THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LITERACY LEVELS AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LIBODE DISTRICT, EASTERN CAPE.

By

SibandaBhekimpilo

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DECLARATION

I, SIBANDA BHEKIMPILO, solemnly declare that this dissertation entitled: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LITERACY LEVELS AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LIBODE DISTRICT, EASTERN CAPE is my own work and it has never been presented in part or whole to any institution or Board for the award of any Degree. I further declare that all the information used and quoted has been duly acknowledged by means of complete reference.

Signature…………………………   Date……………………………

ABSTRACT

In this research, I endeavoured to ascertain how the literacy levels of parents relate to parental involvement in the education of their children in Libode district in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa.

The methodology was qualitative and it included focus group and individual interviews. Specifically, there were four focus groups where each comprised of four parents. A total of thirteen individual interviews were conducted with eight learners and four Heads of Departments (HoD). The results indicated that the literacy level of parents can have a negative or positive impact in their children's education. Recommendations were made and directions were given regarding the implementation of the programmes that would improve parents' literacy and result in effective parental involvement, ensuring an improved learner performance.

According literature, parental participation plays a role in the performance of children at school. Research shows that effective parental involvement programmes use personal contact, cultural sensitivity, accommodation and communication to reach parents and learners. The study revealed that parents with a higher level of literacy tend to participate in the school activities and support their children more than those parents with a low literacy level. The programmes that were put in place by the schools and other stakeholders improved the literacy levels of most parents that took part and enabled them to assist their children with homework. Parents' level of literacy, according to the study,has an impact in the manner in which they get involved in their children's education. Parents with low literacy levels seem to be willing to be involved in the education of their children but find it very difficult to do so. Parents with low literacy levels find it difficult to assist their children at home as they rely on siblings and neighbours for assistance. According to the study, parents only visit the school when they are invited. However, parents and schools seem to have a good relationship showing positive attitude towards their children's education.Parents of low literacy levels attach a value to the education of their children even though they cannot assist them with homework.

Recommendations were made and guidelines were given regarding the implementation of programmes that would improve the literacy in parents and result in effective parental involvement. Effective parental involvement would ensure an improved learner performance.

Volunteer teachers should be used to assist schools in helping parents improve their literacy levels. Reluctant parents should be identified and provided with guidance and direction as to how they can be involved to assist their children. Teachers, through the schools, must make special efforts to keep regular contact with parents. Schools should be familiar with the learners' backgrounds in order to respond effectively to any particular needs in assisting the learners and parents where necessary. Working parents should be accommodated in the school by holding school meetings during the weekends so that they can be in a better position to attend these meetings. Schools should ensure the maximization of parents' participation in school activities.

The following are the key terms which were frequently used in the study: literacy, parental involvement, parent, teacher or educator, learner, community, family involvement, partnership, socio-economic, investigates and academic achievement.

DEDICATION

I dedicate my dissertation to my wife and children who were with me at a time when I was under immense pressure completing my studies.

I dedicate this work to my brother Ishmael Sibanda for his material support throughout my Masters programme.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

APPENDICES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The most important way by means of which a child's potential can be developed is through education in a conducive environment. In order to ensure that the child develops to the best of his or her ability, it is imperative that teachers, parents and other relevant stakeholders work together. Parents have an important role to play in their children's success and achievement at school (Avvisati, Besbas&Guyon, 2010). Parental involvement can be viewed as one of the most important contributing factors not only to improved learner performance but also to the improved level of the general interaction between the school and the community. Research indicates that parental involvement has indeed been found to influence the cognitive and social development of children (Smit&Driessen, 2007). It is evident that the child's development and learning, and an understanding of the purpose of the school are, to a large degree, influenced by the child's home environment and experiences in the milieu. According to Goodal and Harris (2008:278), "it is what parents do to support learning in the school and in the home that makes a difference to the education of the child". Meanwhile Mmotlane, Winnaar and Wakivilu (2009:527) declare that, "parental involvement promotes children's social and interpersonal relations with the whole schooling system". It is, therefore, important to note that the environment in which the child grows has important implications for his or her performance, level of aspiration and motivational level, and also for his or her attitude towards school activities.

The partnership between parents and teachers in the child's learning is very important as the process of teaching and learning takes place at different levels. Involving parents in the years of their children's formal education is very important. Although parents are teachers in an informal setting, learning can only take place in a meaningful environment if all the relevant stakeholders are involved in the process. Burgers as cited by Grobber(2005:19) states that, "The duty of parents and teachers is to teach the

child". Parents are required to effectively play their role and teachers on the other hand have the obligation to treat the family and the community as partners in educating the child and this should be done through the engagement of parents as complementary teachers.

Some of the parents in rural communities are illiterate and cannot partner with teachers in the process of educating their children. These parents fail to take full responsibility of their children and then ultimately delegate their responsibility to the teachers. Sing, Mbokodi and Msila as quoted by Lombard (2007:44), state that "Parents send their children to school with the expectation that they will get quality education….".It is very important to note that these parents should support, guide and assist their children as this support and guidance forms part of their key roles in the upbringing of their children. Lack of support from parents may result in unhealthy relationships between the child and the school. According toNicholas-Omoregbe(2010:176), "The main factor that contributes and influences the lives of school children is the family". In an unhealthy home environment, factors contributing to insufficient stimulation among others can include poverty and low levels of literacy. If parents are not fully involved in the education of their children, it becomes very difficult for them to guide these children towards a brighter and prosperous future. The practices of child-rearing and learningin the home and the family provides very valuable and most useful information that is based on, among other things, the social and cultural background of the children. Nicholas-Omeregbe (2010:176), states that "Educational level of parents is a powerful factor that influences the performance of the children". The implication, therefore, is that what usually happens at home is what normally supports the learning of the child at school. No matter how illiterate these parents are, they can still offer some kind of assistance in as far as the education of their children is concerned.

Mmotlane, *et al.* (2009:537) states that, "Parental involvement in their children`s education can be improved by making parents aware of the need to improve the education of their children and also promoting and improving the quality of education in general"

The 1994 democratic elections saw the introduction of a new education system in South Africa. A point of paramount importance is that the changes in the education system represented a shift from teacher-centeredness to learner-centeredness approach that placed an emphasis on the involvement of all the stakeholders in the education of the children. The involvement of parents became difficult especially in areas of low socio-economic status such as rural areas, due to a number of factors including the literacy level of parents. This resulted in the widening gap between the schools and communities in richer and poorer areas of the country which, on a larger scale, resulted in the disparities in these communities' education system.

There are problems that are associated with literacy and parental involvement in schools as only the voices of the elite few are heard and considered deeply and sincerely at the expense of the poor majority with little or no education. However, these poor parents need motivation to enable them to engage in meaningful participation in their children's education. Parents and teachers must work together harmoniously in the process of developing the child to a fully grown adult.Shilubanaand Kok (2005:101) argue that, "Parents have a critical role to play in the well-being of their children and are also expected to support the learning process of their children". Education Policy designers view community participation as a panacea for whatever is going wrong or missing in education delivery. Schools cannot operate as islands within these communities but they must work in unison for the good and betterment of the child's future. Studies conducted by the United States Department of Education (USDE) on parental involvement reveal that poverty, lack of parental education and being a single parent negatively impacted on the education of these children. The literacy level of some parents, especially in remote rural areas in South Africa, is thought of as a factor that affects parental involvement in the education of their children.Therefore, comprehensive research that will address the widening gap that exists between literacy and parental involvement needs to be conducted. The issues of literacy are very important in parental involvement as the study that was conducted revealed that parents of a high literacy level are more involved in the education of their children compared to those of a low literacy level.

1.2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study aimed at establishing the relationship that exists between literacy and parental involvement in four secondary schools in Libode district. In this particular study, the understanding of parental involvement in Libode district was the main focus. The study thus envisaged information that could help shape complementary and collaborative partnerships between parents and schools by considering and better understanding how parents' literacy relates to their involvement in the education of their children.

1.3. THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

There are many schools in South African rural areas. Some of the rural environments, especially in Libode district, are unfavourable to children's education as they are characterised by parents who are poor with little formal education which results in low levels of literacy. Misra (2006:169) states that, "Rural people show little optimism for the future and think that education is a necessity for the rich and urban people". The unfavourable conditions may take the form of situations in rural families where parents are unable to assist the children with schoolwork. According to Cooter(2006:698), intergenerational illiteracy is defined as,"Asocio-cultural phenomenon whereby illiterate parents inadvertently sponsor home conditions that they seriously hinder their children`s reading and writing development, thus perpetuating a cycle of illiteracy". In high poverty rural settings, intergenerational illiteracy often exists. A number of generations have low education which results in low levels of literacy. The implication in this scenario is that illiteracy is closely related to poverty and low socio-economic status. It is important, therefore, that the role played by parents in the education of their children be strengthened to ensure an improved learner performance in South African schools.

1.4 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study's primary research question was formulated as follows:

What is the relationship between literacy and parental involvement in the education of their children in Libode district?

The following were the secondary research questions:

1. What are the major factors that influence parental involvement in their children's education?
2. What is the importance and benefit of parental involvement in the education of their children?
3. How does literacy affect parental involvement in their children's education?
4. How does literacy relate to parental involvement in their children's education?

1.5. THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.5.1   Research aim

The aim of the research was to explore how literacy levels relate to parental involvementin the education of childrenin Libode district located in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

1.5.2. Research objectives

The study was structured according to the following objectives:

1. To outline the major factors influencing parental involvement in their children's education.
2. To investigate the importance and benefits of parental involvement in the education of their children.
3. To investigate the effects of literacy in parental involvement in their children's education.

4. To determine the extent to which literacy levels relate to parental involvement in the education of their children.

1.6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.6.1. Research paradigm

The study was founded on the interpretive paradigm. Babe (2008:34) refers to a paradigm as "A model or framework for observation and understanding, which shapes both what we see and how we see it". It provides a comprehensive basis for the exploration of a particular concept. According to Johnson and Christensen (2008:33) a research paradigm is "A perspective about the research held by a community of researchers based on a set of shared assumptions, concepts, values and practices". Nieuwenhuis (2007:48) indicates that, "Paradigms serve as the lens or organising principles by which reality is interpreted and refers to the four research paradigms: positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism". However, Nieuwenhuis (2007:58) further mentioned that,"Critical theory and constructivism can be traced back to interpretivism".

According to Nieuwenhuis (2007:59) "Interpretive studies generally attempt to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them". For the purpose of this research, selected opinions from participantswere very important to enable the researcher to determine the possible relationship betweenliteracy and parental involvement in their children's education. There was a need for the researcher to interact with the participants in order to interpret the world as perceived and experienced by them. The interaction between the researcher and the participants enabled the researcher to construct reality based on literacy and parental involvement.Therefore, interpretive paradigm formed the basis of this study.

1.6.2. Research methods

Research methods or strategies were described by Creswell (2009:11) as "types of qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods, designs or models that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design".   The researcher used qualitative research in this study. Some of the aims of qualitative research are to analyse and describe   people's social actions, beliefs, values, thoughts as well as perceptions.

1.7. POPULATION AND SAMPLE SELECTION

The researcher selected the sample from four secondary schools in circuit ten of the Libode district in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The research participants were "information- rich key informants" (Schumacher &McMillan, 2006:319).Participants in the study were purposefully selected and comprised of the Head of Departments, parent couples of children within the four selected secondary schools as well as learners from the four selectedsecondary schools. A total of two parent couples as well as two learners were selected from each of the four secondary schools, bringing the total number of parents to sixteen and that of learners to eight.

The researcher ensured that from the four regions where the four secondary schools were located, four illiterate and four literate parents were selected. The spouses of these selected parents automatically became part of the study. The learners that formed part of the study were also selected on condition that they were children of these selected parents. Four HODs, one from each school were selected to participate in the research study. The researcher believed that the HODs were familiar with the background of learners and the community, therefore, were in a better position than other teachers to provide meaningful data towards the study.The Heads of Departments usually met with parents and were aware of their literacy levels as well as the background of the learners attending their schools. The Head of Departments were also members of their School Based Support Team (SBST).

1.8. DATA PRODUCTION INSTRUMENTS

Useful and suitable data gathering instruments that are paramount in the study were used during the course of the research. These were interviews, focus group discussions, document analysis as well as observations. A brief discussion of these data collection instruments is presented below.

1.8.1 Interviews

Interviews were used to collect data in this research. Interviews can provide access to the meanings people attribute to their experiences and social worlds (Frick Uwe: 2006).The researcher used semi-structured, standardized open-ended interviews. Similar questions were formulated for each participant and all participant groups. The standardisation of these interviews enabled consistency in the study.

The interviews for the HODs and the learners were conducted individually on a face-to-face basis in order to establish a meaningful rapport with participants. The researcher conducted a total of four parent interviews. Each of these interviews was conducted in each school with a group of four parents (2 couples). According to Nieuwenhuis (2007:90), "There is a distinction between group interviews and focus group interviews". The parent interviews were examples offocus group interviews. Questions were phrased in English although translation into Xhosa was done to cater for parents with low literacy levels. Xhosa is the common language within the areas where the research took place.

1.8.2. Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

A total of 16 parents were used in this study. A focus group discussion comprised of these parents divided into four equal groups of four members per group. Patton (2015:49) states that, "A focus group discussion is an interview with a small group of people on a specific topic". Some of the information that can be difficult to get using other methods can easily be obtained using focus group discussions(Hancock,Windridge&Ockleford: 2007). Members of each focus group had

similar characteristics which was important to tackle the topic under investigation. Focus group findings have been used to advice decision making before, during and after an event or programme(Richard, Krueger &Mary Anne: 2014). These focus group findings are used to explore specific topics as well as views and experiences from individuals through group interactions. Focus groups are carefully planned discussions aimed at obtaining perceptions on a defined area of interest in a primitive, conducive, environment were participants are free to respond to comments and share ideas. In this study, these focus groups were made up of people with common characteristics and similar levels of understanding of the topic under research.

1.8.3. Document Analysis

Document analysis is a detailed and systematic examination of documents on a particular organisation(Leedy 2012). Among other things, documents that were analysed included the attendance register, school journals and information books. One of the fundamental aims of collecting these documents in a school situation was to find out how schools engage parents in the education of their children. The other reason could be to determine whether or not the school had put in place any policies regarding parental involvement as a way to ensure effective and meaningful teaching and learning in a classroom situation.

1.8.4. Observations

The researcher, during the course of the study, attended events such as parents meetings and prize giving ceremonies organised by the four secondary schools that took part in the study. This was done to examine how literacy relates to parental involvement in the education of children.

1.9. DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher transcribed and coded obtained data into categories from the interviews conducted with HODs, parents and learners. This was followed by clustering together of

meaningful segments. This clustering together of these segments is called open coding.During these processes, the researcher made some notes from the transcribed data. Finally, the combination of related codes formed some themes. These themes were determinedwhile constructing the interview questionsemanating from the literature study and were used in the data analysis process.

1.10. CORROBORATING DATA

1.10.1. Constituents of trustworthiness

Mouton (2011:122) states that,"Validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration". Schumacher and McMillan (2006:324) on the other hand describe validity in qualitative research as, "The degree to which the data interpretations have mutual meanings between the participants and the researcher". According to Mouton (20011:119), "Reliability is a matter of whether a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same object, would yield the same results each time". De Vos (2005:346) posits that,"Four alternative constructs to validity and reliability reflect the assumptions of qualitative research more accurately". Among other things, the four constructs included credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

1.11ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics are the moral principles influencing conduct (Soans& Stevenson: 2010). According to Johnson and Christensen (2008:102), "Ethics are principles and guidelines that help people uphold the things that are of value to them". Research ethics can therefore,guide researchers in conducting ethical studies. Below is a list of the procedures that were followed in this research study.

The researcher requested consent from Eastern Cape Department of Education to conduct research in the four selected secondary schools.

- The researcher then approached the school principals and the governing bodies of the four selected secondary schools for their approval. The interviews were conducted after school hours to avoid interfering with the normal business of the schools. Participants were informed that personal information will not be released to anyone.

- Having obtained approval from both theDepartment of Education (DoE) and the school principals, informed consent was requested from selected participants. The selected participants were requested to sign the consent forms prior to their engagement in the study.The purpose of the study was explained to the participants and they were assured of the fact that the data gathered will only be used for the purposes of the study. Participants were assured that their identities will not be exposed to anyone and that their participation will be anonymous. The participantswere also informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw anytime they deemed necessary.The researcher informed the participants that a tape recorder will be used to record the interviews but only with their permission.

- A schedule with dates and times was set by the researcher and the participants after consent was obtained from them.

1.12   CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1 offered a motivation for the study. It started with an introduction that was the general description of parental involvement as well as how it relates to the literacy levels of these parents. This was followed by the background information showing some data on the research conducted on parental involvement in some countries in the world in general and South Africa in particular. The statement of the problem came as a comment based on the relationship between literacy and parental involvement in the education of their children. The general and specific objectives spelt out the purpose of the study. The general objectives outlined the major factors from the literature that

influence parental involvement in their children's education as well as to investigate the importance of parental involvement in the education of these children. The specific objective was to investigate the relationship between parents' literacy levels on their involvement in the education of their children. In chapter one, the significance as well as the scope of the study was outlined. In this case, four secondary schools were purposefully selected in Libode district. The chapter ended with the definition of the key terms used in this study.

Chapter 2 presented the literature review encapsulating the phenomena of literacy and parental involvement based on an account of work done by other researchers on the same field of study. The literature study was based on parental involvement, that is, the broader definitions of the concept of parental involvement, the importance and benefits of parental involvement in education and parental involvement in relation to parents' literacy levels. The literature review was also based on the literacy levels of parents, that is, the parents' literacy levels in relation to learner performance, the socio-economic status in relation to literacy as well as the broader definitions of the term literacy according to various scholars. The factors that contribute to lack of parental involvement, home-school communication, parents as primary teachers and home-school collaboration were amongst the factors that were discussed.

Chapter 3 presented the research methodology. This consisted of the research paradigm, the research design and methods, the target population and sample size, sampling techniques, data production instruments, data presentation and analysis techniques. The target population comprised HODs and learners within four selected secondary schools in Libode district as well as selected parent couples within the locality of those particular schools. HODs, parents and learners were purposefully selected with the fundamental aim of obtaining rich information. Interviews formed the main data construction instrument. An overview of the data production and analysis process brought the chapter to an end.

Chapter 4 presented the description of the sites that included the four secondary schools that took part in the study and the participants that included the parents, HODs

as well as learners. This was followed by the analysis of the themes that were deduced from the study. The chapter was concluded by highlighting the major points that related to the themes of the study.

Chapter 5presented the overview of the dissertation where the major points relating to each chapter were mentioned. This was followed by the key findings of the study which were based on the themes that were deduced during data analysis. The recommendations of the study that were based on the major findings led to the final conclusions of the study.

1.13. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Terms that were used throughout the study and formed its basis were clarified below.

- **Parental involvement** is defined as a dynamic process whereby teachers and parents work together for the ultimate benefit of the learner (Lemmer, Meier, and Van Wyk: 2012).
- **Parent**: - For the purpose of this study, a parent is any adult whose role is to guide and accompany a child towards responsible adulthood. According to the south African Schools Act, 84 of 1996(RSA 1996:4), the term parent refers to:
(i)   "The natural parent of a learner;
(ii)   The guardian of a learner;
(iii)   A person legally entitled to custody (physical control) of a learner and;
(iv)   A person who undertakes to act as a parent of a learner for the purposes of the learner's education at school"(Schools Act, 84 of 1996(RSA 1996:4).
- **Literacy**. De Beers (2004:219) states that, "Literacy is dealing with matters at hand, acting in situations and coping with oneself and one's world". In this study, the ability to read and meaningfully contributeto the education of the child will constitute literacy.
- **Academic achievement.** According to Soanes and Stevenson (2010:239), Academic achievement is defined as, "The accomplishment relating to education

and scholarship".In this study, academic achievement will indicate the performanceof learners in their schoolwork.

- **Teacher/Educator-** According to the Oxford School Dictionary (2004:466),"An educator is a person who teaches others especially in a school".

- **Community**- According to the Oxford School Dictionary (2004:91), "A community is a group with similar interests or origins. In a community, the members reside in a specific locality, share government and often have a common culture and historical heritage".

- **Partnership**-According to theOxford School Dictionary (2004:323), "A partnership is one of a pair of people who do something together".In a partnership people or groups agree to share responsibility for achieving some specific goal.

- **Socio-Economic status**- According to the American Psychological Association (2012:76), "The term Socioeconomic status(SES) is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education and occupation".

- **Investigate-**According to the Collins English Dictionary (2015:240), "To investigate is to enquire into a situation or problem thoroughly". To investigate involves searching out and examining the particulars of something in an attempt to learn the facts hidden, unique or complex facts.

1.14 CONCLUSION

The main focus of this chapter was to provide the background to the research and the significance of the study. The description of the problem statement, research questions, research aims and objectives, the research methodology that comprised the research paradigm and the research methods were discussed. The data production instruments that included interviews, focus group discussions as well as document analysis were provided. The trustworthiness constituents as well as the ethical considerations were also outlined in this chapter. The chapter ended with the definition of key terms that

were used in the study.The focus of the following chapter will be on the literature review that will lay the theoretical foundation of literacy and parental involvement.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

LITERACY AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Parents should partner with teachers and other relevant stakeholders in the education of their children. Parents play a fundament role in the education of their children as they are regarded as primary teachers. They should view themselves as being inpartnership with the school; which is a formalised extension of the family. This partnership wasemphasised by legislation such as the South African Schools Act (Act 84 0f 1996).

Throughout the world, efforts are made to involve parents in the education of their children as schools strive to improve education quality. According to the Department of Education (2002:13), "The Departmentwants to promote a vision of a prosperous, truly united, democratic and internationally competitive country with literate, creative and critical citizens leading productive, self-fulfilled lives in a country free of violence,discrimination and prejudice". This vision correlates with Wright, Stegelin and Hartle`s (2007:97) view that,"Parents have a role in the school success and achievement of their children".In view of the above, literature will be reviewed on a variety of sources on parental involvement and literacy in order to provide a theoretical foundation for determining the relationship between literacy and parental involvement in the education of their children. The literature on the concepts of Parental Involvement and literacy will be reviewed under the following headings:

- Parent involvement in formal education.
- Parents as primary teachers.
- The influence of parents' personal background.
- Level of Parent involvement.
- Epstein`s Framework.
- Parental involvement and non- academic outcomes.

- The importance and benefits of parental involvement in education.

- Conceptual Analysis of literacy.

- Literacy defined.

- Illiteracy statistics in South Africa.

- Parents' literate levels in relation to learner performance.

- The effects of illiteracy on parents themselves

- Theoretical Framework: The family literacy theory and Role theory

- Epistemological foundations of the study.

2.2 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN FORMAL EDUCATION

According to an article by Kay (2010:13), parental involvement refers to "The amount of participation a parent has when it comes to schooling and her child`s life". The participation, according to Kay, may take the form of social, educational, disciplinary and safety activities to ensure the holistic development of the child. Social participation may involve a parent ensuring that they know what activities their children are involved in. For example, if the child plays football, the parent may perhaps join the coaching staff or be a volunteer driver for the school. Educational participation according to Kay may mean, among other things, parents taking their children to museums on weekends and even completing science projects together.

Lemmer, Meier and Van Wyk(2012: 103) define parental involvement as,"A dynamic process whereby teachers and parents work together for the ultimate benefit of the learner". According to Wong (2008:497), "Parental involvement is defined as,"the extent to which parents are interested, knowledgeable about and willing to take an active role in the day-to-day activities of their children". Parents should be involved not only at home butshould also work together with their children's teachers to make learning meaningful and a reality to the learners.Mncube (2009:85) states that, "Powers and responsibilities regarding the education of children should be distributed to all stakeholders". Schools should cooperate with the home through parental involvement in

an attempt to minimise the gaps that exist between the school`s intentions towards achievement as well as the community's expectations about their children's education. Mapasawas quoted by Lombard (2007:51); "Many parents are only involved in as far as problems regarding learner behaviour that are reported to the parents". According toDomina (2005:236), "When children have problems at school, their parents should learn about these problems earlier and know more about available solutions". According to Mmotlane*et al.* (2009:528), "Parent involvement in school activities not only improves children`s cultural identity but also facilitates their socialisation, attitudes and behaviours towards those around them". The active and voluntary participation of parents in a broad range of activities at school and within the community may constitute parental involvement and this among other things may include giving support, proper guidance and meaningful supervision of the homework and other activities given to children at school.

Mmotlane*et al.* (2009:528) states that,"Low parental involvement has been detected in South African Black schools in recent years". The government of South Africa put in place a guide officially known asThe South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996), hereinafter referred to as SASA, to ensure a conducive and effective teaching and learning environment and to build partnerships among the relevant stakeholders in education. According to SASA (Act 84 of 1996),"The parents and the community should ensure that the school functions effectively and that they make meaningful contributions towards the smooth running of the school". School governing bodies, therefore, should be capacitated and fully assistedtoensurean effective execution of their roles and responsibilities in the smooth running of these schools as social and professional organisations. Maboe (2005:45) points out that,"Parents are indispensable partners in the education process".They have to take full responsibility of the education of their children. The family and the community are seen as partners with the school in children's education and development (Epstein: 2008). According toMachen, Wilson and Notar (2005:13)"Parents are an important part of the process of improving schools as it gives them an effective voice in decision making".Parental involvement and meaningful contributions have resulted in effective learning of the children as this

ensures a link between the school and the community in terms of the common values that are taught at school and those that are taught at home.The manner in which parents play their roles at home allows them to engage more in creating and maintaining a quality environment for learning at home (Hill & Tyson 2009). It isimportant for teachers to conduct some research in order to comprehend the culture and the importance of parents' participation in the education of their children.

Maphanga (2006: 27) indicates that,"The home, child and school form a trio that creates a special climate that is desirable for effective education". Nicholas-Omoregbe (2010:179) points out that, "Academic aspirations of children positively relate to parental involvement and parents' education level because children imitate their parents and aspire to be as highly educated as their parents".

Walker, Shenker, and Hoover-Dempsey (2010) reviewed literature and suggested reasons why parents become involved in their children's education. They noted that the relationship between schools and parents is imperative if parents are to become more involved in the school setting. Walker *et al.* (2010:59) stated that,"There are other factors that may shape parental involvement and these include social-economic status, resources and parent's level of education". Parents lack confidence based on the knowledge they have which they think may not be adequate for them to meaningfully support the effective learning of their children. A closer look at the results of research conducted by Smit and Liebenberg (2003:2) reveals that, "The major factor *interalia;* contributing to poor parental participation in the education of their children is that parents perceive the school staff as being out of touch with the realities of sub-economic living conditions". This results in schools having to place unprecedented demands on the parents. Leading to the negative consequences that may include the reduction of parental ability for active involvement in their children`s schooling. The reduction may be caused by the stress of meeting demands placed by the schools.

Smit and Liebenberg (2003:3) highlight the fact that,"The participation of parents under such circumstances may have negative consequences as the parent-child relations may be strained resulting in many children being forced to leave school at a tender age".

There is a need for teachers to be familiar with their learner's background as well as the values of the community to help improve and strengthen the relations with the learner`s parents (Lemmer et *al.*:2012).

2.2.1 Parents as primary teachers

Singas cited by Surujlal and Dhurup (2009:34) indicated that, "Parents are the first teachers of their children and by law are responsible for their children". This is supported by Lu and Liu (2009:71) who postulate that, "Family education is the first education that a child receives". It is very important to maintain the involvement of parents especially in the early years of their children's formal education as parents take part as primary teachers from birth. Lu and Liu (2009:71) further indicate that, "The schooling process of a child is dynamic, and the early stage of basic education; family education and school education are integrated". This may suggest the need for parents to continue sharing the responsibility of educating the child with the teachers as these parents are perceived as primary teachers in their own right.

Penly andEble (2007: 78) state that, "Parents are children's first teachers and have a life-long influence on children`s values, attitudes and aspirations". Parents on a daily basis interact with their children making the family their children's support base. Kanan and Al-Karasneh (2009:332), postulate that, "The family as an institution is seen as an on-going and interacting social system". The personal and social development of children begins in the family as it is the children`s first group of people. The foundations for the future development of the children are firmly laid before these children become involved with groups outside the family. The family provides the perspectives to guide children's behaviour.

Parents need to express their love and care for their children through the educational support that they give them. The encouragement and motivation to these parents will enable them to assist their children in reading and writing activities at home. According to Kanan and Al-Karasneh (2009:332), "Parental encouragement refers to obvious verbal and nonverbal forms of encouragement for the child". Parents should not be professional teachers in order to teach these children, but they can assist their children

by listening and encouraging them as they do their schoolwork. Even though the majority of parents do not know how to help their children with their education, they can at least be involved in their children's activities by providing guidance and support where necessary.

Parents can just listen to their children's reading if these parents are not able to read to their children. According to Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:41), "Parents must show that they believe in their children and show them that they are important, loved and capable". Any language in this discussion is important as long as it facilitates effective communication between the parent and the child. According to Penly andEble (2007:93),"Most parents, regardless of their economic status, educational level or cultural background care deeply about their children's education and can provide substantial support if given specific opportunities".

2.2.2 The Influence of parents' personal background

Most parents have a great influence in the education of their children. The reason for this influence is that these parents are the first to teach these children at home before they can go to school.As Sclafani(2012) writes, " The influence of teachers is actually reciprocal and to some extent depends on what your child brings to the classroom...these same teachers also form impressions based upon other information such as your child's previous year's grade and test scores, and his or her family background and the family's level of involvement" (Sclafani: 2012). Children's brains are like sponges in the first couple of years of their lives and they absorb in everything around them *(ibid*: 84). This may imply that what they learn in the first years of their lives from their parents will impact these children for the rest of their lives. It is fundamental that children learn how to be excited about learning and that this kind of excitement should be instilled by the parents from an early age. The questions that can be asked are: How can parents develop positive attitudes in their children for them to have interest in their school work? What are the best qualities that parents should have for them to positively influence their children's education?Research reveals thatparents of a

higher literacy levelhave enough time to prepare their children for school compared to those with a poor educational background.

In the majority of cases, the education that parents received will determine the education that will be received by their children. Research shows that the children whose parents are educated tend to do well at school compared to those whose parents are not educated.Sclafani (2012: 88) states that,"Parents who have gone beyond a high school education are found to be more involved with their infants and their children than those who did not finish high school...many less educated parents simply have more unmanaged stress in their lives and this stress interferes with the ability and opportunity to interact with their children".The parents who find it easy to assist their children with homework are those who have gone beyond high school and have endured the pressure and stress of school. On the other hand, the parents who find it difficult to assist their children with schoolwork are those who did not complete primary education and have a very low literacy level.

According to Bukhari and Randal (2009:108), "The quest for education is ever increasing across the socio-economic sections of the population with the kind of attention paid by parents for the education of their children". Parents with less education do not often participate in the education of their children compared to those parents with a higher level of education.The major reason can be that the low literacy level parentsdo not realise the importance of their interaction with schools as they get intimidated by the school environment.Bukhariand Randal (2009:108) state that, "Most parents, even low income, culturally and linguistically diverse parents, possess the attitudes and at-least the sufficient early literacy skills and knowledge to help their children get on the road to literacy".

Research conducted by Bracken and Fischel (2008:34) revealed that the child's literacy interest is highly correlated with the book exposure and parental literacy teachings. According to traditional research, mothers of a high literacy level succeed in providing cognitive and language skills to their children. Cognitive and language skills enable children to succeed in their schoolwork.This is because stereotypically, the mother has

more influence on the child's education as she is more involved in the child's school work compared to the fathers who are always away and arrive home very late at night.

2.2.3 Level of Parent involvement

Richardson (2009: 89) states that, "Many parents wish to be more involved in their children's school work and want to receive more information and assistance from schools in order to reach the desired goals". However, it is unfortunate that most of South African schools fail to establish connections with the community. According to Dauber and Epstein (in Saunders & Sheldon, 2009), "Parents are less involved in the education of their children after the lower grades". The findings of Epstein and Cannor`s study from 1994(in Sirvan, 2007:66) revealed that,"An average percentage of parents and students are of the idea that literacy has an impact in parental involvement. Based on this study, about 80% of parents and 70% of learners in selected secondary schools think that literacy has an impact in parental involvement". Studies conducted are contrary to these statistics in that a decline in parental involvement has been noted with each passing year that the child stays in the school (Sirvan, 2007; Richardson, 2009).

Other studies and reports show the same patterns. According to the National Centre for Education in the United States of America statistics (in Sirvan 2007: 67),"Parental involvement and activity decreases as the children grow older". According to Sirvan (2007:68),"In the years 1996 and 1999, 86% of parents with children in primary schools in America had at least one meeting with their child's teachers, while only 50% of parents with children in secondary school had at least one meeting with the teacher". Findings such as these are contrary to the value of parental participation in the education of their children.Schools therefore, should maintain a good rapport with the communities in general and the parents in particular. Positive relationships enhance effective parental involvement.

As illustrated by the discussions in this section, one can conclude that evidence is available on how parental participation is important if learners are to improve their performance. However, the impact of parental involvement has results in both academic and non-academic outcomes.Learners tend to improve the school attendance,

behaviour, their attitude towards school as well as their social skills in general if their parents participate in their school activities.

2.2.4 Epstein's Framework

Epstein and her co-workers developed a framework with six major factors on parental involvement.The framework was based on the issues of family, school and community partnership.The framework also included the results from other research studies conducted on the most effective factors in the children's education(Epstein, 2009). Parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community are the six factors in Epstein's framework.

Parenting pertains to the establishment of a supportive home environment for the children as well as helping all households understand the development of the child.

Communicating refers to a way of designing and conducting a meaningful two-way communication that is home-to-school and school-to-home based. It is also about how the child partakes in school programmes and their progress. Learning at home pertain empowering parents with knowledge and ideas on how best they can assist their children with homework and curricular related activities and decisions. Decision making covers accommodating parents in school decision making.Community collaboration involves identification and integration of community services and resources to support and strengthen schools, students and their families.

Each factor may pose challenges to parental involvement wherein these challenges have to be overcome. This explains why Epstein (2009) believes it as important thatschools should identify some of these factors that need to be considered if schools and communities are to work in harmony for the good of the child.

2.2.5 Parental Involvement and non-academic outcomes

Research has shown that, the involvement of parents may have an impact on both academic and non-academic outcomes of the child(Saunders &Sheldon, 2009). Further studies suggest that actively involved parents in the learning of their children enhance a

smooth flow from one school level to another (Saunders&Sheldon, 2009). If parents are involved in their children's education, children may refrain from misconduct and focus their attention on their studies.

2.2.5.1 Attendance

As Saunders and Sheldon (2009:54) argue, "It is important for schools to improve learner attendance". Being at school gives learners more chances to learn. Saunders and Sheldon(2009:56), states that, "Certain aspects of parental behaviour have important indicators of lower levels of truancy among students".These among other things include discussions with the students about school work as well as being members of a parent-teacher association. This may go a long way in helping parents in the process of monitoring and supervising their children's attendance more effectively for the improvement of the learning process.

2.2.5.2 Behaviour

The home environment usually determines the manner in which children will behave at school. In order to improve learner behaviour, there should be a collective effort by all the stakeholders such as the school, parents and the community in achieving the desired goals (Sanders & Sheldon, 2009). All the stakeholders need to be actively involved in the school activities in order to improve the behaviour of learners in the school. Improved learner behaviour will ensure effective teaching and learning. Sheldon and Epstein (in Sanders &Sheldon, 2009: 58) also claim that,"Schools who have improved their partnership with the parents and the community have fever learners with disciplinary problems".

2.2.5.3 Attitude

Social and emotional development of children improves if their parents participate in their education (Sanders & Sheldon, 2009). Students who appear to have higher school engagement and achievement are those whose parents are more involved in their

education. If parents are more involved in their education, children will be more receptive to learning and will view schooling in a more positive light.

2.2.5.4 Homework

The chief benefits of involving parents in the education of their children are the improved subject grades, good conduct and positive attitudes as well effective learning (Richardson, 2009). According to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2008: 68), "Parents agree that they have an important role to play in home based activities when it comes to children's learning". The major activities by parents at home, among others, may include monitoring their children's schoolwork and progress, discussing school related issues with their children and assisting them with homework.

2.2.5 The importance and benefits of parental involvement in Education.

Parental involvement in the education of their children is associated with progress in performance, greater school enjoyment, and better school attendance and improved behaviourat school. It is also very important that parents feel welcome at school and that they become involved in the school activities (Griffin &Galassi, 2010). According to research, there are gains that are associated with parental involvement which can even be greater if combined with other school improvements(Nokali, Nermeen, Bachman &Votruba: 2010).

According to Brown (2006: 96),"Working with parents is a mutually beneficial activity". Parents offer assistance to their children withcurriculum related activities. Teachers also gather the knowledge through research on how parents can provide necessary assistance to their children.Brown (2006: 45) also states that, "The fundamental aims of involving parents in the education of their children include informing teachers about the child, as learners outside school foster mutual respect, understanding and openness between parents and educators".

Misra (2006:166) maintains that, "Development, whether personal or social, revolves around education". According to Smit and Driessen: (2007:112),"The description of

parental involvement has been expanded from participation of parents at school to involvement of parents in the education of their children at home". The basis in which the teacher builds on is laid by the parents and teachers have nothing to build on unless the foundation is sound and solid. Although many parents lack knowledge and skills to assist their children with their education, helping with homework can motivate children towards their schoolwork resulting in an improved learner performance.Nkhias cited by Lombard (2007:51) says, "Open communication channels between home and school contribute towards increased parental involvement……" It is important for the child that the channels of communication between the home and the school are effective to enhance effective teaching and learning.

According to Hango (2007:1372),"Parental involvement in children's lives can have a long lasting impact on the well-being of the children". Machen*et al* (2005:14) allege that,"When parents are involved in the education of their children they send a valuable message that they care about their children's success". Turkey and Kao (2009:14) confirm that, "Parents who are involved send a message to their children that education is important, and these children are more likely to value education themselves".Therefore, most learners can perform better if their parents are fully involved in their education.(Narian2005:1) indicates that, "The role of a parent is extremely vital in the development of values, beliefs, interests and the identity of the child, and that the child needs an on-going support and guidance of the parents". The participation of parents in children's education can provide security and emotional stability; this shows how important parental involvement is in the education of the child. Through parental participation, learners become aware that they should account to both their teachers as well as their parents in as far as behaviour and performance is concerned. Children become afraid of doing wrong things simply because of the motivation that they get and they focus on their schoolwork.Shilubana and Kok (2005:105) affirm that,"If the parents are not available in the child's school life, it puts a strain on the child, not only affecting the child's school performance but also their emotional state".

Lemmer*et al.* (2012:132) highlights the fact that,"When teachers and parents improve the quality of their relationship and make it part of school practice, parents increase their interaction with their children at home and feel more positive about their abilities to help their children". Parents can take part in the education of their children regardless of their economic status, literacy level, and the employment status.

2.3 CONCEPTUALISING LITERACY

2.3.1 Literacy defined

Okantey (2008) as quoted by Nicholas-Omeregbe (2010:176) maintains that, "Educated parents, by virtue of their education level, are equipped to recognise the importance of parental involvement and the fact that parent-teacher relationships promote educational attainment and academic achievement of their children". Nicholas-Omoregbe (2010:177-179) further indicates that, "Educational levels as well as income are interconnected, implying that parents who are educated have the potential for an increased income". Children from rich families have better chances of improving their academic performance as their parents can offer more in terms of support, encouragement, and motivation to mention a few.

The word literacy is often used to,"Indicate that a person is able to read and write, and also illustrates that a person possesses knowledge and certain competences within a specified field"(Soans& Stevenson: 2010).A literate person can have a greater influence on political, economic and social issues as the person is aware and acknowledges the changes in his or her surroundings.The ability to critically evaluate information in order to react confidently to such information when required also relates to literacy. According to De Beer (2004:291), "literacy is about functioning properly, coping and dealing with matters at hand, coming to terms with one`s situation, and acting in situations". De Beer (2004:291) further indicates that, "What is desperately needed for the sake of human future is the development and cultivation of a comprehensive literacy that will enable people not to only perform necessary skills but also to live full and meaningful human lives". Illiterate members of the community cannot functionproperly in the societyas lack of knowledge, among other things, may tend to be a limiting factor. This makes it

difficult for them to contribute meaningfully in decision making processes that may affect their children's education.

A number of illiteracy effects have been raised. Illiteracy can only be alleviated if a country realises that people are illiterate(Sibiya, 2005). People who are illiterate should be made aware through awareness programmes that they can improve their literacy levels and skills for the benefit of their future and that of their children. People must be informed that illiteracy is a problem that needs to be addressed(Sibiya, 2005). People should take the initiative to attend some educative programmes such as adult literacy programmes to enable them to acquire basic education. Basic education will enable them to acquire basic reading and writing skills that will allow them to function effectively in the societies in which they live.

2.3.2 Illiteracy statistics in South Africa.

The 1996, 2001 and 2011 Statistic South Africa report (2011) in (Aitchison& Harley, 2006) shows that, "The number of Black (African) adults with little education or no schooling is significantly higher than the population of Coloured, Indians, and White South Africans". According to Table 2.1,"The figures provided show a large number of adults, aged between 20 years and older, who are illiterate (with less than grade 7 or no schooling)".

Table 2.1: Population aged 20 years and older with no schooling or less than

Grade seven education by province: Census 1996, 2001 and 2011

PROVINCE	No schooling			Some primary education (less than grade 7)		
	1996	2001	2011	1996	2001	2011

Kwazulu -Natal	957,217	1,100,291	621,199	747,586	849,144	784,305
Limpopo	771,587	835,485	499,073	252,287	352,437	334,189
Eastern Cape	617,796	743,700	375,754	635,478	643,921	653,118
Gauteng	419,157	504,619	301,311	516.624	673,283	612,990
Mpuma-langa	410,336	456,747	325,540	211,216	264,548	271,726
North-West	403,143	423,787	248,516	364,297	426,025	353,753
Free State	236,149	251,408	115,380	328,076	340,753	262,576
Western Cape	153,109	162,781	102,242	362,284	431,698	401,362
Northern Cape	97,691	88,680	76,861	94,570	101,934	116,115
Totals	**4,066,185**	**4,567,497**	**2,665.874**	**3,512,415**	**4,083,742**	**3,790,134**

(Source: Aitchison& Harley, 2006)

In 1996 in the Eastern Cape Province, the population aged twenty years and older with no schooling was 617,796. The numbers increased to 835,480 in 2001. The numbers dropped drastically to 375,758 in 2011. The significant drop in numbers in 2011could be due to the fact that the government improved its education system. In 1996 in the Eastern Cape the population with some primary (less than grade 7) was 635,478. The number increased in 2001 to 643,921 and the number further increased to 653,118 in

2011. The increase could be due to the fact that the government had improved its education system. The figures show that the literacy level in the country is still very low though there is an improvementwhere the government still needs to address the problem of illiteracy in the country.Figure 2.1 below is a graphical illustration of the statistics in Table 2.1 (Based on South Africa's nine provinces).

Figure 2.1 A graphical illustration of the 1996, 2001 and 2011 census statistics
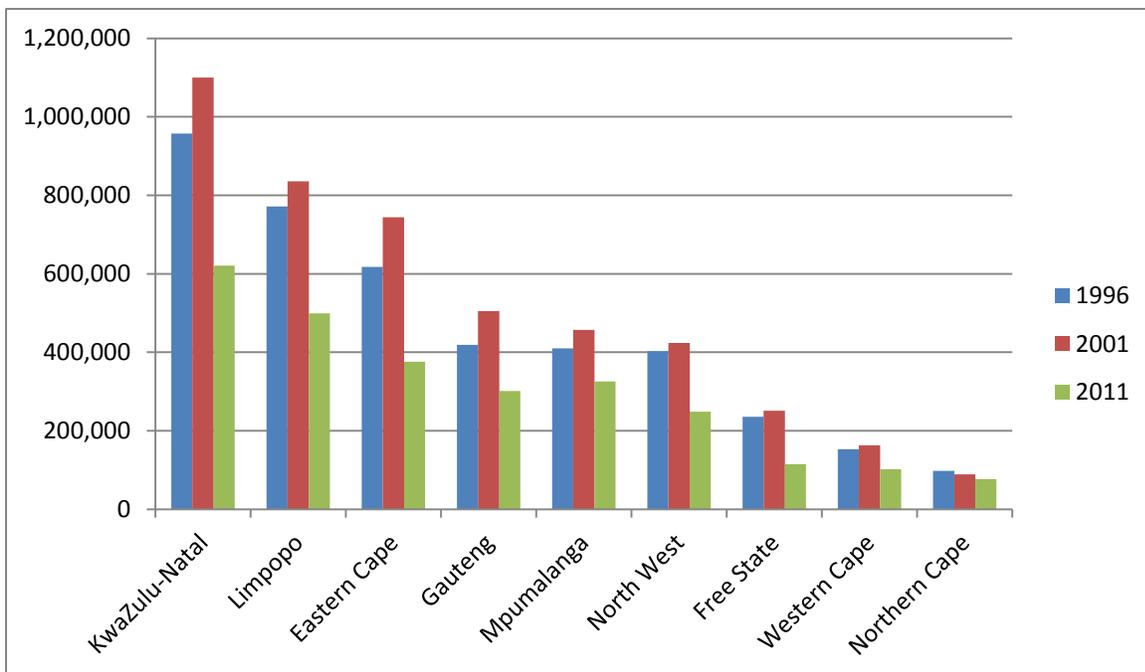
(Source: Aitchison& Harley, 2006)

There are some notable changes and developments with regard to the numbers shown in figure 2.1 above. However, a lot still needs to be done to improve the literacy level of adults in this country.

Figure 2.2 provides a table to represent South African literacy statistics according to race

Level of Education	Black African	Coloured	Indian	White	Other
No Schooling	2484492	119015	26214	20752	15402
Some Primary	3280014	387603	60152	45111	17253
Completed Primary	1148911	207303	25449	23489	8746
Some Secondary	8334131	1172623	234124	679402	61294
Grade 12	6343830	706285	364305	1339835	59863
Higher	2019228	214927	199975	128846	35136
0ther	57685	7861	7028	37146	3866
Total	23668291	2815616	917248	3426580	201555

(Source: Aitchison& Harley, 2006)

Figure 2.2 reveals that much still needs to be done to address the literacy imbalances as this is evident that interms of illiteracy levels, Blacks (Africans) remain the highest in this country. This could result from the fact that theBlack (Africans)population is the highest compared to other races. The other factor could be that it is not easy for rural communities to access education and most of the Blacks live in these rural communities. Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) was introduced in the early 1990s (Department of Education, 2002).Although it is not yet accessible to all, it is an

important step in the reconstruction and development of the society (Department of Education: 2002). According toDepartment of Education (2002:48), "The citizens of South Africa are introduced to a culture of learning and encouraged life-long learning amongst the members of the society". According to the vision of the Department of Education for ABET(Department of Education, 2002: 50),"The Department of Education envisages a literate South Africa in which all citizens have to acquire basic education and training that enables effective participation in socio-economic and political processes to contribute to reconstruction, development and social transformation".

2.3.3 Parents' literacy levels in relation to learner performance

Roman (2004:87) posits that, "Children whose parents did not complete school or have trouble with literacy skills are more likely to be illiterate themselves, and are more than five times as likely to drop out of high school as other children". Illiterate adults are believed to be highly dependent on others to function and survive as they are not able to read letters and perform other functions such as filling the forms at the bank. In the majority of cases, these Illiterate parents lack the knowledge and skillsto respond to challenges they encounter in their day to day lives. A number of illiterate parents felt that they cannot possibly assist their children with homework. These parents usually feel embarrassed to participate in school activities and willingly contribute to their children's education because they feel undermined by the teachers. According toSing, Mbokodi andMsila (2004:304), "Children tend to be motivated by the quality time that they spend with their parents at home". Parents, therefore, despite the fact that they have low literacy levels can play a pivotal role in their children's education by not only showing interest, listening and encouraging their children when doing homework but also by motivating them towards improving their performance at school. Eggen and Kauchak (2007:298) state that, "when learners are motivated, they have more positive attitudes towards school and describe school as satisfying". Jacobs, Vakalisa and Gawe (2006:138) highlight the fact that, "Each community, even the rural poor have a number of people who have special talents and knowledge that can be shared with the learners".

2.3.4 The effects of illiteracy on parents themselves

According to Willenberg (2005: 166), "The high adult illiteracy level means that many children lack opportunities to observe adults modelling literate behaviour".

Weigel, Martin and Bennett (2006:357) state that, "Certain characteristics of the home and family, such as income, parents' literacy levels and literacy habits, and parent-child interaction in literacy activities have been found to be linked to the children's literacy and language skills". The parents with little education find it difficult to help their children with homework due to their low literacy levels. Weigel*et al.* (2006: 358) indicate that, "The home serves as a setting in which language and literacy are typically first encountered". "Joint book reading, parental valuing of literacy, the quality of home environment and overall supportiveness of the home environment are positively related to children`s literacy abilities"*(ibid)*. Schools need to support and encourage parents to take part in their children's education.

2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.4.1 The Family Literacy Theory

The family literacy theory will be explored in this study. The researcher believes that the performance of learners at school can only be improved if parents and teachers work together to assist these children. According to Tracy and Morrow (2012:93) family literacy theory refers to, " A series of ideas that researchers share, including the design, implementation and evaluation of programs to help facilitate the relationship between family literacy and student achievement and the way in which literacy is naturally used in the home". This theory stresses the importance and need of family involvement in the education of their childrenas this may result in an improved learner performance in school activities. The theory promotes the relationship between family literacy, student achievement and parental participation in children's education (Denny, 1983). The teachers who have an interest in incorporating the Family Literacy Theory into their

classroom curriculum and environment usually work to create partnerships with parents. These partnershipsare usually based on mutual respectand working collectively.Teachers will, therefore, conduct child study programmes in order to be familiar with the challenges that the learners face at home which may be a barrier to effective teaching and learning.

The relevance of this theory in this study is that the literacy of parents significantly influences the child`s motivation to acquire, develop and use literacy. Homes as physical environmentsbecome a positive influence on children's sense of efficacy with print especially when books are available (Allen & Mason, 2002). Parents have levels of literacy that allow them to feel competent with print, speech and other literate behaviours(Leichter 2001). The increase in the availability of books in the home may increase the levels of literacy of parents which subsequently results in the quantity and quality of interactions between the parents and their children. Parents can, therefore, acquire new roles that would enable them toguide their children's learning and help them to acquire literacy. Rogoff (2002:86) states that, "In cases where parents and children participate in the problem solving together with larger amounts of verbal interaction, there is effective parent-child interactions in many domains".

- A second position is based on the notion that literacy may liberate and empower both the children and parents. According to this position,parents who gain a sense of personal control as a result of literacycan accept or reject alternatives to their current practices when given opportunities to make choices.The Family Literacy Theory, within the context of literacy and parental involvement, helps to empower the literacy of both parents and learners. Literate and empowered parents are believed to be more involved in the education of their children compared to those with low literacy levels.

These parents may serve as role models to their children for the importance of success. Durkin (2000:94) suggest that, "children have a decided advantage when they are read to and when reading materials are available". Health (2002: 56) found that,"In

the homes of "mainstream" families, parents supported their children's literacy development by engaging in conversations about events and reading bedtime stories".

2.4.2. The Role Theory

The Role Theory was also be explored in this study.According to Ritzer (2007:3961), "The Role Theory is a perspective in Sociology and in Social Psychology that consists mostly of every day activity being the acting out of socially defined categories, for example, mother, manager, and teacher". Expectations and behaviours that individuals have to face and fulfil form part of their roles in the society. People behave differently in different situations and the observations relating to how these individuals will behave in these specific situations constitute The Role Theory. The demands of roles may result in conflicts where the assessment of a person by individuals is contrary to what the person may think of him or herself. This is called "role pressure". Role pressure may also arise when an individual has multi-roles that the person cannot fully fulfil.

The major focus of roles according to the role theory, are on goals that are held by the groups and their individual members(Walker, Shenker& Hoover-Dempsey 2010).According to Walker, Shenker and Hoover-Dempsey (2010: 140), "Socialization of the child, instilling of appropriate behaviour, learning specific subject matter, development of children's unique talents, interests… are goals that the roles focus on".

The relevance of the role theory in this study is that its main concern is based on one of the most fundamental traits that are attributed to social behaviour. The behaviour of human beings is different and cannot be predictable depending on their perspective social identities and the situations that they live in. Within the context of literacy and parental involvement, it is these social identities that aid the understanding of how literacy can actually relate to parental involvement in the education of their children. The presumptions of the Role Theory, therefore, are that the expectations are the major generators of roles where these expectations are learned through experience and that persons are aware of the expectations they hold.

2.4.3 Epistemological foundations of the study.

The social constructionist theory and the interpretive approach will be used to conduct the study. The focus of the interpretive approaches is on the meanings that shape actions and institutions, and the ways in which they do so. Within the context of literacy and parental involvement, Epistemology poses the question of our knowledge of how literacy relates to parental involvement within the context of education. A set of answers to that question is provided by the interpretive theory.The assumption for the different types of interpretive theoriesis that human affairs cannot be understood properly unless we grasp the relevant meanings. Different varieties of interpretive theory understand meanings in different ways. The interpretive theories can express intentions, beliefs, the unconscious or a system of signs. The interpretive theories canalso explain meanings in different ways through the use of logical progression, the dispositions of individuals, the structural links between concepts and power. Within the context of literacy and parental involvement, the interpretive theories assist to find the meanings and understanding of how literacy can relate to parental involvement in the context of education. In short, interpretive approaches studies beliefs, ideas or discourses.

Jorgensen and Phillips (as cited in Duku, 2006: 75), describe social constructionist as,"An umbrella term for a range of theories about culture and society". Social constructivism, according to Jorgensen and Philip(as cited in Duku 2006: 75),"constructs truth, experiences and meaning in relation to how one interacts with one`s social world". According to constructivists, knowledge is constructed by humans; it is conjectural and fallible and grows through exposure. Humans have a built-in aversion to disorder and have internal knowledge structures that guide perceptions, understanding and action. Five elements of one conception of constructivist teaching practice include activating prior knowledge, acquiring knowledge, understanding knowledge, using knowledge and reflecting knowledge.

2.5 CONCLUSION

In order to maximise the childrensspotential and to enhance effective learning, parental involvement and partnership in education is very important in strengthening and supporting teachers. It is important for all the stakeholders to work together in order to improve the education of the child. Schools as institutions of learning and socialisation should have knowledge of parental involvement in education and ways to accommodate parents in the education of their children. Poor socio-economic environments may sometimes contribute to a lack of parental involvement and the low educational level of parents may affect the performance of learners at school. Financially stable parents usually support their children and create a conducive learning environment through the provision of adequate school resources and materials.The next chapter will focus on the research methodology that was used in the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter elaborates on the methodology that was used in this study which included the research methods, sampling and sample selection, the data production instruments, the role of the researcher, the data construction process as well as the research ethics.

3.1 RESEARCH METHODS

Creswell (2009:11) describes research methods or strategies of inquiry as, "Types of qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods, designs or models that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design". The researcher used the qualitative research in the study. According to Creswell (2009:11), "Qualitative research aims to describe and analyse people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, values, thoughts and perceptions". The researcher, using qualitative research interpreted and understood the concept of literacy in parental involvement using the data that was produced from the participants during the course of the study.

A qualitative research design that operationalised using a case study as a research method was used during the course of this study. According to Creswell (2009:12) a case study is, "A qualitative method in which the researcher explores a single entity or phenomenon bounded by time and activity". Houser (2009:67) describes a case study as, "An intensive investigation of a single individual in an effort to intervene with that person and/or to make interferences with others". Based on this study, a case study appeared to be the most relevant and suitable method or strategy of inquiry to be used. Moreover, the use of a case study enabled the researcher to fully understand the concept of literacy in parental involvement in the context of the secondary schools in the Eastern Cape Province.

3.2 POPULATION AND SAMPLE SELECTION

This study's researchpopulation consisted of Head of Departments (HoD), parents and learners from selected secondary schools in Libode district as per demarcations by the Eastern Cape Department of Education. The number of research participants was determined through a sampling process.

The selection of the schools was subjected to purposeful sampling(Maree&Pietersen, 2007). Plano Clark and Creswell (2010:253) describe purposeful sampling as,"The intentional selection of research participants by the researcher in order to learn more about or to better understand a central phenomenon". Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee: (2007:166) posit that, "Purposeful sampling is based on selecting research participants who the researcher believed were representative of the population under investigation".The selection of the participants was based on the fact that they shared certain characteristics that were significant and more relevant to the study.

The sample was selected from four secondary schools. A total of two parent couples as well as two learners were selected per school, bringing the total number of parents to sixteen and learners to eight. Four HODs; one from each school were selected to participate in the research study.

3.3 DATA CONSTRUCTION

Useful and suitable data gathering methods that appeared to be paramount in the study were used during the course of the research. The discussion of these data production instruments is presented below.

3.3.1 Interviews

The researcher used semi-structured, standardized open-ended interviews to construct data during the study. For the purposes of consistency, the interviews were standardised. The standardisation of the interviews means that the interview questions were the same for each interview and all participant groups.

Face-to-face individual interviews were conducted with the learners and Head of Departments (HoDs). This enabled the researcher to establish a relationship with the participants in order to get enough information from them.The researcher conducted a total of four parent interviews. Each of these interviews was conducted in each school with a group of four parents (two couples). Nieuwenhuis (2007:90), posits that, "There is a distinction between group interviews and focus group interviews".The parent interviews were classified as focus group interviews.The interview questions were in English although there were some translations into Xhosa which is the common language used where the research took place.

3.3.1.1. *Ways of counteracting the disadvantages of interviews*

Various ways were noted that one can employ to counteract the disadvantages of interviews. The researcher ensured that there were some probing leading questions that could enable him to get the required responses during the interview process. To help the interviewer avoid unnecessary and irrelevant responses, the questions were made clear. The researcher created a relaxed mood by making the participants feel at home during the course of the interview. The interviewer clearly explained the purpose of the interview to the participants to enable them to understand the significance and value of their contributions during the course of the study.

3.3.2.Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

A total of sixteen parents were used in this study. The researcher conducted a total of four focus group discussions. Each secondary school selected had a group consisting of four parents (two couples). According toPatton (2015: 49),"A focus group discussion is an interview with a small group of people on a specific topic". Some of the information that can bedifficult to collect using other methods can easily be collected using the focus group interviews(Hancock, Windridge&Ockleford: 2007). Members of each focus group from each of these selected secondary schools had similar. They all came from the rural set up with the level of litercay ranging from average to low.

3.3.3. Document Review

The researcher reviewedthe minute books, attendance register, school journalsas well as the information books. One of the fundamental aims of collecting the above mentioned documents in the schools was to examine the levels of parental involvement.Leedy (2012:201) describes document analysis as,"A detailed and systematic examination of documents on a particular organisation for the purposes of identifying patterns or themes".

3.3.4. Observations

Marshall and Rossman (2010: 109) define observation as,"The systematic description of events, behaviours and artefacts in the social setting chosen for study".The researcher in this study used both participant and non-participant observation in order to fully explore the relationship between literacy and parental involvement. According to DeWaltand Billie (2011:36),"Participant observation is a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routine and their cultures"

The researcher attended events such as meetings and prize giving ceremoniesorganised by the schools in an attempt to examine the relationship between literacy and parental involvement in the education of the child. The meetings were mostly attended by parents of a higher literacy level. The interactions between the parents and the researcher enabled the researcher to evaluate the impact literacy has in parental involvement.During the course of the meetings, meaningful contributions came from those parents with a higher level of education.The researcher noted that parents got involved in their children's education through taking part in various activities and events such as open days, fundraising activities as well as being involved in school feeding schemes.

The researcher noted that parents were not given similar opportunities to express themselves in these events that were organised by the schools. Preferences were given

to the parents with a higher level of literacy at the expense of the parents with a lower literacy level. In other words, the parents with a higher level of education got better treatment from the schools compared to parents with a lower level of education. All the parents were invited to attend the events organised by the schools, although the parents were not treated the same.

Parents with expertise volunteered to assist learners in their areas of specialisation. Some parents collaborated with the schools due to the fact that the parents attended the events organised by the schools. On the other hand, some parents showed a negative attitude towards the education of their children as they failed to attend the events organised by the schools.

Non-participant observation was also used in this study. Liu and Maitlis(2010: 87) state that, "Non-participant observation isa research technique whereby the researcher watches the subjects of his or her study, with their knowledge, but without taking an active part in the situation under scrutiny". When using non-participant observation, itcan be incorporated to other data production methods in order to obtain comprehensive results.

The researcher noted that the schools communicated with all the parents regardless of whether the parents had higher or lower levels of literacy.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis, according to Shamoo and Resnik (2009: 95),"Is the process of systematically applying statistical and/or logical techniques to describe and illustrate, condense, recap and evaluate the given data".There are a number of procedures that provide inductive inferences from the data and distinguishing the phenomena of interest from the statistical fluctuations present in the data (Shamoo&Resnik 2009). The researcher in this study analysed the data that was based on the conducted interviews,

documents that were reviewed during the course of the study as well as the observations that were made when the study was conducted.

3.5.1. Analysis of interview data

The researcher first read the transcripts from the interviews conducted with HODs, parents and learners one by one while taking down notes. The researcher then transcribed and coded into categories the data obtained. Several important codes were brought together to create more categories. The most important categories were combined where additional impressions of raw data were clustered together to form themes which were determined while constructing the interview questions. The themes that the researcher formed were further scrutinised and those which were deemed less important were left out and the important themes were singled out and they constituted the study's findings.

3.5.2. Analysis of Document Review data.

The researcher organised and prepared the data from the minute books, attendance register, school journals as well as the information books. After having read all the documents and obtaining the general sense of the information in those documents, the researcher began the coding process. The coding process is the system of organising materials into chunks before bringing meaning to the chunks. The researcher went through all the codes that were created and read them through again while taking down notes. Some of the less important codes were dropped at this stage and the most important codes were kept. The categories or themes of different types were created from these important codes. The researcher then labelled these themes based on their relevance and how they are connected to each other. The researcher then singled out the most important themes which constituted the main results of the study.

3.5.3. Analysis of observational data

The researcher organised and prepared the data for analysis by typing the field notes or sorting as well as arranging the data into different types according to the sources of

information. A general sense of information was obtained by reading all the data and reflecting on its overall meaning. The researcher then coded the data by taking text data into themes and labelling those themes.

3.6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although efforts were taken to ensure the justification of the study, the researcher acknowledges some specific limitations. Amongst others the following limitations are discussed:

3.6.1. Sample size

The findings of the study cannot be generalised to represent the literacy level of the parents in the Libode district due to the sample size of the participants. Furthermore, the findings regarding parental involvement may differ from area to area in the same district.

3.6.2. Interview barriers

Although parents and learners were willing to participate in the interviews, both groups were struggling to give proper responses. This might be ascribed to the language and literacy barriers experienced by especially the parent and learner participants. Furthermore, many interviews were conducted after hours to make provision for working parents.

3.6.3. Interview skills of the researcher

The researcher acknowledges that his interview skills could be improved. One particular area for improvement is the ability to prompt interviewees to enable them to clarify or expand on their responses, which would consequently result in obtaining better data.

3.6.4. The role of the researcher

The researcher acknowledges that he may have played a conflicting dual role in the interview process because of being both an employee of the Department of Education and an interviewer at the same time.

3.7. CONCLUSION

The issues of paramount importance that included, among other things, the research methods, sampling and sample selection, the data production instruments, the role of the researcher, the data construction process and research ethics were discussed fully in this chapter. The researcher used the qualitative research method in this study.The participants in this study were purposefully selected and comprised Head of Departments, parent couples of children from the four secondary schools as well as learners from those respective schools. The data was collected through the use of interviews, focus group discussions, document analysis as well as observations. The researcher discussed the themes of the data obtained from interviews. There were limitations that were attached to the study that included the sample size, interview barriers, and the researcher's interview skills and role. The next chapter will focus on the data analysis and interpretation.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher contextualises the study. The researcher made some descriptions of the contexts where the research took place that included the sites together with the larger communities, the participants that consisted of the HODs, parents and learners. A description and background was given of the documents that were analysed which included the minutes' books, the attendance registers, the school journals as well as the information books. The descriptions were followed by an analysis and interpretation of the collected data which was based on the themes that the researcher developed. This led to the chapter conclusions where the summary of each theme was highlighted.

4.2. CONTEXTUALISING THE INTERACTIONS

4.2.1 Description of sites

The larger community where the study was conducted was sub divided into four wards with different characteristics. These were ward A, B, C and D. The researcher used the letters of the alphabet to represent the research sites for the purposes of anonymity. This was done in an attempt to abide by the research ethics. In each of these wards, there was a secondary school where the research took place. Ward C and D were located in deep rural areas and had more or less the same traits whereas wards A and B also shared similar characteristics and were located in semi-rural areas. Schools located in ward A and B had better resources, equipment and facilities compared to those in ward C and D. That was mainly due to the fact that wards C and D had a very poor road infrastructure that impacted negatively on the transportation of resources, facilities and equipment to the communities and particularly schools in those wards.

All the schools in all the four wards had no electricity except for just a single school that was in ward A that used a solar system as the alternative source of energy; although only the school office was powered. This was the only school which had a computer in the principal's office. All these other schools in these other three wards had no computers at all.

The government in the Eastern Cape Province had embarked on a massive programmeto urgently deal with all the mud schools around the province. It aimed at replacing all these mud schools with properly constructed concrete schools. The secondary school in ward D benefited from this programme. Three blocks of classes with three classrooms in each block were constructed bringing the total number of classrooms that were constructed to nine. In addition to the blocks of classrooms, an administrative block that comprised the staffroom, administrative clerk office, kitchen as well as the principal and deputy principal's offices were built.

4.2.2 Description of participants

4.2.2.1 Description of parents

Some parents in ward A and B had reached their secondary education and were better in terms of understanding the need and roles as well as responsibilities attached to the education of their children as compared to parents in ward C and D. Parents in ward C and D came from underdeveloped areas. Ward A and B had a very sound transport infrastructure that made them easily accessible in terms of development programmes that were brought by the government as well as the Department of Education (DoE) in the respective wards particularly in those secondary schools that were located in those two wards.

The researcher, in the process of participant selection, ensured that parent couples were selected in the study. This meant that if the father was selected the mother automatically qualified to be part of the interview process.

The selected group of parents comprised eight males and an equal number of females. Out of the total number of parents interviewed, six of them had reached their secondary education. Two of these six parents came from ward A. The other two came from ward B. The other two came from ward C. A male partner of a parent in ward A was also a member of the school governing body. Amongst these six parents, this was the only parent with a permanent job, working for the Ministry of Transport. The other five parents in this category were workers but on a temporary basis as they used to work for months before their contracts expired and would stay the other months without jobs. These six parents in this category represented the working class and were dressed in smart and clean formal attire. All the parents in the category that represented the working class had reached their secondary level of education except for one who was an SGB member and had reached tertiary education and was the most educated of them all. The living conditions in the households of this category of parents that represented the working class were above the poverty datum line as all of them used to work at some time and represented an average group in the society in terms of the socio-economic status. Interview proceedings revealed that this category of parents had an interest in their children's education and seemed to be cognizant of the reasons of sending their children to school.

Another category of parents were those with a very low level of education. This group comprised ten parents that came from wards C and D as per research demarcations and consisted of five males and five females. In this category, only four of these parents reached grade seven and the rest were below grade seven. All these parents were not working and depended entirely on subsistence farming which in the majority of cases was affected by the inconsistencies of the rains. This explains the reasons why these parents represented a group in the society that lived below the poverty datum line with a very low socio-economic status. This group normally failed to reach the basic needs of their households in terms of food, clothing and decent education as well as proper accommodation for their children. During interviews, these parents were dressed in untidy casual attire which was not very clean and the researcher attributed thisto severe lack of resources. Parents in this category did not show an interest in their children's

education. This could be due to the fact that wards C and D, where these parents lived, were less developed. Lack of development in these wards could be due to the fact that the wards were isolated with a very poor transport network that prevented development programmes into these areas. This explains why some parents in these areas had little education.

4.2.2.2 Description of learners

The researcher selected two learners per schools, a boy and a girl from Grades 11 and 12. Since the research was conducted in four schools, the total number of learners that took part in the study was eight. The learners were also selected from the households of parents that took part in the study. Altogether, there were four boys and four girls that took part in the study.

The researcher sub-divided the group of learners into two categories where the first category comprised learners that came from schools in wards A and B. These learners were smart, clean and neatly dressed with proper complete school uniforms. One of the boys was the president of the Learner Representative Council (LRC). Two of the girls in this category were selected from Grade 11 and two of the boys were from Grade 12. All these learners showed confidence as they appeared to know the reasons why their parents sent them to school. These learners seemed to have average resources to support their day to day learning at school. They showed a sense of responsibility, good manners and some leadership qualities as evidenced by the fact that one of the boys in the group was the president of the LRC.

The other category was formed by learners who came from schools in ward C and D. This category comprised two boys and two girls who were selected from Grades 11 and 12 respectively. Three of these learners, two boys and one girl were in school uniforms that were not complete and in a bad state. The other girl had no school uniform at all. Ward C and D were disadvantaged wards in terms of development and learners in these wards had no resources to support their learning. Learners in ward C and D seemed to come from households of very low socio-economic status. Learners in this category showed little confidence in what they were doing. It appeared as if they were

not aware of what was happening around them as well as the value of education together with the reasons why their parents sent them to school.

4.2.2.3 Description of HODs

A total of four HODs were interviewed as one HOD was selected per school. There were three males and only one female HOD that took part in the study. The reason why there was no gender balance in this case of HODs could be that most of HODs in the targeted schools were science teachers and most of the science teachers in these remote schools are male teachers. Their teaching experience ranged from 15 to 20 years with the female participant as the highest serving member with 20 years-experience as an educator and six years-experience as an HOD. She holds a Bachelor of Education Degree in the field of Science. The other two male HODs had fifteen years of teaching experience and both had their second degrees in the field of Science and had both served as HODs for four years. The other male HOD holds a Master's degree also in the field of Science and had seventeen years of teaching experience and five years as an HOD.

All the HODs seemed to be comfortable and confident during the course of the interview and they managed to explain clearly what was taking place in the schools. They explained the backgrounds of different learners as well as that of the communities they were working in. The four HODs appeared to be aware of their standing in the schools as well as the duties and responsibilities attached to their positions. The four HODs were dressed properly as professionals and their conduct was good during the course of the interviews.

4.3 BACKGROUND OF DOCUMENTS ANALYSED

The researcher analysed the attendance register, the minutesbooks, the school journal and the information book to evaluate the relationship betweenliteracy andparental involvement in the education of the child.

4.3.1 Minute book

A minute book is a book containing permanent and detailed records of the deliberations and resolutions adopted at an official meeting. All formal organisations such as schools are required by the law to maintain up to date minute books which should be accessible to all members of the school. The researcher in all the four secondary schools evaluated the minute books in order to assess the categories of parents which most featured in the activities of the school to support the education of their children. The exercise could enable the researcher to draw conclusions based on whether or not literacy has an impact in parental involvement in the education of their children.

4.3.2 Attendance register

During parents meetings, schools circulated registers where all the parents present signed. This data is available to the schools records to enable the School Governing Body (SGB) to determine those parents who frequently attend the meetings and other events organised by the school. The researcher thought that the registers could help determine which category of parents between those with a high literacy level and those with a low literacy level attended the activities organised by the schools.

4.3.3 School journal

A school Journal is a weekly diary usually written by the principal of a school on what has been going on in the school. Entries about what is being taught along with other interesting anecdotes can be found in these records. The researcher analysed the school journal to determine whether the events that were recorded by the principal showed any relationship between literacy and parental involvement. The analysis of the school journal enabled the researcher to determine which category of parents attended the activities organised by the schools.

4.3.4. Information book

The school information book recorded some of the important communication between the principal and the teachers mainly on the issues relating to teaching and learning as well as some other activities that take place in a school environment. Some of the issues that relate to teaching and learning cannot be done without consultation with parents.The researcher assessedthe information book to determine whether the literacy level of parents was considered in these kinds of communication.

4.4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.4.1 Introduction of themes to be analysed.

This section offers an interpretation of the data by relating what was found in the theoretical framework as well as the literature review. The discussion was then based on the following themes: The School's Awareness of the community's literacy level-; school's responsiveness to the community needs-;treatment of parents by schools-;empowerment and encouragement of parental involvement bythe school-; school communication with parents-; parental involvement in children's education-; predominantly involved parents in the education of children-; Voluntary parental involvement in the education of children-; parents' valuing of children's education-; parents' attitude towards schooling-; as well as parental attendance of school meetings. A detailed description and discussion of the themes is given below.

4.4.2 School practices on parental involvement and literacy

4.4.2.1. School's Awareness of Community's literacy level

The main focus of this theme was to determine whether schools are aware of the levels of education of some of the parents in the communities where these schools are located. This couldensure that proper strategies are implemented to enhance effective teaching and learning as well as to achieve improved learner participation.

It is important for teachers to understand the background of the parents of the children that they teach in order to have a clear understanding of the learners that they interact with on a daily basis (Roman 2004). To expound on the aforementioned, it is imperative for teachers to know and have information based on their learner's backgrounds, the family and community norms as well as values in order to create and strengthen positive relations with learners' parents. Some of the interviewees indicated that the schools are knowledgeable about the literacy levels of the communities where the children that they teach come from and they understand the backgrounds of the learners that they teach.

One of the interviewed H.O.Ds from a secondary school in ward B had this to say regarding parents' literacy levels:

> Parents in this community are illiterate as some of them come from underdeveloped areas with inadequate equipment and resources to improve their literacy levels. The school is working with the community to try and improve the literacy levels of some of these parents. This could be done through the introduction of educational programmes as well as the provision of some resources and equipment that may help improve the literacy level of these parents. Parents seem to be eager to learn and upgrade their literacy although on the other hand some seem to show a negative attitude towards education.

When the HOD was further asked by the researcher some possible reasons as to why most of the parents in the community are illiterate. The response from the HOD pointed out to the suggestion that this may be attributed to the fact that the community itself is underdeveloped and lacked in essential facilities and resources that may help improve the community members' level of education.

These following are words from another HOD from a secondary school also in ward B:

The community where these parents come from is underdeveloped. There are inadequate resources to support these parents in an effort to improve their levels of education. Literate parents play a pivotal role not only in the education of their children but also in improving their societies.

Learners thought that the schools are doing much more to understand the literacy levels of their parents in the community.

One of the learners from a secondary school in ward C responded by saying that:

There are programmes that are put in place by the school and other organizations to ensure that our parents get basic education. Basic education will enable them to assist us with our schoolwork. It will also enable them to read letters that are sent to them by the school and also to write letters to the school if there are issues that need to be attended to.

The response signalsan awareness of the sample regarding the living conditions and education levels of their communities. They seem to be aware that there is a strong relationship between literacy and parental involvement in the education of the child. Regarding general circumstances and living conditions and educational levels, one parent said this in her response:

Schools and some Non-Governmental Organisations are trying their level best to put in place programmes that will help improve the general circumstances of the people in the community regarding their literacy. Parents viewed the stance as a positive move and were eager to participate in all the programmes that are organised by the schools and the Non-Governmental Organizations. Parents believed this may help improve the circumstances that affect measures to improve their literacy levels. Although some parents were positive about the move, some on the other hand believed that these programmes could be having less benefit to the parents.

This response shows that the school, as an institution of learning, plays a pivotal role in conducting community based studies to ensure that they understand the backgrounds, culture as well as the level of education of the parents to enhance effective parental involvement in the child's education.An improved level of literacy may imply an active involvement and participation of parents in the education of their children.The Family Role Theory stresses the need for schools to teach learners their cultures and also for learners to learn the culture of their schools. Teaching the culture, norms and values of the community at school closes the gap between the home and the school and this improves the working relationship between the home and the school. On the other hand, instilling the culture and values of the school to the learners and the larger community enhances a positive rapport between the school and the larger community.The improved relations between the school and the community enhance effective parental involvement which results in an improved teaching and learning milieu.An improved teaching and learning environment may result in improved learner participation.

4.4.2.2. School's responsiveness to community needs

This theme aimed at establishing the response of the schools towards the needs of the community. Teachers should be aware of the need of the community where their school is located as this may enhance effective parental involvement. Regarding responsiveness to community needs, some of the interviewees highlighted the measures that the schools have in place in order to meet the community's basic needs.

One of the learners from a secondary school in ward D had this to say:

> The government through schools provides us with food, clothes, books, uniforms and other basic needs. The provisions assist most of us. During the winter season we are provided with jerseys that keep us warm during the entire cold season. There is a feeding scheme at school that helps some of us who come to school without having a meal. Some of the learners in my class wear the uniforms that were donated by the government. This assists us a lot as it closes a gap between the have

andhave nots at school. Books are a scarce commodity in our community so the school is doing a great job in supplying us with these books.

The fact that schools provide uniforms and food as well as other basic needs to underprivileged learners may be an indication that the material requirements of the community are being addressed by the schools.

This is what one of the parents from a secondary school in ward A said:

> The school provides our children with textbooks and exercise books to make learning very easy. Textbooks and exercise books are very expensive and as parents in this poor community we cannot afford to buy enough for our children yet effective learning cannot take place if learners do not have these books. The provision of these books by the school plays a key role in the education of our children.

Parents pointed out that there are other organisations that donate uniforms and clothes to learners.

> There are other organisations and rich people from the nearby towns that assist us with some of the basic things for our children and this helps a lot in the education of our children as most of the basic needs are met.

When further asked how the parents feel about the assistance that they get from the organisations, a parent from a secondary school in ward B said:

> We are very grateful for the assistance that we get from these stakeholders as this goes a long way in improving the living conditions of our children, developing the community where we live and also enhances effective learner participation and parental involvement.

Chapter two, sections 27, 28 and 29 of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa in the Bill of Rights states that every child has a right to food, shelter and a decent education.

These are the words from one of the HODs from a secondary school also in ward B:

> We inform parents of serious issues that affect the day to day learning of their children at school that include the behaviour of some of these learners, the use of drugs and other dangerous substances, shortage of textbooks and other important resources as well as absenteeism and lateness. Parents in this regard promised to work together with the schools to intensively deal with the critical issues that may affect the effective learning of their children at school.

According to this response from the HOD, it seems as if schools are working hard to improve the education of the children through partnerships with relevant stakeholders. The literacy level of the parents is very important if parents are to be actively involved in the education of their children.

4.4.2.3. Treatment of Parents by Schools

The manner in which parents are treated when it comes to matters relating to the education of their children forms an important feature as this may impact negatively in the didactic situation if not properly attended to.

Although parents claimed that they are treated the same and with respect and dignity, one parent from ward B and the other from ward C believed that poorer parents are less attended to when visiting the schools compared to those who are financially stable and educated. Parents believed that for one to be recognised as a decent human being, the person must occupy a higher status in the society and must have a higher level of education.

One of the parents from a secondary school in ward A said.

> We are treated well and with equal respect and dignity by the school. The contributions made by all the parents in the school meetings and other formal school gatherings are seriously considered regardless of the level of education of the parents and their social status. The school attends to

all the parents equally regardless of whether there are rich or poor. The parents feel free to discuss matters relating to the education of their children when they are at school.

When asked by the researcher,one parent from ward A urged that the school does not assist poorer parents in time. The parent claimed that the assistance the school gives to parents in the majority of cases is based on the social status of these parents as well as their level of education. Parents that occupy a higher status in the society are promptly given all the assistance they need compared to those parents who are very poor with little education.

One of the parents from a secondary school in ward D responded by saying:

> If you visit the school and you are poor and uneducated, you will spend the whole day waiting for the person that will assist you. If you want to see the principal, they will tell you that the principal is very busy but if you are a rich and educated parent when you visit the school and you want to see the principal, someone at the reception will take you straight to the principal's office without you waiting.

Another parent from ward D elaborated that the disparities in the treatment of parents by the school are caused by the fact that schools are of the perception that parents who are rich and educated will always contribute meaningfully in the school through their sound and constructive ideas as well as the physical materials that will lead to the school's development. Similarly, parentsfrom ward B believed that schools are of the perception that poor and uneducated parents cannot contribute meaningful in the running of the school either through the physical materials or the constructive ideas.

> "These teachers think that when you are poor, you are also poor in mind and you cannot think constructively and that is why we are not properly treated at school".

Contrastingly, interviewed HODs from secondary schools in ward A and B believed that all the parents are treated equal, with respect and with dignity regardless of their educational or societal status.

> "We treat all the parents equally and with respect and dignity regardless of the social status that they occupy in the society as well as their level of education".

These HODs from secondary schools in ward A and B were of thebelief that a fair treatment to these parents will paint a good picture in the community about the school, and this may leads to an improved rapport between the school and the community. A good relationship between the school and the community will result in improved parental participation in the education of their children. A sound relationship between the school and the community facilitates a meaningful interaction between these two social institutions that will enable the child to benefit from these interactions.

Interviewed learners from the secondary schools in ward C and D that were also under the impression that their parents were treated equally and with dignity by the schools. The argument by these learners was contrary to what some of the parents believed as they claimed that regardless of the societal status and the level of education all their parents are treated the same and with respect and dignity.

One of the learners from a secondary school in ward B said:

> I have never witnessed a situation where parents are discriminated at school. All the parents that I have seen coming to my school including my parents are treated equally and with dignity and respect. They all seemed to be very happy when they visit the school. They are given the attention that they need as soon as possible and their issues are attended to as soon as they come to school.

One of the learners on the issue of disparities and discriminations as parents claimed responded by saying that:

"Parents have an inferiority complex and they like putting wrong labels on teachers. Some parents are friends with some of the teachers on social grounds and when some of these parents see this they become jealous and think that these parents are favoured by the teachers".

"Teachers are human beings and have a right to meddle with any member of the society at any level".

On general terms one can point out that the interviewees had mixed reactions on the treatment of parents; with the HODs and learners claiming that all the parents were treated equally with respect and dignity regardless of their educational and societal status. Some parents believed that parents were not fairly treated at these schools as rich and educated parents were treated better than poor and uneducated parents. This suggests that there is no balance between the school and the parents and that there are no good relations that exist between the schools and the communities. The manner in which parents are treated by the schools thus stresses the fact that teachers should be sensitive and should take into account the manner in which they relate to their learners' parents. Teachers also need to address the behaviour and attitudes that may hinder the success of parental involvement in their schools. In addition, schools should work out possible strategies that will enable all the parents to feel that they are fairly treated when they visit these schools regardless of their levels of literacy.

4.4.2.4. Empowerment and encouragement of parental involvement by schools

Measures adopted by schools to motivate and encourage parents to assist their children in order to improve their performance at school form the core of this theme.

The Family Literacy Theory stresses that schools should help parents understand what they can do at home to help support and encourage their children. Schoolsshould encourage parents to take part in school activities in order for the parents to play a role in their children's education.

In this regard one of the HODs from a secondary school in ward A had this to say:

We invite parents to meetings and open days to motivate and encourage them to take responsibility for their children's education and to ask for assistance in cases where they need help. Not all the parents attend some of these meetings and open days. We really empower those parents who support their children by attending these activities and events. This has impacted positively in the teaching and learning situation. We have also noted that the parents with a higher literacy level are the ones who are strongly involved in the school affairs of their children. The performance of learners whose parents took part in school activities improve from day to day as compared to the performance of those learners whose parents do not partake in school activities.

Asked by the researcher as to why some of these parents did not attend these school meetings and open days, the HOD from the secondary school in ward D responded strongly by stating categorically that some of these parents do not attend these meetings due to work and household related circumstances.

This is what the HOD from a secondary school in ward D had to say:

Some of the parents complain that they don't have enough time to visit the school due to circumstances beyond their control which range from job related issues to household matters. This makes it very difficult for us as a school to effectively deal with some of the problems that involve their children.

Schools should ensure that the organised meetings are purposeful and that a healthy atmosphere is created to accommodate all the parents regardless of their literacy level. Some parents indicated that sometimes they go to school on invitation. They claimed that when invited to meetings, they are encouraged to fully participate in their children's school activities.

One of the parents from the secondary school in ward C said:

We are encouraged to ask for assistance where needed from the school even though in most cases we are not offered that assistance and if ever there is any; it is not done in time.

Parents claimed that regarding assistance that they may need at school, preference is given to the parents with a higher literacy level compared to the parents with a lower educational level.

This is what one of the parents had to say:

Preference is given to those parents who are rich and if you don't have money like me then you are not being fully attended to.

Asked on the possible reasons why financially stable parents are given first preference in as far as assistance is concerned, the parent claimed that:

"Teachers do that with the hope that they will get rewards in the form of money, lunch or other material rewards".

The learner in ward A claimed that the schools encourage their parents to assist the children with homework.

One of the learners from the secondary school in ward A said:

We are always given letters to invite our parents to school meetings and some activities that are organised by the school. In some cases announcements are made at the assembly when the school has a message that we have to send to our parents. Some of the parents especially my mother always attends to the activities that are organised by the school. Some of the parents don't attend to these meetings because some of them are organised during the week where some of the parents are at work.

The learner from the secondary school in ward Aindicated that the attendance to school meetings and other activities can be improved by organising these meetings and other school events during weekends where most of the parents are likely to be available.

These were the words from one of the learners from the school in ward C:

> Organising meetings and some school activities during weekends enables all the parents who are willing to attend these activities to attend. Learners do not go to school during the weekends except if there is a prior arrangement and this affords the parent a good opportunity for them to attend to the school calls.

Schools play a fundamental role in mobilising parents to take part in their children's education through their support; either by providing materials and resources or by helping their children at home, or by attending school activities such as meetings and open days. Participants thought that schools should try by all possible means to organise their meetings and other activities during the weekends as this may actually enable all the parents who are willing to attend these activities to attend without any hindrances. Information regarding school meetings and activities should be disseminated to all the parents concerned regardless of their literacy level on time as this may improve the attendance in these activities.

4.4.2.5. School communication with parents

The theme tried to establish the communication channels that were followed between the home and the school and how effective communication relates to literacy and parental involvement.

The HOD from one of the secondary schools in ward B mentioned that information is communicated to parents through letters. They believed that although there are other various forms of communication, the use of letters especially in a school set up seemed to be the most used form of communication between the home and the school. The use of letters, however, appears to have some disadvantages as most of these parents in

these remote areas are illiterate and cannot read the letters on their own. Parents will require the assistance of their children to read these letters. Schools have a responsibility of improving the literacy level of the parents in the community to ensure that the communication between the home and the school is effective and promotes effective parental involvement.

The HOD from the secondary school in ward B said:

> We use different forms of communication to convey different messages to parents through their learners. Some of these communication channels are more effective than others. The use of letters is the most commonly used in the school although some parents find it difficult to read these letters. Phone calls are also used especially when there are very urgent messages that are directed to a few individuals. The use of phone calls is very effective as the messages reach the intended destination well on time.

When the researcher asked about the other forms of communication apart from the letters and the phone calls, the other HOD from the secondary school in ward C claimed that they usually disseminate the information to the parentsthroughannouncements at assembly as this would reduce the burden of reading to the parents who find reading a challenge. Parents claimed that information from the school is primarily communicated through letters, telephonically and sometimes through verbal communication.

This is what the parent from the secondary school in ward A had to say:

> The school communicates with us through letters, announcements and sometimes telephonically depending on the matters that need to be attended to.

The interviewed learners from ward B and C also affirmed that the information from the schools is communicated to their parents through announcements, letters and telephonically.

The most commonly used form of communication by the school to our parents at home is through announcements.

As the literature review indicated, the foundations of good parent-teacher relationships depend entirely on sound and clear communication. Meaningful communication results in meaningful parental involvement. It was, however, not clear from the responses how schools accommodated parents with low levels of literacy in instances where the primary source of communication was in a written form.

According to the Family Literacy Theory, there should be effective two way communication between parents and teachers to ensure effective parental involvement. This means that improved communication channels between the home and the school may lead to effective teaching and learning as the school gathers meaningful information of the people in the community. The information would assist in conducting child study programmes that would help in the design of effective, sound and meaningful teaching strategies that may be used in the classroom.

4.4.3 Parental involvement and literacy

4.4.3.1. Parental involvement in children's education.

The fundamental aim of this theme was to establish the extent to which parents get involved in their children's education through engaging in various activities that help improve teaching and learning. Family Literacy Theory stresses the importance of family involvement in the education of their children as it enhances effective learning, especially in some cases where a good rapport exists between these parents and the schools. Good relationships mean that parents are free to consult teachers on some issues relating to their children. The teachers, on the other hand, are also free to report to parents some matters that may need attention and that may impact negatively in a teaching and learning environment. Although the schools are trying to involve

everyparent, teachers find it somewhat disappointing that parents are not fully involved in their children's education.

Regarding parental involvement, this is what one of the HODs from one of the secondary schools in ward D had to say:

> Parents participate in school activities especially those with a higher educational level as they seem to be aware of the reasons why their children are sent to school. Most of the parents especially those with low literacy level do not attend to school activities and they are not aware of the value of education in their children.

Althoughsome parents attend events organised by the school, some view such meetings as "community gathering" mainly for the purposes of socialisation. Moreover, parents' representation in these school meetings are sometimes lacking due to the fact that some parents do not understand the structure of education.

This was echoed by the response from a parent in ward C who said that:

> We are not familiar with the new learning areas, making it very difficult for us to assist our children with homework. The school is not doing much to orient us on these different learning areas that are being offered in the school. This creates a gap between the home and the schools as most of us parents are not well versed on that which is being done at school. The school is supposed to organise some programmes, activities and courses that may help improve the knowledge of parents regarding these different learning.

Schools encourage parents to help their children with schoolwork. Some parents are willing to do so. However, when parents do not have sound literacy skills, it is difficult for them to read to their children and assist them with schoolwork. Schools as institutions of learning seem to be playing a little role in empowering these parents and improving their

literacy levels and this impacts negatively in the day to day learning of their children and subsequently leads to poor learner performance.

This was framed by the participants when one of the parents from the secondary school in ward A said:

> The older siblings and other children from the neighbourhood are sometimes called for assistance as we only provide our children help in our areas of specialisation. In some cases, there are neither older siblings nor children from the neighbourhood that may assist our children. That really frustrates our children as most of these home works will be needed the following day and we could not assist them as parents.

When asked by the researcher what she thinks may be the solution to the problem, the parent went on to suggest that teachers should clearly explain the homework before they give it to the children especially in difficult learning areas such as Physical Science and Mathematics.

> The core business of a teacher is to teach our children and the core business of the learners is to learn what these teachers teach them at school. To my surprise, most of the teaching is done by us parents at home instead of it being done at school.

The interviewed learners from ward B and D claimed that their parents face difficulties in assisting them with homework due to the fact that there were other learning areas that were introduced in the curriculum which their parents were not familiar with.

One of the learners from the secondary school in ward B said:

> My parents always face challenges in assisting me in some of the learning area especially Mathematics and Physical Science because they are not educated and they find it very difficult solve Mathematics and Science related problems.

The other learner from a secondary school in ward D claimed that although her parents are educated, they have little knowledge of some of the learning areas that have been newly introduced into the curriculum.

> My father is always keen to assist me in all these subjects except Technology which is very difficult to him because he always says that he did not learn Technology at school.

The responses from the participants may suggest that most parents find it difficult to assist their children at home due to the fact that they have very low literacy levels and that they are not familiar with the new learning areas that have been introduced in the school curriculum. Government should work out meaningful and comprehensive strategies that can be effectively implemented in an effort to curb the problem of illiteracy in these communities as this has some direct and indirect effects on parental involvement.

4.4.3.2. Predominantly involved parents in children's education.

This theme addressed the key roles that were played by both parents at home in as far as the education of the child is concerned to ensure effective parent participation in the education of the child.

The Role Theory focuses, in principle, on the roles in the family and work domains considered to be the two most central institutions in people's lives. The participants indicated that some mothers are more involved in their children's general education although a few participants remarked that their fathers also sometimesassist.

The HOD from the secondary school in ward A said:

> Mothers are mostly the ones who are involved in their children's education although a few fathers also assist in their children's education. I think the reason why mothers get involved more than the fathers is that children appear to be more bonded to their mothers compared to their fathers. Children spend most of their time with their mothers at home. They report

everything relating to their learning to their mothers and they seem to have the trust that their mothers will always do the best for them compared to their fathers.

The HOD from the secondary school in ward A when asked the possible reasons why mothers appeared to be more involved in their children's education compared to their fathers indicated that fathers seemed to have limited time due to work commitments and other household duties.

These were the words from the HOD from a secondary school in ward C:

Fathers are always out of the homestead fending for the children and the children are always with mothers at home.

Parents claimed that they all help their children in as far as schoolwork was concerned but the help is according to their areas of specialisation.

This is what one of the parents from a secondary school in ward B had to say:

We as parents share our duties and responsibilities according to expertise. We share the responsibilities according to what we know best. If the father is good in Mathematics, he will help our children in Mathematics and all these other learning areas that are related to Mathematics. If the mother is good in Languages she helps the children in the learning areas that are related to these Languages. There are cases where learners come home with problems that both of us cannot solve at home.

Asked on how a parent can deal with such a situation where the child brings home a problem that both parents cannot solve, the parent pointed out that they ask the siblings to assist. If the problem cannot be solved by the siblings, they ask for assistance from the children of the neighbourhood. If that is in vain then that is where the frustration begins.

This is what the same parent from a secondary school in ward B said:

We seek assistance from the siblings and if they can't assist we consult the children from the neighbourhood and in most cases that's where our children face a lot of challenges.

Learners in ward A and B claimed that they are assisted by their mothers in most cases except for two learners who claimed that they are assisted by their fathers as their mothers are illiterate.

The learner from the secondary school in ward A said:

My father is not always at home in most of the times and when I come from school I always give the homework to my mother who always assist me.At times my father comes home very late at night when we are already asleep. In some cases my teachers give us difficult problems that my mother cannot solve and we sometimes wait for my father to come or at times we seek assistance from the children of the neighbourhood who always assist me a lot with my homework.

The other learner from a secondary school in ward B claimed that her mother was illiterate and that he receives all the assistance regarding school work from his father who is always available to support him. The learner pointed out that although the father was there to support him at times, there were challenging problems that the father could not solve. Asked on how they deal with such situations where the father could not solve some of the problems, this is what the learner had to say:

My father at times found it very difficult to solve some of the problems especially in Physical Science. We normally try to research in the internet to work out possible answers to the problems. The internet always goes a long way in assisting me with some of the challenging problems that my teachers give as homework. I normally ask my subject teacher the following day in case of those problems that I failed to get the solutions from the internet. The internet has helped me a lot in as far as my home works are concerned since our teachers give us very difficult staff.

It is evident from the participants' responses that the mothers are perceived as the ones who are predominantly involved in the education of their children and who also assist their children to achieve academically. Learners give the announcements and homework from school to their mothers who are always at home.Possible reasons as to why mothers are predominantly involved are that fathers always come home very late at night and very tired. Children have better relationships with mothers as they spend most of their time with their mothers at home while their fathers areaway. These findings seemed to be contradictory to what was stated in literature that women, especially those whose literacy levels are low, find it difficult to assist their children with schoolwork. Literature stated that the fathers play an active role in assisting the learners with school work. However, this research revealed that the mothers are the ones who are actively involved in their children's education and the fathers play a passive role.

4.4.3.3. Voluntary parental involvement in children's education.

The theme on Voluntary parental involvement looked at the extent that literacy affects the manner in which parents visit the schools where their children are learning. Though the interviewees indicated that many parents are not afraid to visit the schools, it generally appeared as if a lot of parents do not voluntarily visit schools unless invited.

The HOD from one of the secondary schools in ward C said:

> Parents do not voluntarily come to school. Some of these parents come to school when invited by the school authorities and some even if there are invited do not come to school. Parents have an inferiority complex and some have a misleading perception that teachers think that they are better beings in the society and they always look down upon then. All the parents are free to visit the school at whatever time as these visits by parents help strengthen the relationships between the school and the larger society.

When the HOD was asked as to what might cause these parents not to visit the school, the informant pointed out that the visit by parents to school is viewed by some members of staff as disruptive to the smooth running of the school. Some teachers are of the

perception that parents should not always be invited to come to school as their presence at times disrupts the programmes of the school.

This is what was said by another HOD from the secondary school in ward D:

> Parents are not voluntarily invited to come to school as this is disruptive to the running of the school. When parents come to school during the working hours they disrupt the attention of learners and some will just pop into the classroom where their children learn just to greet their children without anything serious that they want from these children. Some would just request the teachers to discuss issues that are not work related. That creates an atmosphere that is not conducive to effective teaching and learning.

This is underscored by the literature review where it stated that parents with low literacy levels do not take part in schools' decision making processes because they feel that they have nothing valuable to offer. On the other hand, parents who are closely involved with the school activities, such as to serve on the SGB, appear to be more confident to visit the schools whenever they wish because they feel that they are accommodated and that their decisions in the school are considered seriously by the authorities.

The parent who is also a member of the school governing body and comes from a secondary school in ward A said:

> I freely go to school anytime and the teachers are very kind to me and they treat me very well. Some parents say that the school discriminate parents but I haven't seen that kind of discrimination and I still believe that all the parents are invited to come to school at any time as long as there is an issue that the parent has to come to school to attend to. Sometimes I visit the school almost four days if not five a week since I'm an SGB member, I'm supposed to be present when there are discussions of any kind at school that relate to teaching and learning.

The learners from the secondary schools in ward B and D echoed the same sentiments regarding visits by their parents to schools. These learners indicated that their parents are not afraid to go to school and they only go when invited to meetings.

This is what one of the learners from the secondary school in ward B said:

> My parents always visit my school if they are invited in case there are issues that need to be addressed. At times they fail to go to school in case they are invited during the working hours and are not available due to work commitments. The visit by my parents to school is very important as it improves the relationship between my teachers and my parents.

The other learner from a secondary school in ward D also said that his parents visit the school when invited unless if the invitation comes at a time when the parent already had other commitments.

> My parents visit the school when they are invited but sometimes they fail to attend due to the fact that the school at times gives very short notices. In this case, it becomes very difficult for them to attend since there will be having other plans.

When the researcher asked another learner from a secondary school in ward D the reason why teachers claim that their parents are afraid to visit the schools especially when they are not invited, te learner responded by saying that there is no need for the parents to visit the school if not invited as this may disrupt the teaching and learning process.

The learner said:

> Parents should only go to school when they are invited to and there is no reason why parents can just go to school without any formal invitation as this may cause a disruption in the smooth running of the school.

Learners, therefore, seemed to be of the opinion that their parents should not go to school if they are not invited as this may have a negative impact on the teaching and learning process. Learners believe that schools should have clear programmes in place that will incorporate parents in the running of the school. In designing these programmes, schools should bear in mind that these parents have other commitments at home.

Although some teachers viewed some visits by parents to schools as disruptive, parents are welcomed to visit the schools as this strengthens the relationship between the home and the school. Schools should have a plan of accommodating all the parents who want to visit the school for various purposes. It was, however, suggested by some participants that some of these meetings should be held during the weekend to enable all the parents to attend. In addition, in instances where these activities are held during the week, they should be organised after hours when most of the parents are likely to attend.

4.4.3.4. Parents' valuing of children's education

The purpose in this theme was on the determination of the categories of parents that value the education of their children and those that view education negatively. This was done as an attempt to discuss possible ways to ensure that all the parents, regardless of their level of literacy, are involved in the education of their children.

According to the literature review, parents' involvement in the education of their children sends a message that they care about their children's success and that they regard education as very important.

Mixed responses were obtained from HODs. The HODs from the secondary schools in ward A and B responded positively by indicating that parents attend meetings when invited which shows that they have an interest in their children's work and want to check their progress and performance.

One of the HODs from the secondary school in ward B said:

Parents attend to meetings and other schools activities when invited to and this shows that these parents are eager to see their children succeeding. In these meetings, a lot of things regarding the education of these children are discussed and parents always get some platforms to air their views on some of the issues that affect the day to day activities of these learners either at school or at home. The school on the other hand also gets the opportunity to facilitate some meaningful interactions between the teachers and the parents.

There were also other cases mentioned by the HOD from the secondary school in ward D, where parents especially those of struggling learners seemed not to show interest in their children's education. It was pointed out that some of these parents did not attend to the meetings and other activities that were organized by the school.

These are the words from the HOD of a secondary school in ward D

Most of the things that affect children and teachers at school are discussed in the parents meetings. Some parents seem not to be supporting the education of their children because the best way a parent can support the child's education is through the interaction with the school. This helps the parent to learn more of the behaviour of the child outside the home environment.

On the other hand, parents revealed that education is important as it enables their children to fit well in the society and also prepares them for a brighter future.

One of the interviewed parents from a secondary school in ward D said:

By creating better future for our children, we benefit a lot as parents as this will enable us to improve our lives. Educated children tend to be bread winners in most of the households and they help a lot in improving the standard of living of the home. Most of us are very poor and we stay in

homesteads that are poorly constructed and our hopes are on these children that they will one day build proper structures for us.

The learners interviewed, however, claimed that their parents consider education as very important. They indicated that their parents supported them with stationary and textbooks as well as other resources that are of use in the classroom.

One of the learners from a secondary school in ward C had this to say:

> The support that I get from my parents is overwhelming. My parents buy me textbooks, exercise books, school uniforms and other important resources that I needed in the classroom. The support from my parents does not end there. My parents attend to meetings, open days and other gatherings that are organised by the school. On consultation days my parents come to school to view my work and they also get the opportunity to discuss with my teachers on my progress. That really helps me a lot in knowing my strength and weaknesses and also understanding the practical and comprehensive ways of dealing with these drawbacks.

Learners believed that through the support that they get from their parents, they are placed on a better position to succeed in school.

One learner from the same secondary school in ward C had this to say:

> My parents are working very hard to uplift my standard of education and they support me in all the aspects to ensure that I improve my performance. I hope that in the future to come I will be in a better position to support my family and improve their status in the society.

The learners seemed to be optimistic of the future. The learners interviewed claimed that parents, irrespective of their literacy levels, considered education as very important.

4.4.3.5. Parents' attitude towards schooling

The manner in which parents addressed issues relating to the education of their children was explored in this theme in an attempt to work out possible strategies to improve the attitudes of all the parents towards their children's education.

The HODs interviewed had mixed feelings regarding the parents' attitude towards the schools where their children are learning. The HODs from the secondary schools in ward A and B claimed that the attitude of parents is generally positive towards these schools as these parents frequently visit the schools to check the progress of their learners and to attend to other issues that relate to the education of their children.

The HOD from a secondary school in ward A said:

> Parents are very positive about the schools where their children are learning. The parents are very proud of these schools and they normally show their pride by supporting their children through the provision of resources and they also support the development of the school through the provision of funds and other resources that may be of help. Parents attend to the activities that are organised by the school and they contribute meaningful ideas that may be used to build the school.

The parents from the secondary schools in ward C and D, on the other hand, did not show interest in school activities. These appeared to be mostly those parents with a low level of education. These parents seemed to be frustrated in life and always view everything negatively.

This is what the HOD from a secondary school in ward A had to say:

> These parents are full of excuses and they believe that sending children to schools at times is a waste of time. They don't support these children with stationary and other basic things needed in the classroom.

The parents from the secondary schools in ward A and B indicated that they were proud of their children's schools. Parents claimed that those parents with a higher educational level seem to be more critical when it comes to some of the school matters as indicated by one of the parent's responses.

The parent from one of the secondary schools in ward B had this to say:

> We are not happy with the conduct and the manner in which some of the teachers at this school handle some matters. The issues that affect the school and the learners in particular are not professionally handled by the teachers together with the administrative staff. That creates some inefficiency in the running of the school and that results in the poor performance by the learners in the school.

The learners indicated that their parents were proud and happy of their schools. They claimed that they got maximum support from their parents in the form of stationary, textbooks and school uniforms.

These are the words from one of the learners from one of the secondary schools in ward A:

> My parents are very proud of the school and they really support in all possible means in the development of the school. My parents at one point had some donation forms that they used to look for the money for the construction of one of the grade ten classrooms. I used to move round the streets in the nearby towns and in the villages to ask for the money from the residents. My father also used to carry these donation forms when going to work and even after work he will move around as well to try and raise money for the development of the school.

When asked on some of the things that they think could affect the attitude of their parents towards their schools, this was the response from another learner also from a secondary school in ward A.

Although my parents have a positive attitude towards my school they also believe that the school can improve the manner in which it deals with some of the important issues that affect the day to day running of the school. My parents believe that the school must strengthen its relationship with the community, draw all the parents closer as this will result in us learners improving in our schoolwork.

The responses showed that the parents and learners are proud of the schools but that the parents with a lower level of education tend to show less interest in their children's work. The researcher attributed this to the fact that these parents with low levels of education have an inferiority complex and always have a perception that they are looked down upon by the teachers. They feel there is nothing meaningful that they can discuss with these teachers. They view teachers as having a superiority complex. These parents, however, seemed to hide their ignorance under these alleged accusations. The presented data suggested that the attitude of the parents in their children's schools is chiefly one of pride.The attitude of these parents could point to the fact that they consider asimportant what the schools are doing. Schools offer quality and meaningful education to the children although some parents believe that more still needs to be done to enhance effective teaching and learning.

4.4.3.6. Parental attendance of meetings

This theme looked at the manner in which parents, regardless of their literacy levels, attend to the activities organised by the school. The discussion of the theme would assist in examining to what extent literacy relates to parental involvement in the education of their children.

HODs indicated that about 80-98% of parents attend meetings on weekends although the percentage tends to drop during weekdays.

This is what the HOD from a secondary school in ward B had to say:

> Most parents attend meetings that are organised during the weekends but as most of the parents are not committed during weekends and learners will be available to take care of the homesteads when parents attend to meetings on weekends. The number of parents that attend to meetings and other activities that the school organises drops during the weekdays.

Asked on the possible reasons why the number of parents that attend school meetings and other activities dropped, the HOD attributed the drop to the fact that most of the parents are working during weekdays making it very difficult for them to get time to attend for school meetings. Parents calculated their attendance to meetings to be between 40 and 98% and they attributed the difference to working conditions.

The parent from a secondary school in ward D said:

> As parents we attend most of these meetings and activities more effectively if they are scheduled for the weekend. During the week it is very difficult for us to attend to these meetings because of other commitments at home or elsewhere.

Learners indicated a 50- 96% attendance rate of their parents to meetings organised by the school and they attributed the percentage to their parents' working hours.

> My parents only attend to the meetings and school activities that are organised during the weekend.

> My parents are not working and therefore are free to attend to the meetings and other activities whether organised during the week or during the weekend.

Most of the informants indicated that parents' attendance to meetings was better if the meetings were held over the weekends and that meetings were attended less frequently during weekdays due to work commitments. The literature stated that parents long working hours of often prevent them from attending meetings. Generally, it appears as if

parents' attendance of meetings is good and that parents are thus accommodated by their children's schools when meetings are scheduled. Schools are therefore challenged by the community to ensure that they accommodate the community members when planning for activities that involve parents.

4.5. CONCLUSION

The focus of this chapter was on the analysis and interpretation of the data that was collected through interviews that were conducted on HODs, parents and learners. The findings suggested that schools understand the background, culture and parents' level of education. Schools work together with other stakeholders to improve the education of the children. Parents in some cases find it very difficult to assist their children with homework and other school activities as they are not familiar with the new learning areas as per the current curriculum. Schools encourage parents to support their children with home works. Women were perceived to be the ones who predominately assist their children with homework as some fathers return late from work.

Data produced suggested that parents, irrespective of their literacy levels, attached value to the education of their children. The constructed data suggested that improved communication channels between the home and the school could lead to effective teaching and learning. The participants revealed that parents' attendance of meetings was relatively good and that they were accommodated in their children's schools.The following chapter will focus on the synthesis of findings, recommendations as well as the conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER 5

SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The study was conducted with the purpose of examining the relationship between literacy levels and parental involvement in the education of children in Libode district, Eastern Cape.

The chapter will provide the overview of the study, followed by the key findings that will be based on the themes that were deduced from the study. This will be followed by the recommendations as derived from the findings from the research as well as recommendations for further research. The limitations of the study will be highlighted after which the study will be finally concluded.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Chapter one offered the motivation for the study. It started with an introduction that was the general description of parental involvement as well as how literacy relates to parental involvement in the education of their children. This was followed by the background information showing some data on the research conducted on parental involvement in other countries in general and particularly in South Africa. The statement of the problem came as a comment based on the relationship between literacy levels and parental involvement in the education of their children. The general and specific objectives spelt out the purpose of the study. The general objectives outlined the significant factors from literature regarding parental involvement in formal education as well as an investigation on the importance of parental involvement in the education of their children. The specific objective was to investigate how literacy relates to parental involvement in the education of their children. In chapter one, the significance as well as the scope of the study was outlined. In this case, four secondary schools were purposefully selected in Libode district. The assumptions and limitations that the

researcher experienced during the course of the study were alsooutlined. The chapter ended with the definition of the key terms.

Chapter Two presented the literature review encapsulating the phenomena of literacy and parental involvement based on an account of work done by other researchers on the same field of study. The literature study was based on parental involvement, that is, the broader definitions of the concept of parental involvement, the importance and benefits of parental involvement in education and parental involvement in relation to learner participation. The literature review was also based on the literacy levels of parents; the parents' literacy levels in relation to learner performance, the socio-economic status in relation to literacy as well as the broader definitions of the term literacy according to various scholars. Since this study considered parental involvement as crucial to the education of learners and that parents are indispensable stakeholders and partners in the education of their children, the Family and Role Theories as well as the Social Constructivism and Interpretive Theories were explored as a guiding framework. The factors that contribute to lack of parental involvement, home-school communication, parents as primary teachers and home-school collaboration were amongst those discussed. The chapter was concluded by emphasising parent-teacher interdependence and the importance of stimulating learning environment to enhance the effective learning of children.

Chapter Threepresented the research methodology. This comprised of the research paradigm, the research design and methods, the target population and sample size, sampling techniques, data production instruments, data presentation and analysis techniques. The target population comprised HODs and learners within selected secondary schools in Libode district as well as selected parents within the locality of those particular schools. HODs, parents and learners were purposefully selected with the fundamental aim of obtaining rich information. Interviews formed the main data construction instrument. An overview of the data construction and analysis process brought the chapter to an end.

Chapter Four presented the description of the sites that included the four secondary schools that took part in the study and the participants that included the parents, HODs as well as learners that took part in the research. This was followed by the analysis of the themes that were deduced from the study which included: the awareness of the community's literacy level-; responsiveness to the community needs-; parental involvement in the children's education-; empowerment and encouragement of parental involvement-; predominantly involved parents-; treatment of parents by the school-; parents' valuing of education-; parents' attitude towards schools-; communication to parents by the school as well as parental attendance to school meetings. The chapter was then concluded by highlighting the major points that relate to the study's themes.

Chapter Five presented the overview of the dissertation where the major points relating to each chapter were mentioned. This was followed by the key findings of the study which were based on the themes that were deduced from the study. The recommendations of the study that were based on the major findings then followed which finally led to the limitations and final conclusions of the study.

5.3 KEY FINDINGS

The study aimed at establishing the relationship between literacy and parental involvement in the education of their children. The researcher explored the key findings that emanated from the research themes and those that emanated from the literature respectively.

It emerged from the study that was conducted that schools are knowledgeable and considerate about the literacy levels of the communities where these schools are located and that they understand the backgrounds of the learners that they teach. These schools are working hard to improve the education of the children through partnerships with relevant stakeholders and in some cases through notifying parents about some of the educational matters that may directly or indirectly affect the teaching and learning environment. Most parents find it difficult to assist their children at home

due to the fact that they have very low literacy levels and secondly that they are not familiar with the new learning areas that have been introduced in the school curriculum. Schools seem not to be doing much to support these parents through the organisation of some courses, activities andprogrammes that may play a pivotal role in improving the parents' level of education in these affected remote communities. Most meetings and other activities are organised by the schools during the week and the majority of the parents find it difficult to attend these meetings and activities due to work related and social issues.

The findings of this research revealed that the literacy of parents has an impact in the manner in which these parents are involved in the education of their children. Parents with low literacy levels in this research appear to be more passively involved (Mmotlane*et al.*2009: 529). Parents with low levels of education encounter difficulties when trying to assist their children with homework. They depend on others, such as older siblings or children from the neighbourhood to assist. Despite their apparent disinterest in their children's education, these parents motivate and encourage their children to work hard at school.Furthermore, the research revealed that mothers are more involved in their children's education and try to assist them to improve their participation. Parents normally visit the school by invitation although relationships are healthy between the school and the community.

Some teachers viewed some visits by parents to schools as disruptive yet others viewed the visits as meaningful and contributing to effective teaching and learning. Schools seemed to be open centres for parents to visit in order to try and bring closer the home and the school environment in an effort to aid effective teaching and learning. This is evidenced by the fact that schools invite parents to most of the school activities such as meetings, open days, fundraising activities to mention a few. Although schools invite all the parents in these school activities, not all the parents attend these activities because of other commitments.

It emerged that all the parents were treated equally and with respect and dignity regardless of their educational and societal status. Some parents believed that parents

were not fairly treated at these schools as financially stable and educated parents were treated better than poor and uneducated parents. The participants claimed that parents, irrespective of their literacy levels, generally attached value to the education of their children. They realised that less educated people tend to struggle more in life and that education is the passport to independence and a brighter future for the learners as well as their families.

The participants showed that the parents and learners were proud of their schools but that the parents with a lower level of education tend to show less interest in their children's work. Moreover it was revealed that parents with low levels of education have an inferiority complex and always have a perception that they are looked down upon by the teachers. They felt there was nothing meaningful that they could discuss with these teachers whom they view as having a superiority complex. These parents however, seemed to hide their ignorance under these alleged accusations. It was also noted that private schools were preferred by some parents subject to affordability. The presented data suggests that the attitude of the parents in their children's schools was chiefly one of pride, which could point to the fact that they value what the schools are doing in terms of offering quality and meaningful education to their children. On the other hand, these parents believe that more still needs to be done to enhance effective parental involvement. Parents and learners affirmed that information is primarily communicated through letters, telephonically and sometimes through verbal communication. The participants indicated that parents' attendance to meetings was better if the meetings were held over the weekend and that meetings were attended less frequently during weekdays due to work commitments.

Teachers and parents must work together in partnership to ensure that what is taught at school has a correlation with what is taught at home and vice versa. Sound partnerships will not only improve the relationship between parents, teachers and learners, but will also encourage teamwork within the same educational framework. Cooperation between parents and teachers is thus a key ingredient to educational success. In addition to the fact that parental involvement influences the cognitive and social development of children, parents are indispensable stakeholders without whom schools

cannot function effectively. They are the resources that can provide valuable information about their children and lay the foundation on which teachers can further build on. When parents are involved in their children's education, children will refrain from misconduct and focus their attention on their education (Sanders &Sheldon, 2009)

Parental involvement in children's school activities facilitates socialisation, positive attitudes and socially acceptable behaviour. Regardless of their own educational backgrounds, parents play a pivotal role in the education of their children since parental involvement is a strong predictor of learner achievement. The more involved the parents are, the better off their children are because they will be more receptive of learning and view schooling in a more positive light (Sanders & Sheldon, 2009).

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the purpose of the research and the key findings, the resultant recommendations are suggested to improve the literacy levels of parents with low levels of formal education as this may improve their participation in their children'sschool affairs. Schools especially those situated in remote areas should make provision for special programmes intended to empower parents with regard to educational changes such as curriculum development as well as empowering parents to take part in decision making processes to contribute positively towards the education of their children. Reluctant parents must be supported on how they can be involved to assist their children. Parents should visit schools to participate in small group interactions in a positive non-threatening school environment where everybody's contribution is valued.

All the parents should be accommodated in the meetings that are organised by the school. Schools should ensure that parents are actively involved in the education of their children.Schools should not underestimate what parents with low literacy levels could potentially contribute towards their children`s education.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Areas for further research could include the following:

- Research, which includes a bigger sample and additional research instruments that focuses on a wider spectrum of rural areas, can expand on the current research topic in order to increase the validity of the findings.

- A study could be conducted regarding the development and implementation of literacy programmes and / or parental involvement programmes for parents with low literacy levels.

- A model for the identification and training of parents to improve their literacy levels as more literate parents appear to be more involved in the education of their children.

5.6.   CONCLUSION

Parents play a fundamental role in the education of their children. For learners to perform well at school they need the support of their parents. Parents could support the education of their children by fully taking part in the school activities of these children. In this study the relationship between literacy and parental involvement was investigated to determine which category of parents between those who are educated and those who are not educated are more involved in the education of their children.

The focus of the study was on secondary schools in the rural communities of the Libode district, Eastern Cape Province. The area where the research took place was chosen because of the fact that parents in the area are not educated and children find learning a very difficult task.

The findings of the study conducted revealed that literacy indeed has an impact on parental involvement. Educated parents appeared to be more involved in the education of their children compared to the uneducated parents who showed a passive role when it comes to participation in their children's school activities. Parents with low literacy

levels could find it difficult to assist their children at home. These parents could ask for older siblings or children from the neighbourhood to assist.

Based on the findings emanating from the research, the following final conclusion can be drawn.

One can therefore, conclude that the literacy level in parents has a fundamental role to play especially in the manner in which parents will be involved in the issues relating to the education of their children. Children from families with a low literacy level will always face numerous challenges with their education compared to those children who come from families with a high literacy level. Education is a very hard journey that needs motivation, support and encouragement, to mention a few. Lack of literacy could mean a lack in some of the most important skills that a human being needs to have in order to function effectively on a day to day basis. Parental involvement results in an improved learner participation as teachers and parents work together in a conducive environment to help the children.The holistic development of the child occurs in an environment where the school and the community form some partnerships in order to enforce the norms and values of both institutions.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview questions for the HODs, parents and Learners

Interview questions for HODs in English

HODS
1. What is the literacy level of the parents in the community where the school is located?
2. In order to improve the literacy level of the parentshow does the school respond to the need of the community?
3. Considering the level of their literacy how are parents involved in the school activities to improve learner performance?
4. How does the school empower/encourage parents regardless of their literacy level to be involved in the school and its activities to improve the performance of learners?
5. Between the educated and the uneducated parents which category do you think is usually more involved in the children`s general education?
6. Between the educated and the uneducated parents which category usually has the confidence to visit the school to make queries or ask about their children`s performance?
7. Is the treatment of parents by the school similar regardless of their literacy level?

8. How do parents, considering their literacy levels value their children`s education?
9. What are the effects of literacy on the attitude of parents towards school?
10. What form of communication is used by the school to communicate with parents?
11. Between the educated and the uneducated parents which category do you think often attends the meetings organised by the school?

Interview questions for Parents in English

PARENTS
1. As parents does the school seem to be aware of your literacy level in your community?
2. How does the school respond to particular needs of your household in order to improve your literacy?
3. Considering some of you with high literacy levels and those with low literacy levels which category do you think is more involved in the school activities?
4. What is done by the school to improve your literacy level?
5. Between the educated and the uneducated parents which category is usually more involved in the education of the children? Give reasons for your responses.

6. Between the educated and the uneducated parents which category show confidence in visiting the school to make queries or ask about the child`s performance?
7. Is the treatment of parents similar regardless of their literacy levels?
8. Which category of parents do you think value their children`s education the most?
9. What are the effects of literacy on the attitude of parents towards school?
10. What form of communication is used by the school to communicate with parents?
11. Between the educated and the uneducated parents which category do you think often attends the meetings organised by the school?

Interview questions for Learners in English

LEARNERS
1. Is the school aware of the literacy level in your household?
2. How does the school respond to particular needs of your household in order to improve your literacy levels?
3. How are your parents involved in the school and its activities regardless of their literacy levels?
4. How does the school empower/encourage your parents regardless of their literacy levels to be involved in the school and its activities?

5. Between the educated and the uneducated parents which category is usually more involved in the education of the children? Give reasons for your responses.
6. Between the educated and the uneducated parents which category show confidence in visiting the school to make queries or ask about the child`s performance?
7. Is the treatment of parents by the school similar regardless of their literacy level?
8. Which category of parents do you think value their children`s education the most?
9. How would you describe the attitude of both categories parents towards the child`s school work?
10. What form of communication is used by the school to communicate with parents?
11. Between the educated and the uneducated parents which category do you think often attends the meetings organised by the school?

Appendix B: Translated interview questions for learners and parents

Translated interview questions for parents into IsiXhosa

Parents
1. Isikoloesisinolwazilwentoyokubaabafundangangokulinganayokulengqinqiinesikolo?
2. Isikoloesisijongananjaninezidingozekhayangalinyekulengingqi?
3. Ixauqwabaselaabazaliabanemfundoekuzingaeliphezulunephantsiyibaphiabathathainxaxhebakakhulukwizintozesikolo?
4. Isikoloesiingabasibakhuthazanjaniabazaliekuthatheniinxaxhebaekuphuculeniizingalabolemfundo
5. Leliphiiqelalabazalielizibandakanyalemfundoyabantwanababo? Yintoniocingaibangelaoko?
6. Leliphiiqelaelizithembileyoekubuzeniindlelaabaqhubangayoabantwanababoesikolweni
7. Ngenxayokungafanikwezindidizabazaliucingaisikolosibaphathangokufanayo?
8. Abazaliaba ukwahlukakwabokwamazinga abo emfundoingababakubonanjengentoenokuyichaphazelanjaniimfundoyabantwanababo?
9. Ingabaumzalingamnyeimfundoanayoingasichaphazelanjaniisikoloaphindeabenengcingaezinjaningesikolo?
10. Isikoloesisiqhakamtshelananjaninabaabazalibenemfundoingafaniyo?

11. Ngenxayokubakukhoabazaliabanemfundoephantsinephezulu, ngabaphiabazihambayoiintlanganisoezibizwasisikolo?

Translated interview questions for learners in IsiXhosa

Learners
1. Isikolosakhosiyayazinaizingalemfundolakokwenu?
2. Isikolosakhosincedanjanikwimfunozabantubakokwenuukuzekwenyukeizingalemfundo?
3. Ingabaabazalibakhobayithathanjaniinxaxhebaesikolwenisakhonokubaithiniimeko yezifundokubo?
4. Isikolosakhosibakhuthazanjaniabazalibakhoukubabathatheinxaxhebanokubaizin galabolemfundolithini?
5. Loluphiudidilwabazalioluthathainxaxhebakwimfundojikelelekwayezizathuziniziba ngelalonto?
6. Ngabaphiabazaliabazithembileyoukubuzaesikolwenimalunganendlelaabantwan aabaqhubangayoesikolweni?
7. Ingabaisikolosakhosibaphathasibahloniphangokufanayoabazalinokubabayekang akananinaesikolweni?
8. Loluphiudidilwabazaliolubonaimfundoibalulekile?
9. Ungayichazanjaniindlelaindidizabazalieziyijongangayoimisebenziyesikolo?

10. Isikolosinxibelelananjaninabazalinokubaliyhininaizingalabolemfundo?

11. Ngokuzazikwakhozombiniezindidizabazali,
ungathiinjaniindlelaezizangayokwintlanganisozesikolo?

Appendix C: Application to conduct research (Cover letter)

50 Dikweni Street

Ikhwezi Ext

Mthatha

19 May 2014

The Provincial Department of Education

Zwelitsha

BHISHO

Dear Sir/ Madam

REF: RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS AT LIBODE DISTRICT

Iam studying my Master Degree in Education at the University of South Africa. I intend conducting my research in secondary schools within the Libode district.The aim of the research is to determine the impact of literacy in parental involvement.

Could you please confirm whether your permission would be granted to conduct the interviews on the HODs, educators, parents and learners from the selected secondary schools? Once your permission has been granted arrangements will be made with the concerned parties and interviews will take place after school hours.

Participation of these parties would be voluntary and they will be free to withdraw should they deem necessary without any penalty. The researcher would also ensure anonymity and confidentiality during the course of the interviews.

You may contact me should you need more information on the following number or email address.

Kind regards.

B. Sibanda

Student number: 45343276

Cell: 078 606 9973

Email: sibandabhekimpilo@yahoo.com

Appendix D: Permission to conduct research

Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
EDUCATION

STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY RESEARCH AND SECRETARIAT SERVICES
Steve Vukile Tshwete Complex • Zone 6 • Zwelitsha • Eastern Cape
Private Bag X0032 • Bhisho • 5605 • REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: +27 (0)40 608 4773/4035/4537 • Fax: +27 (0)40 608 4574 • Website: www.ecdoe.gov.za

Enquiries: B Pamla   Email: babalwa.pamla@edu.ecprov.gov.za   Date 15 July 2014

Mr. Bhekimpilo Sibanda

P.O. Box 427

Mthatha

5099

Dear Mr. Sibanda

PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE A MASTERS THESIS: THE IMPACT OF LITERACY LEVELS ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LIBODE DISTRICT, EASTERN CAPE

1. Thank you for your application to conduct research.

2. Your application to conduct the above mentioned research in four Secondary Schools under the jurisdiction of Libode District of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) is hereby approved on condition that:

   a. there will be no financial implications for the Department;

   b. institutions and respondents must not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation;

   c. you present a copy of the written approval letter of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) to the Chief Directors and Directors before any research is undertaken at any institutions within that particular district;

   d. you will make all the arrangements concerning your research;

   e. the research may not be conducted during official contact time, as educators' programmes should not be interrupted;

building blocks for growth

Ikamva eliqaqambileyo!

Appendix E: Letter to school Principals

50 Dikweni Street

Ikhwezi Ext

Mthatha

19 May 2014

The Principal

....

....

....

Dear Sir/ Madam

REF:RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

Iam studying my Master Degree in Education at the University of South Africa. I intend conducting my research at your school. The aim of the research is to determine the impact of literacy in parental involvement. I have also sent my application to the Department of Education through the Libode district.

Could you please confirm whether your school would be available to interview an HOD and selected two learners together with their parents. Once your permission has been granted arrangements will be made with the concerned parties and interviews will take place after school hours.

Participation of these parties would be voluntary and they will be free to withdraw should they deem necessary without any penalty. The researcher would also ensure anonymity and confidentiality during the course of the interviews.

You may contact me should you need more information on the following number or email address.

Kind regards.

B. Sibanda

Student number: 45343276

Cell: 078 606 9973

Email: sibandabhekimpilo@yahoo.com

Appendix F: Letters to HODs

<div align="right">
50 Dikweni Street

Ikhwezi Ext

Mthatha

19 May 2014
</div>

Dear HOD

I am studying my Master Degree at the University of South Africa. I require your help to furnish me with the data that I may need for my research.I will provide you with a written document explaining in detail the purpose of the study. I would appreciate your signature if you feel you are content with the contents of the document.

<u>Before giving consent to take part in the study you should note the following.</u>

The research aims at determining the impact of literacy in parental involvement.

The principal of your school helped me to identify you as a suitable person to take part in this study. I still require your consent before you can take part in the study.I intend obtaining the data from you through the face-to-face interviews. A maximum of ten minutes will be spent on each interview. Participation in the research is voluntary. Should you feel something is wrong, you are free to pull out. The data that will be collected will not be shown to any person but will be used for the research purposes.

You will not be rewarded for taking part in the study although the research may in future assist the Department of Education and the community in dealing with issues that relate to literacy and parental involvement.

The research is conducted by a Masters Student, B. Sibanda under the supervision of Dr. T. Netshitangani from the Department of Education Leadership Management, University of South Africa.

CONSENT: I... (FULL NAME) have read and understood the nature of my proposed participation in the project and agrees to participate.

Signature.......................................   Date...

Appendix G: Letters to Parent

<div align="right">

50 Dikweni Street

Ikwezi Ext

Mthatha

19 May 2014

</div>

Dear Parent/ Guardian

I am studying my Master Degree at the University of South Africa. I require your help to furnish me with the data that I may need for my research.I will provide you with a written document explaining in detail the purpose of the study. I would appreciate your signature if you feel you are content with the contents of the document.

Before giving consent to take part in the study you should note the following.

The research aims at determining the impact of literacy in parental involvement.

The principal of your school helped me to identify you as a suitable person to take part in this study. I still require your consent before you can take part in the study.I intend obtaining the data from you through the face-to-face interviews. A maximum of ten minutes will be spent on each interview. Participation in the research is voluntary. Should you feel something is wrong, you are free to pull out. The data that will be collected will not be shown to any person but will be used for the research purposes.

You will not be rewarded for taking part in the study although the research may in future assist the Department of Education and the community in dealing with issues that relate to literacy and parental involvement.

The research is conducted by a Masters Student, B. Sibanda under the supervision of Dr. T. Netshitangani from the Department of Education Leadership Management, University of South Africa.

CONSENT: I.. (FULL NAME) have read and understood the nature of my proposed participation in the project and agrees to participate.

Signature.......................................   Date...

Appendix H: Letters to Learner

50 Dikweni Street

Ikhwezi Ext

MTHATHA

19 May 2014

Dear Learner

I am studying my Master Degree at the University of South Africa. I require your help to furnish me with the data that I will need for my research.I will provide you with a written document explaining in detail the purpose of the study. I would appreciate your signature if you feel you are content with the contents of the document. Your parents should also sign the documents as an indication that they have granted you the permission to take part in the study.

Before giving consent to take part in the study you should note the following.

The research aims at determining the impact of literacy in parental involvement.

The principal of your school helped me to identify you as a suitable person to take part in this study. I still require your consent before you can take part in the study.I intend obtaining the data from you through the face-to-face interviews. A maximum of ten minutes will be spent on each interview. Participation in the research is voluntary. Should you feel something is wrong, you are free to pull out. The data that will be collected will not be shown to any person but will be used for the research purposes.

You will not be rewarded for taking part in the study although the research may in future assist the Department of Education and the community in dealing w`ith issues that relate to literacy and parental involvement.

The research is conducted by a Masters Student, B. Sibanda under the supervision of Dr. T. Netshitangani from the Department of Education Leadership Management, University of South Africa.

CONSENT: I.. (FULL NAME) have read and understood the nature of my proposed participation in the project and agree to participate.

Signature (Learner)..   Date..

Signature(Parent)…………………………….   Date……………………………….