mean while, argues that the parents of learners in poorer South African schools, in particular, do not give teachers the assistance they need. Le Cordeur (*ibid.*) indicates that this lack of assistance or support is especially rife in the poorer schools because the parents in the poorer schools are not competent to perform many of the school governance tasks–such as making recommendations regarding the appointment of principals and the drafting of school budgets – which the School Governing Body (SGB) is supposed to undertake.

Interestingly, Lall, Campbell and Gillborn (2004:98) report on similarly uninvolved parents in rural districts in England. Here, however, the behaviour of these parents seemed to change with the introduction of the New Deal for Communities (NDC) educational project (*ibid.*), an initiative to engender greater parental involvement in schools. This relates directly to the researcher's question: ''Do initiatives designed to promote parental involvement in school activities exist in Mopani district schools?''. Parents are often uncertain as to how they should become involved in their children's school activities. This is largely because they are not sure about the point at which helpful involvement becomes harmful encroachment on educators 'professional terrain.

Writing within the South African context, Lemmer (2007:219) argues that an effective partnership model should also form part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and that schools must design initiatives to promote parental involvement. In their study on educators' perceptions regarding parental involvement, McDermott and Rothenberg (2000:9) found that the majority of parents were not involved in the school activities of their children. Moreover, the teachers who were interviewed in this study indicated their frustrations regarding this lack of parental involvement(*ibid.*). However, although these teachers indicated that they valued parental involvement in school activities, they did very little to elicit it(*ibid.*). This discrepancy is also at the core of the present study, which looks at teachers' perceptions of the extent and impact of initiatives designed by schools to promote parental involvement in the school environment. Research conducted by Al-Shamarri and Yawkay (2008:7) in Kuwait, indicates that, in 2008 in this Middle Eastern country, the parents of children with special needs were more involved in their children's education than parents whose children did not have special needs. Between 64.7% and 95% of the respondents, which were teachers, attested to parental involvement in their particular schools (*ibid.*). Meanwhile, in another study, which was conducted in Australia by Berthelsen and Walker (2008:38) in the same year, on parental involvement in schools 60% of teachers stated that parents were very involved in their children's education, 37% said parents were somewhat involved,and3% indicated no parental involvement at all.

Parents' involvement in their children's educational activities thus seems to vary depending on the context of the school. In the South African context, the 60% parental involvement cited in the Australian study would be considered good, whilst 65% (and 95% in schools with special needs, as is the case in Kuwait) would be viewed as excellent.

Additionally, parents seem more inclined to get involved when learners are still young or when learners have special needs. If this type of involvement can be emulated in high schools, the efficacy of our school system should show great improvement.

1.1.2   Parental Involvement and Learner Performance

Lemmer (2007:218) contends that strong partnerships between school, family and community lead to improved academic achievement, higher self-esteem, better school attendance, and more appropriate social behaviour on the part of learners. If parental involvement has such extensive benefits, it seems worthwhile to plan initiatives to increase it. Indeed, research conducted by the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project (Great Britain. DFES, 2007:5) in England, concluded that home activities undertaken by parents were more important for children's intellectual and social development than were parental occupation, educational attainment or income level. If the findings of the EPPE Project's longitudinal study of 3 000 children between the ages of three and 10 can be generalised across the board, then it is clear that all school stakeholders should design initiatives that promote parental involvement. This could reduce the achievement gap present between children of differing socio-economic status groups and bring about equitable achievement among them. Desforges and Abouchaar (2003, in Reynolds, 2005:7)argue that parental involvement has a greater influence on learner achievement than does variation in the school quality. Desforges and Abouchaar (*ibid.*) suggest that, in schools that are known for the good quality of the education they provide, those that have greater parental involvement should achieve even better academic results than others, despite their being on par with one another in terms of the quality of the education offered.

There thus seems to be compelling evidence that the interest and enthusiasm of their parents helps children to succeed at school. However, the research conducted by Desforges and Abouchaar (2003)provides only vague answers to the question of "whether and how you can facilitate such interest; what form it must take; and whether the outcomes are universally positive". Reynolds (2006: 13), by contrast, expresses doubt over the aforementioned benefits of parental involvement. Reynolds' (*ibid.*) concern about how to facilitate parental interest is related to the research question underlying this study: "what types of initiatives do schools use to promote parental involvement in the school environment?"

Writing specifically of the South African context, Singh, Mbokodi and Msila (2004:305) also express the opinion that parental involvement has an effect on learner performance. Mestry and Grobler (2007:177), meanwhile, cite studies by Squelch and Lemmer (1994) and Heystek and Louw (1999), in which the researchers concluded that active parental involvement improves learner performance, reduces drop-out rates, decreases delinquency, and fosters a more positive attitude towards the school. Furthermore, the advantages of greater parental involvement with children who have special needs have already been mentioned in reference to the research of Shamarri and Yawkay (2008) in Kuwait. According to Gurian (2008:2):

> In addition to improving academic progress, parental involvement pays off in other significant ways; as such involvement is a protective factor against adolescent tobacco abuse, depression, eating disorders, academic struggles and other problems.

However, the question of why, if parental involvement holds such benefits for learners, parents are not far more involved than my observations seem to indicate remains unanswered. Also unclear are details regarding the initiatives taken by school authorities to promote parents' involvement in their children's education. For Berthelsen and Walker (2008:36), schools have a responsibility to design and initiate innovative ways to promote greater parental involvement in school activities. They indicate that parental involvement is facilitated and its benefits enhanced by, for example, teachers' positive attitudes about the parental role in the classroom (*ibid.*).As such, Berthelsen and Walker (*ibid.*) contend, it is teachers' responsibility to provide opportunities for parents to become more involved in such classroom activities.

Nevertheless, it appears that, despite the plethora of research studies that confirm the many benefits associated with parental involvement in school, many schools, although they do not discourage parental involvement, still take no action to initiate or manage it in a more effective manner.

1.1.3   Barriers to Effective Parent Involvement

Many research studies reveal that there are several barriers to effective parental involvement in children's education (Lall *et al.*, 2004; Berthelsen and Walker(2008); Reynolds, 2006; Mncube, 2009; Le Cordeur, 2015). Reynolds (2006), for example, lists low socio-economic status, work-related commitments, poor parenting skills, and negative

teacher attitudes towards parents among the impediments to effective parental involvement.

Singh *et al.* (2004) quotes the research findings of Lareau (1987:79), who attributes the extent of parental involvement to factors like parents' own educational attainment, parents' views on the appropriate division of labour between teachers and parents, the amount of free time that parents have available, and the socio-economic status of the family. The same barriers are also mentioned by Al-Shammari *et al.* (2008), Mestry and Grobler (2007:177), Mncube (2009:95), and Van Wyk (2003), Eccles (1993), Delgado (2004), Heystek (2004), Miretzky (2004), Hawes and Plourde (2005), Mji and Mbinda (2005), Souto-Manning and Swick (2006), Pryor, Crawford, Rice and Pryor (2006), Markward, Mateeva, Markova and Chernova (2006), Dhingra, Manhas and Sethi (2007), Berger (2008), Carter (2008), Sanders (2008), Olatoye and Ogunkola (2008), Peters, Seeds, Goldstein and Coleman (2008), Nojaja (2009), Ratcliff and Hunt (209), Radii (2011), and Makgopa and Mokhele (2013)

1.1.4   Suggested Initiatives to increase Parental Involvement

Berthelsen and Walker (2008:36) believe that initiatives undertaken by schools, such as "inviting parents to become involved in school activities, [convey] to parents that their involvement is welcome and valued and [provide]motivation to be involved''. They further state that invitations to parents should come from schools and teachers as well as learners (*ibid.*). One study that provides extensive information on how schools (and teachers, in particular) can design initiatives to promote parental involvement is provided by Lemmer (2007:223). In Lemmer's study, teachers described how they addressed the parental-involvement barrier parents feeling unwelcome at schools by creating family-like school environments. For example, consideration was given to parents' needs when a venue was chosen for a parents' meeting, for which a venue that was accessible to all was chosen, making it easy for everyone to attend .If the relationship between the school and family is no longer an option but a necessity, (Corrigan and Bishop, in Erlendsdottir, 2010:21), plans must be designed to develop and strengthen this relationship and the initiative for this must be taken by schools and teachers.

Nye, Turner and Schwartz (2008:20) suggest that parental involvement should be fostered by providing parents with knowledge and training on how best they can contribute to their children's education. The Consortium for Research on Education Access Transition and Equity (CREATE) (2011:3), recommends that parental involvement should be initiated and

promoted by schools. In all of these recommendations, the indications are that parents could contribute in a meaningful way. These recommendations are central to the research question: "What types of initiatives do schools and schools managers use to promote parental involvement in children's education?"

In an attempt to answer the above question, Lemmer (2007:227) suggests that parental involvement should not be seen as a teacher issue only but must also be viewed as a departmental issue. She emphasises this by claiming that schools should provide training for school staff and that teacher education programmes should make parental involvement a core module. McDermott and Rothenberg (2000:10) share this view, by stressing that teacher training programmes must involve modules on how teachers can work effectively with the learners 'parents to better their children's education:

> Methods course work should provide opportunities for prospective teachers to learn how to write effective notes, letters and newsletters to families(*ibid.*).

Parental involvement is not a school issue; it is, in fact, a policy issue. Mestry and Grobler (2007:178) also suggest workshops and in-service training for both teachers and parents. Lunts (2003:211) is critical of the fact that, although many schools in the United States of America have access to electronic communication technologies, they seldom use these to promote parental involvement in schools. She further cites examples like emails, hotline-automated calling systems, and voice mails as tools that may be used to enhance parental involvement (*ibid.*). In South Africa, Short Messaging Service (SMS) text messages are commonly used means of communication that may be effectively used to promote parents' involvement in their children's education. This study thus investigates the extent to which schools and school managers in the sample make use of technological resources in an effort to promote greater parental involvement.

In this study, literature regarding parental involvement in school activities from various countries across the world was consulted. This gave me a better understanding of the common themes that surround parental involvement and strategies used to elicit parental involvement as well as the barriers that impede parental involvement in school activities. Furthermore, in the research discussed above, almost all researchers directly or indirectly, relied on the model for parental involvement that was developed by Epstein (1989).

Having provided a short background on the importance of parental involvement in the education of their children, I will formulate the problem in terms of a statement or question.

1.2   Problem Statement

Given the plethora of research articles that attest to the benefits associated with parental involvement (McDermott and Rothenberg, 2000:9; Singh *et al.*, 2004:305; Reynolds,2006; Mestry and Grobler, 2007; Le Cordeur, 2015), the problem question is then:"What are teachers' perceptions regarding parental involvement in their children's education, the benefits associated with parental involvement, and teachers' knowledge of strategies to enhance parental involvement?"

As most teachers are also parents and they are directly involved in educating children, I deemed it important to probe the perspectives of teachers regarding the benefits of parental involvement, the initiatives used to induce parental involvement in school activities, and the extent to which parents are actually involved in school activities.

1.3   Research Hypothesis

At this stage of the study, the research hypothesis will be broadly formulated as it will be further refined in Chapter 4.

- The null hypothesis (Ho): There is statistically no significant association between the dependent variables concerned with teachers' perceptions of parents' involvement in their children's education and the independent variables used in the study.
- The alternative hypothesis (Ha): There is a statistically significant association between the dependent variables concerned with teachers' perceptions of parents' involvement in their children's education and the independent variables used in the study.

1.4   Research Question

The main issue that this study will investigate is the extent to which teachers in the Mawa and Molototsi circuits of the Mopani district in the Limpopo province believe that parents are actually involved inthe education of their children. Enveloped in this issue arethe extent to which teachers and parents recognise the benefits associated with parental involvement in their children's education and the initiatives used by schools and educators to promote parental involvement.
From this, the following questions emerge:

- What core aspects are described in the existing literature regarding the apparent benefits of parental involvement in school activities? What are the perceptions of teachers regarding prevalence of parental involvement in their schools?

From this main question the following sub-questions emerge

- Is there an association between teachers' perceptions regarding parental involvement and the academic performance of learners?
- What types of management intervention can result in greater parental involvement in school activities?
- Does parental involvement have benefits to learner achievement and learner behaviour?

1.5   Aim of the Research

The main aim of this study is to conduct research into teachers' perceptions about parental involvement in their children's education in the Mawa and Molototsi circuits by using a quantitative research approach. I intend to probe teachers' perceptions regarding the extent to which they agree or disagree that there are benefits associated with parental involvement in schools, the extent to which their schools use strategies to promote parental involvement, and the barriers that they perceive as hampering effective parental involvement in their schools.

1.6   Motivation for the Research

The value of this research is that it has the potential to assist the National Department of Basic Education (DoBE) to make better-informed decisions when formulating policies regarding parental involvement in school activities. This research is relevant in that it will shed light on whether teachers' perceptions are consistent with legislation that empowers parents to have more say in their children's education and whether teachers believe in the benefits associated with parental involvement. In addition, the findings of this study will contribute to the existing literature by suggesting ways in which parental involvement may be enhanced, especially in rural circuits like Mawa and Molototsi.

1.7   Explanation of Key Concepts

1.7.1   Parent

The *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary* (1994:254) defines the word "parent" as "a person who has or adopts a child; father or mother". Within the context of education, the *South African Schools Act* (RSA. DoBE, 1996:4) describes such an individual as:

> [A] parent or guardian of the learner[;]the person who undertakes to fulfil the obligation of a person referred to above towards the learner's education at school.

For the purpose of this study, the word "parent" shall refer to either a biological parent or any person who undertakes to fulfil the obligation of the father or mother towards the learner's education at school.

1.7.2   Initiatives

According to the *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary* (1994:205), the word "initiative" refers to:

> The ability to initiate things or the first step in a process that, once taken, determines subsequent events. It can also be an important action that is intended to solve a problem.

For the purposes of this study, the word "initiative" should be understood to refer to a deliberate and intentional action from both educators and school managers to engage parents actively in their children's education.

1.7.3   Involvement

The *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary* (1994:211) defines the verb "involve" as follows:

> [Causing] a person or thing to share the experience or effect of a situation. It can also be seen as causing someone to participate in an event or ongoing process.

Rudney (2005:25) explains that, as busy professional practitioners, teachers can often make assumptions about groups of parents based on scant actual knowledge about them or their contexts. This is particularly common when parents and teachers do not share the same worldviews, experiences or social capital, as is the case when children from rural areas attend urban schools (Horvat, Weininger & Lareau, 2003; Kao and Rutherford,

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2007; Kim and Schneider, 2005).For the purposes of this study, the word "involvement" shall refer to the deliberate and intentional participation of parents in school activities.

1.7.4   Perception

This study arose from my observation as a school teacher that most of my colleagues believed that, whilst parental involvement in their children's education was important, the parents of the children they taught seemed rather apathetic when it came to actual involvement in school affairs or in the governance of the school. Hence, the process that individuals (in this case, teachers) use to select, organise, store and interpret stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world needs to be further investigated. This study is my investigation into the possible reasons for this apparent lack of parental involvement, as observed by teachers.

The first aspect of this scenario that needs clarification is the matter of how people form perceptions, as different people see the same thing different ways. The explanation for this could be varied but some of the more obvious influential aspects involved include: the situation in which individuals finds themselves, the predominant cultural values of their communities, and their particular needs and emotions. All of these factors could influence an individual's perception in some or other way. Among my colleagues' first responses when I asked them why they believed that parents were so apathetic was to point to some individual I personality aspect or an external factor such as a parent's occupation as an indication of disinterest. The problem with this, as I realised on further inspection of the question, is that it is very dangerous for teachers to make judgements about parents' level of interest in their children's education if they do not have all the facts before them. Teachers should thus be careful when attributing possible causes to an observed behaviour. For example, learner misbehaviour at school is often attributed to lack of parental discipline when this may not be the case at all in reality. Teachers should avoid stereotypes, halo effects, and other errors in social perception when drawing conclusions based on their observations of parent behaviour as failing to do so will skew their perceptions of possible causes of parental non-involvement in school matters.

For the purposes of this study, the perceptual process experienced by teachers is possibly best thought of as an intertwining of perception, feeling and thinking. Such an intertwined system is also influenced by, among other things, individual personalities, the ways in which language is acquired and used to express emotions, think and establish relationships, and the myriad identities one takes on through participation in varied communities (Lee, 2010: 652).

When conceiving this study, I was aware of the difficulties associated with investigating parental involvement by looking at teachers' perceptions thereof – the issue of second-hand information potentially being less credible. However, I decided to stick with teachers as my research subjects as most of them are also parents and, as they teach the children of other parents, they are also privy to the behaviour of other parents – giving them a valuable dual perspective. I also took care to ask teachers to state how important parental involvement was to them before I began probing their perceptions of the extent of such involvement. This allowed me to make comparisons between the "ideal" and the "real" situation of parental involvement as seen by the teachers.

1.8   Research Method, Design and Data-Collection Tool

De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (in Simango, 2006:8) explain that quantitative research relies primarily on the collection of numerical data, whereas qualitative research relies mostly on verbal data. Leedy and Ormrod (2010:187), meanwhile, describe survey research as the process of acquiring information about one or more groups of people – perhaps about their characteristics, opinions, attitudes or previous experiences.

For this study, a quantitative research method, coupled with a survey research design and the use of a structured questionnaire as the primary data-collection tool, was identified as the best possible approach. I chose this approach based on the fact that it is fairly cost effective, easy to administer, and allows for greater generalisability of the findings from the research population.

1.8.1   Subjects and Method of Sampling

I used teachers from the Mawa and Molototsi circuits to form the research population in this study. These circuits fall under the Mopani district of Limpopo, which is home to 474 public schools (RSA. DoBE, 2015:17). I used the non-discriminate method of selecting every second school from the list of 52 public schools supplied by the DoBE to identify 20 schools from the Mawa and Molototsi circuits for my study. I then distributed 20 questionnaires to each of these schools via school principals with whom I conducted personal interviews beforehand. These 20 schools thus constituted the research sample from which the data was obtained. To allow for the comparison of learners' academic performance at different schools, the selection included five of the best- and worst-performing secondary and primary schools from the same list (the sampling frame). Academic performance in the secondary school will be in terms of the Grade 12 results as achieved in the 2012 National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examination and the Annual National Assessments (ANA) in Grade 6 for primary schools. Teachers involved in the study included principals, deputy principals, heads of department, and Level One teachers.

1.8.2   Data Collection

The data were collected via a structured questionnaire as data-collection tool. As Leedy and Ormrod (2010:187) explain, survey research is the process of acquiring information about one or more groups of people –their characteristics, opinions, attitudes or previous experiences. This makes survey research an appropriate technique for collecting educators' perceptions about the apparent benefits associated with parental involvement in schools.

1.8.3   Procedure

Prior to commencing this research, I made the necessary arrangements with the relevant authorities at both circuit and school levels. The schools' performance data lists as well as a list of schools in the Mopani district, which formed my sampling frame, were requested from the circuit manager (Babbie, 2008: 221).

Each school was visited on a particular day and permission obtained from the school principal to provide a 10-minute brief to the teachers during break-time. A box, which was placed in a convenient and secure place, was provided for the return of questionnaires. Although I allowed a five-day period for teachers to return their questionnaires, I had to return to numerous schools again in order to collect questionnaires that were not completed the first time around.

1.8.4   Ethical Issues

Participants were told about their rights, that participation was voluntary, and that their opinions were vital as they could serve to assist authorities in making better-informed decisions regarding parental involvement in school activities. Every participant signed a consent form to indicate that they were participating freely. The confidentiality of the respondents was ensured via the provision of blank envelopes in which they placed their questionnaires before sealing and placing them in the return box.

1.9   Chapter Division

- Chapter 1 provided the introduction to the study, problem formulation, and aims of the study. It also outlined the research design and methodology used and clarified certain concepts.
- Chapter 2 will provide the theoretical framework for the study as well as a literature review.
- Chapter 3 will give a brief description of the research design and methods of data collection and data analysis.
- Chapter 4 will constitute the presentation, discussion, and interpretation of the findings.
- Chapter 5 will provide a summary, conclusions and recommendations.

1.10 Conclusion

In Chapter 1, I briefly elucidated the problems that will be researched, in addition to explaining why this research is important and how it will be conducted .In Chapter 2, the foundation of the aspects concerning parental involvement and strategies to enhance such involvement will be investigated in order to identify possible factors that will serve as the dependent variables in this research project. A theoretical framework, which will serve as an appropriate lens through which the findings can be interrogated, will also be identified.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This research study was based on two main theoretical frameworks: Cognitive Consistency Theory and Epstein's six parental involvement typologies. Cognitive Consistency Theory (CCT) was used to explain the contradictions between teachers' beliefs about the benefits of parental involvement and the actions that teachers adopt to promote and encourage parental involvement in their different schools. According to CCT, teachers should display a balance of beliefs and actions with regard to parental involvement. Epstein's(2005)parental involvement typologies will be used to assess which types of involvement teachers deem very important as well as their views of actual parental involvement in this particular involvement activity.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was based on Cognitive Consistency Theory in general and the Balance Theory in particular. According to Heider (1958), the Balance Theory is an approach concerned with individuals' perceptions of the relationship between themselves (p) and two other elements in a triadic structure. I used Balance Theory to investigate the extent to which there was balance between teachers' beliefs about the benefits of parental involvement and the initiatives teachers instigated to elicit it. Gawronski, Peters, Struck and Bodenhausen (2008:107) expand on Heider's theory of cognitive consistency and conclude that implicit and explicit attitudes have their roots in qualitatively different processes, which are associative and propositional processes. The explicit behaviour of educators (doing nothing to initiate parental involvement even when they said that they valued it) was analysed using this theory and the conclusion was that, implicitly, teachers did not, in fact, value parental involvement. Teacher behaviour was explained in terms of the implicit attitudes, beliefs and perceptions that teachers have about the benefits associated with parental involvement. If teachers believe in the benefits associated with parental involvement, there must be a correlation between their beliefs and their actions; their actions should also promote parental involvement in children's education.

Another theory that is relevant is one developed by Epstein (2008). Epstein's six parental involvement typologies are based on her perception of three types of relationships between families and schools. Her first perception is that of separate responsibilities between families and schools. Her second perception is that of shared responsibility between families and schools and her last perception is that of sequential responsibility between families and school (*ibid.*). These theoretical frameworks will be used to assess the types of philosophies held and approaches taken by teachers towards the issue of parental involvement.

2.3   Literature Review

The literature indicates that, when parents are involved in their children's education, there are mostly positive benefits associated with such involvement. Lemmer (2007), Mncube (2009), Simango (2006), Gurian (2008), Erlendsdottir (2010),and Berthelsen and Walker (2008), Bhengu (2005), Jacobs (2005), Kruger and Michalek (2011), Xaba and Nhlapo (2014) contend that parents' involvement in school activities impacts positively on the academic performance of their children. Literature also reveals that the benefits of parental involvement are not only confined to academic performance; parental involvement also strengthens parent-learner, parent-teacher and teacher-learner relationships. Patrikakou (2008) argues that parent involvement also instils a sense of belief in the stakeholders in education in that it clarifies the expectations of each stakeholder and therefore creates an understanding amongst the role players involved in education. Dixon (2008) cites feedback as another essential benefit of parental involvement. Involved parents receive information about their children's performance early and act accordingly. Teachers, in turn, receive information about the learners and their home environments and adjust their teaching accordingly. Feedback between home and school is vital as it clarifies possible misconceptions and misunderstandings between home and school and therefore paves the way for the development of a smooth partnership between the involved parties.

2.3.1   Definition of Parental Involvement

The literature also reveals that teachers differ in terms of their perception of the prevalence of parental involvement. These differences stem from the fact that researchers have differing definitions of what constitutes parental involvement. Differing elements include the party that is most influenced by the subject of the research (i.e. the teachers or the parents) and the phase of the school system on which the research focuses(i.e. foundational, intermediate, senior, or within the further education and training phase).

There is no agreement between researchers on what the best definition of parental involvement is and, as a result, one study may conclude that the rate of parental involvement is high, whilst another study conducted in similar conditions concludes that the rate of parental involvement is too low. Some of the researchers who express similar concerns over this discrepancy include Horvatin (2011), Le Cordeur (2015), Shearer (2006), Horrell (2011), Dixon (2008), Wright (2009). Indeed, according to Wright (2009:45):

> The lack of a true, working definition of involvement makes it more difficult for researchers to draw clear conclusions about the scope and effectiveness of parental involvement.

To make his point, Wright (2009:35) further refers to a study by Barge and Loges (2003) in which parents indicated that, for them, monitoring the academic progress of their children at home was their most valued involvement responsibility. This contrast was in contrast with teacher expectations, which were that parents should also be involved in the classroom.

It seems as if definitions of parental involvement can be divided into three major categories, as outlined by Epstein (2008). Some of the definitions tend to focus more on school-based involvement, some on home-based involvement, and others on the collaboration between home and school. In view of this, it is easy to see why teachers tend to view parents as less involved than parents consider themselves to be. To bridge this misunderstanding, two-way communication between teachers and parents (to clarify the roles and expectations of each group) is imperative. When consulting research on the issue of parental involvement, it is vital to consider the definition thereof adopted by the researcher, as this has a bearing on the conclusion reached by that study.

Closely related to these differences over the definition of parental involvement is the subject of the study. The subject of the study tends to influence the outcome of the study in that, if the subjects of the study are parents, results tend to indicate parental involvement, whereas, if the subjects are teachers, results tend to show lack of parental involvement. Whilst Dixon (2008:18) explains that teachers often complain that parents do not assist in their children's education, Wright (2009:34) warns about teachers' tendency to label parents as uncaring simply because the majority of their colleagues regard them as such. Lawson (2003, in Wright, 2009:4) also argues that, on the whole, teachers tend to be more school-focused in their perceptions of parental involvement and, as a result, regard home involvement essentially as non-involvement. Meanwhile, parents tend to have wider community-encompassing views on the subject. Once again, it is important for the researchers of parental involvement in education to be aware of these factors, as they have bearing on the conclusion reached. Nevertheless, this study focuses on teachers' perceptions of parental involvement and the initiatives that they undertake to promote it. Therefore, conceptions of parental involvement are not the primary issue here. What are of utmost importance in this study are the perceptions of teachers and what they do to promote parental involvement in the effective management and governance of the school.

The last factor that influences perceptions of parental involvement is the phase of the school in which the study is being conducted. Most research studies conducted in the foundation phase tend to report a high rate of parental involvement, whereas research studies conducted in high schools tend to report low rates of parental involvement. This is finding is supported by Abdullah, Seedee, Alzaidiyeen, Al-Shabatat, Azeydeen and Al-Awabdeh (2011:1403),who state that "family involvement tends to decline as students move from elementary to middle to high schools". Simango (2006) also supports this view, based ona study conducted in secondary schools in rural Limpopo, inwhich he found that the rate of parental involvement was very low. Meanwhile, Rahman (2001:11) questions why parental involvement is so limited, especially in high schools, when the literature indicates that such huge benefits are associated with parental involvement. It seems as if the school phase of the learner is a highly determinant factor in parental involvement.

2.3.2   Different Views of Parental Involvement

Due to the differing views on parental involvement, a logical question that comes to mind is "to what extent are parents actually involved in their children's education?" As stated above, there are different views of parental involvement and researchers often disagree about what constitutes parental involvement. So the question is difficult to answer because different research articles have different views on the issue of the prevalence of parental involvement throughout the world. In South Africa, the findings of a research study conducted by Mncube (2009:91) on the issue of parental involvement in KwaZulu Natal found that parental involvement varied among different types of schools, depending on whether the school was situated in a rural or an urban area. Therefore, Mncube concludes that the school context is a determinant factor of parental involvement; rural parents are not involved while urban parents are involved to a large extent (*ibid.*). This view is probably supported by Le Cordeur (2015: 11) but contradicts other findings on the barriers of parental involvement. For example, Reynolds (2006), Berthelsen and Walker (2008), Mncube (2009), and Haack (2007) state that work commitment is a barrier to effective parental involvement in urban areas because urban parents are more likely to be employed than their rural counterparts.. Similarly, Lall, Campbell and Gillborn (2004:98) report on similarly uninvolved parents in rural districts in England. Here, however, the behaviour of these parents seemed to change with the introduction of the New Deal for Communities (NDC) educational project (*ibid.*), an initiative to engender greater parental involvement in schools. This relates directly to my question: ''Do initiatives designed to promote parental involvement in school activities exist in Mopani district schools?''. Parents are often uncertain as to how they should become involved in their children's school activities. This is largely because they are not sure about the point at which helpful involvement becomes harmful encroachment on educators' professional terrain.

Writing within the South African context, this lack of parent involvement, Lemmer (2007:219) argues that an effective partnership model should also form part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and that schools must design initiatives to promote parental involvement. In their study on educators' perceptions regarding parental involvement, McDermott and Rothenberg (2000:9) found that the majority of parents were not involved in the school activities of their children. Moreover, the teachers who were interviewed in this study indicated their frustrations regarding parental involvement(*ibid.*). However, although these teachers indicated that they valued parental involvement in school activities, they did very little to elicit it(*ibid.*). This discrepancy is also at the core of the present study, which looks at teachers' perceptions of the extent and impact of initiatives

designed by schools to promote parental involvement in the school environment. Research conducted by Al-Shamarri and Yawkay (2008:7) in Kuwait, indicates that, in this Middle Eastern country, the parents of children with special needs were more involved in their children's education than parents whose children did not have special needs. The study found that between 64.7% and 95% of the respondents affirmed parental involvement in their particular school (*ibid.*).

It should be borne in mind that it is commonly found that having children with special needs forces their parents to be more aware of and attentive to their needs, as such children are likely to be more dependent on parental support than children who do not have special needs.

Parents' involvement in their children's educational activities thus seems to vary depending on the context of the school. In the South African context, the 60% parental involvement cited in the Australian study would be considered good, whilst 65% (and 95% in schools with special needs, as is the case in Kuwait) would be viewed as excellent.

2.3.3   Parental Involvement and Learner Performance

Lemmer (2007:218) contends that strong partnerships between school, family and community lead to improved academic achievement, higher self-esteem, better school attendance, and more appropriate social behaviour on the part of learners. If parental involvement has such extensive benefits, it seems worthwhile to plan initiatives to increase it. Indeed, research conducted by the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project (Great Britain. DFES, 2007:5) in England, concluded that home activities undertaken by parents were more important for children's intellectual and social development than were parental occupation, educational attainment or income level. If the findings of the EPPE Project's longitudinal study of 3 000 children between the ages of three and 10 can be generalised across the board, then it is clear that all school stakeholders should design initiatives that promote parental involvement. This could reduce the achievement gap present between children of differing socio-economic status groups and bring about equitable achievement among them.

Desforges and Abouchaar (2003, in Reynolds, 2006:7) argue that parental involvement has a greater influence on learner achievement than does variation in the school quality. Desforges and Abouchaar (*ibid.*) suggest that, in schools that are known for the good quality of the education they provide, those that have greater parental involvement should achieve even better academic results than others, despite their being on par with one another in terms of the quality of the education offered.

There thus seems to be compelling evidence that the interest and enthusiasm of their parents helps children to succeed at school. However, the research conducted by Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) provides only vague answers to the question of "whether and how you can facilitate such interest; what form it must take; and whether the outcomes are universally positive". Reynolds (2006: 13), by contrast, expresses doubt over the universal aforementioned benefits of parental involvement. Reynolds' (*ibid.*) furthermore expresses concern about the issue of how to facilitate such parental interest. The above issues are related to the research question underlying this study: "what types of initiatives do schools use to promote parental involvement in the school environment?"

Writing specifically of the South African context, Singh *et al.* (2004:305) also express the opinion that parental involvement has an effect on learner performance. Mestry and Grobler (2007:177), meanwhile, cite studies by Squelch and Lemmer (1994) and Heystek and Louw (1999), in which the researchers concluded that active parental involvement improves learner performance, reduces drop-out rates, decreases delinquency, and fosters a more positive attitude towards the school. Furthermore, the advantages of greater parental involvement with children who have special needs have already been mentioned in reference to the research of Shamarri and Yawkay (2008) in Kuwait. According to Gurian (2008:2):

> In addition to improving academic progress, parental involvement pays off in other significant ways; as such involvement is a protective factor against adolescent tobacco abuse, depression, eating disorders, academic struggles and other problems.

However, the question of why, if parental involvement holds such benefits for learners, parents are not far more involved than my observations seem to indicate remains unanswered. Also unclear are details regarding the initiatives taken by school authorities to promote parents' involvement in their children's education.

For Berthelsen and Walker (2008:36), schools have a responsibility to design and initiate innovative ways to promote greater parental involvement in school activities. They indicate that parental involvement is facilitated and its benefits enhanced by, for example, teachers' positive attitudes about the parental role in the classroom (*ibid.*).As such, Berthelsen and Walker (*ibid.*) contend, it is teachers' responsibility to provide opportunities for parents to become more involved in such classroom activities.

Nevertheless, it appears that, despite the plethora of research studies that confirm the many benefits associated with parental involvement in school, many schools, although they do not discourage parental involvement, still take no action to initiate or manage it in a more effective manner.

2.3.4   Barriers to Effective Parent Involvement

Many research studies reveal that there are several barriers to effective parental involvement in children's education (Lall *et al.*, 2004; Berthelsen and Walker, 2008); Reynolds, 2006; Mncube, 2009; Le Cordeur, 2015). Reynolds (2005: 154), for example, lists low socio-economic status, work-related commitments, poor parenting skills, and negative teacher attitudes towards parents among the impediments to effective parental involvement. Singh *et al.* (2004:35) quotes the research findings of Lareau (1987:79), who attributes the extent of parental involvement to factors like parents' own educational attainment, parents' views on the appropriate division of labour between teachers and parents, the amount of free time that parents have available, and the socio-economic status of the family. The same barriers are also mentioned by Al-Shammari *et al.* (2008), Mestry and Grobler (2007:177),Mncube(2009:95), and Van Wyk (2003:3).

Le Cordeur (2015:11) is probably also correct in his perception that parents with children in poorer schools engage in less effective parental involvement in the management and governance of the school than those whose children attend schools serving a wealthier clientele. In the South African context, this means that schools situated in Quintiles 1, 2 and 3 should experience less effective parental involvement than schools classified under Quintiles 4 and 5.

2.3.5   Initiatives to increase Parental Involvement

Berthelsen and Walker (2008:36) believe that initiatives undertaken by schools, such as "inviting parents to become involved in school activities, [convey] to parents that their involvement is welcome and valued and [provide] motivation to be involved". They further state that invitations to parents should come from schools and teachers as well as learners (*ibid.*). One study that provides extensive information on how schools (and teachers, in particular) can design initiatives to promote parental involvement is provided by Lemmer (2007:223). In Lemmer's study, teachers described how they addressed the parental-involvement barrier of parents feeling unwelcome at schools by creating family-like school environments. For example, consideration was given to parents' needs when a venue was chosen for a parents' meeting, for which a venue that was accessible to all was chosen, making it easy for everyone to attend. If the relationship between the school and family is no longer an option but a necessity, (Corrigan and Bishop, in Erlendsdottir, 2010:21), plans must be designed to develop and strengthen this relationship and the initiative for this must be taken by schools and teachers.

Nye, Turner and Schwartz (2008:20) suggest that parental involvement should be fostered by providing parents with knowledge and training on how best they can contribute to their children's education. The Consortium for Research on Education Access Transition and Equity (CREATE) (2011:3), recommends that parental involvement should be initiated and promoted by schools. In all of these recommendations, the indications are that parents could contribute in a meaningful way. These recommendations are central to the research question: "What types of initiatives do schools and school managers use to promote parental involvement in children's education?"

In an attempt to answer the above question, Lemmer (2007:227) suggests that parental involvement should not be seen as a teacher issue only but must also be viewed as a departmental issue. She emphasises this by claiming that schools should provide training for school staff and that teacher education programmes should make parental involvement a core module. McDermott and Rothenberg (2000:10) share this view, stressing that teacher training programmes must involve modules on how teachers can work effectively with the learners' parents to better their children's education:

> Methods course work should provide opportunities for prospective teachers to learn how to write effective notes, letters and newsletters to families. (*ibid.*)

Parental involvement is not a school issue; it is, in fact, a policy issue. Mestry and Grobler (2007:178) also suggest workshops and in-service training for both teachers and parents. Lunts (2003:2) is critical of the fact that, although many schools in the United States of America have access to electronic communication technologies, they seldom use these to promote parental involvement in schools. She further cites examples like emails, hotline-automated calling systems, and voice mails as tools that may be used to enhance parental involvement (*ibid.*). In South Africa, Short Messaging Service (SMS) text messages are commonly used means of communication that may be effectively used to promote parents' involvement in their children's education. This study thus investigates the extent to which schools and school managers in the sample make use of technological resources in an effort to promote greater parental involvement.

In this study, literature regarding parental involvement in school activities from various countries across the world was consulted. This gave me a better understanding of the common themes that surround parental involvement and strategies used to elicit parental involvement as well as the barriers that impede parental involvement in school activities. Furthermore, in the research discussed above, almost all researchers directly or indirectly, relied on the model for parental involvement that was developed by Epstein (1989).

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

Teachers are often the primary communicators between parents and schools. The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers regarding the prevalence of parents' involvement in their children's school activities as well as teachers' views on the types of initiatives that schools operate to promote parental involvement. In this section, I will discuss the research methodology under the following subheadings: research design (subjects of the research), research sites, and reliability and validity.

3.2   Research Design

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:117), the research design refers to a plan for selecting subjects, research sites and data-collection procedures to answer the research questions. They further outline the goal of research design as being to provide credible information (*ibid.*).

The design for this research study was a survey and the data was collected via a structured questionnaire.

3.2.1   Subjects of the Research

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:119) describe subjects as the individuals who participate in the study and from whom data is collected. In some of the studies, subjects are called participants or respondents and, collectively, the group of subjects or participants from whom the data are collected is referred to as the research sample. The aim of this study was to investigate teachers' perceptions regarding the prevalence of parental involvement in school activities and teachers' views about the initiatives that schools used to promote parental involvement. The subjects of this study were teachers employed in primary and secondary schools in the Mawa and Molototsi circuits. There are 24 schools in the Mawa circuit and 28 schools in the Molototsi circuit, with about 580 teachers in both circuits (RSA. DoBE, 2012:19). I randomly selected 20 schools from the 52 public schools in the two circuits and distributed 400 questionnaires to these schools as described earlier.

The data-collection tool used was a structured questionnaire. Of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 330 were completed and returned, giving a return rate of 82.5%. This high return rate is ascribed to the considerable time and attention that I gave to distributing and collecting the questionnaires. The questionnaire consisted of nine sections and nine pages. The following are some of the descriptive details of those who returned their completed questionnaires to me.

3.2.1.1 Respondent Gender

In terms of gender, Table 3.1provides some of the information.

Table 3.1   Frequencies of the Two Gender Groups in the Sample

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Male	163	49.4	49.4	49.4
	Female	166	50.3	50.3	99.7
	Total	330	100.0	100.0	

The data in Table 3.1 reflect a balanced return rate in terms of teacher gender. There were 1.02 female respondents for every male respondent in the sample, whereas the Department of Basic Education indicates a gender ratio of 1.7 female teachers for every male teacher in the Mopani district, where the two circuits are found (RSA. DoBE, 2012:19).The sample is thus over-representative of male teachers with respect to the Mopani district in Limpopo but it could still be representative of the two circuits used in the sample.

3.2.1.2 Respondent Age Groups

When an ordered variable such as age exists, then a new variable that corresponds to ranges of values in the original variable can be created. Respondents were grouped using the visual binning facility of SPSS 22.0 so that the groups contained more or less equal numbers as this facilitated the statistical testing procedures (Norusis, 2009:72). The age groups are shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2   The Frequency of Age Groups present in the Sample

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
	<= 44.00	96	29.1	29.1	29.1
	45.00 - 47.00	82	24.8	24.8	53.9
Valid	48.00 - 51.00	84	25.5	25.5	79.4
	52.00+	68	20.6	20.6	100.0
	Total	330	100.0	100.0	

The mean age of the teachers in the sample was 46.95 years, the median age 47.0 years and the mode 46.0 years. The average male respondent was slightly younger, at 46.4 years, compared to the average female, who was 47.5 years of age. The data thus indicate that the teachers in the sample are probably older, on average, than most teachers in South Africa. In addition, this data is similar to that found by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) (Van der Linda, 2007:16), which indicates that 42% of all teachers fall in the 31-to-40-years age category and 37% in the 41-to-50-years age category. The data in Table 3.2 indicate that 79.4% of teachers in this sample fall in the 21-to-51-years age group, whilst the HSRC similarly indicates that 79.0% of teachers fall in this age category. The sample is thus representative of the population of teachers with respect to age.

3.2.1.3 Teaching Experience Groups

The teachers' experience in years was also binned visually and four groups resulted. The data is summarised in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Frequency of Teaching Experience Groups in the Sample

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
	<= 44.00 yrs.	96	29.1	29.1	29.1
	45.00 - 47.00 yrs.	82	24.8	24.8	53.9
Valid	48.00 - 51.00 yrs.	84	25.5	25.5	79.4
	52.00+ yrs.	68	20.6	20.6	100.0
	Total	330	100.0	100.0	

The average amount of experience of teachers in the sample was 17.6 years, the median was 19.00 and the mode was 21 years. This data correlates well with the age of the teachers in the sample.

3.2.1.4 Educational Qualifications in the Sample

The initial categories provided were collapsed to four categories, as shown in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 The Frequencies of the Various Qualification Groups in the Sample

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
	G12 +Post school diploma/certificate	28	8.5	8.5	8.5
Valid	Teachers diploma/certificate +FDE	140	42.4	42.4	50.9
	Bachelor's degree	70	21.2	21.2	72.1
	Honours or higher	92	27.9	27.9	100.0
	Total	330	100.0	100.0	

The data in Table 3.4 indicate that only 8.5% of teachers had the lowest qualification of a Grade 12 plus a diploma or certificate. The larger part (42.4%) of the sample had teachers' diplomas plus Further Diplomas in Education. 49.1% of teachers had a degree or higher qualification. The sample is probably representative of the highest levels of educational qualification in the teaching profession.

3.2.1.5 School Type in the Sample

The school type groups consisted of two categories –primary and secondary schools. The appropriate frequencies, as obtained from the questionnaires, are provided in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5   The Frequencies of the Two School Type Groups

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Primary	212	64.2	65.8	65.8
	Secondary	110	33.3	34.2	100.0
	Total	322	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	8	2.4		
Total		330	100.0		

The data in Table 3.5 indicate a ratio of 1.93 primary school respondents for every one secondary school respondent in the sample. The DoBE (2012: 22) indicates a primary-to-secondary school ratio of 1.8 to 1. The sample is thus fairly representative of the population with respect to school types.

3.2.1.6 Educator Organisation (A5)

The vast majority of the respondents (85.5%) belonged to the South African Teachers Union (SADTU). As about 70% of educators nationwide belong to SADTU, this sample is over-representative of SADTU members nationally.

3.2.1.7 The Language of Instruction Groups

The vast majority of schools have English as their medium of instruction and, hence, only two categories, "English" and "Other", were included. The data are given in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6   The Frequencies of the Two Languages of Instruction Groups in the Sample

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	English	238	72.1	72.1	72.1
	Other	92	27.9	27.9	100.0
	Total	330	100.0	100.0	

The data in Table 3.6 show that the majority (72.1%) of the respondents were from schools with English as the language of instruction. The other languages used for instruction were Afrikaans and Northern Sotho and feature simply as "Other" in the Table because there were too few Afrikaans respondents to form a suitable group for statistical analysis.

3.2.1.8 Respondent Socio-Economic Status

The initial three groups were collapsed to form two groups –average and above-average in the one group and below-average in the other group. The data are given in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7   The Socio-Economic Status Groups in the Sample

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Average + above	205	62.1	62.5	62.5
	Below average	123	37.3	37.5	100.0
	Total	328	99.4	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.6		
	Total	330	100.0		

As only 3.0% of the sample indicated that their learners came from above-average socio-economic contexts, this was collapsed with the average group, which contained 59.1% of respondents. The socio-economic status of the majority (97%) of learners in the sample would thus actually be average and below-average.

3.3   Research Sites

All teachers in Mawa and Molototsi were meant to participate and they would form the research population. The two circuits are similar in many aspects. They both fall under the jurisdiction of the Modjadji tribal authority and the common language spoken there is Selobedi, one of the Sepedi dialects. They are both deeply rural circuits, situated between the towns of Tzaneen, Modjadjiskloof and Giyani. On average, schools in these circuits are about 40 kilometres away from any of the above-mentioned towns. They also belong to the Bolobedu cluster, which includes five circuits – Mawa, Molototsi, Rakwadu, Modjadji and Motupa. In terms of labour unions, about half of the schools in Molototsi belong to the Mawa branch and the other half belongs to the Modjadji branches of the SADTU and PEU teacher unions.

Schools in the Mawa circuit are spread amongst the 13 rural villages of the Greater Tzaneen municipality in the Mopani district of Limpopo, whereas schools in Molototsi are spread amongst 16 rural villages in the Greater Letaba municipality of Limpopo's Mopani district. As I wanted to get the views of teachers about the prevalence of parental involvement in rural schools in the Mawa and Molototsi circuits of the Mopani district, these rural schools were best suited for the research.

3.3.1   Pilot Test

As a pilot test, I gave the questionnaire to 20 educators who did not form part of the research sample and asked them to complete it and provide feedback about the clarity of the instructions, the time taken to complete the questionnaire, and whether they thought that the issue of parental involvement in school matters was adequately handled. The feedback received enabled me to address several issues about the clarity of the items and check the reliability of the scales involved. No serious issues concerning reliability were found.

3.3.2 Data Collection

To investigate teacher perceptions of school activities, I developed a nine-page structured questionnaire to be completed by the participants. The questionnaire took between 20 and30 minutes to complete. I approached the two circuit managers to seek permission to conduct the research in their respective circuits. Both circuit managers gave their written permission to do so. The Mawa circuit manager further invited me to a principals' meeting at which I was afforded an opportunity to introduce myself and indicate the benefits of the research study to the whole circuit. I used that opportunity to make appointments with the individual school principals to visit their schools. The two circuit managers also assisted me with an official contact list of schools, which made communication with schools much easier. Appointments in the Molototsi circuit were made via telephone. I visited the schools on the dates agreed with the principal and, after a brief discussion with me, the principal introduced me to the staff in addition to stating the purpose of the study and the possible benefits thereof for the circuit in general and the school in particular. All school principals gave their written permission for me to conduct my study in their schools. Most of the principals were very warm, welcoming and helpful toward me. It was easier getting permission from school principals than getting consent from teachers to participate in the research. This was mainly due to the timing of the research and teacher commitment. The research coincided with the district's continuous assessment (CASS) moderations, ANA tests and Grade 12 trial examinations. This forced me to adopt a flexible approach based on individual schools. In some of the schools, I left the questionnaires with the principal who, at a convenient time, explained the procedure to the whole staff and handed out the questionnaire for teachers to complete .I thus relied heavily on the assistance of principals for my study in these schools. In other schools, however, I was able to explain the procedure for completing the questionnaire in a brief staff meeting of about 10 minutes. All participating teachers were requested to fill in the consent form, which was packaged with the questionnaires, and hand them into the office of the school principal. I negotiated a time period for questionnaire collection with each school as a sign that I appreciated their busy schedules. Most of the teachers requested a period of one week to return the competed questionnaires but some teachers took three weeks to return the completed forms.

After collecting all the completed questionnaires, I started with the process of analysing the data. I used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SSP22.0) to assist with the data analysis. For detail on data analysis, see Chapter 4.

3.4   Reliability and Validity

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:183) define reliability as the consistency of measurement; the extent to which results are similar over different forms of the same instrument or occasions of data collection. They (*ibid.*) define validity as the extent to which inferences made on the basis of numerical scores are appropriate, meaningful and useful. I will discuss reliability and validity under the following sub-headings: split-half and Cronbach alpha reliability, and face and construct validity.

3.4.1   Split-Half Reliability

Split-half reliability is when items of a test that has to be given to a group of participants are divided into two comparable halves and a correlation coefficient is calculated between the two halves (McMillan &Schumacher, 2006:185). However, I used Cronbach's method of splitting the data, which is loosely equivalent to splitting the data in two in every possible way and computing the correlation coefficient for every split. The average of these values is equivalent to Cronbach' alpha (Field, 2009: 674).

3.4.2   Cronbach Alpha Reliability

McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 185) describe Cronbach alpha as a test that measures equivalence of all the items and explain that it is a form of internal consistency that is used for items that are not scored right or wrong. To increase the questionnaire reliability, I used the Cronbach alpha test on all items. All the scales had Cronbach coefficients of above 0.70, which is generally accepted as an indication of good reliability of the scales present in the instrument used.

3.4.3   Face Validity

Trochim (2006) describes face validity as the extent to which a test is subjectively viewed as covering the concept it purports to measure. It probes whether the researcher reached the correct conclusions. I was always alert to threats that could compromise the research findings and conclusions. (The full discussion of the research limitations is provided in Chapter 5.4.1.) In addition, the questionnaire was scrutinised by my supervisor and a statistical consultant in Educational Leadership and Management, which further enhanced the face validity.

3.4.4   Construct Validity

Validity refers to how well a researcher translates or transforms a concept, idea, or behaviour into a functioning and operating reality (Trochim, 2006). Schumacher and MacMillan (2006: 179) define validity as the extent to which inferences made on the basis of numerical scores are appropriate, meaningful and useful. Since the aim of this research was to collect teachers' perceptions regarding the prevalence of parental involvement in their schools, face-to-face interviews would have been an ideal data-collection method. However, conducting such a large number of face-to-face interviews would have been immensely time-consuming and costly. Thus, as I wanted to collect the views of as many teachers in the Mawa and Molototsi circuits as possible, the face-to-face interview method would not have been the most practical choice. I used a questionnaire as my data-collection tool to save time and money. A questionnaire is easy to administer to a large population although it has the disadvantage of lacking the depth in answers that the probing of each individual teacher could have elicited in a face-to-face interview. The construct validity of the questionnaire was determined using factor analytic procedures as several variables or items were used to attempt to measure parental involvement. In such a case, one can measure the correlation between each pair of variables using what is known as an R-matrix (Field, 2009: 628). This process is explained in greater detail in Chapter 4.

3.5   Conclusion

This was a quantitative research study based in rural schools in two circuits namely the Mawa and Molototsi circuits. The two circuits have a total of roughly580 professional teachers, whoformed the population of this research study. The two circuits were carefully selected because of their deeply rural characteristics and proximities to the nearest towns. The circuit managers gave me their permission as well as the contact list of the various School Management Teams (SMTs). The principals also gave their written permission, which was co-signed by the School Governing Body (SGB) chairperson or secretary. A total of 400 teachers participated in the research, while the data from 330 questionnaires were suitable for data analysis, which constituted about 82.5% of the teachers in Mawa and Molototsi circuits who received the questionnaires. All participants signed the consent form to indicate that they were participating of their own free will and that they were not expecting compensation for taking part in the study.

The analysis of the data will be dealt with in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

4.1   Introduction

The study was conducted in the Mawa and Molototsi circuits of the Mopani district of the Limpopo Education Department. A structured questionnaire was used as a data-collection tool. The questionnaire was divided into nine sections. I will discuss the chapter under the following sub-headings: The descriptive statistics of the sample (not discussed in Chapter 3), the factor analytic procedures, testing the 10factors against the various independent variables, synthesis of quantitative analysis, and conclusion.

4.2   Descriptive Statistics of the Sample

4.2.1   The Extent of Belief that Government Funds should follow the Learner and not be based on Quintiles (A9Rec)

The "to no extent" category was combined with the "to a small extent" category and four categories were formed. The frequencies are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1   The Frequencies in the Four Extents of Agreement Groups with Respect to Government Funds following the Learner rather than using Quintiles

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	No to a small extent	73	22.1	22.1	22.1
	To a moderate extent	89	27.0	27.0	49.1
	To a large extent	95	28.8	28.8	77.9
	To a very large extent	73	22.1	22.1	100.0
	Total	330	100.0	100.0	

This grouping of responses could be said to be reasonably equal, with respondents who indicated a moderate to small extent of agreement forming 49.1% of the sample, while 50.9% indicated a large to very large extent of agreement.

Considering that this sample was largely rural, it is surprising that so many indicated that government funds should, to a large and very large extent, follow the learner (50.9%) and not the quintile ranking as is presently the case.

4.2.2   Home Language (A10REC)

It was attempted to collapse the initial 12 categories to the four main language groups namely Nguni, Sotho, Afrikaans and English. However, the sample contained an overwhelming number of Northern Sotho home language respondents and forming Afrikaans and English home language groups was not feasible. Only two groups (Sotho and Nguni) were formed and their frequencies are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2   The Frequencies of the Mother Tongue Groups

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Nguni	51	15.5	15.9	15.9
	Sotho	270	81.8	84.1	100.0
	Total	321	97.3	100.0	
Missing	System	9	2.7		
Total		330	100.0		

The data in Table 4.2 indicate that the overwhelming majority of respondents were mother-tongue Sotho speakers and, thus, this sample was not representative of the various population groups in South Africa or of the other language groups, such as Afrikaans and English, in Limpopo.

Sections B to I on the questionnaire (see Appendix B) consisted of scaled items that probed the perceptions of the respondents in the sample regarding parental involvement in the schools' activities. It looked only at the perception of teachers but, as the vast majority of them are also parents, their opinions were convenient to use. However, this should be remembered and generalisations to the population are only made where the sample was representative of the population.

The sample of 330 respondents was large and this enables the process of factor analysis to be utilised.

4.3 Factor Analytic Procedures

The items in Section B asked respondents to share their perceptions about the *importance* of parents' involvement in the activities of their children. The items were placed on a five-point interval scale from 1("not very important")to 5 ("extremely important"). In order to reduce these variables to a more manageable size, the factor analytic procedure was utilised. More specifically, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Oblimin rotation indicated a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.931 with Bartlett's sphericity of p=0.000. These values implied that factor analysis would, indeed, reduce the variables by grouping them into fewer factors. For the items in Section B, one factor, which explained 66.73% of the variance present and had a Cronbach reliability coefficient of 0.936,was formed. The factor was named "The importance of parental involvement in the activities of children (FB1)". The items, with their factor loadings and mean scores, are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3   Items with their Factor Loadings and Mean Scores involved in FB1

FB1.1 – The importance of involving parents in school activities			
Item	**Description: How important is it that parents are involved:**	**Loading**	**Mean**
B6	In the reading activities of their children?	.883	3.63
B4	In the social activities of their children?	.881	3.58
B7	In the writing activities of their children?	.875	3.59
B8	In the problem-solving activities of their children?	.861	3.63
B3	In the cultural activities of their children?	.845	3.56
B2	In the sporting activities of their children?	.809	3.56
B5	In the spiritual activities of their children?	.780	3.52
B1	In the classroom activities of their children?	.596	3.54
	Average	.816	3.58

Figure 4.1   Histogram and Box Plot showing the Data Distribution in the Factor: "The Importance of Parental Involvement in School Activities"
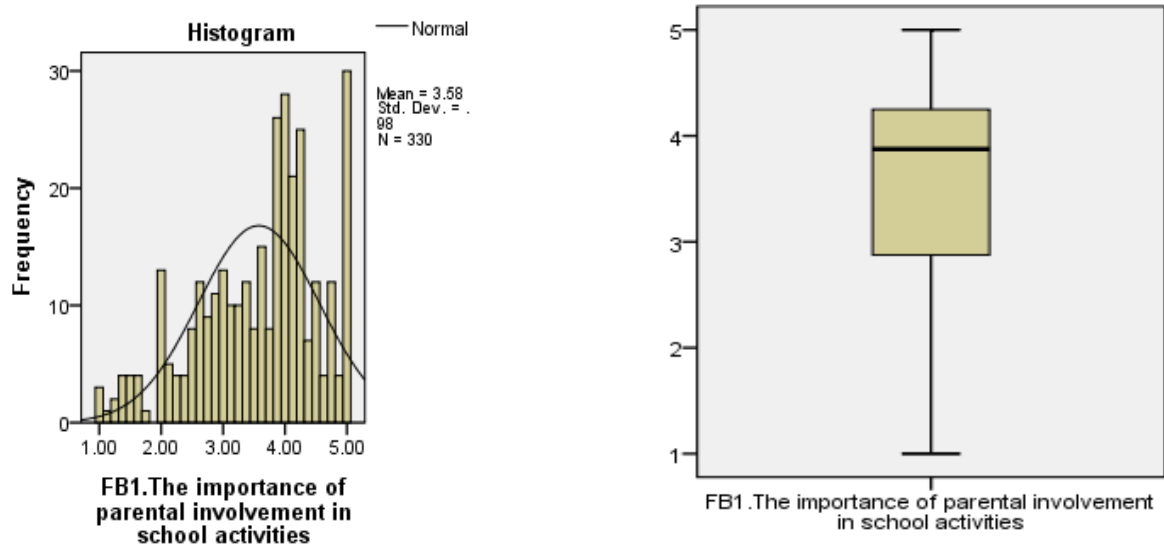
The mean score of 3.58 indicates that respondents believed that it was moderately important, tending towards important that parents were involved in school activities. The respondents indicated that parental involvement in children's reading and problem-solving activities was the most important $(\overline{X} = 3.63)$. The median value of 3.88 indicates that at least 50% of the respondents rated the factor as important. The distribution of the data was slightly negatively skewed. The histogram and box plot in Figure 4.1 overleaf indicate the distribution of the data in the sample.

The data in Table 4.3 indicate the teachers' perceptions about how important parental involvement in school activities is and, as such, their espoused opinions or their observations of parents' behaviour in general. In order to determine the extent to which teachers think that parents actually involve themselves with school activities, items B9 to B16 were posed. The expectation was that parents and teachers were likely to say one thing but do another. Thus, these items (B9 –B16) asked teachers "how often" parents were involved in the various activities of their children at school.

The KMO value of 0.901 and Bartlett's sphericity of p=0.000 indicated that the items could be reduced to fewer variables (factors). The procedure of PCA with Oblimin rotation was the same as the previous procedure. One factor that explained 67.57% of the variance present resulted and it had a Cronbach reliability of 0.931. It was named "the frequency of

parental involvement in school activities (FB2)". The items, their factor loadings, and their mean scores are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4   Items with their Factor Loadings and Mean Scores involved in FB2

Item	Description: How often are parents actually involved in the:	Loading	Mean
B15	Writing activities of their children?	.879	2.73
B14	Reading activities of their children?	.857	2.71
B12	Social activities of their children?	.828	2.96
B16	Problem-solving activities of their children?	.827	2.85
B9	Classroom activities of their children?	.822	2.68
B11	Cultural activities of their children?	.822	2.93
B10	Sporting activities of their children?	.816	2.82
B13	Spiritual activities of their children?	.715	2.87
	Average	.821	2.82

The data in Table 4.4 indicate that teachers were of the opinion that parents sometimes involved themselves in the school activities of their children, although one would have expected that they often involved themselves in such activities. The distribution of data is shown in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2   Histogram and Box Plot Showing the Data Distribution in the Factor the Frequency of Parental Involvement in School Activities

40
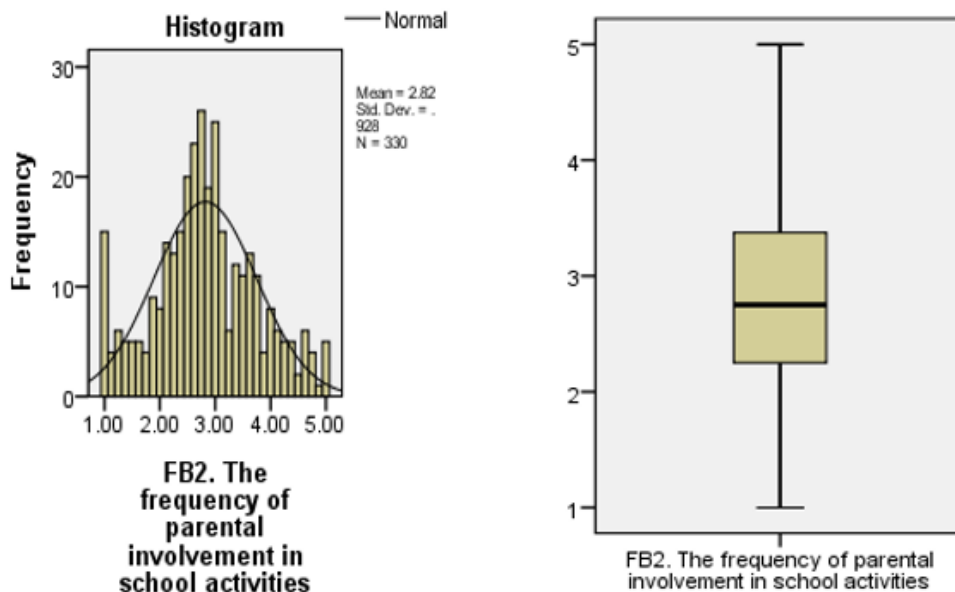
The median value of 2.75 indicates that 50% of the respondents scored this value or higher and, thus, teachers believed that parents tended to only sometimes involve themselves in the school activities that involved their children. The distribution of data is slightly positively skewed.

As the same respondents answered regarding both the importance and the frequency of actual parental involvement in school activities, a paired samples t-test could be used to determine whether these two factor means differed from one another to a statistically significant extent. The results of the paired-samples t-test were:

$$(\overline{X}_{FB1} = 3.58; \overline{X}_{FB2} = 2.82; p = 0.000; r = 0.55)$$

Testing using the non-parametric Wilcoxon signed rank test gave similar results (Z = -10.012; p=0.000; r = 0.55). Both sets of tests indicated that teachers believed that parents did not meet the expectations of the importance requirements or that, in the eyes of the teachers, "parents do not do as they say they do". Moreover, the effect size was large (r = 0.55) and, hence, the practical significance could be that, if this discrepancy is not made clear to parents and teachers, the status quo is likely to remain and matters will continue as in the past. It is also likely that parents are not even aware of the teachers' perception o fthe discrepancy between what they say and what they actually do. This finding supports that of McDermott *et al.* (see Section 2.3.1).The question that now arises is:"What can schools possibly do about this state of affairs?"

I agree with the view of Sengé (1990: 274), who describes organisations as being inherently political. Public schools are, after all, government institutions and all the legislative mandates and expectations contained therein are political in nature. Furthermore, they are all hierarchical and bureaucratic and, hence, obtaining a sense of participatory management is extremely difficult. That is because this would necessitate changing the perceptions of the communities concerned to one of "in this school we do what is right rather than concentrating on who wants what done" (*ibid.*). In order to create such a climate, it is necessary that openness is given priority because, where openness is present, people are allowed to speak openly and honestly (participative openness) about important issues.

They should also continually challenge their own thinking, a practice that Sengé (1990: 281), refers to as "reflective openness". Openness emerges when two or more individuals become willing to suspend their judgement in each other's presence and they become willing to share their thinking and indeed to be susceptible to having their thinking influenced by one another (Sengé, 1990: 284). It is no easy matter for a school principal who has to implement government legislation to express his/her vulnerability to others and the creation of an open climate where dialogue can occur is only possible when a commitment to serve one another is present. The spirit of the *South African Schools Act* (RSA. DoBE,1996) is about participative governance. The hierarchical structure of public schools does not lend itself towards participatory governance. Furthermore, school principals are held accountable for the professional management of the school but are also concerned with school governance as they are ex-officio members of the SGB, where they represent the Education Department. Many teachers also believe that the school principal should manage the school on his/her own and, hence, act in an authoritative way. The SGB is seen by such teachers as an unnecessary hindrance and they believe that parental involvement should be kept to a minimum. However, in a constitutional democracy, involvement of the parent community is essential and, hence, the sooner a school leader establishes an open participative climate, the better for all concerned. In fact, the *South African Schools Act* (RSA. DoBE, 1996) gave formal effect to a participative form of democracy by redistributing power to local school governing bodies with the removal of centralised control over certain aspects of educational decision-making and the establishment of cooperative governance between education authorities and the school community. In essence, these provisions are intended to establish a democratic power-sharing and cooperative partnership among the state, parents and educators.

Section C of the questionnaire was similar to Section B in that it also asked about the importance and frequency of actual involvement but it was about school governance, which has been alluded to above. Items C1 to C8 asked teachers to give their opinions about the importance of having parents involved in school governance. The PCA procedure using Oblimin rotation indicated that the items could be reduced to one factor only. The KMO value of 0.907 and Bartlett's sphericity of $p=0.000$ both pointed towards a more parsimonious solution. The one factor explained 71.33% of the variance present and had a Cronbach reliability of 0.942. The factor was named "the importance of parental involvement in school governance (FC1)". The items, with their factor loadings and mean scores, are given in Table 4.5 overleaf.

Table 4.5

Table 4.6   Items with their Factor Loadings and Mean Scores involved in FC1

	FC1-The importance of parental involvement in school governance		
Item	**Description: How important is it that parents are involved in:**	**Loading**	**Mean**
C6	Developing school plans and other school policies?	.887	3.66
C8	Giving of their time to assist with school activities?	.879	3.53
C5	Approving the annual budget of the school?	.876	3.99
C4	Attending scheduled meetings of the school?	.869	3.85
C7	Developing the vision and mission of the school?	.866	3.66
C3	Being members of other SGB sub-committees of the school?	.822	3.76
C2	Fundraising activities of the school?	.805	3.34
C1	Being members of the school governing body of the school?	.743	4.07
	Average	.843	3.73

The data in Table 4.5 indicated that the majority of teachers believed that it was moderately important $(\overline{X} = 3.73)$ tending towards important that parents were involved in school governance activities. The median was 4.00 and, hence, 50% of teachers rated this item as being important. Teachers ratedItemC1 (being members of the school governing body of the school) as the most important item. The same can be said about item C5, which had to do with approving the school budget. This despite the fact that one would have expected a stronger sense of importance from the teachers, as parental involvement is about participatory governance and not about only "rubber stamping" the school budget. The distribution of data is shown in Figure 4.3 overleaf.

Figure 4.3   Histogram and Box Plot showing the Data Distribution in the Factor the Importance of Parental Involvement in School Governance (FC1)
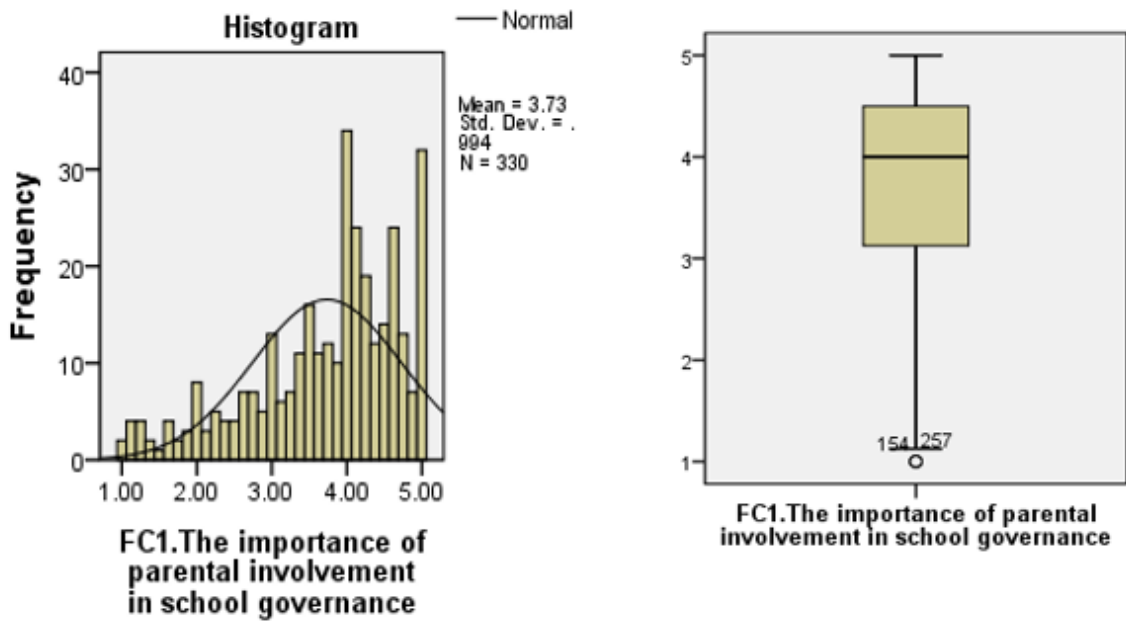
Both the histogram and the box plot indicate that the data were slightly negatively skewed.

Items C9to C16 asked teachers to give their perceptions of the frequency with which parents involved themselves in school governance. The KMO value of 0.908 and Bartlett's sphericity indicated that a more parsimonious solution than the eight items was possible. After a PCA procedure, with Oblimin rotation, only one factor resulted that explained 68.62% of the variance present and had a Cronbach reliability of 0.934. The items and their factor loadings and mean scores are displayed in Table 4.6 overleaf.

Table 4.7   Items with their Factor Loadings and Mean Scores involved in FC2

	FC2- Frequency of parental involvement in school governance		
Item	Description: How often are parents actually involved in:	Loading	Mean
C14	Approving the annual budget of the school?	.890	3.02
C15	Developing school plans and policies?	.886	2.98
C16	Giving of their time to assist with school activities?	.863	2.79
C13	Attending scheduled meetings of the school?	.839	3.43
C12	Attending scheduled meetings of the school?	.814	3.33
C11	As members of other SGB sub-committees?	.813	3.18
C10	Fundraising activities of the school?	.783	2.64
C9	Being members of the school governing body?	.726	3.61
	Average	.827	3.11

Figure 4.4   Histogram and Box Plot showing the Data Distribution in the Factor the Frequency of Parental Involvement in School Governance (FC2)
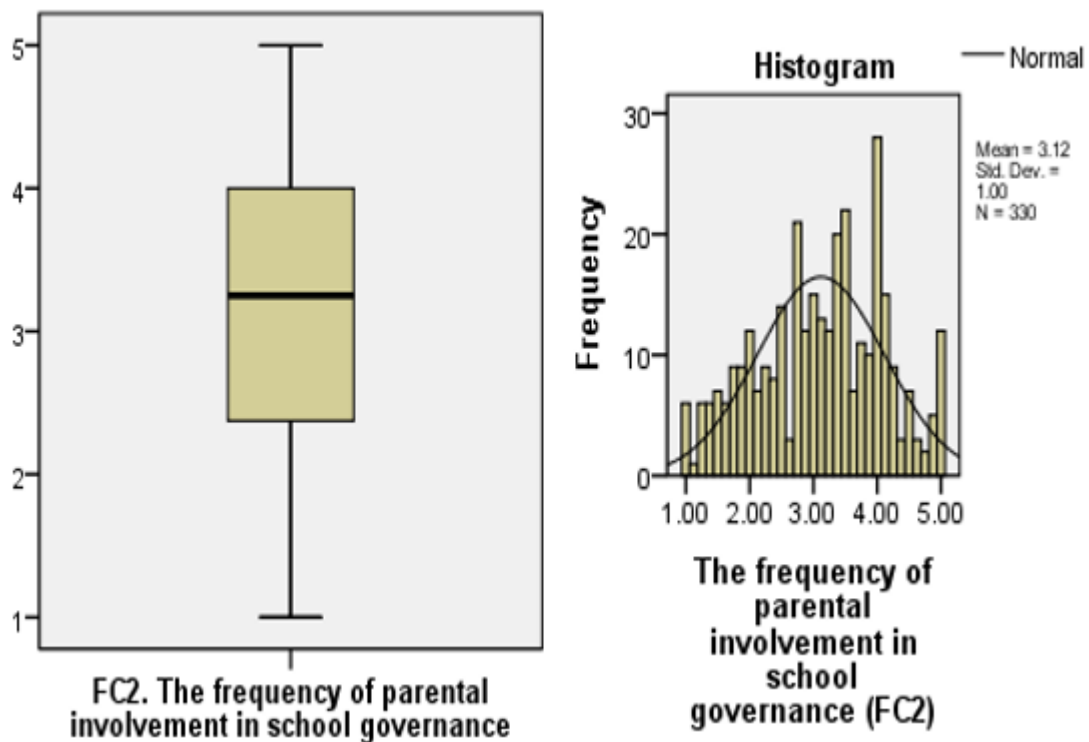
The data in Table 4.6 indicated that teachers had the perception that parents sometimes involved themselves in school governance activities ($\overline{X} = 3.11$). The median of 3.25 was similar and also indicated an involvement that is far from what one would expect namely parents should often involve themselves in school governance activities. The distribution of data that is symmetrical is shown in Figure 4.4.

As both factors had the same respondents a dependent t-test can be utilised to determine the difference between the importance (ideal) and the actual observation (reality). The results were $(\overline{X}_{FC1} = 3.73; \overline{X}_{FC2} = 3.11; p = 0.000; r = 0.50)$. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test gave similar results (Z = -9.142; p=0.000; r = 0.50). The large effect size (r=0.50) indicates the substantive importance of this finding namely that the espoused view (the ideal) is usually higher than that which we actually do or see. Teachers thus perceived the parental involvement in governance as more important than that which they (parents) demonstrate by actual involvement in school governance. This finding supports those of Wright (2009:34) and Dixon (2008:18), where they indicate that perception is in the "eye of the beholder" and hence teachers tend to see parents as not being involved in school governance (see 2.3).

The correlation of FB1 with FB2 had a value of r = 0.292 while the correlation of FC1 with FC2 was r = 0.434. This possibly indicates that teachers believe that it is more important for parents to be involved in school governance than it is for them to be involved in the activities of their children at school. This, in turn, could be interpreted as parental involvement and is acceptable in school governance because it is legislated to be so but the professional management of the school, which involves teaching activities, is the domain of the professionals.

Section D contained nine items that asked respondents the extent to which they believed that their schools initiated programmes that promoted parental involvement in their schools. The KMO value of 0.903 and Bartlett's sphericity indicated that a more parsimonious solution was possible. The PCA procedure with Oblimin rotation resulted in one factor that explained 66.73% of the variance present. The Cronbach reliability was 0.936 and it was named the extent to which the school initiates programmes to promote parental involvement (FD1). The items with their loadings and mean scores are given in Table 4.7 overleaf.

Table 4.8   Items with their Factor Loadings and Mean Scores involved in FD1

	FD1 – The extent to which school initiates programmes to promote parental involvement		
Item	**Description: To what extent does your school:**	**Loading**	**Mean**
D3	Initiate programmes about teacher training on effective parental involvement?	.869	2.75
D5	Initiate programmes where a teacher is assigned to foster parental involvement?	.868	2.84
D4	Initiate programmes that include parental involvement in the school development plan?	.850	3.02
D2	Initiate programmes clarifying the expected role of parents in the school?	.845	2.93
D9	Have a register of parents who actually assist with school activities?	.820	2.51
D1	Initiate a parent involvement guide designed by teachers and parents?	.816	2.80
D8	Have a register of parents who visit the school of their own accord?	.804	2.70
D6	Provide parents with an annual schedule of parents meetings?	.766	3.29
D7	Have a data base of parents contact details?	.699	3.38
	Average	.815	2.91

The data in Table 4.7 indicated that the respondents believed that their schools initiated programmes that promoted parental involvement to a moderate extent ($\overline{X} = 2.91$). In order to stimulate participatory governance one would wish to have a mean of at least 4 as this would indicate that the school initiates parental involvement programmes to a large extent. The data distribution is shown in figure 4.5

Figure 4.5   Histogram and Box Plot showing the Data Distribution in the Factor the Extent to which the School initiates Programmes that stimulate Parental Involvement (FD1)
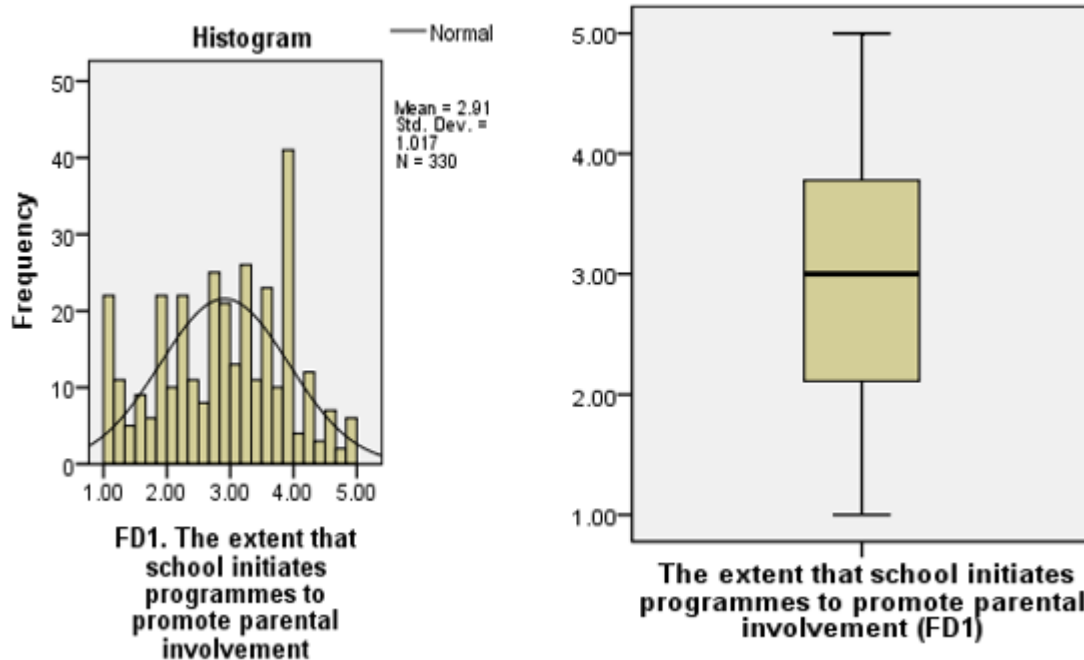
The median value was 3.00 and hence 50% of the teachers scored a value of 3 or higher. The distribution of data was symmetrical around the mean.

Section E contained nine items that asked respondents as to the extent to which their schools made use of certain strategies to promote parental involvement. Item 5 was missing from the final questionnaire and hence it was ignored in the analysis of the data. After removing Items E7 and E9 as they had a Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) less than 0.6 the PCA procedure with Oblimin rotation resulted in a KMO value of 0.835 and Bartlett's sphericity of p=0.000. The six remaining items resulted in one factor that explained 61.47% of the variance present. It had a Cronbach reliability of 0.862. The items with their loadings and mean scores are given in Table 4.8 overleaf.

Table 4.9   Items with their Factor Loadings and Mean Scores involved in FE1

	FE1- The extent to which school uses strategies to promote parental involvement		
Item	**Description: To what extent does your school:**	**Loading**	**Mean**
E6	Use school cultural days as a strategy to promote parent involvement?	.879	2.41
E8	Use personal invitations to parents by teachers as a strategy to promote parent involvement?	.788	2.15
E2	Use parent weekend meetings as a strategy to promote parent involvement?	.785	1.96
E3	Use parent holiday meetings as a strategy to promote parent involvement?	.762	2.01
E1	Use parent evening meetings as a strategy to promote parent involvement?	.703	1.84
E4	Use an open school day for parents as a strategy to promote parent involvement?	.670	2.53
	Average	.765	2.19

The data in Table 4.8 indicated that the teachers were of the opinion that their schools used strategies that promote parental involvement to a small extent only $(\overline{X} = 2.19)$. The use of open days had the highest mean of 2.53 indicating that it is a strategy that is used to a small tending to a moderate extent. It is possible that teachers in the sample either believed that their schools do not need to promote parental involvement as it is already satisfactory or that they do not want more parental involvement. The distribution of data is shown in Figure 4.6 overleaf.

Figure 4.6   Histogram and Box Plot showing the Data Distribution in the Factor the Extent to which the School uses Strategies to promote Parental Involvement (FD1)
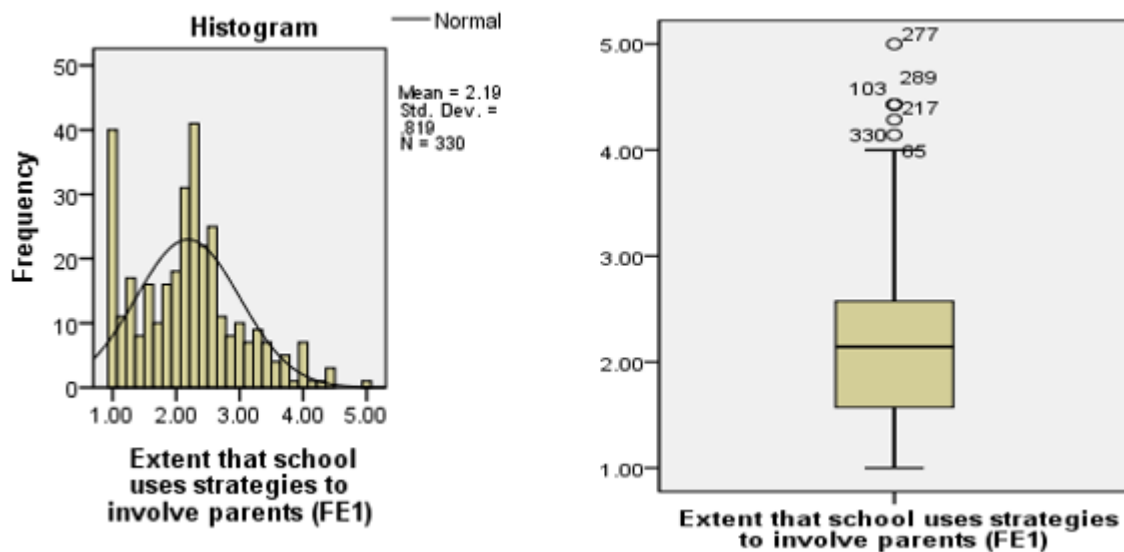
The median value of 2.14 also indicated that 50% of respondents scored this score or higher. The boxplot also indicated that there were some respondents who had the perception that their schools used these strategies to a large and very large extent but these were only isolated respondents (such as 277, 289 and so on).

Section F of the questionnaire contained eight items that probed the perceptions of teachers as to the extent to which their schools make use of certain media as sources to promote parental involvement. The initial procedure indicated that items F5 and F7 have MSA values less than 0.6 and hence they were removed. The PCA and Oblimin rotation then resulted in a KMO value of 0.799 and Bartlett's sphericity of p=0.000 indicating that distinct factors were a possibility. One factor resulted that explained 47.05% of the variance present and that had a Cronbach reliability of 0.754. The items, their loadings and mean scores are indicated in Table 4.9 overleaf.

Table 4.10   Items with their Factor Loadings and Mean Scores involved in FF1

Item	Description: To what extent does your school use:	Loading	Mean
— FF1			

	FF1 – The extent to which the school uses media sources to promote parental involvement		
Item	**Description: To what extent does your school use:**	**Loading**	**Mean**
F1	Invitation letters to promote parental involvement?	.791	2.03
F3	Short message systems (SMSs) to promote parental involvement?	.774	2.27
F2	Oral invitation by learners to promote parental involvement?	.768	2.94
F8	Phone calls to parents to promote parental involvement?	.630	2.74
F4	Newspapers and newsletters to promote parental involvement?	.541	3.93
F6	Social media such as face-book and twitter to promote parental involvement?	.505	1.99
	Average	.668	2.65

The data in Table 4.9 indicate that teachers believed that their schools used media to a small tending to a moderate extent to promote parental involvement. Newspapers and newsletters obtained the most favourable score namely 3.93 indicating that schools used these to a moderate tending to a large extent. The modern social media obtained the least favourable response and it is possible that face-book and twitter are recent innovations and still have to be tested in this regard. This is even more so in deep rural areas where this research was conducted. The data distribution is shown in Figure 4.7 and it is positively skewed.

Figure 4.7 Histogram and Box Plot showing the Data Distribution in the Factor the Extent to which the School uses the Media to promote Parental Involvement (FF1)
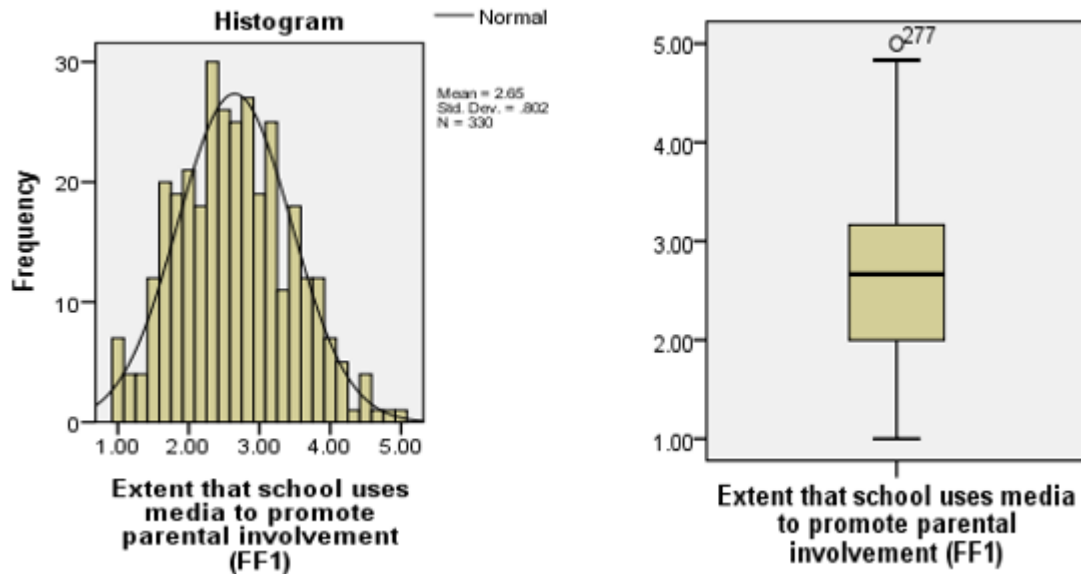
Section G contained eight items that asked teachers to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the items provided. The items were anchored by 1 (indicating strong disagreement)at one end of the scale and 5 (indicating strong agreement)at the other end. However, the items were about learner behaviour and teachers probably believed this to be contentious as these issues all have an indirect influence on learner achievement. Items G2 and G1 had MSA values less than 0.6 and were removed from the procedure. This resulted in a KMO value of 0.825 and Bartlett's sphericity of p=0.000. One factor containing six items with Cronbach reliability of 0.845 resulted. It explained 64.99% of the variance present. However, the Cronbach reliability increases to 0.924 if item G3 is removed. The PCA procedure with Oblimin rotation was repeated with G3 removed and the variance explained increased to 77.34% for the 5 items. The factor was named "the extent of influence of parental involvement on learner behaviour" and it had a reliability of 0.924. The five items involved in the factor are shown together with their factor loadings and mean scores obtained in Table 4.10 overleaf.

Table 4.11   Items with their Factor Loadings and Mean Scores involved in FG1

FG1 –The extent of influence of parental involvement on learner behaviour			
Item	Description: To what extent do you agree or disagree that parental involvement:	Loading	Mean
G5	Reduces learner dropout rates?	.910	3.97
G6	Improves learner problem solving skills?	.901	4.32
G7	Reduces learner substance abuse?	.883	4.23
G4	Improves learner social behaviour?	.867	4.00
G8	Has no effect at all?	.835	4.20
	Average	.879	4.14

The data in Table 4.10 indicate that the respondents agreed with the items that could possibly influence learner behaviour. The highest mean was recorded on item G6 where a mean of 4.32 shows that the respondents agreed that parental involvement improved the problem solving skills of learners. Rather surprising was item G8, which indicated agreement with parental involvement having no influence at all. Inspection of the frequency tables of item G8 indicated that 86.0% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed that parental involvement had no influence on learner behaviour. It is likely that this item was not carefully answered and that teachers should have disagreed with this item. All items before had to be answered with increasing agreement to the right and it is likely that the item was superficially answered as it contradicts the other items. These items could also influence learner achievement in an indirect way. In retrospect, it is apparent that the scale should possibly have been inverted. The distribution of data is shown in Figure 4.8 overleaf.

Figure 4.8   Histogram and Box Plot showing the Data Distribution in the Factor the Extent of Influence of Parental Involvement on Learner Behaviour (FG1)
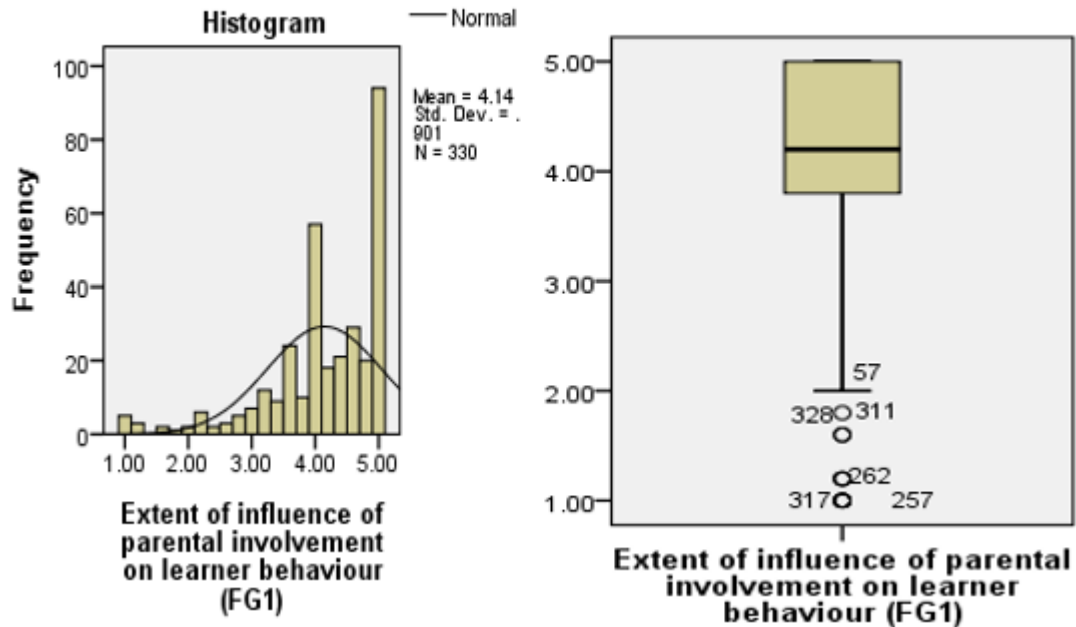
The data are negatively skewed, as is clearly indicated by the median value of 4.20, which indicates that 50% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the items in the factor.

Section H had eight items that asked about the extent to which parental involvement fostered school objectives. Item H3 had an MSA less than 0.5 and was removed from the analysis. The KMO value of 0.793 and Bartlett's sphericity of p=0.000 indicated that fewer factors could be formed. Two first-order factors emerged that explained 72.39% of the variance present. These two first-order factors were subjected to another factor analytic procedure and one factor that explained 73.14% of the variance present, resulted. It had a Cronbach reliability of 0.864 and contained seven items. The factor was named "the extent to which parental involvement fosters school objectives (FH2.0)" and the loadings and mean scores of the items involved are shown in Table 4.11 overleaf.

Table 4.12 Items with their Factor Loadings and Mean Scores involved in FH2.0

	FH2.0- The extent to which parental involvement fosters school objectives		
Item	**Description: To what extent does your school use parental involvement:**	**Loading**	**Mean**
H5	For approval of the annual school budget?	.853	3.50
H4	To give parents' progress reports concerning their children?	.821	3.53
H8	To improve the overall academic improvement of learners?	.799	3.85
H6	For providing parents insight into the audited financial report?	.777	3.41
H7	To congratulate parents when learners' do exceptionally well?	.774	4.10
H2	To deal with learners' learning difficulties?	.952	4.09
H1	To solve poor learner social behaviour?	.951	4.09
	Average	.847	3.80

The data in Table 4.11 indicated that the respondents believed that parental involvement fosters school objectives to a large extent. Items H7, H1 and H2 all had mean scores above 4.0 indicating that the respondents believed that these three items were most applicable to parental involvement fostering school objectives. The hidden meaning behind these three items could be that the main objective of the school is to enhance learner potential especially with respect to learning. The data distribution in this factor is shown in Figure 4.9 overleaf.

Figure 4.9 Histogram and Box Plot showing the Data Distribution in the Factor the Extent to which Parental Involvement fosters School Objectives (FH2.0)
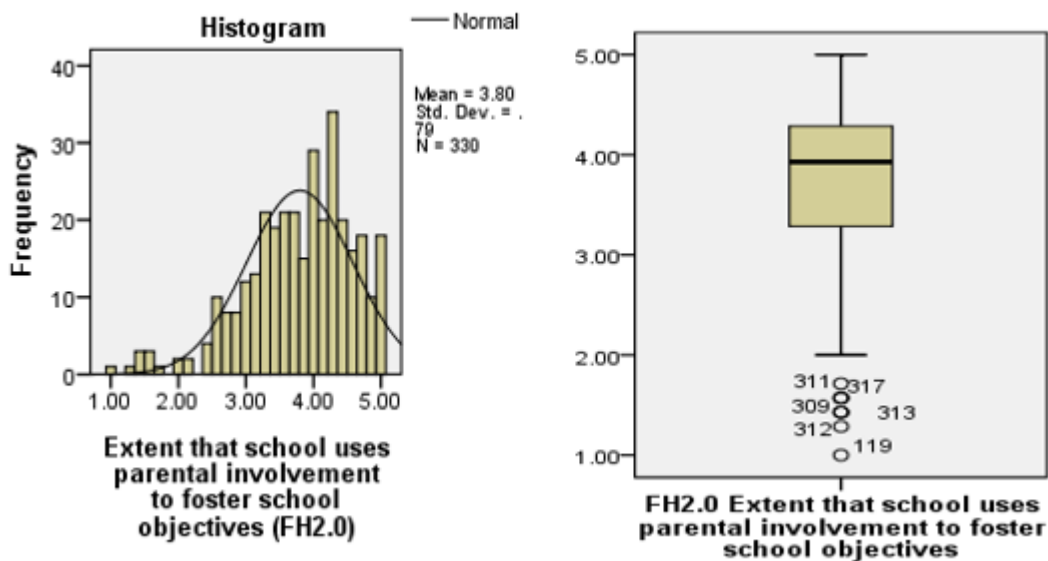
The median value of 3.93 also indicated that the majority of respondents signalled that, to a large extent, they agreed that the items involved showed that parental involvement fosters school objectives, one of which could be to keep parents informed about the progress of their children. The distribution of the data was negatively skew.

The last section of the questionnaire, namely Section I, contained eight items that asked respondents to give their perceptions of the frequency with which some barriers could influence parental involvement. The initial PCA procedure indicated that Items 16 and 18 had MSA values smaller than 0.6 and should be removed. On their removal the KMO value was 0.726 and the Bartlett's sphericity still significant at $p=0.000$. Two first-order factors resulted that explained 66.62% of the variance present. When subjected to a second-order procedure, one factor resulted that explained 64.45% of the variance present. It had a Cronbach reliability of 0.724, which could be increased if item 17 was removed. On removing Item 17 the Cronbach coefficient increased to 0.754 and contained 5 items. These items and their factor loadings and mean scores are shown in Table 4.12 overleaf.

Table 4.13   Items with their Factor Loadings and Mean Scores involved in FI 2.0

FI 2.0-The frequency with which barriers influence parental involvement			
Item	**Description: How often does:**	**Loading**	**Mean**
I2	Work related commitments act as barriers to effective parental involvement in school activities?	.906	3.51
I3	A perception of teachers negative attitudes towards parents act as barriers to effective parental involvement in school activities?	.878	3.63
I1	The socio-economic status of the family act as barriers to effective parental involvement in school activities?	.795	3.77
I5	A lack of knowledge on how to get involved in school activities act as barriers to effective parental involvement in school activities?	.754	3.43
I4	A low educational level of the parents act as barriers to effective parental involvement in school activities?	.740	3.28
	Average	.814	3.52

The data in Table 4.12 indicate that teachers had the perception that the barriers that influenced parental involvement do so to a moderate extent only $(\overline{X} = 3.52)$. The socio-economic status of the family achieved the highest mean score and it is seen as a barrier that sometimes, too often, influences parental involvement in school activities. This finding correlates with that of Le Cordeur (2015:11), as discussed in the literature review under Section 2.3.3. The distribution of the data is given in Figure 4.10 overleaf.

Figure 4.10 Histogram and Box Plot showing the Data Distribution in the Factor the Frequency of Barriers preventing Parental Involvement in School Activities (FI 2.0)
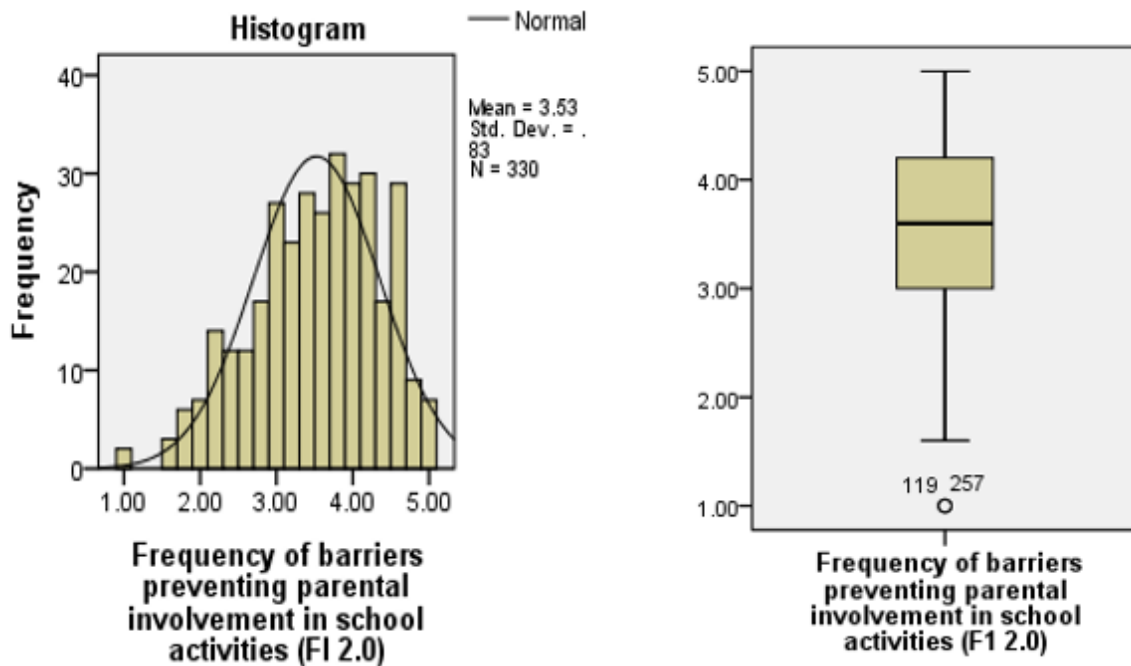
The median value of 3.60 indicates that 50% of the respondents obtained this score or higher and thus the factor tends towards respondents having the perception that these barriers to a moderate and large extent hamper parental involvement in school activities.

To summarise the factor analytic procedures it would be useful to name the factors obtained as they will be used throughout the statistical testing procedure. They were:

- FB1. The importance of involving parents in school activities
- FB2. The frequency of with which parents are involved in school activities
- FC1. The importance of involving parents in school governance
- FC2. The frequency with which parents are involved in school governance
- FD1. The extent to which the school initiates programmes to promote parental involvement
- FE1. The extent to which the school uses strategies to promote parental involvement
- FF1. The extent to which the school uses media to promote parental involvement
- FG1. The extent of influence on learner behaviour by parental involvement
- FH2. The extent to which parental involvement fosters school objectives
- F12. The frequency of barriers that influence parental involvement

4.4 Testing the Ten Factors related to Parental Involvement (Dependent Variables) against the Various Independent Variables

The factors arrived at during the process of factor analysis will serve as dependent variables in this research. The independent variables will be the various biographic and demographic variables contained in Section A of the questionnaire. Two independent groups can be tested using the independent t-test for parametric data and the Mann-Whitney U-test for non-parametric data.

4.4.1 Gender as Independent Group (A1)

The first independent group to be investigated will be to see if male and female respondents differ statistically significantly with respect to the importance of the school initiating programmes to promote parental involvement (FB1). The null hypothesis:

Ho – There is statistically no significant difference between the mean scores of the two gender groups with respect to the importance of involving parents in school activities.
Ha – There is statistically a significant difference between the mean scores of the two gender groups with respect to the importance of involving parents in school activities.
The appropriate data as tabulated is displayed in Table 4.13.

Table 4.14   Significance of Differences between the Two Gender Groups with Respect to FB1

Factor	Group	Mean	t-test (p-value)	Effect size (r)
The importance of involving parents in school activities (FB1)	Male	3.56	0.800	-
	Female	3.59		

Based on the data in Table 4.13, it can be seen that both male and female respondents believed that it was of moderate importance that the school should involve parents in school activities. Thus, although female respondents agreed to a slightly greater extent than males, this difference in mean scores was not sufficient to eliminate the possibility of chance playing a role in the results.

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Hence, one cannot reject the null hypothesis and, thus, there is statistically no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female respondents with respect to the importance of parental involvement in school activities and both groups agreed that it was moderately important. If, however, the independent t-test indicated a significant value ($p<0.05$) then the result was not due to chance and the null hypothesis cannot be accepted (the alternative hypothesis is correct). When testing the frequency of how often parents are actually involved in school activities then one would expect a different response as it is always easier to say something than to do it. Hence, the espoused or importance of parental involvement will not necessarily equate to actual involvement or behaviour on the part of parents. The hypotheses could be as follows:

- Ho – There is statistically no significant difference between the factor means of male and female respondents with respect to how often parents are involved in school activities (FB2).
- Ha – There is statistically a significant difference between the factor means of male and female respondents with respect to how often parents are involved in school activities (FB2).

The appropriate data is supplied in Table 4.14 below.

Table 4.15   Significance of Differences between the Two Gender Groups with Respect to FB2

Factor	Group	Mean	t-test (p-value)	Effect size (r)
The frequency of parental involvement in school activities (FB2)	Male	2.71	0.031*	0.12
	Female	2.93		

** = Statistically significant at the 1% level ($p<0.01$)

*= Statistically significant at the 5% level ($p>0.01$ but <0.05)

Effect size – r = 0.1 to 0.29 small; r = 0.30 to 0.49 moderate; r = 0.50 + large

The data in Table 4.14 indicate that, although both male and female respondents have the perception that parents rarely to sometimes involve themselves in school activities, females are statistically significantly more positive regarding the frequency of parental involvement in school activities than male respondents are. Thus, the null hypothesis cannot be accepted (it must be rejected) and the alternative hypothesis is more likely to

occur. As a p value of 0.03 is smaller than a p-value of 0.05 we can eliminate the likelihood that chance was responsible for this result. Either female respondents are by nature more positive in their perceptions or their more caring nature allows them to interact more with parents regarding school activities. It is also possible that they are also parents and that when it comes to school matters then the mother often takes the lead in the South African context.

As most of the hypotheses are similar and there are many factors to be considered, I am only going to show and discuss the results where statistically significant differences were present.

Table 4.16   Significance of Differences between the Two Gender Groups with Respect to the Dependent Variables or Factors

Factor	Group	Mean	t-test (p-value)	Effect size (r)
The frequency with which parents are involved in school governance (FC2)	Male	2.88	0.000**	0.23
	Female	3.34		
The extent to which the school initiates programmes to promote parental involvement (FD1)	Male	2.79	0.038*	0.11
	Female	3.03		
The extent to which parental involvement fosters school objectives (FH2)	Male	3.67	0.004**	0.16
	Female	3.92		
The frequency of barriers that influence parental involvement (FI2)	Male	3.41	0.013**	0.14
	Female	3.64		

** = Statistically significant at the 1% level (p<0.01)

*= Statistically significant at the 5% level (p>0.01 but <0.05)

Effect size – r = 0.1 to 0.29 small; r = 0.30 to 0.49 moderate; r = 0.50 + large

In each of the four dependent variables (factors), female respondents had a statistically significantly higher factor mean score than male respondents. In the frequency with which parents were involved in school governance both male and female respondents believed that parents were involved to a moderate extent.

Both gender groups also believed that the school-initiated programmes that promoted parental involvement to a moderate extent, as was the case with school objectives, but the

gender groups tended to believe in the involvement-fostering school objectives to a larger extent. In the barriers factor, female respondents tended towards the perception that such barriers often influenced parental involvement, while male respondents believed that this only happened sometimes.

4.4.2 Educator Organisations as Independent Group (A5Rec)

The overwhelming majority(90.7%)of educators who participated in the study belonged to the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), with very few educators belonging to other organisations (9.3%). This large inequality was probably the reason that no significant differences could be found for any of the 10factors concerned.

4.4.3 Type of School (A6Rec)

The vast majority of teachers were from primary and secondary schools and hence these two groups were tested against the 10 factors. Only the factors where significant differences were found are displayed in Table 4.16 below.

Table 4.17 Significance of Differences between the Two School Type Groups with Respect to the Following Factors:

Factor	Group	Mean	t-test (p-value)	Effect size (r)
The frequency of with which parents are involved in school activities (FB2)	Primary	2.92	0.009**	0.19
	Secondary	2.61		
The frequency with which parents are involved in school governance (FC2)	Primary	3.39	0.000**	0.41
	Secondary	2.61		
The extent to which the school initiates programmes to promote parental involvement (FD1)	Primary	3.16	0.000**	0.34
	Secondary	2.41		
The extent to which the school uses strategies to promote parental involvement (FE1)	Primary	2.39	0.000**	0.37
	Secondary	1.76		
The extent to which the school uses media to promote parental involvement	Primary	2.80	0.000**	0.28
	Secondary	2.33		

(FF1)				
The extent of influence on learner behaviour by parental involvement (FG1)	Primary	4.33	0.000**	0.33
	Secondary	3.79		
The extent to which parental involvement fosters school objectives (FH2)	Primary	3.98	0.000**	0.39
	Secondary	3.44		
The frequency of barriers that influence parental involvement (FI2)	Primary	3.71	0.000**	0.39
	Secondary	3.14		

** = Statistically significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$)

*= Statistically significant at the 5% level ($p > 0.01$ but < 0.05)

Effect size – r = 0.1 to 0.29 small; r = 0.30 to 0.49 moderate; r = 0.50 + large

The data in Table 4.16 indicate that eight of the 10factors involved showed statistically significant differences regarding the various aspects of parental involvement, with primary school respondents having the highest factor mean in each instance. All eight of these factors indicated statistically significant differences on, at least, the 1% level of significance. As the effect size is a standardised measure, the various effect size differences can be compared with one another. The frequency with which parents were involved in school governance (FC2) had the largest effect size (r = 0.41) and it thus appears as if parents are more likely to involve themselves in the governance of schools at the level of primary schools than they are at the secondary level. Parents are probably more interested in aspects of learning while their children are young and the management and governance of primary schools is also less complex than it is for secondary schools. Also, secondary school children probably demand greater independency from family ties than do primary school children and, hence, parents tend to allow older children to have much more say in their relationships with peer groups than they would give to younger children. This finding supports those of Abdullah *et al.* (2011), Simango (2006: 32) and Rahman (2001: 11) (see Section 2.3)

4.4.4　Language of Instruction (A7Rec)

No significant statistical differences could be found between English as the language of instruction (73.0%) compared to the other languages, which constituted only 27% of the sample.

4.4.5　The Socio-Economic Status of the Majority of Learners in the School (A8Rec)

There were too few respondents who indicated that they came from schools that were perceived to be of above-average socio-economic status so they were grouped with the average group.

Table 4.18　Significance of Differences between the Two Socio-Economic Status Groups with Respect to the Following Factors:

Factor	Group	Mean	t-test (p-value)	Effect size (r)
The frequency of with which parents are involved in school activities (FB2)	Av.+ Above	2.95	0.030*	0.12
	Below average	2.67		
The frequency with which parents are involved in school governance (FC2)	Av.+ Above	3.28	0.000**	0.22
	Below average	2.84		
The extent to which the school initiates programmes to promote parental involvement (FD1)	Av.+ Above	3.09	0.000**	0.22
	Below average	2.63		
The extent to which the school uses strategies to promote parental involvement (FE1)	Av.+ Above	2.36	0.000**	0.30
	Below average	1.90		
The extent to which the school uses media to promote parental involvement (FF1)	Av.+ Above	2.75	0.002**	0.17
	Below average	2.48		

Factor	Group	Mean	t-test (p-value)	Effect size (r)
The frequency of barriers that influence parental involvement (FI2)	Av.+ Above	3.64	0.005**	0.16
	Below average	3.36		

** = Statistically significant at the 1% level (p<0.01)

*= Statistically significant at the 5% level (p>0.01 but <0.05)

Effect size – r = 0.1 to 0.29 small; r = 0.30 to 0.49 moderate; r = 0.50 + large

The data in Table 4.17 indicate that the group who had the perception that the majority of their learners came from above-average and average socio-economic situations had a higher factor mean in each of the six factors described in the table. The factor with the largest effect size (r = 0.30) was the factor concerning the extent to which the school used strategies to promote parental involvement. To a small extent, the respondents from schools with learners who came from average and above average socio-economic situations agreed that their schools used strategies to promote parental involvement, whilst the respondents with learners from below-average socio-economic situations agreed to an even smaller extent with the strategies to promote parental involvement. This is probably because it is easier to promote parental involvement where funds are more readily available than they would be in below-average conditions. In addition, the community is likely to be more responsive.

4.4.6   Home Language (A10Rec)

No significant differences could be found between the two language groups – Nguni and Sotho. There were too few English and Afrikaans home-language respondents and they thus had to be ignored. The sample was overwhelmingly dominated by persons from the Northern-Sotho-speaking group (79.7%).

When there are three or more independent groups involved, the ANOVA test can be used to determine whether the three groups differ from one another. If the ANOVA indicates that there is a difference at the multivariate level, post-hoc tests are used to test for pair-wise differences. The non-parametric equivalent is the Kruskal-Wallis test at the multivariate level and then the Mann-Whitney U-test for pair-wise differences. The first variable to be tested will be the age groupings. Age (A2 Binned)

The only factor where significant differences between the age groups could be found was in the extent to which the school uses strategies to promote parental involvement (FE1). The Kruskal-Wallis test indicated that there was a statistically significant difference when the three groups are tested together. The appropriate data was as follows:

$$[H(3) = 11.06; p = 0.011]$$

Hence the three groups do differ statistically significantly from one another when tested as one group. However, this test does not show which of the age groups actually differed from the others. Is it Groups 1 and 2, Groups 2 and 3, or Groups 1 and 3? One way to see which groups differ from the rest is to investigate the box plot. The box plot is shown in Figure 4.11 below.

Figure 4.11 Box Plot of the Extent to which the School uses Strategies to Promote Parental Involvement according to the Four Age Groups
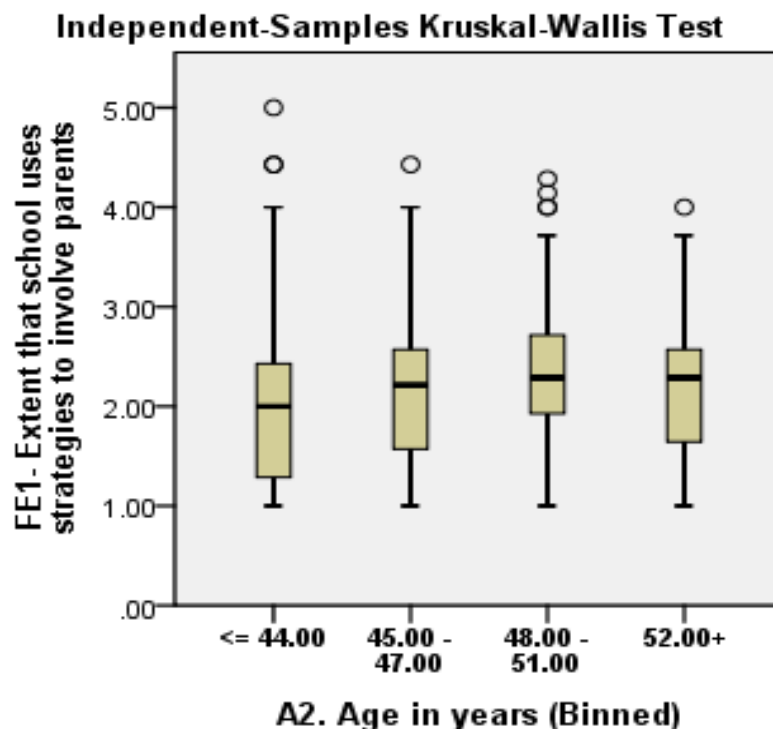
The box plot indicates that the median value of the 48-to-51-years age group had the highest value and that the 44-years-or-less age group had the lowest median value. According to Field (2009: 565), if one wishes to avoid making a Type 1 error by doing a series of Mann-Whitney U-tests between the four age groups then the two groups that

actually differ should be used. From the box plot in Figure 4.11, it seems as if the ≤44-years age group differs significantly from the 48-to-51-yearsage group. The appropriate Mann-Whitney values were:

$$(\overline{U}_{<44\,yrs} = 78.94; \overline{U}_{48-51yrs} = 103.71; p = 0.001; Z = -3.195; r = 0.24).$$

The 48-to-51-yearsage group thus agreed to a statistically significantly greater extent with schools using strategies to promote parental involvement than did the youngest age group of 44 or fewer years. It is possible that the principals, deputy principals and Heads of Department fall in this older age group and as such they are possibly more aware of the use of strategies to promote parental involvement. In addition the majority of the teachers in the sample fall in this age category (see Section 3.2.2).

4.4.7   Teaching Experience (A3 Binned)

There were four teaching experience groups formed. The Kruskal-Wallis (H) test indicated that three (FB2; FC2; FD1) of the 10 factors showed significant differences across the years of teaching experience groups. The results were as follows:

[FB2 H (3) = 9.804; p=0.020; FC2 H (3) = 8.69; p=0.034; FD1 H (3) = 9.113; p=0.028]
Inspection of the box plots of the three factors concerned indicated which pairs were likely to be involved in the significant differences. The data that came from the Mann-Whitney U-test is summarised in Table 4.18 overleaf.

Table 4.19   Pair-Wise Differences across the Age Groups for the Following Factors

Factor	Group	Mean Rank	Z	p-value	r
The frequency of with which parents are involved in school activities (FB2)	≤10 years	89.19	-2.82	0.000**	0.22
	25+years	67.93			
The frequency with which parents are involved in school governance (FC2)	≤10 years	91.23	-2.52	0.012**	0.20
	11-19years	72.07			
The extent to which the school initiates programmes to promote parental involvement (FD1)	≤10 years	111.54	-2.54	0.011**	0.18
	20-24years	90.77			

** = Statistically significant at the 1% level (p<0.01)

*= Statistically significant at the 5% level (p>0.01 but <0.05)

Effect size – r = 0.1 to 0.29 small; r = 0.30 to 0.49 moderate; r = 0.50 + large

The data in Table 4.19 indicate that the group with the least teaching experience (10 or less years) had the highest mean rank in each case and hence they were more positive about the aspects of parent involvement than the older groups. In the frequency with which parents were involved in both school activities and were school governance, the least experienced group agreed to a greater extent with the factors concerned. This group was also the most positive about their school initiating programmes that promote parental involvement.

4.4.8   Highest Educational Qualification (A4Rec)

The original six categories were collapsed to four and, when the 10factors were tested against the four qualification groups, the Kruskal-Wallis test indicated that three of the factors (FC1; FE1; FF1) showed significant differences across the four age groups. The Kruskal-Wallis (H) results were:

[FC1- H (3) = 8.381; p = 0.039; FE1 – H (3) = 9.14; p=0.028; FF1 H (3) = 13.021; p=0.005]

The box plots of these three factors were screened to see which actual age groups differed from one another and then the Mann-Whitney U-test was utilised to determine the significance of the differences. The results are summarised in Table 4.19 overleaf.

Table 4.20   Pair-Wise Differences across the Appropriate Qualification Groups for the Following Factors:

Factor	Group	Mean Rank	Z	p-value	r
The importance of involving parents in school governance (FC1)	T. Dip. + FDE	108.23	-2.320	0.020*	0.15
	Honours +	129.09			
The extent to which the school uses strategies to promote parental involvement (FE1)	PS. Dip.+ G12	62.59	-2.62	0.009**	0.20
	T. Dip.+ FDE	88.88			
The extent to which the school uses media to promote parental involvement (FF1)	PS. Dip.+ G12	58.30	-3.13	0.002**	0.24
	T. Dip.+ FDE	89.74			

** = Statistically significant at the 1% level (p<0.01)

*= Statistically significant at the 5% level (p>0.01 but <0.05)

Effect size – r = 0.1 to 0.29 small; r = 0.30 to 0.49 moderate; r = 0.50 + large

With respect to the importance of involving parents in school governance, the data in Table 4.19 indicate that the group with the highest educational qualifications also believed that it was more important to involve parents in school governance than teachers who had a teaching diploma and a further Diploma in Education. In the other two factors, the group with a teachers' diploma and FDE were more positive in their support than the teachers with the lower qualification were.

4.4.9   The Extent of Agreement with the Statement that the Allocation of Government Funds should follow the Learner and not be based on the Schools' Particular Location or Quintile (A9 Rec)

The original item could be answered by using one of five categories with "to no extent" identified by 1 and "to a very large extent" by 5. "To no extent", "to a small extent" and "to a moderate extent" were combined into one group (G1), as they would indicate a more negative view of government funding following the learner, whereas the "agree to a large extent" and "agree to a very large extent" options would indicate a positive view and, hence, they were grouped together (G2). Thus, two groupings resulted namely G1 (A negative view) and G2 (A positive view). The independent t-test indicated that two of the 10 factors concerned with parental involvement in school activities showed interactions with the G1 and G2 groups. As there were 10dependent variables involved, I did a multivariate analysis (MANOVA). In a MANOVA the factors are tested to see whether the vector means of the two independent groups differ statistically significantly from one another with respect to the 10 factors taken together (Field, 2009:605). Any difference at this level would then be tested pair-wise using t-tests with Bonferroni correction. In this research, this means that, instead of the p value being less than 0.05, it would become 0.025. The results of the two parental involvement factors that indicated significant interactions are displayed in Table 4.20 below.

Table 4.21   Significance of Differences between the Four Agreement Groups with Respect to the Following Factors:

Factor	Group	Mean	Wilks-Lambda (p-value)	t-test (p-value)	Effect size
Importance of parental involvement (FC1)	Negative view	3.61	0.011**	0.023*	0.13
	Positive view	3.86			
Strategies to promote parental involvement (FE1)	Negative view	2.29		0.019*	0.15
	Positive view	2.08			

** = Statistically significant at the 1% level (p<0.01)

* = Statistically significant at the 5% level (p>0.01 but <0.05)

Effect size – r = 0.1 to 0.29 small; r = 0.30 to 0.49 moderate; r = 0.50 + large

With respect to the importance of parental involvement (FC1), the data in Table 4.20 indicate that the group with the more positive view who supported government funding following the learner had the highest factor mean score and, hence, agreed to a larger

extent than the group with the more negative view. The group with the highest factor mean on parental involvement thus differed from the present government funding formula, which is based on so-called quintiles where government funding is allocated according to the relative wealth of the surrounding community.

It is possible that the group that believed to no to a small extent that funds should follow the learner was also negative about more parental involvement in school governance and were of the opinion that greater centralisation of governance functions would be a good thing. The line graph of this relationship is shown in Figure 4.12 below.

Fig.4.12: A Line Graph showing the Mean Scores of the Two Extent of Agreement Groups with Respect to the Importance of Parental Involvement in School Governance (FC1)
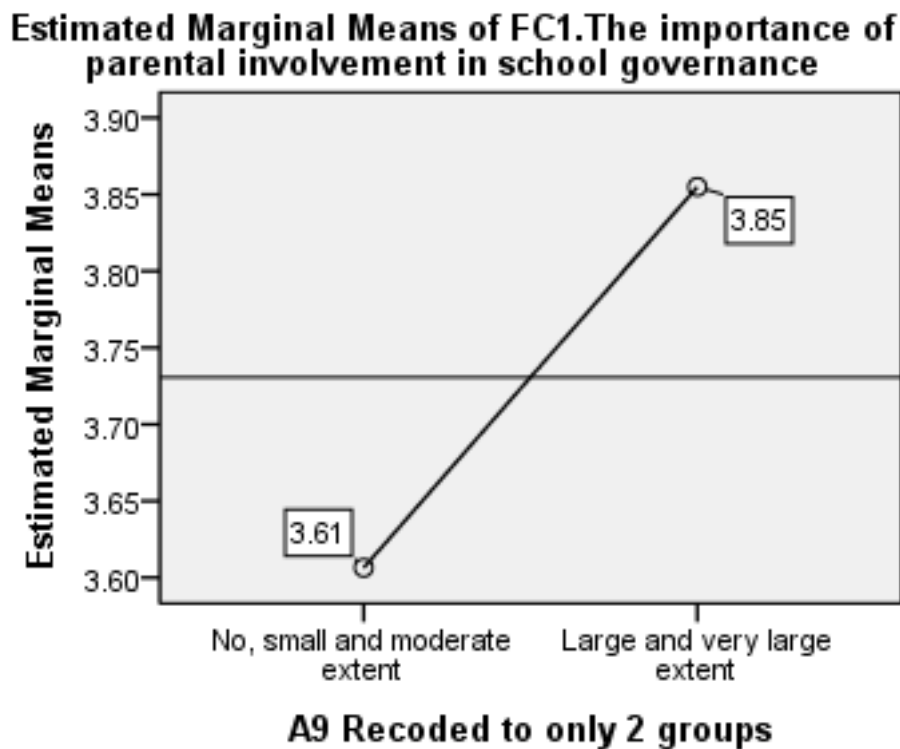
The data in Table 4.20 also show a statistically significant difference between the positive and negative view groups with respect to the extent to which the school uses strategies to promote parental involvement (FE1). Both the groups had the perception that their schools used strategies to promote parental involvement to a small extent only but the respondents with the more positive view of government funding following the learner agreed (to a significantly smaller extent statistically)that their schools used strategies to involve parents to a greater extent. This could be seen as criticism of the school by the

more positive group as they possibly feel that the school should be more actively involved with both programmes and strategies to obtain greater parental involvement. This relationship is shown in Figure 4.13.

Figure 4.13 A Line Graph showing the Mean Scores of the Two Extent of Agreement Groups with Respect to the Extent to which the School uses Strategies to Promote Parental Involvement (FE1)
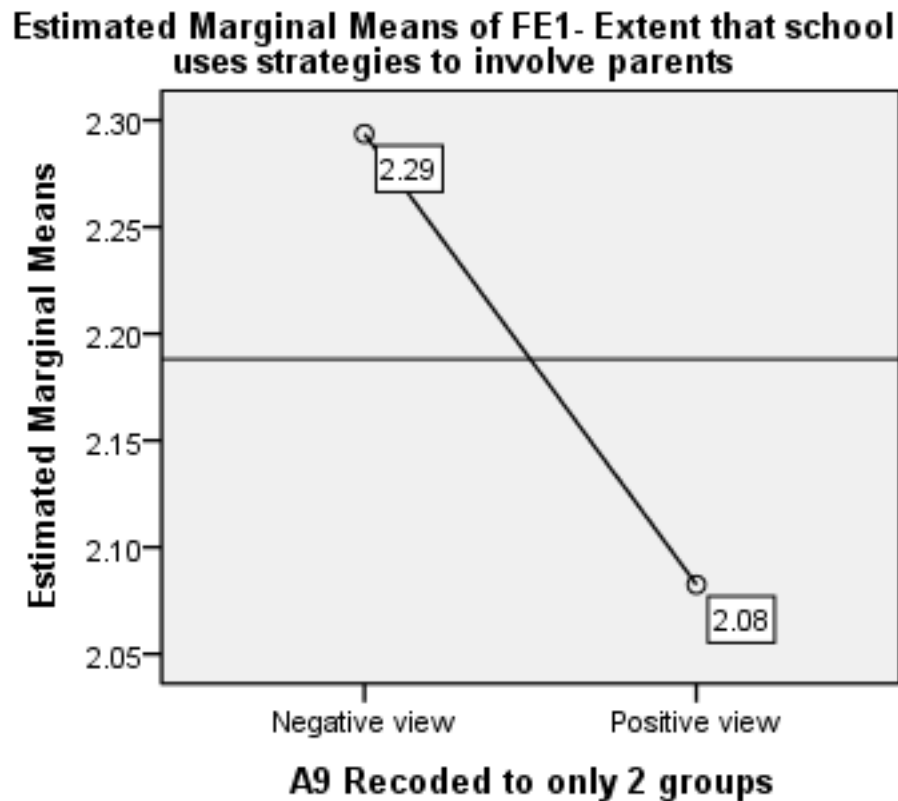
4.4.10 Significance of Differences of Primary School Performance Groups with Respect to the Dependent Variables

I included another independent variable, which I named "academic performance of primary schools in the district (K1)". Performance was set at a 60% pass rate in primary schools in the Annual National Assessment examinations. The only factor that showed any significant differences was the factor "the extent to which parental involvement fosters school objectives(FH2)". The results were the same whether parametric or non-parametric procedures were utilised:

$$(\overline{X}_{Performing} = 3.76; \overline{X}_{Underperforming} = 3.99; p = 0.036; r = 0.15)$$

The result indicates that the under-performing schools agreed to a statistically significantly greater extent than did the performing schools that parental involvement fosters school objectives. The reason for this difference is difficult to explain but it is possible that the under-performing schools are aware of the stigma attached to being such a school and together with Departmental pressure they may be more aware of the importance of parental assistance in meeting school objectives. It is also possible that parental involvement at these low performing schools is poor and that teachers use this low parental involvement as a reason for poor learner academic performance. The correlation coefficient is significant but low ($r = 0.133$; $p=0.028$)

With respect to secondary schools, no significant association could be found between the performing secondary schools groups and the factors concerned. The performance was set at a 60% pass rate in the NSC examination written at the end of G12. It is possible that the 60% pass rate was rather low and could possibly have been set at a higher level.

4.5   Synthesis of Quantitative Analysis

The questionnaire designed tested educators perceptions about aspects of parental involvement in school activities in the Mawa and Molototsi circuits of the Mopani district in the Limpopo province of South Africa. There were 10sections and 10factors that resulted from the factor analytic procedures and could be said to form the basis on which parental involvement is built. The factors formed were as follows:

- The importance of involving parents in school activities (FB1);
- The frequency of with which parents are involved in school activities (FB2);
- The importance of involving parents in school governance (FC1);
- The frequency with which parents are involved in school governance (FC2);
- The extent to which the school initiates programmes to promote parental involvement (FD1);
- The extent to which the school uses strategies to promote parental involvement (FE1);
- The extent to which the school uses media to promote parental involvement (FF1);
- The extent of influence on learner behaviour by parental involvement (FG1);
- The extent to which parental involvement fosters school objectives (FH2);
- The frequency of barriers that influence parental involvement (FI2).

The essence of the first two factors (FB1 and FB2) was that educators believed that parent involvement was important but the frequency with which parents actually involved themselves could be improved. There was a statistically significant difference between the importance of being involved and the observation of actual involvement. The same tendency was present in the two governance factors, which, again, indicated that it was important for parents to be involved in school governance but the observation of actual involvement of parents was that it could be improved. It thus appears as if that which one outwardly espouses as important (the ideal) is often not consistent with how we behave (the real). I thus indicated that such a discrepancy between "what we say we do and what we actually do" is something that needs to be subjected to a dialogue and that participative and reflective openness were essential in order for effective communication between parents and the school to occur. The essence of the problem could well be situated in the hierarchical and bureaucratic structures in which teachers work as they are not conducive to participatory governance. With respect to the extent to which the school initiates programmes to promote parental involvement (FD1), the mean score indicated that schools could do much more in this regard as participatory governance needs the parents to be more involved in school activities. The extent to which the school uses strategies to promote parental involvement (FE1) was found to be small. In order to stimulate parental involvement strategies, such as open days, which allow parents to actually see things as they are prove to be popular mechanisms to market the good qualities of the school and they should be more frequently used in rural areas. The extent to which the school uses media to promote parental involvement (FF1) was found to be present to a small to a moderate extent and schools need to increase their exposure to the media so that parents become more aware of some of the achievements of the school. Respondents also agreed that parental involvement influenced learner behaviour (FG1). It cannot be easy for any parent to be summoned to the school because of his/her child exhibiting serious behavioural problems but a school climate where openness is advocated and implemented can make this onerous parental task much more palatable. To a large extent, respondents believed that parental involvement also fosters school objectives (FH2). Educators should thus model that which they say is important and, if one of the schools' objectives is good academic achievement, teachers need to show learners that a positive work ethic is something that can be employed to obtain good results. The respondents also perceived that certain social and economic barriers hampered parental involvement (FI2) to a moderate tending to a large extent. Social barriers will always be there but barriers such as an unwelcome climate regarding parental visits can and should be removed.

Female respondents were significantly more positive than male respondents with respect to the actual involvement of parents in school activities (FB2), participation in school governance (FC2), programmes that promote parental involvement (FD1), and parent involvement fostering school objectives (FH2). Furthermore, they also agreed to a significantly greater extent with the barriers that influence parental involvement (FI2).

The types of schools at which the respondents taught showed a strong association with the factors concerned with parental involvement in the sense that eight of the 10 factors showed significant differences between respondents from primary and secondary schools. In each instance, the respondents from primary schools had a statistically significantly higher factor mean than respondents from secondary schools. It would thus appear as if parental involvement at the primary school level is perceived as more important than at secondary level. However, a cross-tabulation of data indicated that the majority of females in the sample were employed in primary schools (74.8%) while 25.2% were employed in secondary schools. Thus, the primary school bias could be due to the female numbers at primary schools. This still leaves one with factors like FB2, FE1, FF1 and FG1 not being due to female dominance but some other aspect in primary schools was responsible for those differences.

The three socio-economic groups in the sample showed a significant association with six of the 10 factors concerned with parental involvement. They were: the frequency with which educators observed parents as being involved in school activities (FB2), in school governance (FC2), perceptions of how schools initiated programmes to promote parental involvement (FD1), perceptions of how schools utilised management strategies to promote parental involvement (FE1), perceptions of how schools use media to promote parental involvement (FF1), and the frequency with which certain barriers influenced parental involvement (F12). In each of these factors, the average and above average socio-economic status group showed a more positive perception of the factor concerned. Communities where socio-economic conditions are average and above usually have parents who are well educated, have permanent employment, and feel more confident in themselves to participate in the education of their children and the activities associated with it.

The age of educators in the sample was associated with the extent to which the school uses strategies to promote parental involvement (FE1), where the older the educators were, the stronger their agreement with the strategies being utilised. The better qualified educators also agreed statistically significantly more strongly than did the less qualified educators with the frequency of parental involvement in school governance (FC1), the extent to which the school used strategies to promote parental involvement (FE1), and the extent to which the school used media to promote parental involvement (FF1).

The item that probed educator perceptions about the extent to which government funding should follow the learner also indicated an association with six of the 10 parental involvement factors. Generally the group who agreed to a large and very large extent that funding should follow the learner and not be allocated to a school as presently is the case, namely via quintile allocation, were more positive of parental involvement in school activities (FC1). However, this was not so for actual involvement of parents in school governance (FC2) where they agreed to a smaller extent than the other groups. This could possibly indicate an acute awareness that more parental involvement is needed if more funding was delegated down to school levels for implementation.

4.6   Conclusion

The data analysed were collected from 330 respondents via structured questionnaires, which consisted of 10 sections from Section A to Section I. Associations emerging from this research were that female teachers were more positive toward parental involvement than male teachers. Parental involvement was perceived to be higher in primary schools than it was in secondary schools. The age of the respondents was another factor that determined perceptions of parental involvement as the younger and inexperienced teachers believed that parental involvement was higher than the older and more experienced teachers. However, this research did not yield different views between teachers at academically high performing secondary schools and those at the so-called under-performing secondary schools, as I had expected. However, in primary schools, there was a significant connection between academic performance and parental-involvement-fostering school objectives. The result indicated that the under-performing primary schools, agreed to a statistically significantly greater extent than did the performing primary schools that parental involvement fosters school objectives.

It is possible that the teachers blame the parents for this under-performance in the ANA as it is always easy to point the finger at someone else instead of accepting personal responsibility for poor academic performance. However, the lack of significant findings at secondary school level could be due to my not using a sufficiently rigorous research methodology such as the pre-and post-test procedure associated with experimental and control groups. While teachers generally agreed that parental involvement was important, there was a general lack of initiative from schools to promote actual parental involvement.

The final chapter will involve a summary and discussion of the findings and possible recommendations flowing from them.

CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   Introduction

In this chapter, I will present a summary of the research findings, which include findings from the literature and the empirical research, in addition to making recommendations, describing the research limitations, and presenting my conclusion.

5.2   Summary of Research Findings

5.2.1   Findings from the Literature

One critical aspect that emanates from the literature review is that there is currently no clear and concise definition of parental involvement (Horvatin, 2011; Kavanagh, 2013; Shearer, 2006; Dixon, 2008; Wright, 2009). Wright (2009) claims that this lack of a true, working definition of parental involvement makes it more difficult for researchers to draw clear conclusions about the scope and effectiveness of parental involvement. Although the work of Epstein (1987; 1989; 1995; 2008) has done much to narrow this gap by restricting the definition to six categories, teachers' opinions still vary extensively when it comes to the definition of parental involvement.

Furthermore, the issue of parental involvement seems to depend on the context and situation in which the research is being conducted. Researchers who conduct their research studies in impoverished rural environments tend to arrive at the conclusion that the rate of parental involvement is low, whilst research studies conducted in middle-class urban contexts tend to conclude that parents are more involved. Moreover, research conducted in elementary or primary schools is more likely to lead researchers to conclude that parents are moderately to very involved, whereas the inverse is generally the case in middle and high schools. As Abdullah *et al.* (2011) observes, family involvement tends to decline as students move from elementary to middle and high school. These observations are supported by the research of Abdullah Simango (2006: 32) and Rahman (2001: 12).

Disagreement amongst teachers over the apparent benefits associated with parental involvements another critical issue revealed by the literature. Many researchers seem to agree that there are numerous positive benefits associated with parental involvement. Lemmer (2007: 219), as cited in Chapter 2 (21), contends that good school, family and community partnerships lead to improved academic learner achievement, self-esteem, school attendance and improved social behaviour. According to the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education project (EPPE) (2007), for example, home activities undertaken by parents are more important for intellectual and social development than hindrances linked to parent occupation, level of education or income, and so forth. Mestry and Grobler (2007: 177) support this view, stating that parental involvement improves learner performance, reduces drop-out rates, decreases delinquency, and fosters a more positive attitude towards school.

Lack of parental involvement is identified by many researchers (Van Wyk, 2003; Lall *et al.*, 2004;Singh *et al.*, 2004;Reynolds,2006; Mestry andGrobler, 2007:177; Berthelsen and Walker, 2008;Al-Shammari and Yawkey, 2008; Mncube, 2009;Le Cordeur, 2015, Risimati 2002, Smith 2006, Shearer 2006, Cole 201)as an obstacle to children's successful scholastic development. These researchers list various possible barriers to effective parental involvement, including, among others:

- low socio-economic status;
- work-related commitments;
- a lack of skills;
- negative teacher attitudes towards parents regarding, in particular, their own limited educational capabilities and their views regarding the appropriate division of labour between teachers and parents; and
- limited time availability.

Any school that seeks maximum parental involvement has to take these and other parental involvement barriers seriously and work to develop measures and strategies to counter the effects of these barriers. Teachers, school managers and departmental officials must include the management of these barriers, along with initiatives to counter them, in their school development plans.

5.2.2   Summary of the Empirical Research Findings

The questionnaire was designed to probe educators' perceptions about the importance and frequency of parental involvement in school activities in the Mawa and Molototsi circuits of the Mopani district in the Limpopo province of South Africa. The literature revealed numerous aspects that researchers need to consider when investigating parental involvement in schools. I identified 10sections and then designed a structured questionnaire according to these 10aspects. A Principal Component Factor Analytic procedure (PCA), using Oblimin rotation, confirmed the presence of these 10 factors, which could be said to form the basis on which parental involvement in the two circuits concerned was built.

The factors formed were as follows:

- The importance of involving parents in school activities (FB1);
- The frequency of with which parents are involved in school activities (FB2);
- The importance of involving parents in school governance (FC1);
- The frequency with which parents are involved in school governance (FC2);
- The extent to which the school initiates programmes to promote parental involvement (FD1);
- The extent to which the school uses strategies to promote parental involvement (FE1);
- The extent to which the school uses media to promote parental involvement (FF1);
- The extent of influence on learner behaviour of parental involvement (FG1);
- The extent to which parental involvement fosters school objectives (FH2);
- The frequency of barriers that influence parental involvement (FI2).

The essence of the first two factors (FB1 and FB2) was that educators or teachers believed that parental involvement was important but the frequency with which parents actually involved themselves could be increased. There was a statistically significant difference between the perception of the importance of involvement and the perception of actual involvement. The same tendency was present in the two governance factors. This, again, signified that teachers considered it important for parents to be involved in school governance. However, the observation of actual involvement was that it could be improved.

It thus appears as if that which the respondents openly espoused as important (the ideal) was often not reflected in the way they actually behaved (the real) and this was especially so when the observer (teacher) was not the person being judged (parent). I thus indicated that such a discrepancy between "what we say we do and what we actually do" is something that needs to be subjected to a dialogue; participative and reflective openness are essential in order for effective communication between parents and the school to occur. The essence of the problem could well be situated in the hierarchical and bureaucratic power structures in which teachers work as these are not conducive to participatory governance in which power differences are reduced to a minimum. However, this finding could also be applicable to the perceptions researchers have of the particular subjects that they are using and, whilst teachers believe that parents are not sufficiently involved in school governance and management, the parents would likely contradict this with perceptions of greater involvement (see Section 2.3). It is generally easier to be objective about others than about oneself.

Furthermore, teachers should also be aware of attribution errors such as blaming learners' poor academic performance exclusively on parental disinterest. Teachers may also be more inclined to accept the credit and praise for learners' academic achievement (self-serving bias) than to attribute this to the efforts of parents or the learners themselves. The stereotyping of parents is also something that should be avoided as the cause for parental involvement in school activities should not be associated with status in the community or parental wealth. In addition, the first impression that many teachers have of parents comes via the behaviour of their children and, as such, can be erroneous and should not be relied upon as an accurate reflection of reality.

With respect to the extent to which the school initiates programmes to promote parental involvement (FD1), the mean score indicated that schools' could do much more in this regard as participatory governance necessitates greater parental involvement in school activities. The extent to which the school uses strategies to promote parental involvement (FE1) was found to be small. In order to stimulate parental involvement, strategies such as open days – which allow parents to actually "see things as they are" and are popular mechanisms with which to market the good qualities of a school – should be employed. The extent to which the school uses media to promote parental involvement was found to be present to a small to a moderate extent and schools need to increase their exposure to the media so that parents can become more aware of schools' achievements.

One common activity used by schools to promote parental involvement is the parents' evening, during which parents move from teacher to teacher, spending a very short time with each. There is hardly any conversation beyond introductions; parents rarely have the opportunity to say more than "hello" and "thank you". The meetings between staff and parents are set up for a one-way flow of information –from teachers to parents. The timing does not allow for much, if any, discussion of the report given or for in-depth questioning from parents. The aim here is to "tell" parents information rather than to engage them in dialogue. Hence, such parents' evenings have limited value and creative thinking around the aim of such evenings needs to be undertaken by schools and their parent communities.

The development of a positive and parent-friendly school climate would go a long way to improving parental involvement in school activities. Schools have to learn to plan for effective parental involvement. The literature review in Chapter 2 indicated the danger of parents developing a negative attitude towards the school due to one-sided communication. For example, it cannot be comfortable for any parent to be called to the school because of his/her child presenting serious behavioural problems. A school climate that is invitational and where openness is advocated and implemented can make this difficult parental task less unpleasant. Respondents also believed that parental involvement, to a large extent, fosters school objectives. Educators should thus model that which they say is important. If one of the school's objectives is good academic achievement, then teachers need to show learners how their own work satisfaction, perseverance, timeliness, responsibility and respect for authority can be utilised to obtain good results. The respondents also perceived that certain social and economic barriers stood as moderate to severe impediments to parental involvement. Social barriers will always be there but barriers such as an unwelcome environment for parental visits can and should be eliminated.

Female respondents were significantly more positive than male respondents with respect to the actual involvement of parents in school activities, participation in school governance, programmes that promote parental involvement, and school objectives for fostering parent involvement. Furthermore, they also agreed to a significantly greater extent with the barriers that influence parental involvement. This may be the result of a maternal bond that exists between females and children or the more caring nature that women often display. Schools have to be aware of this relationship and exploit it to their advantage while developing means to assist male teachers to have a more positive outlook on parental involvement and not to see this as a competitive relationship. Schools

and departmental officials have to find ways to make teachers, especially male ones, see parental involvement as something from which they can benefit if they listen to the feedback received from involved parents.

The type of school the respondents taught at showed a strong association with the factors concerned with parental involvement because eight of the 10 factors showed significant differences between respondents from primary and secondary schools. Statistically speaking, in each instance, the respondents from primary schools had a significantly higher mean factor than respondents from secondary schools. It would thus appear as if parental involvement at the primary school level is perceived as more important than at secondary level. This observation is in line with the literature studied (see Section2.3). However, it should be noted that a cross-tabulation of data indicates that the majority of females in the sample were employed in primary schools (74.8%) while only 25.2% were employed in secondary schools. Thus, the primary school bias as observed in this research could be due to the high number of female teachers at primary schools. Nevertheless, the over-representation of female teachers at primary school level may not be the only reason why primary schools are more positive about parental involvement, asit seems to be the norm worldwide that parents are more involved at primary schools than at secondary schools. This is one phenomenon that needs further investigation by researchers. Currently, the underlying reasons identified by researchers seem to be more speculative than conclusive. Simango, for example, concludes that it may be because adolescents need greater independence and often resent parental interference that secondary school parents seem less involved. Once again, this is remains mere speculation until further research conclusively proves it.

The three socio-economic groups in the sample showed a significant association with six of the 10 factors concerned with parental involvement. This finding correlates with others worldwide, which indicate that parents of average and above-average socio-economic status tend to be more involved in the education of their children than parents classified as having low socio-economic status (see Section 2.3.1). The areas in which the above socio-economic aspect were observed include the frequency with which educators observed parents as actually being involved in school activities and governance, perceived schools as initiating programmes to promote parental involvement, perceived schools as utilising strategies to promote parental involvement, perceived the schools as using media to promote parental involvement, and indicated the frequency of barriers that influence parental involvement.

In each of these areas, the average and above-average socio-economic status group showed a more positive perception of the issue concerned. Communities where socio-economic conditions are average and above usually have parents who are well educated, have permanent employment, and feel more confident in themselves to participate in the education of their children and the associated activities. Meanwhile, communities with below-average socio-economic status tend to lack knowledge on how to actually get involved and are often preoccupied with day-to-day survival issues. Hence, caring about what happens at school is not paramount in their needs hierarchy. The constant changing of school curricula in South Africa also appears to be a factor that is disempowering parents in school activities.

Respondents belonging to differing age groups displayed significantly different opinions regarding the extent to which the school uses strategies to promote parental involvement, with the older educators agreeing more strongly with the strategies being utilised. The better-qualified educators also agreed significantly more strongly than did the less qualified educators those parents frequently involved themselves in school governance, that their schools employed sufficient strategies to promote parental involvement, and that their schools used media to promote parental involvement. This serves to reiterate the importance of implementing strategies to facilitate parental involvement in teacher training programmes. At present, teachers have to rely only on workshops and occasional training and greater appreciation of parental involvement and initiatives to promote it seem to be essential when teachers are training to become professionally qualified educators.
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The item regarding educator views on the extent to which government funding should follow the learner rather than the current quintile system also indicated an association with six of the 10 parental involvement factors. Generally, the group that agreed to a large and very large extent with funding following the learner and not with the quintile allocation system were more positive about parental involvement in school activities. However, this did not extend to the actual involvement of parents in school governance, where they agreed to a smaller extent than the other groups. This could possibly indicate an acute awareness that more parental involvement is needed if more funding is to be delegated down to school levels for implementation. This observation is also in line with the global view that urban parents are more involved than rural ones. Most of schools graded Quintile 1, 2 and 3 are rurally based and free, whilst the urban schools are fee-paying schools. Aside from the government's different grading of these schools, the other feature distinguishing them from each other is the level of parental involvement they experience.

5.2.3 Recommendations

Many researchers agree on the benefits associated with parental involvement and it is therefore my recommendation that this issue must receive the attention it deserves. South African legislation emphasises participation in school governance and teachers seem to believe that parental involvement outside governance is an encroachment on their professional terrain. The introduction of a mandatory teacher training module on parental involvement will possibly improve parent-teacher relationships. The Department of Education should also ensure that all district and circuit officials are sufficiently aware of the benefits associated with greater parental involvement and also expose them to workshops in this regard. Lemmer (2007:227) supports this sentiment, claiming that parental involvement should not be seen as a teacher issue only but must also be viewed as a departmental issue. She argues that schools should provide training for school staff and that teacher education programmes should make parental involvement a core module (*ibid.*). McDermott and Rothenberg (2000:10) share this view, contending that teacher training programmes must include a module on effective methods for working with parents:

> A methods course work should provide opportunities for prospective teachers to learn how to write effective notes, letters and newsletters to families. (*ibid.*)

Parental involvement is not just a school issue; it is, in fact, a policy issue. This could indicate that this policy also needs to be more effectively managed at the macro-level of governance as this is where educational policies are designed. Suffice it to say that, if the present bureaucratic power structure informing the way policies are designed by the political party governing the country is not addressed for greater input from all educators and parental organisations, the gap between policy design and implementation will grow even larger (Khatle, Grobler & Moloi, 2014). Lunts (2003:225) is critical of the fact that although many schools in the United States of America have access to electronic communication technologies, they seldom use them to promote parental involvement in schools. In South Africa Short Messaging Service (SMS) messages should be promoted as a more effective means of communicating with parents.

One critical barrier that is cited by researchers with regard to parental involvement is the scheduling of parent-teacher meetings. Many parents are unable to attend these meetings, because they are often called during the week, when parents are unable to get away from work commitments. The Department of Basic Education should indicate its commitment by encouraging schools to schedule parent-teacher meeting during

weekends. However, such scheduling is likely to face resistance from educator unions, which are likely to oppose it unless certain incentives are provided for teachers to come to school after hours.

A collaborative and participative school culture in which parents are fully engaged in school matters seems to be essential for greater school effectiveness. Hence, serious thought needs to be given to the present bureaucratic and hierarchical manner in which schools are managed. Departmental officials, school principals and their School Management Teams will need to give serious attention to creating a school climate in whichall parents are able to participate freely in the education of their children.

5.3 Possible Research Limitations

As it is always easier to see errors after they have occurred, I will now indicate some limitations in the study.

5.3.1 Limitations to the Internal Validity of the Research

Internal validity refers to the manner in which subjects, instruments and procedures control possible sources of error so that these sources are not reasonably related to study results (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006: 179). Although I did everything possible to ensure that the study results were credible, I acknowledge the fact that there were things beyond my control that may have posed credibility threats. I acknowledge the possibility of a historical threat Based on the conditions that existed in some schools, I was able to make a brief presentation to teaching staff, whereas, in other schools, the presentation was too brief due to time limitations. The "subject effect" is another threat that may have threatened the credibility of the study results. MacMillan and Schumacher (2006:140) describe subject effects as the tendency of the subjects to change their behaviour once they are made subjects of a study. For example, I believe that the lack of a statistically significant difference between perceptions of performing schools and under-performing schools with respect to parental involvement was partially due to teachers at under-performing schools adapting their behaviour to appear more positive.

However, this lack divergence from the expected result could also have been a result of my not using a suitable statistical procedure in order to identify any possible differences; the use of an experimental and control group procedure would probably have been more apt. The perceptions of parents as to the importance of and frequency of parental involvement would have added further value to this study.

5.3.2   External Validity

According to MacMillan and Schumacher (2006: 180), external validity refers to the generalisability of the results. The research results have to be interpreted with some caution due to generalisability problems. I used two circuits as my research population and, hence, the generalisability of findings to the district and province could be curtailed. The over-representation of male teachers compared to female teachers could also create generalisability problems. This overrepresentation of gender constitutes population-external validity, which poses a threat to the generalisability of the results to the province as a whole.

5.4   Implications of the Research

5.4.1   Theoretical Implications

The theoretical framework for this study was based on Cognitive Consistency Theory in general and the Balance Theory in particular. According to Heider (1958), the Balance Theory is an approach concerned with individuals' perceptions of the relationship between themselves(p) and two other elements in a triadic structure. Gawronski *et al.* (2008:107) expand on Heider's theory of cognitive consistency and conclude that implicit and explicit attitudes have their roots in qualitatively different processes, which are associative and propositional processes. The explicit behaviour of educators (doing nothing to initiate parental involvement even when they said that they valued it) was analysed using this theory and the conclusion was that, implicitly, teachers did not, in fact, value parental involvement. Teacher behaviour was explained in terms of the implicit attitudes, beliefs and perceptions that teachers have about the benefits associated with parental involvement. If teachers believe in the benefits associated with parental involvement, there must be a correlation between their beliefs and their actions; their actions should also promote parental involvement in children's education.

Thus, Heider's theory seems to apply to the teachers who were participants in this study. Although, in Sections B and C, teachers indicated that they valued parental involvement in school activities, this indication was not supported by the description of initiatives, programmes and strategies to involve parents in Sections D and E. It is therefore my belief that the explicit behaviour of not initiating programmes and strategies to involve parents is closely associated with teachers' true belief that parental involvement is not essential or beneficial and is therefore am unnecessary interference in professional teaching activities. This view is supported by MacMillan and Schumacher (2006: 140),who state that subjects often change their behaviour simply because they know that they are subjects of a study. It is thus possible that the participants had biased perceptions regarding the benefits of parental involvement because that which they said (that limited actual parental involvement was a problem) was not reflected that which they did (failure to develop strategies and programmes or use media to promote parental involvement).

With regard to teachers' perceptions about parental involvement in governance issues, it was surprising to learn that teachers believed that parental involvement should be restricted to SGB membership and budgeting activities. There are thus blatant inconsistencies between that which teachers said they valued and that which they actually practised. If teachers really valued parental involvement, they would have associated it with other activities, like the development of a school vision, school improvement plan (SIP), and other school programmes. This supports my previous conclusion that information gathered regarding the prevalence of parental involvement is dependent on aspects such as subject of the study and types of school and school phase in which information is collected.

5.4.2   Possible Research Implications

The findings from this research study validate some trends in the international literature. For example, many researchers (Berthelsen and Walker, 2008:34, Abdullah *et al.*, 2011; Simango, 2006: 65) have come to the conclusion that parental involvement decreases as learners progress through the various learning phases. This further implies that parental involvement should be strengthened in secondary schools as a matter of urgency. It also implies that the management of parental involvement should be a compulsory module for any envisaged teacher training. The Department of Basic Education, especially in the Mopani district, should include the management and governance of parental involvement in their teacher training workshops.

The fact that teachers do not attach much value to the benefits associated with parental involvement is problematic for the circuit, especially seen in the light of these circuits' poor learner achievements (compared with others in the district)in external academic examinations. Lastly, the Department must make sure that programmes are monitored to ensure that every school has realistic a parental involvement programme and strategies.

5.4.3   Possible Applied Implications

Further research needs to be conducted to lay bare the reasons why parental involvement decreases when learners progress through the various phases of the educational system. Is this decrease in involvement simply due to learner dropout rates or are there other causes for this declining parental interest of parents? The reasons for this tendency need full understanding by education specialists so that effective intervention strategies can be designed and implemented. Programmes focusing on schools located in deep rural and impoverished communities have to be designed in order to educate and encourage parents to actively involve themselves with school activities.

5.5   Conclusion

Although I have acknowledged certain weaknesses relating to the research method used, it is my view that the study findings are useful in enhancing our understanding of teacher perceptions of parental involvement in deep rural circuits in addition to improving our comprehension of schools that share similar characteristics to those in the two circuits studied. The Mopani district is predominantly a rural district with five associated towns. A better understanding of rural districts and how they are managed at the local level can facilitate more effective management and governance of schools in such districts.

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APPENDIX A

UNISA | university of south africa

1428

MATHEKGA S S MR
P O BOX 1635
TZANEEN
0850

STUDENT NUMBER : 3161-558-9

ENQUIRIES TEL : 0861670411
          FAX : (012)429-4150
eMAIL : mandd@unisa.ac.za

2014-05-14

Dear Student

I hereby confirm that you have been registered for the current academic year as follows:

Proposed Qualification: MED (EDUC MANAGEMENT)   (98405)

CODE	PAPER	S	NAME OF STUDY UNIT	WEIGHT	LANG.	PROVISIONAL EXAM.DATE	EXAMINATION CENTRE(PLACE)
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Study units registered without formal exams:

DFEDU95			M ED - EDUCATION MANAGEMENT	0.381	E		

You are referred to the "MyRegistration" brochure regarding fees that are forfeited on cancellation of any study units.

To avoid cancellation of your registration or examination entry and forfeiting your minimum initial payment,
you must submit the following to the Registrar (Academic) by return of mail:
214 A CERTIFIED copy of your identity document, passport or birth certificate reflecting your full names
and date of birth. The copy must be certified by a Commissioner of Oaths and bear the Commissioner's
stamp. A foreign student may have the document certified by a SA Embassy, Consulate, High Commission,
Trade Mission or Public Notary. Please note that fax/scanned copies or copies of certified
copies are not acceptable.

\# Your study material is available on www.my.unisa.ac.za, as no printed matter will be made available
for the research proposal module.

BALANCE ON STUDY ACCOUNT: 0.00

Yours faithfully,

Prof M Mosimege
Registrar

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Title of questionnaire: perceptions of teachers on parental involvement in their children's education in rural schools in the Limpopo province

Dear respondent

This questionnaire forms part of my *master's* research entitled: perceptions of teachers on parental involvement in their children's education in a rural primary and secondary schools oftheMopani district, Limpopo, for the degree of M Ed at the University of South Africa. You have been selected by a purposive non-probability sampling strategy from the population of 600. Hence, I invite you to take part in this survey.

The aim of this study is to investigate perceptions of teachers on parental involvement in their children's education in a rural primary and secondary schools of the Limpopo'sMopani district. The findings of the study will benefit schools, community and Department of education by contributing towards development of an informed parental involvement policies.

You are kindly requested to complete this survey questionnaire, comprising 10 sections as honestly and frankly as possible and according to your personal views and experience. No foreseeable risks are associated with the completion of the questionnaire, which is for research purposes only. The questionnaire will take approximately 40 minutes to complete.

You are not required to indicate your name or organisation and your anonymity will be ensured; however, indication of your age, gender, occupation position etcetera, will contribute to a more comprehensive analysis. All information obtained from this questionnaire will be used for research purposes only and will remain confidential. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you have the right to omit any question if so desired, or to withdraw from answering this survey without penalty at any stage.After the completion of the study, an electronic summary of the findings of the research will be made available to you on request and can also be accessed from circuit office.

Permission to undertake this survey has been granted by your school and the circuit office and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. If you have any research-related enquiries, they can be addressed directly to me or my supervisor. My contact details are: 084 592 1307 e-mail: sontagas@gmail.com and my supervisor can be reached at 0836329821, Department of humanities, College of Education, UNISA, e-mail: bennieg@uj.ac.za.

By completing the questionnaire, you imply that you have agreed to participate in this research.

Please return the completed questionnaire to the office of the principal before 16h00.

APPENDIX B:
TEACHER PERCEPTION OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

SECTION A

Please answer the following questions by crossing (X) the relevant block or writing down your answer in the space provided.

EXAMPLE FOR COMPLETING SECTION A	
QUESTION 1: Your gender? (If you are a male then mark 1 as follows):	
Male	⊠ 1
Female	2

1. What is your gender?

Male	1
Female	2

2. How old are you (in completed years)?

E.g. if you are thirty five years old, enter	3	5			

3. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

E.g. if you have 8 years of teaching experience then write	0	8			

4. Your *Highest* Educational Qualification?

Lower than grade 12	1
Grade 12	2
Post school diploma/certificate	3
Teacher's diploma/certificate plus further educational diploma/certificate	4
Bachelor's degree	5
Honours or higher qualification---	6

5. To which of the following **educator organization** do you belong? (Cross only one)

SADTU		1
TUATA		2
NATU		3
NUE		4
SAOU		5
NAPTOSA		6
SAVBO		7
Others (please specify)		8

6. Your school could best be described as a:

Primary school (grade 0 or 1 to grade 7)	1
Secondary school (grade 8 to grade 12)	2
Combined school – Primary and Secondary (grade 0 or 1 to grade 12)	3
Special school	4
Other (specify)	5

7. **Language of instruction** at your school:

English	1
Afrikaans	2
Double Medium (two languages simultaneously in every class)	3
Parallel Medium (two languages in different classes, for some subjects)	4
Other (specify)	5

8. How would you describe the socio-economic status of the majority of learners in your school?

Above average	1
Average	2
Below average	3

9. To what extent do you believe that the allocation of Government funds to a school should "follow the learner" and not be based on the school's particular location or quintile?

To no extent	1
To a small extent	2
To a moderate extent	3
To a large extent	4
To a very large extent	5

10. **What is your home language?** (Mark one option only)

Zulu		1
Xhosa		2
Afrikaans		3
Tswana		4
North Sotho		5
English		6
South Sotho		7
Tsonga		8
Ndebele		9
Venda		10
Swati		11
Other (specify)		12

EXAMPLE FOR COMPLETING SECTION B

Use the following 5 point equal interval scale to indicate the extent of parent involvement in the children's education:

1 – No extent at all
2- To a small extent
3 - To a moderate extent
4 - To a large extent
5 - To a very large extent

Example: In your experience to what extent are parents involved in the following activities of their children?

(If you perceive parents to be involved to a moderate extent then mark the 3 as follows):

	To no extent at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	To a very large extent
1. Assisting with the completion of homework?	1	2	~~3~~	4	5

SECTION B

In your opinion *how important* is it that parents are involved in the following activities of their children?	Not very important	Somewhat important	Moderately important	Important	Extremely important
1. Classroom activities?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Sporting activities?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Cultural activities?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Social activities?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Spiritual activities?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Reading activities?	1	2	3	4	5
7. Writing activities?	1	2	3	4	5
8. Problem solving activities?	1	2	3	4	5

In your experience *how often* are parents actually involved in the following activities of their children?	Almost never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost always
9. Classroom activities?	1	2	3	4	5
10. Sporting activities?	1	2	3	4	5
11. Cultural activities?	1	2	3	4	5
12. Social activities?	1	2	3	4	5
13. Spiritual activities?	1	2	3	4	5
14. Reading activities?	1	2	3	4	5
15. Writing activities?	1	2	3	4	5
16. Problem solving activities?	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION C

In your opinion *how important* is it that parents are involved in the following governance activities of the school?	Not very important	Somewhat important	Moderately important	Important	Extremely important
1. As members of school governing body?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Fundraising activities of the school?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Members of other SGB sub-committees	1	2	3	4	5
4. Attending scheduled meetings?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Approving the annual school budget?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Developing school plans and other school policies	1	2	3	4	5
7. Developing the vision and mission of the school	1	2	3	4	5
8. Giving of their time to assist with school activities?	1	2	3	4	5

In your experience *how often* are parents actually involved in the following governance activities of the school?	Almost never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost always
9. As members of school governing body?	1	2	3	4	5
10. Fundraising activities of the school?	1	2	3	4	5
11. Members of other SGB sub-committees	1	2	3	4	5
12. Attending scheduled meetings?	1	2	3	4	5
13. Approving the annual school budget?	1	2	3	4	5
14. Developing school plans and other school policies	1	2	3	4	5
15. Developing the vision and mission of the school	1	2	3	4	5
16. Giving of their time to assist with school activities?	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION D

In your experience to *what extent does your school* initiate the following programmes that promote parental involvement?	To no extent at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	To a very large extent
1. Parent involvement guide designed by teachers and parents?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Programmes clarifying the expected role of parents in the school?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Teacher training on effective parental involvement?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Parent involvement is included in the school development plan?	1	2	3	4	5
5. A teacher assigned to foster parental involvement?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Schedule of parent meetings is provided to parents annually?	1	2	3	4	5
7. The school has data base of parents' contact details?	1	2	3	4	5
8. A register of parents who visited the school of own accord?	1	2	3	4	5
9. A register of parents actually assist with school activities?	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION E

In your experience to *what extent does your school* use the following strategies to promote parental involvement?	To no extent at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	To a very large extent
1. Parent evening meetings	1	2	3	4	5
2. Parent weekend meetings	1	2	3	4	5
3. Parents holiday meetings	1	2	3	4	5
4. An open school day for parents?	1	2	3	4	5
5. School cultural days?	1	2	3	4	5
6. School anniversary days?	1	2	3	4	5
7. Surprise home visits by teachers?	1	2	3	4	5
8. Personal invitation to parents by teachers?	1	2	3	4	5
9. Adoption of students, parents and families by teachers?	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION F

In your experience to *what extent does your school* use the following media to promote parental involvement?	To no extent at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	To a very large extent
1. Invitation letters?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Orally through school learners?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Short messages systems (SMSs)?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Newspapers and newsletters	1	2	3	4	5
5. Social meetings such as funeral and community meetings	1	2	3	4	5
6. Social media like emails, face-book and twitter?	1	2	3	4	5
7. Posters and pamphlets?	1	2	3	4	5
8. Phone calls to parents?	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION G

To what extent do you agree or disagree that parental involvement has the following effects on learner performance?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. It improves learner reading skills?	1	2	3	4	5
2. It improves learner writing skills?	1	2	3	4	5
3. It improves learner school attendance?	1	2	3	4	5
4. It improves learner social behaviour?	1	2	3	4	5
5. It reduces learner drop-out rates?	1	2	3	4	5
6. It improves learner problem solving skills?	1	2	3	4	5
7. It reduces learner substance abuse?	1	2	3	4	5
8. It has no effect at all?	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION H

In your experience to *what extent does your school* use parental involvement to foster the following school objectives?	To no extent at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	To a very large extent
1. To solve poor learner social behaviour?	1	2	3	4	5
2. To deal with learner's learning difficulties?	1	2	3	4	5
3. To deal with learners who fail to submit their homework?	1	2	3	4	5
4. To give parents progress reports concerning their children?	1	2	3	4	5
5. For approval of the annual school budget?	1	2	3	4	5
6. For providing parents insight into the audited financial report?	1	2	3	4	5

		Almost never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost always
7.	To congratulate parents when learners do exceptionally well?	1	2	3	4	5
8.	To improve the overall academic improvement of learners?	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION I

In your experience to how often do the following act as barriers to effective parental involvement in school activities	Almost never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost always
1. Socio-economic status of the family?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Work related commitments?	1	2	3	4	5
3. A perception of teachers' negative attitudes towards parents?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Low educational level of the parents?	1	2	3	4	5
5. A lack of knowledge on how to get involved in school activities?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Parents' lack of commitment to education?	1	2	3	4	5
7. A fear of encroaching on professional terrain of teachers?	1	2	3	4	5
8. Lack of initiatives by schools to involve parents?	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX C

Enq	**Mathekga SS**		**PO BOX 1635**
Cell	**0845921307**		**TZANEEN**
Email:	**sontagas@gmail.com**		**0850**
			15 August 2015

The circuit manager
Department of education
Mawa circuit offices
Ga-kgapane

Dear Sir/Madam

Request for permission to conduct research in Mawa circuit school

I am Sontaga Steyn Mathekga a Unisa Student doing Masters in school management. The purpose of the research is to investigate perception of teachers on parental involvement in their children's education in rural schools in the province of Limpopo. Teachers will be requested to complete a questionnaire of 45 minutes about their perception of parental involvement in their children's education. 400 teachers are expected to participate in this research. My supervisor is Professor Bennie Grobler from University of Johannesburg his contact numbers 083 632 982/ 022 715 3442 and email benneg@uj.ac.za.

The purpose of this study is to reveal the views of teachers on the prevalence of parental involvement in their children's education in rural Primary and Secondary schools of the Mopani district, Limpopo province. The research will help to reveal teacher perceptions regarding the role that parents can play in school academic activities. This research will help schools to develop parental involvement programs and to actively seek strategies to encourage parental involvement. Performing and under-performing primary and secondary schools in terms of National senior Certificate grade 12 2014 results and Annual National Assessment grade 6 2014 results in this circuit have been selected to participate in the study. I therefore request your permission to conduct the study in your circuit. The views and opinions of professional teachers regarding parental involvement is critical, they are expected to answer a questionnaire which will take about 40 minutes of their time. The integrity of teachers will be respected all the time and the information

provided here will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for this research purposes. Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the above contact details if ever you need any clarity.

Your positive response will be highly appreciated.

Yours in education

Mathekga SS

Researcher

APPENDIX D

Enq	Mathekga SS	PO BOX 1635
Cell	0845921307	TZANEEN
Email:	sontagas@gmail.com	0850
		15 August 2015

The circuit manager
Department of education
Molototsi circuit offices
Ga-kgapane

Dear Sir/Madam

Request for permission to conduct research in Mawa circuit school

I am Sontaga Steyn Mathekga a Unisa Student doing Masters in school management. The purpose of the research is to investigate perception of teachers on parental involvement in their children's education in rural schools in the province of Limpopo. Teachers will be requested to complete a questionnaire of 45 minutes about their perception of parental involvement in their children's education. 400 teachers are expected to participate in this research. My supervisor is Professor Bennie Grobler from University of Johannesburg his contact numbers 083 632 9821/ 022 715 3442 and email bennieg@uj.ac.za.

The purpose of this study is to reveal the views of teachers on the prevalence of parental involvement in their children's education in rural Primary and Secondary schools of the Mopani district, Limpopo province. The research will help to reveal teacher perceptions regarding the role that parents can play in school academic activities. This research will help schools to develop parental involvement programs and to actively seek strategies to encourage parental involvement. Performing and under-performing primary and secondary schools in terms of National senior Certificate grade 12 2014 results and Annual National Assessment grade 6 2014 results in this circuit have been selected to participate in the study. I therefore request your permission to conduct the study in your circuit. The views and opinions of professional teachers regarding parental involvement is critical, they are expected to answer a questionnaire which will take about 40 minutes of their time. The integrity of teachers will be respected all the time and the information

provided here will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for this research purposes. Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the above contact details if ever you need any clarity.

Your positive response will be highly appreciated.

Yours in education

Mathekga SS

Researcher

APPENDIX E

Enq	**Mathekga SS**	**PO BOX 1635**
Cell	**0845921307**	**TZANEEN**
Email:	**sontagas@gmail.com**	**0850**
		15 August 2015

The principal/SGB Chairperson

_____

Ga-kgapane

Dear Sir/Madam

Request for permission to conduct research in Mawa circuit schools

I am Sontaga Steyn Mathekga a Unisa Student doing Masters in school management. The purpose of the research is to investigate perception of teachers on parental involvement in their children's education in rural schools in the province of Limpopo. Teachers will be requested to complete a questionnaire of 40 minutes about their perception of parental involvement in their children's education. 400 teachers are expected to participate in this research. My supervisor is Professor Bennie Grobler from University of Johannesburg his contact numbers 083 632 9821/ 022 715 3442 and email bennieg@uj.ac.za.

The purpose of this study is to reveal the views of teachers on the prevalence of parental involvement in their children's education in rural Primary and Secondary schools of the Mopani district, Limpopo province. The research will help to reveal teacher perceptions regarding the role that parents can play in school academic activities. This research will help schools to develop parental involvement programs and to actively seek strategies to encourage parental involvement. Performing and under-performing primary and secondary schools in terms of National senior Certificate grade 12 2014 results and Annual National Assessment grade 6 2014 results in this circuit have been selected to participate in the study. I therefore request your permission to conduct the study in your school. The views and opinions of professional teachers regarding parental involvement is critical, they are expected to answer a questionnaire which will require about 40 minutes of their time.. The integrity of teachers will be respected all the time and the information

provided here will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for this research purposes. Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the above contact details if ever you need any clarity.

Your positive response will be highly appreciated.
Yours in education

Mathekga SS
Researcher

APPENDIX F: CONSENT FORM

Enq	**Mathekga SS**	**PO BOX 1635**
Cell	**0845921307**	**TZANEEN**
Email:	**sontagas@gmail.com**	**0850**
		15 August 2015

Dear Teacher

I am Sontaga Steyn Mathekga a Unisa Student doing Masters in school management. The purposeof the research is to investigate perception of teachers on parental involvement in their children's education in rural schools in the province of Limpopo. Teachers will be requested to complete a questionnaire of 40 minutes about their views of parental involvement in their children's education. 400 teachers are expected to participate in this research. My supervisor is Professor Bennie Grobler from University of Johannesburg his contact numbers 083 632 9821/ 022 715 3442 and email bennieg@uj.ac.za.
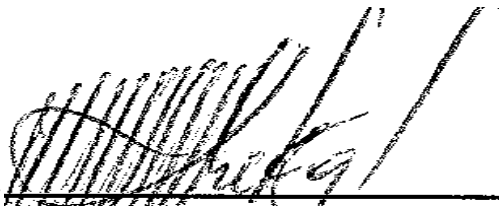
The purpose of this study is to reveal the views of teachers on the prevalence of parental involvement in their children's education in rural Primary and Secondary schools of the Mopani district, Limpopo province. The research will help to reveal teacher perceptions regarding the role that parents can play in school academic activities. This research will help schools to develop parental involvement programs and to actively seek strategies to encourage parental involvement. Performing and under-performing primary and secondary schools in terms of National senior Certificate grade 12 2014 results and Annual National Assessment grade 6 2014 results in this circuit have been selected to participate in the study. I therefore request your participation in this study. As a professional teacher, your views and opinions regarding parental involvement is critical, please take about 40 minutes of your time and complete the questionnaire. The integrity of teachers will be respected all the time and the information provided here will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for this research purposes. Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the above contact details if ever you need any clarity.

Please read and sign the under-attached consent form to indicate that you willingly agree to participate in the research and that you understand that there is no financial incentives attached to participating in the research

I -- ID no ---------------------------- a teacher in ------------------------------------- school, hereby agree to participate in the research. I understand that the information I will give will not be used for any other purposes than the research and that it will be treated with confidentiality. I also understand that there is no financial incentive attached to my participation in the research. I further understand that I am free to withdraw from participating in the research at any given time without consequences.
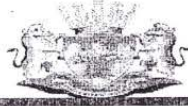
Signed on this day _____ of ---------------- 2014 at -------------------------
Signature of participant_____

Signature of researcher_____

APPENDIX G

LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
MAWA CIRCUIT

Enq: Mutovholwa K.G.
Tel : 015 328 4527

04 August 2014

Mathekga S.S
P.O Box 1615
TZANEEN
0850

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MAWA CIRCUIT

1. The above matter refers.

2. This office received your letter dated 09 May 2014 requesting permission to conduct research in Mawa Circuit.

3. We have no objection to the research and thus are giving you the permission to conduct research in our circuit and we hope it will help schools to develop parental involvement as indicated on your letter.

Thanks in anticipation.

....
CIRCUIT MANAGER: MAWA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
MAWACIRCUIT, PRIVATE BAG X 738, GA-KGAPANE, 0838
TEL. 015 328 3498, FAX 015 328 4527
THE HEARTLAND OF SOUTHERN AFRICA– DEVELOPMENT IS ABOUT PEOPLE

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APPENDIX H

LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

1

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

MOLOTOTSI CIRCUIT
11/08/2014

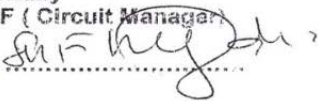ENQ: LEGODI M.F
CONTACT: 0837360159

SIR

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH IN MOLOTOTSI CIRCUIT (Mathekga S.S)

You are hereby granted a permission to conduct your research in Molototsi schools under the topic:

How parental support influences the learner attainment in ANA and Grade 12 NCS).

Yours faithfully
Legodi M.F (Circuit Manager)

Signature ....

Department of Education
Private Bag x18 Ga-kgapane 0838

2014 -08- 1 1

Molototsi Circuit

Molototsi Circuit-Private bag x738,Ga-kgapana ,0838
Email-molototsicircuit@gmail.com

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