

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AS A STRATEGIC TOOL TO IMPROVE THE
CULTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS**

dissertation of limited scope

by

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University of South Africa

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DECLARATION

I, Mogale Thabo James, hereby declare that the research report submitted in partial fulfilment of my Master's Degree in Education Management is my own work and that it has never been produced before in any other institution. Moreover, all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature

MOGALE JAMES THABO

MARCH 2014

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ABSTRACT

Since the advent of democracy in 1994, social changes in South Africa have impacted on schools. In the past, parent involvement in the township schools was viewed as unimportant. However, with the change to a democratic South Africa, parents as critical stakeholders were put under tremendous pressure to get involved in the education of their children. The role that parents are expected to play in education has grown immensely and has been receiving greater interest. The South African Schools Act (Act no. 84 of 1996) makes provision for parents' participation in the activities of the schools. The underlying principle is to ensure that parents are actively involved in the governance and management of schools with a view to create a conducive environment for a better teaching and learning. According to Bloch (2009:22) the more parents are involved in their children's schooling the better their children's academic achievements, the more confident their attitudes to schooling and the lower the drop-out rate. However, the parents in the township schools in South Africa have dismally failed to live up to these expectations. Almost 80% of dysfunctional schools in South Africa are predominantly located in the townships (Smit & Oosthuizen, 2011:64). These schools are ineffective and inefficient; and lack of parental involvement has been cited as a key reason for the decline of academic achievement. Efforts to improve the culture of teaching and learning in these schools have failed. In this study, the extent to which parents in the township schools are involved in the education of their children is interrogated as the focus area. Similarly, the objective of this study is to investigate and evaluate the factors that influence or inhibit parents' participation in the education of their children in the township schools. The study confined itself to three secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North district and used both educators and parents as its sample. The sample was purposefully selected. A mixed methodology of qualitative and quantitative approaches was used for this study. The data presented in this study are mainly derived from the responses to the ninety questionnaires that were distributed to educators as well as the responses of the six parents from the interviews with them. In this study, the ethical considerations of the research as espoused by Merriam (1998:198) were adhered to. This study

stems from the necessity to contribute to the scholarly debate on the involvement of parents in education as it seeks to determine the factors which hamper parental involvement in the education process of the learners in the township schools; and to suggest possible solutions to eliminate them wherever feasible. The reluctance of parents to participate in the education of their children in the township schools remains a mystery which needs to be unravelled. This is the basic premise of this research. The researcher further hopes that when the Findings and the Recommendations of this study are completed, they will be able to add value to the education system in the township schools by conscientising parents about their full role in the governance of the schools as mandated by legislation.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANC	= African National Congress
AIDS	= Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CEPD	= Centre for Education Policy Development
COSAS	= Congress of South African Students
COSATU	= Congress of South African Trade Unions
GDE	= Gauteng Department of Education
HED	= Higher Education Diploma
HIV	= Human Immunodeficiency Virus
SADTU	= South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SASA	= South African Schools' Act (Act 84 of 1996)
SGB	= School Governing Body
SMT	= School Management Team
SPSS	= Statistical Package for the Social Science
USA	= United States of America

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

When we have a closer look at the involvement of the parents in the education of their children, one would realise that such involvement is critical to the success of the child. It therefore goes without saying that the education of the child is the primary responsibility of the parents as the natural educators. Northmore in Fieldgate (2000:49) asserts that children respond positively to the interest taken by their parents; and parents who become aware of the programmes their children are following at school are better able to assist them at home. This notion is supported by Behr, Cherian, Mwamwenda, Ndaba and Ramphal (2006:1) when they argue that not only do parents guide children in their physical, emotional, social, mental and moral development towards adulthood, but they also provide them with knowledge by interacting with the school on a regular basis. It is this kind of interaction or rather involvement which enhances the chances of the child's success and sustainability in their lives. This idea is further mentioned by Terrion (2006:168) when he refers to children's positive relational development as a consequence of parental involvement in their education. It is a foregone conclusion that active parent participation improves home-school relations, reduces misunderstandings and conflict between parents and teachers, prevents the school from becoming isolated from the wider community, motivates children to attend school and has a positive influence on children's academic progress and behaviour (Moloi, 2005:32a). On the contrary, Singh, Mbokodi and Msila (2004:301) postulate that parents who played little or no role in their children's homework and study programmes contributed to the poor performance of their children in the classroom.

Emanating from the above research conducted, I therefore argue that no school can hope to be successful without the involvement of the parents; and similarly,

no parents can expect to see their children unleash their potential without becoming involved in their education process. Clearly, parental involvement is needed to ensure, at the very least, the maintenance of the school both in physical and in educational terms. This argument is further supported by Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004:259) when these authors mentioned that comprehensive parent involvement is a prerequisite for improving the culture of teaching and learning in schools. Over the years, experience has shown that since the abolition of corporal punishment, the schools that are coping best with discipline process in the form of committees are the schools where parental involvement is maximised. According to Crozier and Reay (2005:86) parent involvement has a significant effect on the quality of the learners' experience of teaching and learning in the school, and also on their results. Moloi (2005b:9) posits that without co-operation between the parent and the educator the child cannot be sufficiently educated. The parent and the educator, therefore, have a special and important role to play in the education of the child. It is on the basis of this view that a proper teaching and learning can be nurtured. This notion is further supported by Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004:261) when they mentioned that parents who are involved develop a greater appreciation of their role. Mncube (2009:2) took this argument further by asserting that parental involvement in education has been associated with a variety of positive academic outcomes including higher grade-points averages and lower drop rates.

1.2. BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

Ever since the advent of democracy in 1994, the majority of the township schools have failed to deliver the expected outcomes. One of the most critical challenges facing these schools is the lack of parental involvement. According to Smit and Oosthuizen (2011:64) approximately eighty percent (80%) of our schools are simply dysfunctional in that they are not producing the meaningful outcomes that are their chief objective. Bloch (2009:58) concurs with this assertion when he stated that schooling in South Africa is a national disaster. This notion is further

supported by Cohen and Seria (2010:1, cited from the website: www.bloomberg.com; accessed on 26-07-2011) when they mention that in South Africa, there are thirty thousand (30 000) schools, of which twenty four thousand (24 000) are dysfunctional and which contribute annually to an already eighty percent (80%) dysfunctional schools which are predominantly located in the townships. Consequently, these schools are ineffective and inefficient. Efforts to improve the culture of teaching and learning in these schools have failed. According to the National Planning Commission report (2011:15) teachers in the township schools spend too little time in contact with learners, possess inadequate subject knowledge, lack basic pedagogical ability, that almost twenty percent (20%) of the teachers are absent from work on Mondays and Fridays. The report further indicates that absentee rates increase to one-third at month-end. Moreover, these teachers consider their behaviour to be beyond reproach because they seem not to be accountable to anyone. The impact of their lethargic behaviour is that many of the learners who leave school are not fully functionally literate. The evidence of this is seen in the large number of high school graduate who do not know how to read, write effectively and do simple mathematical computation. It is against this background that the researcher views the township schools as centres of inefficiency, apathy, disillusionment and hopelessness due to the absence of parents' involvement. In most cases, teacher unions whose focus is to fight over promotions and to act in a manner that undermines the normal functioning of our schools are a part of the problem. Stuart Saunders (Mail & Guardian, 2011:36) asserts that in most township schools, there are reports of union opposition to school inspectors and to any other supervision of teachers. The union (South African Democratic Teachers' Union) continues to hold the education of a black child in the townships to ransom and the parents do little, if not nothing, to arrest the situation. This point is further highlighted by Thabile Mange (The Times, 2011:16) when she argues that SADTU have become a law unto themselves: they abandon classes and disrupt teaching and learning with impunity. Professor Jansen (The Times, 2011:9) paints even a gloomier picture when he quotes Sibongile Nthiyane, a

Soweto pupil, who said: “They [her teachers] come to school drunk, never dressed properly. They never come on time. They know they are paid to teach us, but we have to beg them to come to classes. They send us to buy alcohol during school hours; which they drink during school hours.” Amidst all these, the parents have not yet really broken their silence. One is therefore tempted to ask if they are happy with the way things pan out in our schools.

It is for this reason that the researcher argues that parental involvement in the township schools is in dire need if ever the culture of teaching and learning is to be improved. For far too long, the abysmal failure of our children was blamed on the apartheid system, lack of resources and under-qualified educators to the detriment of the entire society. However, one of the most important elements is the lack of parental involvement in the education process. It has been proven without any reasonable doubt that a key to successful schools is active parent participation. Research on parent participation in education indicates, inter alia, that active parent participation improves home-school relations, reduces misunderstandings and conflict between parents and educators, prevents the school from becoming isolated from the wider community, motivates children to attend school and has a positive influence on children’s academic progress and behaviour (Moloi, 2005a:32).

While former white model-c schools continue to receive parental support and to produce uniformly better results; the township schools seem to get worse and worse with reforms. The township schools overwhelmingly survive through sheer will and the force of good and committed educators and not with the participation of the parents. Nonetheless, despite all challenges of education that face the township schools, there is still a few of them that show pockets of best practices. This is precisely because such schools have discipline and are focused. This argument is supported by the National Planning Commission’s report (2011:15) which states that good principals who run efficient and disciplined schools involve parents in the education of their children and constantly seek opportunities to promote their schools in the broader community. Van Wyk and

Lemmer (2009:122) concur with this notion when they indicate that the involvement of the stakeholders in school governance supports the principles of democracy of the country as stakeholders are given the opportunity to influence what is happening in their schools. This, therefore, reduces hostility to national policies as parents and teachers are able to discuss these policies and implement them in their schools according to the unique contexts of their schools.

This study stems from the necessity to contribute to the scholarly debate on the involvement of parents in education as it seeks to determine the factors which hamper parental involvement in the education process of the learners in the township schools, and to suggest possible solutions to eliminate them wherever feasible. The unwillingness of parents to participate in the education of their children in the township schools remains a mystery which needs to be unravelled. This is the basic premise of this research.

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Education system in South Africa has received much prominence over the last decade, and rightly so from a virtually separate education systems, this country is fortunate eighteen years later to be in possession of a workable, internationally comparable and acceptable education system. However, it is worth noting that our education system has not evolved without birth and growing pains. It can therefore be argued that education played and continues to play a pivotal role in this evolution process. It is against this background that one propagates the idea of quality of teaching and learning in the township schools. Stevens (cited in Fieldgate, 2000: 4) argues that of all the factors that have limited the quality and effectiveness of primary and secondary education, none seems as critical as the involvement of parents in the education of their children. Year in and year out in the black township schools, we have continued to witness the lack of teaching and supervision services, low quality of schooling, teachers acting unprofessionally and low pass rates in the national exams. Sadly, in the midst of

all these, it is the fate of the black children that hangs precariously in the balance. It is them who are hardest hit by the class interruptions and rendered not to be fully functionally literate and consequently, find it hard to operate in the modern, computerized, literate world. More worrying, however, is the silence of their parents on the matters that affect their children. According to Moya's article in the Mail and Guardian (2006:29), black parents in township schools have ceded their responsibilities to the Congress of South African Students (COSAS). Almost daily COSAS announces its plans for black children, as though the learners they represent are under no legal guardianship. The lack of parental involvement has therefore been seen as a key reason for the decline of academic achievement (in this instance, the extremely bad academic results of the learners, the poor culture of teaching and learning) in the township schools. Hence the pursuance of this study. The main research question for this study is: "How can parental involvement be optimized to contribute to the enhancement of teaching and learning in the township schools?"

The study further investigates the following sub-questions:

1. What constitute parental involvement?
2. What challenges and frustrations are faced by the schools in terms of parental involvement?
3. What are the implications of the lack of parental involvement for the teaching and learning in the township schools?
4. What possible strategies / suggestions could be formulated to empower, to advocate, to enhance or to increase parents' involvement /participation in the teaching and learning?

1.4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE INQUIRY

The primary aim of the study is to investigate and evaluate the factors that influence or inhibit parents' participation in the education of their children in the township schools. The purpose is to develop strategies that would support township schools to encourage co-operation between the parents and the schools and thereby enhance the culture of teaching and learning; as well as to maximize parental participation in the activities of the school at home and in the overall school situation.

In order to attain the above, the following specific objectives are formulated to conduct this investigation:

- ❖ To conceptualize what constitute parental involvement in schools;
- ❖ To determine through a literature review challenges and frustrations faced by the schools in terms of parental involvement;
- ❖ To explore the reasons why parents are non-participants in their respective township schools;
- ❖ To provide /suggest guidelines / strategies in terms of how parental involvement could be maximized to turn the township schools into learning organisations.

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

According to Kruger (2008:43) education in South Africa has collapsed in some schools. Factors that have caused this in some schools include the undermining of authority and discipline, attitude problems on the part of some teachers and learners and reluctance on the part of the parents to participate in the activities of the school. This implies that the relationship between the school and home in the South Africa's township schools is a much neglected one. Parental involvement is virtually non-existent in the township schools. This is precisely the reason why the researcher needs to ascertain the reasons that inhibit parental involvement in these schools. The researcher is of the opinion that

many of the problems that are experienced by the township schools could best be solved by a greater degree of parental involvement as prescribed by both policy and legislation. This study therefore seeks to evaluate the causes of the lack of parental involvement in the education of the children in the black township schools; and to further answer the question related to what extent are the parents involved in the education of their children in the township schools? This is a critical aspect that has not yet been fully answered in the existing literature nor satisfactorily contextualized in the current debate about the education reforms in South Africa. This study therefore serves, in part, to fill the academic void by determining, through research, to what extent are the black parents involved in the education of their children in the township schools?

Through its findings and recommendations, this study will assist to:

- provide knowledge and insight into the factors that inhibit parental participation in some of the township schools.
- permit the researcher to make valuable recommendations which would, hopefully, be used to improve the culture of teaching and learning in the township schools.
- to bring to the attention of the parents the importance of taking responsibility for the education of their children by getting involved in the school activities.
- to highlight the significance of a paradigm shift in the role of unions if education is to improve in the township schools.

1.6. DELIMITATION OF THE FIELD OF STUDY

This study confined itself to the responses of the parents and educators in the Ekurhuleni North district. A study of this nature could be used to cover as many areas in South Africa as possible. However, since such project would be too expensive and time consuming to carry out, the researcher has decided to concentrate only on three public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North district.

Further limitation of the study was on the sample size. The respondents were purposively sampled and as only three public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North district participated in this study, no claims beyond this group would be formulated nor would the findings be generalised with reference to other districts. The purposive sample group was homogenous so that variables that might influence the results were limited and it included six parents, seventy-five educators and fifteen members of the school management team from each school so that a total of ninety participants were selected.

1.7. RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to gain an in-depth understanding of how parental participation is efficient and effective in the township schools; a mixed methodology of the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches were used for this study. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is descriptive, explorative, contextual and it investigates phenomena in a natural setting (parental involvement in township schools) so that there is clarity, new insights are acquired and the researcher is able to contextualize the findings. This notion is supported by Strauss and Corbin (2008:12) when they argue that qualitative research allows researchers to get at the inner experience of participants, to determine how meanings are formed through and in culture, and to discover rather than test variables. Moreover, a qualitative approach was followed precisely because it is inherently multi-method (Denzin&Lincoln,1994:2-4) and a combination of data collection methods were utilised to complement and verify each other. Initially a literature review was conducted to understand the reasons why black parents in the township schools are reluctant be involved in the education of their children. Subsequent to that, one-on-one interviews were conducted to gain insight by listening to parents.

The qualitative methodology chosen for this research is the case study because the case study data techniques are most suitable for the nature of the

phenomenon under investigation. According to Merriam (1998:19) since the qualitative researchers collect data by interacting with selected persons in their settings, the qualitative case study would be the appropriate strategy to use. The qualitative case studies can provide a detailed description and analysis of processes or themes voiced by participants in a particular situation and furthermore, they are utilized in various teaching and learning situations. A qualitative research was preferred because the researcher desired to elicit the passionate and subjective actions, beliefs, thoughts, experiences and perceptions of the parents on their level of participation in schools to optimize efficiency and effectiveness in teaching and learning. The research design is explained in detail in chapter three.

Equally so, the quantitative approach was chosen because it emphasizes measurement and analysis of causal relationship between variables and not analysis of causal relationship between variables and process (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:4). The researcher used a structured questionnaire which allowed the respondents to enjoy a high degree of freedom to write their responses in their own terms. This stage is also elaborated on in chapter three.

1.7.1. Population and sampling

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:164) argue that one of the first steps in designing a research is to choose a sample. The term “sampling” denotes extracting systematically from a large group. It is then clear to me that sampling means a systematic choice of the individuals who participate in the study and from whom data are collected. Purposeful sampling was used to acquire in-depth information and the participants were as representative as possible. The sample included parents, school management team and educators of all ethnic groups, various gender types, the level or grade of the child as well as years of experience in teaching. Parents were interviewed and structured questionnaires were sent to schools to elicit the educators’

perceptions on why is parental involvement poor at their respective schools. In each school two parents were interviewed. The logic behind my choice of purposive sampling and the sample size is outlined in chapter three.

1.8. RESEARCH METHODS/DATA COLLECTION

A literature review was conducted as a starting point for this study. A myriad of sources were used including journals, books, newspapers, articles, internet, dissertations and government policies and circulars. After initial contact with both the schools and the parents has been made and the necessary permission granted, interviews were conducted. Such interviews were conducted over the weekend to minimize any inconvenience to the parents and educators. One-on-one interviews were undertaken with both active and supportive parents on school governing bodies, as well as those who are inactive and unsupportive. The questions were selected in advance, but the researcher had decided the sequence and wording of the questions. The questions were open-ended and the parents were interviewed in their natural, community setting to allow free responses from each parent. Furthermore, this study adopted structured interview as a technique for collecting data because it would enable the researcher to probe issues during the interviews as well as to observe the participants' body language.

Similarly, since a combination of data collection methods could be used in a qualitative research to complement and verify each other, the researcher also used a structured questionnaire. The purpose of using a structured questionnaire is to reach out to a large number of respondents for issues of generalisability, to save time and to triangulate the study. According to Maree (2007:39) triangulation is critical in facilitating interpretive validity and establishing data trustworthiness; and could require researchers to check the extent to which conclusions based on qualitative sources are supported by a quantitative perspective, and vice versa. This argument is further supported by Denzin and Lincoln (2008:12) when they assert that qualitative methods may be “employed

either singly or in combination with quantitative methods, including the use of randomized experimental designs". The researcher therefore concurs with the afore-mentioned authors that, indeed, more than one strategy or method could be used complementarily to strengthen, enhance the validity, practicality and the effectiveness of the collection of data for a particular research question.

The choice of the questionnaire is deemed as appropriate for this study precisely because it allowed the researcher to glean more and relevant information which relates to the respondents' personal beliefs, considered opinions and insights unhindered. To achieve that, the researcher had developed his own questionnaire complying with the following principles:

- keeping the questions simple and clear
- avoiding ambiguous questions
- not leading the respondents
- not using the negatives in the statements

1.9. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is a process of bringing order, structure and meaning to collected data whilst at the same time it is constructed in a manner that provides answers to the researcher's questions. Qualitative data analysis is specifically explorative and descriptive and its data is analysed in an orderly and systematic manner. An inductive process has been used where the interviews were categorised by coding so that themes are identified (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:479) The content of what each participant provided was compared with every other participant (Merriam, 1998:159). Problems that hindered parent participation in the activities of the schools were analysed. According to Strauss and Corbin (1992:67) the following protocol was used to analyse data (transcripts of the structured interviews):

- Each transcript was read once;

- Relevant words, sentences or phrases were underlined and named according to themes;
- Themes were sorted into categories and sub-categories;
- The interview protocol and transcriptions were given to an independent decoder for analysis; and
- The researcher and the independent decoder discussed the results of the analysis and the interview document was compared with the one previously coded until consensus was reached regarding the final categories of data.

Likewise, basic descriptive statistics was used to analyse and describe the quantitative data based on the conclusions and distributions of the constructed questionnaire. Subsequently, data collected using Likert-type scales were treated as interval data and reported as means and standard deviations for classification purposes. Nominal data were reported using frequencies and percentages. In all this, the researcher used the deductive method.

1.9.1. Trustworthiness of the study

Trustworthiness of this study is based on the principles of reliability, validity and the researcher strove to be objective and impartial (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:407). Moreover, multiple methods were combined to achieve triangulation. According to Flick, Von Kardoff and Steinke (2009:185) the use of complementary methods in the research is intended to compensate for any one-sidedness or distortion that may result from an individual method, theory, database or researcher.

1.9.2. Reliability and Validity

Reliability refers to the consistency of the research and to the extent to which the findings can be replicated. In this study, the researcher kept a documented trail of data collection and data analysis throughout the entire research process. Cronbach's alpha coefficient ($\alpha = .7$) was computed for the items in the

questionnaire. The average reliability for the question 3 (p=.891); question 13 (p=.860) and question 14 (p=.786). The average reliability test for the questionnaire is p=0.831, which is reliable.

There is a verbatim account of the interview transcripts (Evidence of this document is attached as Appendix F). Analysis strategies were employed and a tape recorder was used for recording purposes to confirm the reliability of the study.

Validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness and usefulness of the specific inferences researchers make based on the data they collect. In this study, the validity of data was determined by the application of triangulation procedures to the methods of data collection and analysis to establish any discrepancies (refer to chapter 3).The validity of the questionnaire, in this study, was enhanced by submitting it to the supervisor at Unisa so that he could ensure that it was properly designed and sufficient for measuring what it ought to measure.

A pilot study was conducted prior to the main research study to assess the research instruments before they could be administered. This pilot study was used to identify possible problems with the proposed study by using a small sample of the population of four (4) educators from another district as guinea-pigs. This process assisted the researcher to improve clarity of the questions, the instructions, as well as the layout. The researcher is therefore of the opinion that all these actions had contributed towards the enhancement of the validity of the study.

As far as the interview schedule is concerned, the researcher had asked the participants (4 parents who were used in the pilot study) to comment about the instrument itself and the nature of the open-ended questions asked to establish their relevance and the level of difficulty. From this exercise, the researcher was able to identify and corrected potential pitfalls which might have hampered the success of the study. The interviews were conducted in a natural setting. Interview questions were phrased according to the participants' language

proficiency. This study is comparable because it was adequately described so that the researcher could use the study to extrapolate its findings to other studies.

1.10. CHAPTER DIVISION

This study is composed of five chapters. **Chapter 1** is an orientation or background to the research. **Chapter 2** provides a review of existing literature, both theoretical and empirical; **Chapter 3** comprises the research design that has been utilised to collect data and analyse it; **Chapter 4** presents the findings of the study as well as the discussion and analysis of the data collected. Finally, the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study are presented in **Chapter 5**.

1.11. COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Since most educational research deals with human beings, it is important that the researcher should understand the ethical responsibilities of conducting a research. According to Mouton (2001:239) in any research study, ethical issues relating to protection of the participants are of concern. In this study, the researcher has complied with the ethical requirements by keeping in mind the following points as espoused by Strydom (cited in de Vos, 2002:63-67).

- (1) The protection of the participants from any harm. According to Strydom (cited in de Vos, 2002: 64) participants in a research are likely to be harmed in a physical and/or emotional manner. This is primarily the reason why researchers are advised to exercise extreme care to guard against any misfortune that is likely to harm the participants. For this study, the researcher did not cause any harm to any of the participants involved; and neither did he receive complaints of any harm that he might have caused participants.

- (2) Informed consent. Mouton (2001:244) posits that human subjects must be informed as to what will happen and their signed consent should be obtained. When conducting this study, the researcher had ensured that all participants were duly informed about the purpose of the research and their written consent was received. The questionnaires were signed on the cover page to acknowledge consent.
- (3) Confidentiality and anonymity. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:101) propagate the idea of assuring the participants that the information that they had shared with the researcher would be kept confidential. This is exactly what the researcher in this study did. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity and that the information provided would only be used for the stated purpose of the research only. Under no circumstances would the information be shared with any other person except the supervisor.
- (4) Contribution to the profession. This entails the extent to which a research is able to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and enhance the discipline. Mouton (2001: 242) asserts that scientists have a responsibility to report their research findings resulting from public funding in full, open and timely fashion to the scientific community for their scrutiny. The researcher would therefore make copies of this research study available to Unisa library once it has been approved.

Based on what has been said above, it is true that the researcher had striven to be as honest and objective as possible in terms of adhering to the ethical standards.

1.12. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is clear that in this chapter, the research design and methodologies were described and briefly discussed in an attempt to validate the choice of the research process for this study. Consideration of validity, reliability and ethical aspects has been reviewed. The research process as outlined in this chapter would be followed to allow presentation of the analysed data and research results in the next chapter. According to Creswell (2002:179), strategies of enquiry chosen in

qualitative and quantitative studies will have a dramatic influence on the procedures and for this reason it is important that the choice of strategy needs to be presented and defended.

CHAPTER 2

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Education is valued all over the world for its ability to develop human potential and contribute to economic growth. The future citizens of the world are shaped and educated in millions of classrooms all over the world in which teachers and parents play a pivotal role. Not only do teachers and parents co-operate to guide and nurture these children in their physical, emotional, social, mental and moral development towards responsible adulthood, but they also provide them with knowledge. According to Behr, Cherian, Mwamwenda, Ndaba and Ramphal (2006:12) interaction between parents, teachers and children is important to the latter's personal well-being and school performance. Behr et al (2006:12) assert that parents who are affectionate towards their children, question them about their school work, regularly converse with them about their problems and constantly encourage them, will develop in their children a high level of aspiration or achievement motivation.

Children with achievement motivation tend to work hard at school, even in the absence of any external reward or demand. Similarly, children who were described by teachers as 'lazy' and 'unwilling to work' were children whose parents expressed no desire to be involved in the school activities. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:7) argued that whether we like it or not, for better or for worse, the parents are the child's primary educators. Though the school has a powerful influence on the child, but it can only build on the foundation laid by the parents. It therefore makes sense that the two educationally-important groups of adults involved in the education process, namely parents and teachers, should co-operate for the benefit of the child. The researcher therefore argues that it is not by accident that countries with highly developed education systems, as well as active parental involvement in education, are also those with successful economies and enjoy high standards of living.

Whilst the preceding chapter of this study has focused on the background and motivation of the study, research problem and questions, aims and objectives of the study as well as the brief outlay of research process. In this chapter, greater attention will be given to the review of the related literature particularly the theories and practices of parental involvement as expounded by Epstein and other education theorists. Moreover, the review of the related literature would also focus on the legislative framework regarding parental involvement in the education of the black children in the township schools.

For the purposes of this study, the literature review has provided a context of the study and demonstrated why this study is essential and relevant. The rationale for the literature review was to enable the researcher to understand the current state of affairs in relation to the proposed study.

The literature review forms an important and integral part of the research project. It is the intent of the literature review to contribute towards a clearer understanding of the nature and meaning of the problem that has been identified. According to Fink (2010:3) a research literature review is a systematic, explicit, and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing the existing body of completed and recorded work produced by researchers, scholars, and practitioners. The aforementioned definition implies that in any research project, it is therefore important that a survey of the previous research related to the current study be carried out. This will assist in:

1. Providing a background to the problem;
2. Planning the present research;
3. Assisting the researcher in developing a conceptual framework that will enable him to collect, examine and analyse the data; and
4. To enable the researcher to test the primary information gleaned from the interviews against the secondary information from the books to inform the findings of this research.

This notion is supported by Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:38) when they reasoned that by compiling a review of research findings on a particular topic that have already been published, researchers may become aware of inconsistencies and gaps that may justify further research. Such a review enables researchers to indicate exactly where their proposed research fits in. These authors continued to assert that a review of related literature can provide the researcher with important facts and background information about the subject under study. Similarly, the consequent review of the literature would enable the researcher to avoid duplicating the previous research. However, if a study on the same topic has been conducted before, a review would provide the researcher with information about aspects of the problem which have not been investigated or explored before.

It is against this background that the researcher had reviewed the literature related to this study so that a base can be found to support the research. A literature survey has therefore placed the present project into perspective and also provides direction to the present research. This statement is supported by Neuman (cited in de Vos, 2002:129) when he mentions that a good literature review places a research project in context – it shows the path of prior research and how the current project is linked to the former. It shows that the researcher has identified some gaps in previous research and that the proposed study would meet a demonstrated need. The main aim of the proposed study is therefore to produce a comprehensive literature review of reliable research evidence on parental involvement as a strategic tool to improve the culture of teaching and learning in the township schools.

2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Smyth (2004:167) describes a conceptual framework as a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of enquiry and used to structure a subsequent presentation. When clearly articulated, a conceptual framework has potential usefulness as a tool to scaffold research and, therefore, to assist a researcher to make meaning of subsequent findings. This assertion, in the researcher's opinion, is premised on the fact that as much as it is relatively easy to collect data, it has

increasingly become much more difficult to explain what that data means. It is in this regard that a conceptual framework is viewed as an explanatory device that enables the researcher to make sense of collected data. The conceptual framework also assists a researcher to develop awareness and understanding of the situation under scrutiny by, among other things, providing clear links from literature to the research goals and questions, informing the research design, providing reference points for discussion of literature, methodology and analysis of data, as well as contributing to the trustworthiness of the study (Smyth, 2004:168).

This study focuses on the parental involvement as a strategic tool to improve the culture of teaching and learning in the township schools. It involves two key phenomena: “parental involvement” and “the culture of teaching and learning”, which fall within the legislative, moral and cognitive obligation. Parental involvement is a moral and legislative obligation which is clearly documented in the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996) and the South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996). For these reasons, this section will outline theories used in parental involvement to enable the reader to understand this critical issue in education. To this end, Epstein’s theory of overlapping spheres of influence, Bronfenbrenner’s ecological system theory and various other theories on parental involvement would be discussed.

2.2.1. Parental involvement theory

When we have a closer look at the education theory as a discipline, one realizes that different theories have played a major role in the extension of our knowledge about the schools and the anticipation of future events. Theory is an essential tool for the progress of human beings. As the symbolic representation of the real, it enables people to communicate quickly and effectively. It is intellectual shorthand, which saves each generation having to relearn all that has been discovered. According to Jackson and Sorensen (2010:53) the function of theory is to give coherence to observation. Theory is a set of ideas which we develop in our minds in

order to make it clear to us how certain aspects of reality stand in relation to other aspects. Van der Waldt (cited in Robbins,1997:3) defines theory as a number of statements, including scientific laws, which have a systematic relationship to one another and which are empirically verifiable. Similarly, van Wyk (2009:14) asserts that theory is a mental picture of how things, events and issues fit together. It helps us to identify aspects of reality that we might otherwise not observe, and to understand and explain these. The researcher can conclude from this definition that a theory is a foundation for meaningful deliberation on the basis of which phenomena can be explained. It is against this background that one can argue that the current state of education theory is the result of an evolutionary process. Over a period of many decades, academics and practitioners from diverse backgrounds and with diverse perspectives have studied and analysed schools as learning organizations.

From what has been said in the afore-mentioned paragraph, one may therefore conclude that, indeed, the face of education is rapidly transforming on a global level with various governments trying every available trick to encourage parents to become more and more involved in the education activities of their children. This notion is further supported by Kgaffe (2001:1) when she mentions that many researchers have listed factors which affect the provision of education in schools as the changing nature of the education system, the socio-economic status of society, changing family structures and parents' education level. Owing to these factors, many parents have resolved to turn schools into learning organizations rather than to regard them as mere institutions, particularly the suburban schools. Nevertheless, the township schools are still lagging behind in this regard.

However, in order for the schools to be transformed into learning organizations, it is imperative that every parent should get involved in the activities of the school and in particular township schools. This, unfortunately, is not the case with the township schools. Parents' involvement in the township schools is dire. Many parents in these schools seem to have taken the view that their responsibility ends in sending their

children to school. According to Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004:261), in many communities parent involvement has been virtually non-existent due to political turbulence, poor socio-economic conditions, teacher reluctance and parent apathy. In the midst of this, black children have the additional disadvantage of not having enough parental support during their school years (Van Rooyen, 2010:4). Baloyi (2003:20) supports this statement when he states that the South African experience of parent involvement is unique and different from the rest of the world due to historical, political, social and economic factors. Moreover, Nyama (2010:19) also mentioned that poverty poses a challenge because parents of low socio-economic status are not able to provide adequately for the basic functional, social and academic needs of their children. According to Turney and Kao (cited in Nyama, 2010:19), parents with higher income and greater educational attainment are more involved than parents of lower socio-economic status. In spite of all educational reform in South Africa which are meant to create a conducive environment for participation in the activities of the schools, actual parental involvement in the township schools remains poor. This is largely due to the fact that most of the parents have ceded their responsibilities. As parents, many of us have abdicated responsibility for the rearing of our offspring. We expect other people or authority figures to take care of some pretty basic stuff-like manners, discipline and self-respect (Oppelt, 2012:5). This has resulted in unforeseen consequences in terms of the decline of the culture of teaching and learning. Wolfendale (cited in Fieldgate, 2000: 45) concurs with this point when she argues that parents who can adopt that attitude and take their continuing responsibility to their children so lightly are in as grave dereliction of duty as would be a government which once elected to carry out an electoral programme, made no effort to review or come to terms with the ever-changing needs of society until the next election was in sight.

In South Africa, at present, there has been a concerted effort to develop a legislative framework that would provide guidelines and to enforce parental involvement in the activities of the school in both the public and the private schools. The South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996) serves as the basis from which provisions about parental

involvement in schools are made. Although the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996) regulates and recognizes parental involvement in schools, the reality is that parents in the township schools have abdicated their responsibility for the education of their children to the teachers. According to Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004:259) legislation to reform schooling in a democratic South Africa has focused attention on the rights and responsibilities of parents as empowered stakeholders in education.

However, it is argued that comprehensive parent involvement is a prerequisite for improving the culture of teaching and learning. The researcher therefore argues that the source of the Schools Act (RSA, 1996) is meant to create a framework that gives parents a far greater role in the activities of the school. This argument is premised on the fact that the state cannot do everything for all schools; but that all stakeholders in education must accept responsibility for the organization of schools, and points out that parents are often in the best position to know what a school really needs and what its problems are. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (cited in Desforges, 2003:45) support this notion when they suggest that parents are likely to get involved in their child's education to the extent that they see it as part of their role or "job" as it were.

As much as the aim of this chapter is to present an overview of the theory of education, the chapter further presents a review of relevant literature that will assist the researcher in trying to establish the main causes of lack of parental involvement in the township schools. The topic of the literature reviewed includes: the extent to which parents are involved in the education of their children in the black township schools; the challenges and frustrations that the schools have to contend with due to lack of parental involvement; the impact of the lack of parental involvement for the teaching and learning as well as the reasons why parents have abdicated their responsibility towards the education of their children. The related literature reviewed establishes that a key to successful schools is active parent participation. Parental involvement takes many forms including good parenting in the home, the provision of a secure and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussion,

good models of constructive social and educational values and high aspirations relating to personal fulfillment and good citizenship; contact with schools to share information; participation in school events; participation in the work of the school; and participation in school governance (Desforges, 2003:4). In light of the above-mentioned statement, one can therefore conclude that if learners are to maximize their potential from schooling, they will need full support of their parents. This argument is supported by Wolfendale (1989:47) when she asserts that parents, teachers and children working together in an agreed framework can create cheap, effective and pleasurable partnerships. Mkhabela (2010:64) concurs with this assertion when he posits that collaboration and parent engagement lead to improved student performance and marks. This fits in well with evidence emerging from the literature which indicates that school results improve in low achieving schools when educators, parents, education officials and particularly school principals all work together as a team to improve education. Epstein (2001:43) makes this assertion even clearer when she mentions that the most effective families and schools had overlapping, shared goals and missions concerning children, and conducted some work collaboratively. It is for this reason that she had developed an integrated theory of family-school relations which is characterized by a set of overlapping spheres of influence which bring together the activities of all stakeholders into an interwoven core based on mutual trust (Kgaffe, 2001:13)

Nevertheless, despite all good intentions and attempts by the government to get the black parents involved in the township schools, most parents have deliberately shunned their responsibility. This spontaneous inactivity has been seen as the major impediment in the delivery of effective and efficient culture of teaching and learning in these schools. According to Judy Templeton (cited in Wolfendale, 1989:62) most parents do not feel they have a role to fulfil vis-à-vis the school; they have no obvious reason for being there at all and feel that they have nothing to contribute. Generally teachers have too easily seen a lack of ready response from parents as an indication of a lack of interest in their child's education. Crozier and Reay (2005:32) advanced this argument further when they infer that there exist a

significant majority of parents whose own negative experiences of schooling makes involvement in their children's schooling difficult, even painful. Various researchers have shown that the parents in the township schools are mainly inactive, partly because they do not think it is important to participate in the activities of the school. McPherson and Naicker's research (2002:30) attest to this statement when they revealed that parental involvement is needed, particularly for raising funds. These authors argue that given the level of dissatisfaction with monetary allocations from the departments and the need to supplement financial shortfalls, it has become vital for parents to support schools, and SGB activities. They say that parents, at all schools, need a change of attitude regarding their children's education. They claim that there is a tendency for parents to overlook the fact that the education of their children is the result of partnerships between the state and the parents, and between schools and parents. Kruger (2008:40) elucidates the role of parents when he argues that schools are no longer isolated places of teaching and learning. Like most other institutions they have become very dependent on their environment. Epstein (cited in Kgaffe, 2001:13) supports this notion when she pronounces that schools do not exist nor function in a vacuum and that all youth, families, communities and schools must come together as partners in the process of educating the learner. The aim is to make schools more effective institutions of teaching and learning. In South Africa's new education dispensation, schools are expected to make use of partners in their societies, particularly the parents, to further their main purpose namely efficient teaching and learning.

In the same breadth, Senosi's research from the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD, 2003:76) shows that the many serious factors prohibiting parental involvement in schools include factional fights between parents, a breakdown in communication between schools and parents, the unstable school environment caused by low teacher morale and school theft, vandalism, illiteracy of parents, unemployment and lack of resources, and lack of transport for them to attend meetings. Similarly, Kgaffe (2001:29) identified barriers that have kept collaboration in home-school relations to a minimum as: the changing family

structure, limited time for communication, lack of money to support families and schools, lack of transportation to and from school, invitations to meetings arriving late, single and working parents' inability to participate in day-time school events, cultural and social barriers; and lack of school policies and the practice of parent involvement. Van Wyk (1996:121) concurs with the afore-mentioned researchers when she indicates from the study that she had undertaken in Gauteng that some parents particularly in black townships did not bother much about their children's activities. She mentioned that apathy and attitude of the parents inhibit their involvement in the school activities. Having said this, she attributed this to parents' lack of knowledge in the school activities. The conclusion that can be drawn here is that the parents have little influence and do not contribute meaningfully to the activities of the school particularly in the township schools. It is for this reason that Bloch (2009:59) posits that the vast majority of schools are dysfunctional in that they are not producing the meaningful outcomes that are their primary goal. These schools are township and rural schools, predominantly black, situated in the poor areas. This statement provides evidence that the relationship between the school and the parents in the township schools is not always strong or functional. This implies that the township schools overwhelmingly survive through sheer will and force of good and committed teachers. This is in contrast to the Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres which recommends a comprehensive strategic model of parent involvement on the part of teachers and parents (Lemmer and Van Wyk, 2004:260).

2.2.1.1. Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres

According to Epstein (2001:76) in the model of overlapping spheres of influence, there are, by definition, areas of overlap in which shared responsibilities of home, school, and community are identified and developed. This notion is supported by Van Wyk and Lemmer (2010:206) when they elucidate that Epstein developed a theoretical perspective called overlapping spheres of influence, which is based on the fact that the most effective families and schools have overlapping shared goals and missions concerning children. By implication, Epstein's model emphasizes the

importance of collaboration between the school and home in an attempt to assist a learner to attain success. This idea is confirmed by Kgaffe (2001:14) when she postulates that the theory of overlapping influence states that the mutual interests and influences, policies and practices of all stakeholders can increase interaction and create families and schools which can help the learner to become more successful in education. Epstein's model of parental involvement therefore suggests that home/school communication should be a two-way communication and reflect a co-equal partnership between families and schools (Lemmer and Van Wyk, 2004:260). Comer, as cited in Kgaffe (2001:22) also developed a model which supports Epstein's by emphasizing the empowerment of parents and educators to work in partnership with schools in addressing all the developmental needs of the learner in order that learners may succeed in school. In a nutshell, Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres is represented by two concentric circles of interaction which are determined by the attitudes, practices and interactions of individuals within each context (Kgaffe, 2001:13). Certainly, Epstein's work reflects the necessity for the interwovenness of activities of all role players in order to attain learner success.

The following figure represents the theory of overlapping spheres as espoused by Epstein:

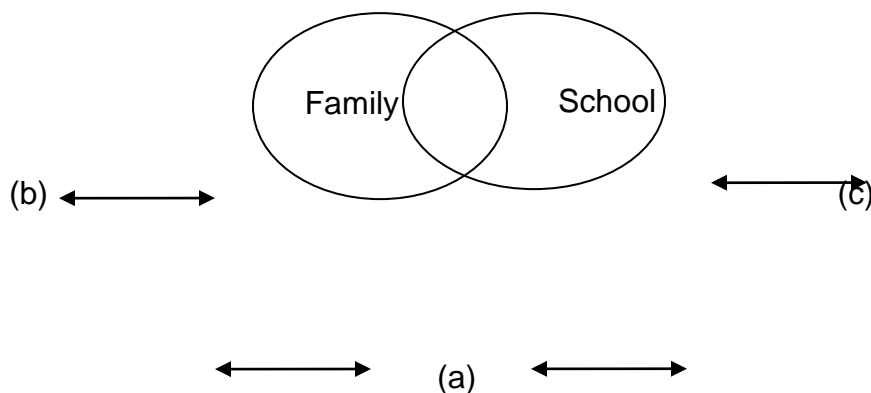


Figure 1: Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres

Key: (a) time (b) policies and practices of the family (c) policies and practices of the school

From this model, Epstein argues that when parents maintain or increase interest and involvement in their children's schooling (force B), they create greater overlap of the family and school spheres than would be expected on the average. When teachers make parents part of their regular teaching practice (force C), they create greater overlap than would typically be expected. The maximum overlap, according to Epstein (2001:29), occurs when schools and families operate as true "partners", with frequent co-operative efforts and clear, close communication between parents and teachers in a comprehensive program of many important types of parent involvement.

Although both Epstein's and Comer's models of overlapping spheres propagate the collaborative and shared responsibilities, equal relationship and distribution of functionalities between home and school, this is often not the case in the township schools. Parents in these schools, from the researcher's observation, do not have a slightest clue of the role they must play or how best could they be involved in terms of assisting the schools to obtain their intended objectives. It is important to note that without such involvement, it is impossible for the schools to function up to the maximum expectations.

Having said all of the above, Epstein (cited in Kgaffe, 2001:15) also argues that her theory of overlapping spheres does not just stop at the activities of families and school. It also considers that community institutions and agencies plus significant relatives may gain custody of learners and play an important part in their lives. For this reason they should be included when programmes of home-school collaboration are implemented. It is a pity that the involvement of the civil groups in the education of the children in the township schools has been so minimal with the majority of the civil groups raising their voices only when the matric results are publicised and are deemed to be poor. This criticism, in the researcher's mind, tends to deflect the attention from the apathetic parents to the government. It is therefore befitting to mention that any civil organisation or parents who were traumatised by living under apartheid need to recognize that those times are past; and that stepping up to the

plate and taking their place in society and in the education of their children will not cause them jail time or banishment. For this reason, all role players need to have a shared sense of responsibility rather than to play a blame game.

When the community partners are brought on to be involved in the education of the learners in the township schools, Epstein model would then look as follow:

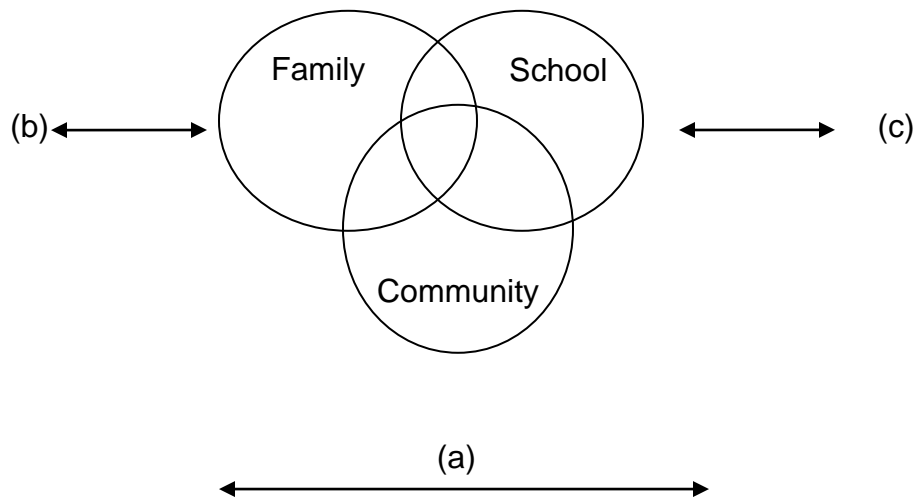


Figure 2: Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence of family, community and school on learner education (Kgaffe, 2001:15)

According to Lemmer and Van Wyk (2009:24-28) the most comprehensive model of partnership currently in the literature appears to be Epstein's framework of six major types of home-school-community involvement. Lemmer and Van Wyk go on to mention that each type of involvement poses specific challenges for its successful design and implementation, and each leads to different outcomes for learners, parents and teachers. Epstein identified the following six types of parent involvement as far as the tasks of schools are concerned:

2.2.1.1.1. Parenting

According to Epstein (2001:43) this type of involvement assists families with parenting and child-rearing skills, family support, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions to support learning at each age and grade level. In practice this entails providing information to all families who want or who need it, not just the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school buildings (Kgaffe, 2001:17).

2.2.1.1.2. Communication

This implies that there should be communication about school programmes and student progress from the school-to-home and home-to-school. This means that messages should not be ambiguous; but a simple writing setting out information and ideas in such a way that the parents will understand what is being communicated to them at first reading.

2.2.1.1.3. Volunteering

This entails improvement of recruitment, training, work, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school or in other locations to support students and school programmes. It is assumed that parents are often unaware of all different ways they can support the school and therefore by including a section each month highlighting volunteer needs, parents can be given better idea of just how they can be of assistance. However, Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:27) recommend that schools should make the programmes for volunteers flexible so that working parents can also participate.

2.2.1.1.4. Learning at home

The implication here is to involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curricular-linked activities and decisions. According to Kgaffe(2001:18) this could include designing and organizing a regular schedule of interactive homework that gives learners responsibility for discussing important things they are learning and helps families stay aware of the content of their children's classwork. In addition, schools should involve families in all important curriculum-related decisions. This will help parents to learn to assist their children at home wisely without taking over the responsibility for homework and learning (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009:27).

2.2.1.1.5. Decision making

By this, Epstein means that families should be involved as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy activities through PTA, committees, councils, and other parent organisations. This means that schools need to develop ownership by bringing parents in on the decision making planning process.

2.2.1.1.6. Community collaboration

It means to co-ordinate the work and resources of community businesses, agencies, colleges or universities, and other groups to strengthen school programmes, family practices, and student learning and development. It is anticipated that family and community partnerships to support learners would be developed which are based on family-centred principles.

Over and above these six types of parent involvement as outlined by Epstein, the literature reviewed further revealed the benefits that are likely to be accrued by the parents, learners and teachers once they are all involved in the activities of the school.

Kgaffe (2001:35) gives the tabular representation of the expected benefits of parental involvement as follows:

Table 2.1: Results for students (Epstein as cited in Kgaffe, 2001:35)

Type 1 Parenting	Type 2 Communicating	Type 3 Volunteering	Type 4 Learning at home	Type 5 Decision making	Type 6 Collaborating with community
Awareness of family supervision, respect for parents	Awareness of own progress and of actions needed to maintain or improve grades	Skill in communicating with adults	Gains in skills, abilities and test scores linked to homework and class-work	Awareness of representation of families in school decisions	Increased skills and talents through enriched curricular and extra-curricular experiences
Positive personal qualities, habits, beliefs and values as taught by family	Understanding of school policies on behavior, attendance and other areas of student conduct	Increased learning of skills that receive tutoring or targeted attention from volunteers	Homework completions	Understanding that student rights are protected	Awareness of careers and options for future education and work
Balance between time spent on chores, on other activities and on homework	Informed decisions about courses and programmes	Awareness of many skills, talents, occupations and contributions of parents and other volunteers	Positive attitude towards school-work	Specific benefits linked to policies enacted by parent organisations and experienced by students	Specific benefits linked to programmes, services, resources, and opportunities that connect students with community
Good or improved attendance	Awareness of own role in partnerships, serving as courier and communicator		View of parent as more similar to teacher, and home as more similar to school		
Awareness of importance of school			Self-concept of ability as learner		

Table 2.2: Results for parents (Epstein as cited in Kgaffe, 2001:36)

Type 1 Parenting	Type 2 Communicating	Type 3 Volunteering	Type 4 Learning at home	Type 5 Decision making	Type 6 Collaborating with community
Understanding of and confidence about parenting, child and adolescent development, and changes in home conditions for learning as children proceed through school	Understanding school programmes and policies	Understanding teacher's job, increased comfort in school, and carryover of school activities at home	Know how to support, encourage and help student at home each year	Input into policies that affect child's education	Knowledge and use of local resources by family and child to increase skills and talents, or obtain needed services
Awareness of own and others' challenges in parenting	Monitoring and awareness of child's progress	Self-confidence about ability to work in school and with children, or take steps to improve own education	Discussions of school, classwork and homework	Feeling of ownership of school	Interactions with other families in community activities
Feeling of support from school and other parents	Responding effectively to child's problem	Awareness that families are welcome and valued at school	Understanding of instructional programme each year and of what child is learning in each subject	Awareness of parents' voices in school decisions	Awareness of school's roles in community, and of the community's contributions to the school
	Interactions with teachers and ease of communications with school and teachers	Gains in specific skills of volunteer work	Appreciation of teaching skills	Shared experiences and connections with other families	
			Awareness of child as a learner	Awareness of school, district and state policies	

Table 2.3: Results for teachers (Epstein as cited in Kgaffe, 2001:37)

Type 1 Parenting	Type 2 Communicating	Type 3 Volunteering	Type 4 Learning at home	Type 5 Decision making	Type 6 Collaborating with community
Understanding families backgrounds, cultures, concerns, goals, needs and views of their children	Increased diversity and use of communications with families in new ways, including those who do not volunteer at school	Readiness to involve families in new ways, including those who do not volunteer at school	Better design of homework assignments	Awareness of parent perspectives as a factor in policy development and decisions	Awareness of community resources to enrich curriculum and instruction
Respect for families' strengths and efforts	Awareness of parent talents and interests in school and children	Awareness of parent talents and interests in school and children	Respect of family time	View of equal status of family representatives in committees and leadership roles	Openness to and skill in using mentors, business partners, community volunteers, and others to assist students and augment reaching practice
Understanding of student diversity	Greater individual attention to students, with help from volunteers	Greater individual attention to students, with help from volunteers	Recognition of equal helpfulness of single parent, dual income, and less formally educated families in motivating and reinforcing student learning		Knowledgeable, helpful referrals of children and families to needed services
Awareness of own skills to share information on child development			Satisfaction with family involvement and support		

2.2.1.2. Ecosystemic model of Bronfenbrenner

Bronfenbrenner's theory of ecological systems is based on a model which recognises the need to see learning as a social process affected by forces at many levels (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2010:204). According to Ahuja (2005:3) the ecological model of Bronfenbrenner's theory attempts to explain the differences in individual's knowledge, development and competencies through the support, guidance and structure of the society in which they live. This ecological theory, therefore, defines four types of systems which contain roles, norms and rules that shape development. Ahuja (2005:2) identifies the four systems as microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. The microsystem is the family, classroom, or systems in the immediate environment in which a person is operating. The mesosystem is two Microsystems interacting, such as the connection between a child's home and school. The exosystem is an environment in which an individual is indirectly involved and is external to his experience, yet it affects him anyway i.e. a child's parent's workplace. The macrosystem is the larger cultural context. Below is the graphic representation of ecological model:

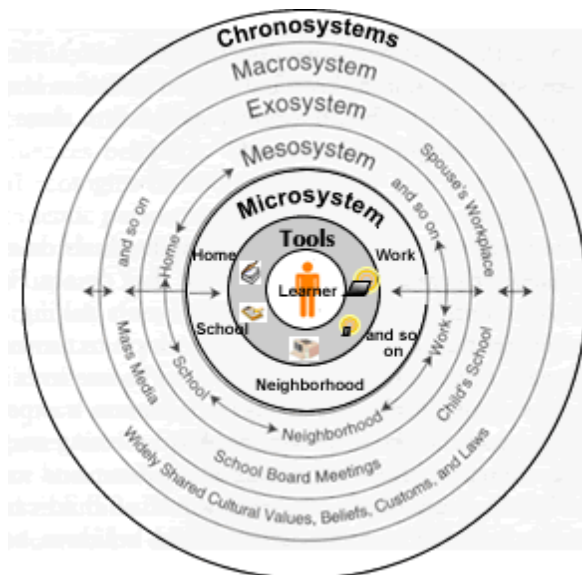


Figure 3. Model of ecosystem of learner development, based on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological system model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

According to this model, the interactions between a number of overlapping ecosystems affect the development of the person significantly. Ahuja (2005:3) posits that the family, peer group and classrooms or neighbourhoods are called the microsystem, which is the primary unit around a child influencing its development directly from the sources. As two microsystems begin to work together i.e. teacher and parent working together to educate a child it happens through the mesosystem. Evidently, Van Wyk and Lemmer (2010:204) support this notion when they argue that the major shift in the theories relating to parent involvement comes from the notion that school and home cannot be separated and will influence each other reciprocally.

Unfortunately, the work-family life balance of a black parent in the township is skewed. Working parents in the townships continue to work the same factory hours, their work demands more face time rather than less, and women in the workplace are also exposed to the same demands as men. All these factors place family life on the back burner making work the primary goal. The instability and unpredictability of family life gives children little interactions with parents and other important adults in their lives and this according to Bronfenbrenner is the most destructive force to a child's development (Ahuja, 2005:4). In advocating Bronfenbrenner's assertion, the researcher argues that without proper parental supervision, children would always look for attention in inappropriate places and manner and these behaviours would give rise to problems of juvenile delinquency, loss of direction, interest and focus in their school work. It is for this reason that more and more teachers have to deal with learners with social and emotional needs. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2010:204) support this statement when they posit that schools alone are not able to improve children's behaviour or attitude towards their school work. They need a partnership with parents when attempting to address issues at school.

It is imperative for everybody to note that the most useful aspect of this model is that it propagates that teachers, parents and community members should work together in harmony and support each other so that the outcome on their children could be

great and positive. If our next generation fails, if our future citizens are weak, if mental disorders and illnesses are on the rise, then it is because we all failed. Before we are swept away in our fast, high stress lives, let's use the ecological model to put the pieces together where our children can experience their lives in harmony (Ahuja, 2005:8). If we as parents, as teachers, communities and societies work together then ours will be the nation of success, good health, respect and love.

2.2.1.3. Other education theories

Any quest for one best theory to explain the social world is probably futile. Social phenomena are too complex for such reductionist explanation, and theories in the social sciences are both normative and culturally relative, reflecting beliefs and values of their creators who cannot escape their location within the social climate of their time (Bush, Bell, Bolam, Glatter & Ribbins, 1999:129). An appropriate approach would be to combine various theories to reap the analytical benefit of insights that each theory perspective can bring while avoiding tunnel vision following from adherence to one or other. Since theories orientate us towards phenomena in particular ways; it therefore seems more realistic to have a balanced view of all theories that deal with parental involvement in education. By conducting a literature survey of all theories on parental involvement in education, the researcher attempted to transcend the limited insight which could be offered by a single theory. The researcher believes that it is very rare for a single theory to capture all the reality in any particular study. This is the rationale behind the consideration of other theories on parental involvement.

2.2.1.3.1. The social capital theories

According to Van Wyk and Lemmer (2010:204) the concept of 'social capital' was used by Coleman as an inclusive term to denote the social resources available to children to aid educational growth. By their account, the social capital theory refers to the social networks, norms and trusts that facilitate educational achievements, particularly those established between parents, learners and schools. Coleman (as

cited in Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2010:204) distinguishes between the different social capital provided by the home and school in the socialisation of the children. One category of inputs, which are described as opportunities, demands and rewards, comes from schools whilst the second category of inputs, described as attitudes, effort and conception of self, are instilled mainly by the social environment of the home. Arguably, Van Wyk and Lemmer (2010:205) assert that the learner's positive ideas about and attitudes towards the importance of education begin with high parental expectations and high levels of parent-child interaction. Thus, a large part of the educational impact of parents is mediated by the aspirations of families for their children and the levels of parent-child interactions. The implications are that financially poor families may still have high educational aspirations for their children, interact regularly with them and support educational pursuits. Such children will be successful scholars irrespective of the poverty of their families.

However, this is in total contrast with what is happening in the township schools where the levels of parental involvement are at their lowest ebb. It is mainly these schools which are plagued by serious challenges which unfortunately could not be resolved without the home support in the activities of the school. According to Stuart Saunders (Mail and Guardian, 2011:36) in February 2011, the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga said she did not believe that the South African education system was in crisis but that the education of the black child in the township is. She puts this down to a lack of discipline among teachers. In support of this argument Tabane (Mail and Guardian, 2011:42) contends that it was a progressive measure that teachers were placed at the forefront of the struggle for better education and community issues. But we must admit the situation is now way out of control. A bunch of people who call themselves the leaders of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) are causing chaos in the township schools. There is therefore no shortage of evidence to show how badly the township schools are performing.

Over the past few years, we have witnessed too many incidents of unprofessional conduct from both the educators and the learners in the township schools. There is an explosion of pregnancies at these schools and some learners are impregnated by teachers. Teachers coming to school while they are drunk. The rate of substance abuse among the learners is very high, with the use of drugs such as dagga, cocaine and alcohol. This information is further corroborated by Majavu and Masondo (The Times, 2011:1) when they mentioned that pupils are also mixing cocaine with lip-ice, Vaseline, or Zambuk so that they can apply the drug to their lips during school hours. Classes do not start on time and on payday teachers leave early. Learners often have to beg teachers to come to class. This anomaly is further acknowledged by Manuel (2011:15) in his Diagnostic Report when he indicated that teachers in African schools teach an average of 3.5 hours a day compared with about 6.5 hours a day in former white schools. During his State of the Nation Address (10 February 2011) President Zuma emphasised the call to have all teachers at school, in class, on time, teaching for at least seven hours a day.

Similar calls were made in the past by the former President Mbeki, one of which was during the SADTU congress on 06 September 1998 in Durban when he sarcastically said:

“Thanks to a form of behaviour perhaps among a few of our educators, and especially teachers in the township schools, the prestige of the profession is fast disappearing, to be replaced by contempt and derision for you, the professionals without whom the new society for which we yearn can never be born. And yet the strange reality is that the most militant opponents to any system of school supervision and inspection are to be found among the members of SADTU”

All these arguments point to a worrying and an increasing level of unprofessional behaviour that is bedeviling the teaching profession in the township schools. Conversely, in the midst of all these, the parents in the township schools have chosen to remain silent. Parents have allowed an atmosphere permissive of the collapse of discipline to prevail in the township schools; enabling teachers to abuse the learners and to betray their responsibilities as people who must act in loco

parentis. It is quite evident to the researcher that by choosing to remain on the periphery of their children's education process, the parents in the township schools are consciously or unconsciously playing a part of an accomplice.

Similarly, there has been a dearth of criticism about the lack of parental involvement in the township schools from the civil society, including the labour federation COSATU which has an opinion on anything and everything. One would have therefore expected parents to play their pivotal role and to demand better accountability from the teachers. Since our children spend much of their day time under the supervision of the teachers, it is only fair and reasonable to expect an exemplary conduct from them. This assertion is supported by the former Minister of Education, Ms Naledi Pandor's article publicised in the Sunday Times (2005:1) when she stated that 'teachers are charged with our precious resources – the children of our country – and we expect them to execute that charge with a high degree of professionalism. I want quality educators who are committed to upholding the character and status of the profession.'

In his article in The ANC Today (2011:4), Minister of Police, Mr Nathi Mthethwa elucidates that 'to be a parent, as Che Guevara said, means sacrificing not only in heroic ventures but sacrifice all the time. It is about learning to help even in small tasks where the schools are concerned. It is also about being jealous in ensuring that we invest in all our children but particularly ensuring the African child has a place in the future's sun. Less disruption in her education today means less disruption to her life tomorrow. To this extent, the opposite is also true.'

It is therefore extremely important for all stakeholders in the community to co-operate and become involved in the education of their children. The social capital theory strongly advocates a sense of community, common values, shared trust, and a willingness to co-operate in creating a positive environment for children (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2010:205). These elements, in the researcher's opinion, are non-existent as far as the township schools are concerned. By contrast, we see ineffective

schools with weak social capital which continue to undermine learner achievement and perpetuate mediocrity as attested to by the afore-mentioned authors. If there is no willingness and ability from the community to increase its resources in order to contribute to the development of its members, then the concept of social capital theory is depleted. This becomes evident in children's performance in science, maths and literature.

2.2.1.3.2. Theory of decentralisation of school governance

Although the three preceding theories have helped shape research and have informed practice of informal parent involvement, government policies relating to parents in education are more often linked to principles of decentralisation of governance, which many governments see as a strategy to improve schools and democratise education (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2010:207). In this regard, it is prudent to agree with the two authors that policies that are derived from decentralised control of education generally refer to formal parent involvement. The last 18 years have seen major changes in the nature of governance in the South African schools. Owing to these changes in legislation, the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996) was promulgated. The major tenet of this Act is that more authority and responsibility for decision making has been devolved to the school level than was previously the case (Mestry, 2006:27).

The parent body mandated by law in South Africa is referred to as the School Governing Body. The South African Schools Act prescribes that the governance of a public school is vested in the governing body that stands in the position of trust towards the school. According to Bisschoff and Mestry (2003:16) prior to the promulgation of the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996), school activities were largely unregulated and this had a detrimental effect on the culture of teaching and learning. The two authors further agree that it is clear that neither central government control nor devolution to provincial level can be effective without a clear set guidelines or regulations on how schools should be managed. They pronounced

that the Schools Act was the first attempt to involve communities in governance, and to set out guidelines for managing schools. It gives unprecedented responsibility to school governing bodies by regarding all schools as equal and making parents primarily responsible for the education of their children through democratically elected structures. The Act, therefore, emphasises a partnership between the parents and the government, and aims ultimately to devolve maximum decision-making and power from education departments to school governing bodies. According to Van Wyk and Lemmer (2010:207) this conclusion is generally based on the premise that the state alone should not control schools, but should share its power with other stakeholders, particularly those closer to the school on a partnership basis.

This entails that there cannot be any better and quality education for any child without the involvement of their parents in the activities of the school. This obligation is imposed by the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996) as cited in Baloyi (2003:31) which states categorically that parents have both the right and responsibility to participate in the education of their children, and points out that parents and members of local communities are often in the best position to know what a school really needs and what its problems are. The state cannot do everything for all schools. The performance of the child is crucially linked to the involvement of the parents in their education activities.

2.3. PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

2.3.1. Parental involvement internationally

Parental involvement is hardly a new practice. According to Baloyi (2003:15) the concept of parental involvement has been in operation all over the world, for example, in the United States of America, United Kingdom and Australia since 1960s. Research and studies were done throughout the world and demonstrated that children had a significant advantage when their parents were directly involved in

the learning process. This notion is further supported by Foskett and Lumby (2003:101) when they postulate that parents represent a key community group with whom schools maintain a relationship, whether close or distant, and in most systems are identified as the principal external relationship that a school or college must manage. Research on school effectiveness strongly identifies that pupil achievement is directly related to the degree of parental engagement.

Though Kgaffe (2001:24) acknowledges the fact that parental involvement differs from one country to the next, it is equally important to note that strategies on parental involvement which are employed by each country will also differ. In this section the researcher will briefly discuss parental involvement in different countries.

Starting in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada, the decentralisation of administrative responsibilities and levels of authority to the school level is a form of educational reform that has been gaining increasing support in developing countries (Gertler, Patrinos & Rubio-Codina, and 2006:1). Similarly, reforms to increase the involvement of both learners and parents in governance, for example in New Zealand, have begun to challenge the limitation of children and parents' involvement. According to Foskett and Lumby (2003:102) the most radical shifts in power towards parents have occurred in those systems in which parental choice dominates, for example in Australia, England, Wales and in some localities in the USA. The two authors further argue that elsewhere the enhancement of parental roles has been less radical in an absolute sense, although still perhaps radical in the context of relatively conservative cultural setting.

In Indonesia, for example, the world's largest Islamic state, the decentralising reforms of Law 2/1989 sought to enable some degree of parental participation in school. In Latin America, similarly, reform has a strong component of such parental empowerment. Stromqvist as cited in Foskett and Lumby (2003:102) shows how the engagement of parents in schools was a strong motivator to educational reform in Peru, and the empowerment of parents to make informed school choices and to

exercise them through a modified voucher system has been a key feature of reform in Chile. In the same breadth, recent changes in Argentina have enhanced parental engagement in school management in some provinces. Kgaffe (2001:24) further reveals that a study of parental involvement in among rural communities in the Republic of China has shown that there is little or no parent participation in education due to some factor such as change in family structure and the type of government in China. Communism in China has resulted in the state sharing in everything that the people have gained for themselves thus leaving them with very little material possessions to provide a better life for their families. So much so that the state has gained control over all matters relating to life in general including education.

In Denmark and Sweden, participation by parents in school and community is widespread across a range of socio-economic groups, in contrast to many other western European countries where it is more commonly associated with middle-class parents. Promoting participation as a community responsibility has not been a successful movement in most countries, however (Foskett & Lumby, 2003:103). Consultation with parents in relation to their children is a statutory requirement in many countries, but there have been only limited attempts to impose such consultation duties upon parents – the development of home-school contracts in England and Wales in the late 1990s is one of the few examples, and this has met with only limited success, principally in those schools where parental engagement was not a significant problem in any case. Furthermore, the importance of parental voice has been promoted with legislation in the Netherlands and Spain, which ensures that strategic planning and policy and management decisions reflect parental perspectives.

Foskett and Lumby (2003:107) further pointed out that within the education systems of many of the less developed nations of sub-Saharan Africa, the increasing devolution of responsibility for management down to school level is built in part on the notion of the importance of connecting schools and communities. Where

participation rates are comparatively low and fluctuate significantly in response to economic, social and environmental conditions, enhancing attendance at school is dependent upon the school becoming the heart of the community with substantial associated prestige and value. In contrast, community involvement in the direct management of schools is strong in many of the countries of east Africa, including Uganda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. This stands in stark contrast to the position prior to independence and to some extent beyond, when community involvement was positively discouraged by the colonial governments. The shift from colonial elitism to community engagement has been a dominant feature of the school systems of the region in the last 30 years.

Van Wyk and Lemmer (2004:260) advance this argument further when they indicated that the concept of parents as partners with schools has been given considerable attention in the education systems of the European Union. In spite of this positive trend, it is difficult to understand why there is not more actual parent involvement in schools. Cullingford and Morrison as cited in Van Wyk and Lemmer (2004:260) suggest that schools and families struggle to translate the intention to increase parental involvement into practice.

2.3.2. Parental involvement in South Africa

The education of children is the primary responsibility of parents. This is a fact that both parents and teachers ignore at their peril. However, there are many factors that influence whether and how parents participate in South African schools. According to Lemmer (2007:218) parent involvement in South African schools has been primarily limited to financing schools and parent volunteering. Legislation extended the right to parents and the community to participate in the school's governing structures. This creates a framework for formal parent involvement but home-school partnerships should not be limited to this practice. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2010:122) state categorically that the Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) makes specific provision for education in Section 29 of the Bill of Rights and guarantees the

right of all South Africans to a basic education. Apart from that, educational policy has been developed since 1994 in various documents such as green and white papers and has been enacted in a series of statutes. It is therefore correct and relevant to mention that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) has a great impact on education. This is true not only because it has some provisions that relate to education, but because it contains a wide range of provisions that affect parties in education, whether education is taking place or not.

It is equally important to mention Baloyi's (2003:20) assertion that the South African experience of parental involvement is unique and different from the rest of the world due to historical, political, social and economic factors. The researcher therefore argues that it is impossible to understand any aspect of South African education without encountering the vast differences between schools that are the legacy of our past. Northmore (cited in Fieldgate, 2000:44) contends that though the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996) recognizes only one category of public school, state schools can in fact be divided into four categories. In order to understand the interaction of parents with schools, it is necessary to consider the nature of each of these schools type:

- Suburban schools are mainly ex-model C schools (formerly designated for white children), but includes former House of Delegates schools (previously designated for Indian children) and former House of Representatives schools (previously designated for coloured children. These schools are reasonably well resourced and have well-qualified staff. Learners in these schools typically come from middle-income homes and their parents have some tradition of involvement in the governance of the school (Northmore, as cited in Fieldgate, 2000:44).
- Township schools are found in the townships of African, Indian and coloured communities and vary in quality of resources and staffing. Many are in very poor conditions and the learners in these schools typically come from low-income homes. Violence, crime and gangsterism are a daily problem for many of these

schools. Although they have some degree of parental involvement, most are left to be governed by the principal and in some cases a few selected members of the school management team. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2004:261) support this notion when they posit that in many townships parent involvement has been virtually nonexistent due to political turbulence, poor socio-economic conditions, teacher reluctance and parent apathy. It is mainly these schools which are plagued by serious challenges which unfortunately could not be resolved without the home support in the activities of the school.

- Rural schools are found in small towns and villages, and serve the poorest sectors of the population. They are mostly under-resourced, isolated and lacking in basic amenities. Very little, if any, parental involvement takes place in these schools. Most of these parents are illiterate and many are unemployed. In many cases, parents have moved to urban areas to seek work, leaving their children to be looked after by relatives.
- Farm schools depend on the benevolence of the farmer for both their existence and their operations. They are usually very small, with one or two teachers, four at most. The reality for these schools is that all their activities defer to the needs and whims of the farmer. The parents are in the farmer's employ and have little, if any, say or governance participation. Farm schools have also been neglected by the education authorities.

As it can be deduced from the above factors, it is quite clear that black parents have not really been involved in the education of their children owing to a myriad of factors such as illiteracy, socio-economic factors, poverty, apathy, dysfunctional families and parents as migrant workers. This argument is further supported by Baloyi (2003:35) when he argues that research studies taken in South Africa especially in exclusive black communities indicate that the obstacles, which hamper parents from becoming involved in the education of their children are illiteracy, a lack of time, a negative school climate, a lack of

parental involvement opportunities, urbanization, social circumstances, attitudes of parents, and the attitude of both educators and school managers. Although most parents might have wished to be involved in the education of their children, it became increasingly difficult to do so because most of them live or work far away from the schools that their children attend. Consequently, it becomes far more difficult to get parents together for governing body and to attend parents' meetings. Moreover, the high incidences of single-parent families have had negative impact on the involvement in the school activities. More women are often the sole breadwinners and the demands of holding down a job and trying to provide the family with basic necessities leaves them little or no time for involvement in their children's schools. All these reduced parents into consumers who had little say in school management and its functions. According to Van Wyk and Lemmer (2004:261) parents' responsibilities were perceived in terms of payment of school fees, attendance of school events and fundraising.

It is against this background that post 1994 period has witnessed radical changes in the South Africa's education system to increase parental involvement. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) introduced the democratisation of the education system and the concept of partnership among stakeholders in education through co-operative governance. The South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996) went further by defining the concept of parent, describing basic parental duties, setting requirements for school related to parents' right to information, and providing for parent and community representation in mandatory school governing body (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2004:261). In accordance with this Act, the professional management of the school is placed under the authority of the principal whilst the governance of the school is vested in the governing body. From what has been said by the two afore-mentioned authors, the Schools Act formulates the state's expectations regarding parental involvement. Parents must ensure school attendance of every learner for whom he or she is responsible, from age seven until fifteen years or the ninth grade, whichever comes first; and pay school fees as determined by

the school's governing body in consultation with the parent body, unless the parent has been exempted from such payment, according to due procedure. The implication here is that both policy and legislation demand greater involvement on the part of the parents and the local community in the life of the school.

2.4. DEFINING “PARENTS” AND “PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT”

Different researchers in education studies often use similar terminology to mean different things. In this section an in-depth analysis is provided to help clarify the concepts that give direction to this study. This implies that the following terms and concepts are therefore explained as utilised in the study. This is necessary because terms and concepts need to be used in an unambiguous manner so that the reader clearly understands what is being said. On the basis of this, the two concepts that are frequently used in this study are explained:

Parent: any older person (non-biological or biological parent), male or female, single or married who is responsible for raising a child, caring for a child or taking the general responsibility of a child. Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004:261) define a parent as the biological parent or legal guardian; the person legally entitled to custody of a learner; or any person who fulfils the obligation towards the learner's schooling. According to the two authors, the concept of parent embraces those with legal or quasi-legal custodianship of the child, whether as biological, adoptive or foster parents. In South African society, the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996) provides a clear definition of a parent. Firstly, the term includes all primary caregivers, that is, the biological parents or legal guardians. Secondly, it includes the person who is legally entitled to custody of a learner. Finally, it also includes any person who fulfils the obligation towards the learner's schooling (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009:8). This very broad definition provides both the legal basis and the imperative for South African schools to acknowledge diverse family types. It implies that the school has an obligation to develop an inclusive range of parent involvement strategies accordingly. Van Wyk and

Lemmer (2009:8) posit that in practical terms, this definition means that a parent may be married or single, a relative (an older sibling, cousin, aunt or uncle for example), a custodial grandparent, a legal guardian, a surrogate parent, a foster parent, a same sex household or even a group such as a commune or any other person who takes care of the child. Based on the account of what has been said above, it is pretty clear that the South African Schools Act places a huge responsibility on the parents to ensure that their children are provided with efficient full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The state supports parents in meeting this obligation by entitling children to twelve years of education (Reynolds, 2005:2).

Parent involvement: Kgaffe (2001:9) describes parental involvement as the support of parents in school activities in and out of school for the benefit of the learners' academic achievement and school effectiveness. Desforges (2003:12) concurs with this description when he defines parental involvement as a catch-all term for many different activities including 'at home' good parenting, helping with homework, talking to teachers, attending school functions, through to taking part in school governance. Squelch and Lemmer in Kruger (2008:42) support the definitions advanced by Kgaffe and Professor Desforges when they define parental involvement as the active and willing participation of parents in a wide range of school-based and home-based activities which may be educational or non-educational. It extends from supporting and upholding the school ethos to supervising children's homework at home. Parent involvement implies mutual co-operation, sharing and support. Most parents want their children to be successful in both their careers and personal life. Generally, the parents look to the school system as a means of achieving this. However, extensive research has shown that schooling alone cannot provide all learners with the personal and cultural competencies necessary for success. For learners to be successful, schools need the involvement of parents in children's education (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2010:199). Morrison (as cited in Baloyi, 2003:8) supports this as follows, "In the

past there was a tendency of narrowing a definition of parent involvement, such a definition, has usually emphasized getting parents involved in the education of their children in public schools and pre-school programmes as well as limiting parents programmes and viewing them as people who provide help and augment the education programme.” This author describes parent involvement as a process of actualizing the potential of parents; of helping parents discover their strengths, potentialities and talents; and of using them for the benefit of themselves and the family.

Reynolds (2005:2) supports this argument when she mentions that a large body of evidence demonstrates a strong and positive link between parents’ involvement and interest in a child’s learning and a child’s subsequent adjustment and achievement. She went on to mention that faced with the evidence of such a link, policy makers and practitioners have seized on the potential of parental involvement to improve achievement and raise standards in schools. Nevertheless, Reynolds(2005), Van Wyk and Lemmer (2010)concur that although the mutual benefits of co-operation between schools and families are well documented, evidence on the programmes designed to facilitate parental involvement is less convincing and less comprehensive.

2.5. PARENTS’ ROLES, FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN EDUCATION

Parental involvement in the academic life of the child is extremely important. Kruger (2008:42) supports this sentiment when he articulates that it is well-known that parent involvement has a significant positive effect on the quality of the learner’s learning experiences in the school. Since parents are considered to be the natural educators, their involvement in the activities of the school has many positive effects on children. According to Mzoneli (1991:3) to attain better results in black schools, especially in the townships, there should be a close link between the school and parents of the child. Mzoneli further describes the family

or parents of the child and the school as juxtaposed to each other. This implies that the two institutions, namely the home and the school, are complementary to each other. To support Mzoneli, Kruger (2008:41) asserts that the issue of parent and community involvement in education and its management is an important aspect of the new education dispensation.

Parents are now one of the major stakeholders in formal education. Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004:260) also argue that various authors advocate a broad approach to parent involvement which extends beyond school governance to incorporate as many and as diverse a representation of parents in a variety of tasks in and outside the school.

In light of what has been said above, it is pretty obvious that the education of the children is too important to be left solely to the school or completely to the home. Moreover, Mzoleni (1991:52) further argues that the positive attitude parents show towards the education of the child contributes towards the academic performance of the child. Similarly, Desforges (2003:40) asserts that parental involvement, especially in the form of parental values and aspirations modelled in the home, is a major force shaping pupils' achievement and adjustment. It therefore stands to reason that parents are a valuable resource for increasing the quality of our educational system. Kappa (1990:1) confirms this statement when he mentions that research has demonstrated that children have a significant advantage when their parents are directly involved in the learning process. Baloyi (2003:19) further advanced Beale's (1985) observation that when parents are involved pupils behave better, thus fewer discipline problems occur; and school rules and regulations are easily applied at school. Parents who are involved tend to develop a greater appreciation of their role (Mncube, 2009:2).

According to James Comer (in Kappa, 1990:5) given the complexity of the modern world, today's students need more adult help than children did in the

past. He posits that programmes that involve parents effectively in the schools can provide a desirable context for teaching and learning. Kruger (2008:43) concurs with this notion when he points out that the advantages of parent involvement can be classified in terms of its value for three parties, namely the teacher, the learner and the school. In terms of advantages for the teacher, parent involvement would result in a more positive spirit between teacher and parent; and with regard to advantages of parent involvement for the learner, parent involvement would mean improved learner behaviour. It is against this background that the researcher argues that education is a means of promoting good citizenship as well as preparing the learners in our schools for the needs of the modern economy in a democratic society. It stands to reason that when we educate learners we technically arm them with the intellectual and cognitive tools and means not only to understand the world and their lives' social experience, but also to change it. However, this change could only be meaningful as and when parents play their part. This argument is further advanced by Manuel (2011:15) when he mentions that where performance has improved in schools in poor communities, studies found that the presence of a good school principal is critical. Good principals run efficient and disciplined schools, support their teachers, mentor less-experienced staff, involve parents in the education of their children and constantly seek opportunities to promote their schools in the broader community. The researcher therefore concurs with all of the above – mentioned authors that teachers and parents should share the responsibility for the education and socialization of children.

It is pretty obvious that the more parents take an interest in the education of their children, the greater will be their development and educational achievement. Consequently, this will benefit the community and the country as a whole. This notion is supported by Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, Wilkins and Closson (2005:105) when they state that involvement has also been associated with other indicators of school success, including lower rates of retention in grade, lower drop-out rates, higher on-time high school

graduation rates, and higher rates of participation in advanced courses. Moloji (2005a:32) confirms this statement when she reveals that research on parent participation in education indicates, inter alia, that active parent participation improves home-school relations, reduces misunderstandings and conflict between parents and educators, prevents the school from becoming isolated from the wider community, motivates children to attend school and has a positive influence on children's academic progress and behaviour. Moreover, Baloyi (2003:18) mentions that the benefits of parent involvement include: student learning and achievement, positive attitudes and behaviour of students, a positive school image, high attendance rates, school success, motivated pupils, psychological benefits for children, parents contributing financially, as well as the maintenance of discipline at school.

A good education is, without any doubt, the most empowering investment that any parent can make to give their children opportunities for a better life. To this effect, the researcher propagates the idea that the most effective way of dealing with the current educational challenges in the township schools is a move towards transforming these schools into learning organizations. And to achieve this, all significant stakeholders particularly the parents should form collaboration with the schools. If such collaboration is not forged, we will continue to work in silos and we won't have the kind of impact that we so dearly wish to have. The sooner every parent realises that education is a triangle involving teachers, parents and learners the better it would be for our schools in the township. Perhaps this will be enough motivation for every parent to roll up their sleeves and put their hands on deck because as things stands now, it could not be assumed that it is business as usual in the township schools. According to Vassallo as cited in Singh, Mbokodi and Msila (2004:303), once parents assume the responsibility of advocating for and supporting their children's education, they will become partners with educators to create the schools their children need.

2.6. THE IMPACT OF NON-INVOLVEMENT OF THE PARENTS

Major studies over the past twenty years have indicated that parents are significant educators of their children and that not even the best school can do the job alone. From time immemorial, parents have always been involved in the education of their children, informally so, as natural educators. Baloyi (2003:13) mentions that parent involvement was a crucial factor in the education of their children and it hinged on teaching the rules and regulations of both the family group and of larger society. According to Dorothy Rich cited in Kappa (1990:29) parents everywhere, in suburbs and inner cities, have remained constant in caring about their children and seeking ways to help them achieve because they understand that good education has a potential to create better opportunities for their children.

Sadly, this has not been the case with the parents in the township schools where teachers continuously share the frustration of the lack of parental involvement in the educational process of their children. This point is further outlined by Kgaffe (2001:38) when she makes a pronouncement that in South Africa, research shows a complete lack of parental involvement in certain communities (townships and rural) while in others (suburbs) parents have always been involved. For far too long, parents in the township schools have failed to take responsibility for the education of their children hence one can point out to the decline in the performance of the learners in these schools. The results of the annual national assessment for grade 3 and 6 which were released by the Department of Basic Education on Tuesday, 28 June 2011 confirmed this decline. According to an article produced by Karl Gernetzky in the Creamer Media Reporter (2011), the national average performance in grade 3 for literacy was 35%, and 28% for numeracy. Similarly, in grade 6, learners achieved an average of 28% in languages, and 30% in mathematics.

One can therefore argue that these results point to systemic problems at some schools particularly the township schools and the Department of Basic Education has acknowledged that the literacy and numeracy of SA's learners are among the lowest of their peers, despite the large sums spent on education each year. This argument is further advanced by Bloch (2009:61) when he posits that South Africa is the worst performer in maths and literacy, probably in the world. This is even worse when you take into account that learners in many less-endowed and more poorly resourced countries achieve a lot more than those in our schools do. It is against this backdrop that Bastian (cited in Vincent, 1996:25) argues that if the least co-operative parent rose to the level of the most co-operative, the effect would be much larger than if the worst school rose to the level of the best, or the least prosperous parent rose to the level of the most prosperous. From the preceding statement, it is clear to the researcher that the importance of parental involvement in the education of the children in the township schools cannot be over-emphasised. It is on these bases that the researcher seeks to exhort parents in the township schools to get involved so that they could improve the culture of teaching and learning which is currently at its lowest ebb. In fact, the South Africa's poor showing in international and local testing of literacy and numeracy could be blamed to a large degree on teacher absenteeism – which is a form of “quiet corruption” (Saunders, 2011:36).

Although Gernetzky (2011) contends that the decline in results was due to the difficulty learners had in switching from being taught in their home languages to English or Afrikaans in grade 4, and the increase from three subjects to eight; the lack of parental involvement in the township schools is also cited as a major cause. The results are therefore, in my opinion, an indictment of how much learning actually takes place in the township schools. Inasmuch as the abysmal failure of education in the township schools is blamed on a host of things including the ever changing curriculum, lack of resources, poor leadership and under-qualified teachers, the researcher strongly believes that one of the most critical elements is the lack of parental involvement in the educational process of

these poor kids. Consequently, the implications for high level of drop-out, unemployment and economic growth are catastrophic, especially as the figures from the annual national assessment reaffirm the truth about the long-term degradation of the education system in general and the culture of teaching and learning in the township schools in particular. Professor Jansen (cited in *The Times*, 2011:15) supports this view when he confirms that nothing demonstrates the demise of learning in our society more powerfully than what happens to poor children in serially disrupted schools and classrooms. This statement better explains the extent to which parents in the township schools have chosen to remain the spectators whilst the education of their children is disintegrating. Singh, Mbokodi and Msila (2004:303) take this argument further when they explain that parental role in education is crucial in ensuring the success of the learners and that presently, there appears to be insufficient participation of black parents in managing schools although there are a number of critics who acknowledge the importance of parental involvement in ensuring quality. Equally so, Mncube (2009:1) states that at some schools in South Africa, parents are not yet playing their full role as governors mandated by legislation. It is indeed perturbing that almost eighteen years into our democracy, where we now have a single and universally accessible system of schools, our township schools still remain the speck in the eye; and are in the main functionally illiterate and innumerate.

The report of the annual national assessment result is evidence that parents in the township schools have a huge mountain to climb if they cherish a dream of witnessing their children participating with confidence and skill in the modern competitive global economy. The current results are not something that one can be proud of. The researcher argues that parents need to focus their minds and change their attitudes so that they could improve on these results. Nathi Mthethwa as quoted in *The ANC Today* (2011:6) puts it vividly when he used Frantz Fanon's quotation that "each generation must discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it, in relative opacity." It is in this spirit that the researcher challenges

the parents in the township schools to rise up and fulfill the mission to participate in their children's education or betray it by choosing to remain apathetic.

Although education has been identified as one of the key priorities in South Africa since the famous ANC 2007 Polokwane conference, to date however, we have not been able to translate theory into practice. Over the past eighteen years our observations have shown that even though the desire for schools to work is high up on the list of concerns of all South Africans, the political will to galvanise parents into action has always been lacking. Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004:263) highlight this point clearly when they mentioned that endeavours by the Department of Education to promote broader and varied participation of the parent body are absent or perfunctory. This observation was also confirmed by President Zuma during his State of the Nation Address (2011) when he mentioned that:

“We are making a difference in education, as evidenced by the significant increase in the matric pass rate last year, and the interest displayed by the youth in education around the country.”

It is quite clear from this extract that there is a deafening silence about the involvement of the parents in the education of their children. The impression created by these utterances is that parents should be held exempt and unaccountable for the education of their children. It is these sentiments that are expressed from the high podiums that leave much to be desired. Given the state of our education in the township school, one would have expected the President to exploit the platform and be radical and robust in terms of encouraging parental involvement and the fact that the school will never be important to a child unless it is important to a parent. Poor performance has become synonymous with almost 80% of the township schools. The extremely bad academic results of learners exiting the school after the completion of grade 12, the poor culture of teaching and learning which exist in these schools, high drop-out rate, lack of

parental participation and poor attendance rate of learners have become the hallmarks through which the education in the township schools can be explained. Amazingly, in the same address on the need to create jobs, the President said:

“Research has indicated that we can create jobs in six priority areas. These are infrastructure development, agriculture, mining and beneficiation, manufacturing, the green economy and tourism.

We cannot create these jobs alone. We have to work with business, labour and the community constituencies. Experience shows that we succeed when we work together.”

It is this stark contrast from the two excerpts that deserves to be exposed. The reality of our education system is that it should be a national imperative that we ought not only religiously pursue but religiously implement as well. It is worth pointing out, however, that throughout the years all the post-apartheid governments have on paper prioritized the importance of the parental involvement in the education of a black child in the township schools but nothing beyond this has invariably been achieved. To attest to this statement, former President Mbeki (1998:6) had once said:

“Your political representative, the African National Congress, has placed high on its programme of action the task to ensure a radical improvement in the quality of education we deliver to both young and old in our country, including the restoration of the culture of learning, teaching and service.”

In the same way as business cannot succeed alone without the involvement of other stakeholders, the researcher can safely say that education in the township schools too cannot succeed without the involvement of the parents. However, one must admit that the government has year in and year out struggled to translate its good intention to increase parents’ involvement in the education of an African child in the township schools.

Furthermore, the promulgation of the Schools Act in 1996 and the subsequent abolition of the corporal punishment have only complicated matters in the township schools. Learners in these schools are continuously becoming ill-disciplined and educators have found themselves in a position of not knowing what to do in the absence of administering the corporal punishment and non-participation of the parents. It is worth pointing out that indiscipline not only disrupts teaching and learning but can also endanger learners and educators by turning the schools into predatory environment where children are not safe and where low-level violence predominates. It is evident that good discipline is a cornerstone in the foundation of successful schools; and the role players that impact directly towards maintenance of good discipline in schools are the parents.

The researcher's argument is based on the fact that despite all focused efforts to bring about improvements to education in the township schools, learner performance still remains poor and things seem to be getting worse and worse. Quality of teaching and learning cannot be improved if learners bunk classes and behave badly when they are present at school. Good class attendance and appropriate conduct are pre-conditions for effective teaching and learning. It is quite clear that black parents in the township schools can no longer abdicate their responsibility to other people where the education of their children is concerned.

2.7. STRATEGIES TO INCREASE PARENTS INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLS

Traditionally, schools viewed parents as 'clients', which implied that parents delegated their educational responsibility wholly to educators who acted on their behalf in educational matters (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2010:214). However, engaging parents in the education of their children at home and at school is increasingly viewed as an important means to support better outcomes for

children. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2010:214) go on to mention that when schools and families work together children have higher achievement levels in school and stay in school longer. This, therefore, is a highly desirable outcome for education in South Africa. Conversely, differences in family structure, parenting arrangements, socio-economic status and cultural background sometimes make it more difficult for schools to form effective partnerships with families. It is for this reason that Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:153) assert that teachers are in an excellent position to help children to cope with the effects of family break-up and to provide guidance to parents. This is basically the reason why the two authors have developed the following strategies that schools can use to help children and parents cope:

- **Create a school policy.** This policy should deal with the effects of family break-up and take the needs of divorced or separated parents into account when planning school events. Schedule parent-teacher interviews and parent evenings after work so that working parents can attend. Ask parents when they enrol their children at school that the school should be fully informed of any home disruptions, which may affect the child's academic progress.
- **Create an inviting atmosphere.** One of the first steps in creating home-school partnership is to recognize that the strength of the school lies in the differences families bring to the school. This means that diversity should not be ignored or tolerated. This should be the basis on which all learners and parents are welcomed into the school.
- **Provide teacher in-service training.** This will broaden teachers' sensitivity to the very complex family dynamics surrounding divorce and its effects upon learners. Review the possible effects of family break-ups on children.
- **Provide counseling and support for parents and children.** Start support groups based at the school for single parents. Hold parenting classes to

help these parents understand the effects of divorce on children and how to manage them. Refer parents and children with severe problems to appropriate community agencies. Bring in a social worker to work with children, families and teachers.

- **Update school and class records.** Ensure that records reflect current family situations, such as the names and addresses of parents and step-parents, custody and visitation arrangements. Be knowledgeable about where and with whom your learners live.
- **Involve all parents in the child's education.** Encourage the interest of step-parents and non-custodial parents in the child's education. The more adults who are positively involved with the child, the better. Send duplicate notes and report cards to non-custodial parents and arrange separate parent-teacher interviews with them. Include non-custodial parents on field trips, in special programmes and in school activities.

2.8. PROMOTING A CULTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

2.8.1. What is meant by a culture of teaching and learning?

Most researchers have argued that the importance of what a good school does cannot be overemphasised. Similarly, ensuring that teachers and learners spend more time in schools and classrooms is clearly a prerequisite for improving the culture of teaching and learning. The culture of teaching and learning implies that schools are expected to create a safe and caring environment in which learning can take place and that teachers and learners maintain discipline, arrive on time and spend school hours teaching and learning. In these schools, teachers are sure to work with the parents to ensure that learners achieve academic excellence, develop as human beings and grow into responsible and useful members of society. The culture of teaching and learning is therefore about how teachers manage time in class so that their learners spend as much time as possible meaningfully engaged

with challenging intellectual work. According to Reeves (as cited in Fieldgate, 2000:68) in order to improve the effectiveness of time spent in class, it is important that teachers select the most appropriate and efficient teaching methods for engaging their learners with school –related knowledge and skills.

Although the South African school year is of average length, compared to most other countries, many researchers have discovered that a considerable time is lost to teaching and learning in our schools (Reeves as cited in Fieldgate, 2000:68). Researchers have also reported that incidents such as union meetings and strikes in the township schools, pay-days; memorial services; extra-curricular events such as sports days, staff training, school celebrations, ad hoc staff meetings and class excursions often take precedence over time in class. These interruptions and disruptions have far reaching consequences on the culture of teaching and learning in the township schools because they tend to limit teachers' teaching time, making it impossible for them to cover their intended programme of work. This problem is further exacerbated by the poor leadership style of the school principals. Too many principals in the township schools are unable to perform their duties because they are beholden to their union, namely the South African Democratic Teachers' Union. Equally so, the high level of apathy amongst the black parents seems to constrain them to stand up to teachers who show no interest in their jobs. There can be no doubt that increasing time in class will remove one of the major obstacles to the culture of teaching and learning in the township schools. This assertion is supported by Senge (1994:3) when he refers to such schools as learning organizations where teachers and learners continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.

2.8.2. Role and responsibilities of SGB in a culture of teaching and learning in the school

Over the past eighteen years, we have seen the progressive delegation of funding and responsibilities from local education authorities to individual schools. Schools are now largely self-managing, responsible for their own budget and accountable for all aspects of their performance. According to section 20 (1) of the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996) governing bodies are responsible and accountable for all major decisions about the school and its future. Governors have a legal responsibility to conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement, including the promotion of the culture of teaching and learning. They set the school's vision and strategic aims monitor and evaluate performance thereby acting as critical friends to the principal and ensure the school is accountable to those it serves. It is expected that the SGB should work in partnership with the principal, other school staff and the parents to promote high standards of educational achievement at the school. Bisschoff and Mestry (2003:59) have listed the following responsibilities of the SGB in an attempt to promote the culture of teaching and learning in the school:

- To develop the mission statement of the school that refers to what the school wants to achieve.
- Adopt a code of conduct that refers to rules of behaviour for learners at the school.
- Support the principal, educators and other staff in carrying out their professional functions.
- Encourage parents, learners, educators and other staff to render work willingly for the school.
- Buy textbooks and educational materials or equipment for the school.
- Supplement the funds supplied by the state to improve the quality of education in the school.
- Meet with or consult parents, learners and educators where required by the Schools Act.

2.8.3. Role and responsibilities of the instructional leader in parental involvement and the culture of teaching and learning

Few educational roles are less clearly defined than that of the principal since he/she is barraged by uncoordinated expectations. Role ambiguity is heightened by the absence of clearly stated job description in government statutes and local administrative structures. But within all this ambiguity, there is consensus that the principal, as the head teacher, is the instructional leader in the school. Principals, by virtue of their responsibility as managers of schools, are undoubtedly part of an administration network. It is not surprising then that the most effective schools have principals who stress the importance of instructional leadership in a quest to execute the core business of a school, namely teaching and learning. The role and responsibility of the instructional leader therefore involves setting clear goals, allocating resources to instruction, managing the curriculum, monitoring lesson plans and evaluating teachers. Moreover, in learning organisations, the instructional leader would encourage staff members to meet on a regular basis and discuss their work, to work together to solve problems, reflect on their jobs and take responsibility for what students learn. This notion is supported by Phillips (2010:2) when he postulates that instructional leaders make effective teaching and learning a priority, set high expectations for performance, create a culture of continuous learning for learners, give praise for effective teaching and get the parents involved for school success. This implies that instructional leaders have a primary responsibility of curriculum managers; and as such cannot avoid in any good conscience involvement with teachers, learners and parents in the process of curriculum implementation and improvement of the culture of teaching and learning. Bisschoff and Mestry (2003:58) concur with this assertion when they argued that the Schools Act stipulates that the principal, under the authority of the Head of Department, must undertake the professional management of a public school. This means that the principal has delegated powers to organise and control teaching and learning at the school effectively.

While accepting principals as part of the administrative figures, one regrets to see that most principals in the township schools have ceased to be instructional leaders who can help to promote the culture of teaching and learning. Most principals have become non-educators who have assumed the role of administrators and this has led to the establishment of a gap between the classroom and the principal's office. Phillips (2010:3) posits that principals do not see themselves as instructional leaders and many are of the belief that anything that has to do with teaching and learning is best assigned to teachers. Generally, principals tend to be more manager-administrators oriented while that of instructional leader is most often delegated to the deputy principal. This is an unfortunate situation that the principals find themselves in. They are faced with a double-fold dilemma, namely, the pressure to cope with the daily complexities of their administrative work and the added responsibility of becoming instructional leaders. By all means, the principal as an instructional leader must ensure that his/her school is running smoothly so that effective teaching and learning can be realized. If this precaution is ascertained, all the school activities of which the curriculum is one, will run like a circulatory system of a healthy body. This view is supported by Kruger (2008:31) when he further postulates that the principal alone cannot effectively lead the instructional programme of a school. It should be a shared responsibility where members of a school's management team as well as teachers should assume the responsibility for their own professional development and the effective execution of the instructional programme.

2.9. CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented detailed discussion on the practice of parental involvement in the South African township schools. The role of parents in the activities of the school was elaborated on in details since engaging parents in the education of their children at home and at school is increasingly viewed as an important means to support better outcomes for children. Special attention was also paid to the various theories of parental involvement which served as a framework for

a clearer understanding of the nature and meaning of the phenomenon under study. Similarly, a comparative analysis of parental involvement in South Africa's schools and the other international countries was made. To this end, one can therefore single out the general observation by various authors that the majority, although not all, underperforming schools are located in township schools and informal settlements. For this reason, it can be safely said that working to achieve quality education is critical to redressing the political, economic and social standing of every child in the township schools. Parents need to begin to think of education as the means of developing their greatest assets, namely the children, because in each of them there is hope and dreams which, when fulfilled, contributes to the benefit of society and greater strength of our nation. As parents, we have an obligation and a responsibility to invest in our children and our schools to ensure that our children get the best education possible. The school should therefore endeavour to empower parents to effectively support the education of their children by creating conducive and welcoming conditions.

Furthermore, this chapter focused on the strategies that can be employed by the township schools to support diverse types of families in their parenting task and to facilitate their involvement in their children's education. It was further argued that the principal is an instructional leader despite the presence of other odd administrative duties assigned to him. By implication, the principal is responsible for the restoration and inculcation of the culture of teaching and learning in the township schools which has so far greatly deteriorated. This has impacted negatively on the capacity of the township schools to achieve better results and parents end up spending a fortune on transport and fees trying to get their children into suburban schools. Chapter 3 concentrates on the research design that has been utilised to collect data and analyse it.

CHAPTER 3

EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Data collection has been identified as one of the critical and time consuming exercise of the research project. This, unfortunately, must be done because without data it will not be possible to broaden one's understanding, to explain the unknown or to add new knowledge to existing knowledge (Brynard and Hanekom, 1997:27) Research methodology is therefore the how of collecting data and the processing thereof within the framework of the research process. It is in this regard that this chapter presents an account of the research methodology that has been applied to this study in addressing the research problem presented in chapter one. This chapter further describes the rationale behind the choice of the methodology used. In this chapter, the researcher has attempted to give details of the following sections: research design, population sampling, procedures for data collection, validity and reliability, and the ethical considerations of the study and data analysis. However, the results of this study are presented in chapter four.

3.2. RESEARCH PARADIGM

It is important to note that every scientific research is or rather should be conducted within a particular paradigm. According to Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006:40) paradigms act as perspectives that provide a rationale for the research and commit the researcher to particular methods of data collection, observation and interpretation. This notion is supported by Creswell (cited in de Vos, 2002: 266) when the author states that researchers approach their studies with a certain paradigm or world view, a basic set of beliefs or assumptions that guide their enquiries. These assumptions relate to:

- The nature of reality
- The relationship of the researcher to that being researched

- The role of values in a study
- The process of research (the methodological issue)

Based on the above assertions, the researcher can therefore conclude that a paradigm refers to a set of interrelated assumptions that one can make about the social world based on the philosophical and conceptual framework of the study in question. Brynard and Hanekom (1997:3) view a paradigm as an interpretative framework which is guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied. In their definitions, the two authors have listed these beliefs as:

- Ontology: which is the study of a reality
- Epistemology: which focuses on the search for knowledge to arrive at results that are as close to the truth as possible?
- Methodology: which is all about the application of methods and techniques in pursuit of valid knowledge.

Emanating from the latter, de Vos (2006:45) argues that researchers must, therefore, decide within what paradigm they are working, know the nature of their selected paradigm very well, and spell this out in their research report in order to keep communication with their reader public clear and unambiguous.

This study was conducted from a constructivist or interpretivist perspective. The constructivism paradigm is rooted in the assumption that there are multiple realities of the same phenomenon rather than it being one universal, external entity. In addition, this study is further embedded in the post-positivism and pragmatic approaches since they both assume that reality is multiple, subjective and constructed by individuals. According to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009:90), ontologically, the post-positivists view reality as a creation of the individuals that are involved in the research while the pragmatists believe that “truth is a normative concept and only what works may be considered to be the truth”. Post-positivists

believe that we should strive for constantly better explanations of reality and causality, whereas pragmatists believe that we should employ those explanations of causality and reality that are closer to our own values because we will never understand causal relationships absolutely (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009:93). It therefore stands to reason that from this study, there are three major paradigms that have evolved on which the study is grounded. The common factor amongst these three paradigms relates to the extent to which each believes that reality is subjective and an outcome of a social construct; and that the quantitative and qualitative approaches co-exist and can be combined for a better result. The choice of these paradigms will therefore enable the researcher to understand and interpret parents' behaviour according to their own perceptions, attitudes, values and beliefs regarding parental involvement in the township schools. In terms of the ontology, the constructivism paradigm supports a relativist reality where reality is individually constructed and subjective within a particular milieu. The understanding is that this reality is subject to change over time.

Similarly, according to Plack (cited in Botha, 2011:2) the constructivist paradigm propagates the notion that knowledge is comprised of multiple interpretations of reality that are contextually bound and value laden. Equally so, the post-positivists view knowledge as consisting of nonfalsified hypotheses that can be regarded as probable facts or laws (Guba & Lincoln, 1998:113). Reality can consequently be seen as subjective and can only be uncovered through inquiry and interpretation, not through observation. In this research, interpretive elements have been elicited through the interviews with the parents and are presented in a text format by way of written transcripts.

3.3. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH DESIGN

In undertaking the research study, it is important for the researcher to select an appropriate framework. This selection may be governed by a number of factors including the researcher's choice of the research strategy, methods and the

researcher's view of the epistemology. According to Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006:6) epistemology specifies the nature of the relationship between the researcher and what can be known whilst methodology specifies how researchers may go about practically studying whatever they believe can be known.

It is in this regard that the researcher argues that interrelationship exists between his adopted theoretical stance and the methods used. The implication is that what the researchers study, how they study it; and how they make sense of it all depend upon their theoretical framework. This includes, amongst other things, the way the researchers perceive the world and the assumptions they have about what is reality and how it is constructed. Research therefore needs to be guided by some theoretical orientation.

As reflected in the preceding chapter, in this study, invariably, the researcher's conceptual framework is guided by the constructivist, post-positivist and pragmatic approaches and aligns itself with Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres and Bronfenbrenner's ecosystemic model of parental involvement.

3.4. MIXED METHOD RESEARCH DESIGN

The aim of this study is to investigate and evaluate the factors that influence or inhibit parents' participation in the education of their children in the township schools. The purpose is develop strategies that would support township schools to encourage co-operation between the parents and the school and thereby enhance the culture of teaching and learning; as well as to maximise parental participation in the activities of the school at home and in the overall school situation. In order to gain an in-depth understanding of how parental participation is efficient and effective in the township schools; a mixed methodology of qualitative and quantitative approaches (Post-positivist-interpretive approach) were used for this study. A rationale for using the mixed methods is to enable the researcher to use a more integrated approach with the potential to yield better research outcomes by tapping on the strengths of each research paradigm. Moreover, by using the mixed

methods, the researcher sought to demystify or dispel the existing myths that the qualitative and the quantitative approaches are mutually exclusive and may never be used simultaneously. According to Osborne (2008:134) using a single method to effectively address multilayered problems is difficult and nearly impossible. Owing to this assertion, complicated problems such as parental involvement in the township schools require research approaches that are equipped to handle complexity. It is for this reason that the researcher has opted to use the mixed methods research because they provide the various lenses needed to address the educational problems. The mixed method approach is supported by Denzin and Lincoln (2008:12) when they assert that qualitative methods may be “employed either singly or in combination with quantitative methods, including the use of randomised experimental designs”. The mixed methods movement takes qualitative methods out of their natural home, which is within the critical, interpretive framework. It divides inquiry into dichotomous categories: exploration versus confirmation. Qualitative work is assigned to the first category, quantitative research to the second (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008:12).

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2008:14 & 31) in the positivist version it is contended that there is a reality out there to be studied, captured and understood whereas the post-positivist and interpretive version argues that all research is interpretive in the sense that it is guided by the researcher’s set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied. Some beliefs may be taken for granted, invisible, only assumed, whereas others are highly problematic and controversial. Each interpretive paradigm makes particular demands on the researcher, including the questions the researcher asks and the interpretations he or she brings to them. This point is further seconded by Osborne (2008:125) when he pointed out that the fundamental principle of mixed methods research is to combine methods in a manner that considers the strengths and weaknesses of each individual method. It is against this backdrop that Greene, Caracelli and Graham (cited in Osborne, 2008:126) had outlined the following five purposes for conducting mixed methods research: triangulation, complementarity,

development, initiation and expansion. By their assertion, the afore-mentioned authors explain triangulation as referring to the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods to demonstrate convergence. This notion is further supported by Houser (2009:77) when he posits that triangulation in mixed methods research is defined in terms of the combined use of methods to investigate and understand the same phenomenon. Complementarity studies use qualitative and quantitative methods to examine intersecting but different aspects of a phenomenon. Development involves using quantitative and qualitative methods sequentially, with one method informing the development of the other. Initiation, most often an after-the-fact purpose, is used to discover as well as explore contradictions found when using quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the same phenomenon. Expansion involves a multiple approach to “extent the breadth and range of the study” (Osborne, 2008:126). The purpose of this study is to develop strategies that could be used in the township schools to enhance parental involvement.

To validate the researcher’s choice of mixed methods of research, one can therefore argue that the development of the mixed methods research paradigm may not be a panacea for all research problems. However, it does provide a bridge between the traditionally stand-alone qualitative and quantitative research methods. In the researcher’s opinion, it can be viewed as a deliberate attempt to create a confluence of the radically different views and assumptions about the nature of science and methodologies which characterise the post-positivist and the constructivist approaches. It has not only provided the modern researchers with a new tool if sufficient data cannot be gathered by only one method or instrument; but has also presented an integrative approach that has managed to reconcile some of the differences that have polarised the quantitative and the qualitative approaches over the past years.

3.4.1. REASONS FOR CHOOSING A QUALITATIVE DESIGN

Whilst the quantitative design propagates the idea of post-positivism in this study, the qualitative design supports the constructivist approach. This implies that the belief is on the construction of multiple realities. It is against this backdrop that the qualitative design aligns itself with the phenomenological approach. The primary focus of the phenomenological approach is to understand how humans develop a way of knowing the world. What is the human perception of events or an event? In trying to ascertain the perceptions, feelings and reactions of the parents about their involvement or lack of in the township schools, the researcher has decided to use the phenomenological approach to try to understand their personal perspectives. The researcher can therefore safely conclude that, in keeping with this study's phenomenological character, a qualitative design was used to provide a better understanding of the specificity and complexity of the processes at work by providing an insider's point of view (Houser, 2009:71).

The qualitative approach was chosen because it is descriptive, explorative, contextual and it investigates phenomena in a natural setting (parental involvement in township schools) so that there is clarity, new insights are acquired and the researcher is able to contextualize the findings. This notion is supported by Strauss and Corbin (2008:12) when they argue that qualitative research allows researchers to get at the inner experience of participants, to determine how meanings are formed through and in culture, and to discover rather than test variables. Moreover, a qualitative approach was followed precisely because it is inherently multi-method (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:2-4) and a combination of data collection methods were utilised to complement and verify each other. Moreover, Bless (2006:44) posits that some kind of information cannot be adequately recorded using quantitative data only. To this end, the author is of the opinion that language provides a far more sensitive and meaningful way of recording human responses. In these cases, words and sentences are used to qualify and record information about the world, thus the research will be qualitative in that regard.

Smaling (cited in Mashaba, 2008:12) argues this point further when the author maintains that unlike other research methodologies, qualitative research allows for flexibility in design and implementation to ensure congruence between question formulation, literature, data collection strategies and data analysis required for the phenomenon being investigated. The methodology allows for information seeking dialogue or interview, in which the researcher has the goal of finding information by identifying when to continue, stop or modify the research process in order to achieve the desired reliability and validity to ensure rigour (Mashaba, 2008:12). In this regard, the qualitative approach fits in very well with this study since it allowed the researcher to interview the inactive or unsupportive parents; and where there was uncertainty; the researcher was able to clarify questions immediately. Moreover, the qualitative research design uses an inductive approach. This implies that the researcher would start from what the respondents knew about the extent of parental involvement in their respective schools and moved to the unknown factors.

The qualitative research approach chosen for this investigation is the case study method because the case study data techniques are most suitable for the nature of the phenomenon under investigation. According to Merriam (1998:19) since the qualitative researchers collect data by interacting with selected persons in their settings, the qualitative case study would be the appropriate strategy to use. The qualitative research approach, but in particular the case study can provide a detailed description and analysis of processes or themes voiced by participants in a particular situation. This method could also be utilised in various teaching and learning situations. This idea is further supported by Burns (2000:460) when the author argued that the case study method is a very valuable as preliminary to major investigations because it is so intensive and could generate rich subjective data. Since this research project is of a limited scope, the researcher believes that the case study is the appropriate choice because it requires establishing boundaries and units of analysis to study in the environment so it is not totally open or undefined. Denscombe (2005:31) concedes that one of the strengths of the case

study approach is that it allows the researcher to use a variety of sources, a variety of types of data and a variety of research methods as part of the investigation. It not only allows this, it actually invites and encourages the researcher to do so.

A qualitative research was preferred and considered appropriate as part of collecting data for this study because the researcher desired to elicit the passionate and subjective actions, beliefs, thoughts, experiences and perceptions of the parents on their level of participation in schools to optimise efficiency and effectiveness in teaching and learning. Case study design, because of its flexibility and adoptability to a range of contexts, process and people provides some of the most useful methods available in educational research.

3.4.2. REASONS FOR CHOOSING A QUANTITATIVE DESIGN

Equally so, the quantitative research design approach was also chosen as part of the data collection process for this investigation because it emphasises measurement and analysis of causal relationship between variables and not analysis of causal relationship between variables and process (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:4). With the quantitative research design approach, reality is viewed as singular, objective and independent of the researcher. Houser (2009:76) corroborates this statement when the author elucidates that the quantitative research design developed as a positivist paradigm and the basic belief system of positivism is rooted in a realist ontology, that is, the belief that there exists a reality out there, driven by immutable natural laws. Taylor (2000:171) supports this argument when the writer mentions that quantitative research is designed to provide objective descriptions of phenomena and to demonstrate how phenomena can be controlled through specific treatment. The validity and reliability of results will become important. It then stands to reason that the researcher will use the deductive method, that is, moving from the general to the specific in focus. According to Creswell (1994: 117) “this data collection, in turn, enables a researcher to generalise the findings from a sample of responses to a population.”

Since quantitative research design data collection methods often employ measuring instruments, de Vos (2002: 171) is of the opinion that such methods could be categorised into questionnaires, checklists, indexes and scales. Furthermore, according to Foxcroft and Roodt (cited in Magolego, 2011:29) quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things. This argument is further supported by Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:38) when they indicate that quantitative research methodology relies upon measurement and uses various scales. Numbers form a coding system by which different cases and different variables may be compared. Systematic changes in “scores” are interpreted or given meaning in terms of the actual world that they represent. This methodology will be used because numbers have the advantage of being exact for example “three means exactly the same thing to every person who knows the concept; and will mean exactly the same thing in different social, cultural and linguistic context. Another reason for the choice of this methodology is that numbers can be analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. On the basis of the above argument, the researcher can conclude that the primary focus of the quantitative research is to explain the relationships between the variables. In doing so, the said researcher would allow themselves to be influenced by the post-positivist approach to knowledge.

In conclusion, there is high likelihood that existing theory generated by either the qualitative or quantitative research design maybe biased or inadequate for this study. It is against this backdrop that the researcher has opted to use the mixed method research design approach for this investigation.

3.5. POPULATION SAMPLE

McMillan and Schumacher (1997: 164) argue that one of the first steps in designing quantitative and qualitative research is to choose a sample. The term “sampling” denotes extracting systematically from a large group. This idea is further supported by Kerlinger (cited in de Vos, 2002: 198) when he mentions that sampling means

taking any portion of a population as representative of that population. Maree (2007:79) supports this idea by defining a sample as a process used to select a portion of the population for study. It is then clear to the researcher that sampling means a systematic choice of the individuals who participate in the study and from whom data are collected. This research is confined to the responses of the parents, educators and the school management team members in the township schools in Ekurhuleni North District. A structured questionnaire was distributed to the educators and the School Management Team members who were purposively selected. Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam, 1998:61). Purposeful sampling is chosen because the researcher would be able to acquire in-depth information and to manage the individuals under study. Patton (cited in Merriam, 1998:61) argues that “the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth.” Information rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research. This notion is corroborated by Osborne (2008:130) when the author emphasises that it is necessary to find participants who are knowledgeable, are able to provide balanced perspectives, and will contribute to the proposed theory regarding parental involvement in the township schools.

Three secondary schools in Tembisa (Ekurhuleni North District) were chosen as the focus area of the study since it is mostly in the secondary schools where parental involvement is lacking. Consequently, the culture of teaching and learning has deteriorated and approximately eighty percent (80%) of these schools have become ineffective and inefficient. Year in and year out, these schools have continued to witness the lack of teaching and supervision services, low quality of schooling, teachers acting unprofessionally and low pass rate in the national exams. For the purposes of this research project, the relevant variables that were considered in deciding on the sample were consistent participation and support of the parents in the activities of the school; and those parents who have shown no interest in the

activities of the schools and do not support their children. To identify these respondents, the researcher has used the attendance registers of the previous parents' meetings that had been convened by the selected schools in the past two years (2010 – 2011).

The researcher has purposively selected two (2) active parents and thirty (30) educators from each of the three identified secondary schools in Tembisa (Ekurhuleni North District). A total number of 96 people from three different schools were used in this study. The researcher had assumed that the selected individuals are well conversant and have firsthand experience about the challenges facing these schools. The active and supportive parents in each school were interviewed whilst the questionnaires were distributed to the thirty (30) identified educators and SMT members in each of the three schools. Stratified purposive sampling method has been used to obtain greater degree of representativeness in as far as the respondents are concerned. Maree (2007:79) defines stratified purposive sampling as a means of selecting participants according to pre-selected criteria relevant to a particular research question. The sample size may or may not be fixed prior to data collection, and very often depends on the resources and time available to the researcher.

3.6. DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND THEIR JUSTIFICATION

Data collection for qualitative and quantitative research can be obtained from various sources since the methods of data collection are guided by the purpose of the study. These sources include amongst others: books, journals, government policies, articles, dissertations, circulars, interviews and questionnaires. For the purposes of this study, data gathered is categorised as primary and secondary data. Primary data is any data which has been collected through the focus group interviews with the inactive or unsupportive parents and the structured questionnaire which has been distributed amongst the educators and the SMT members. On the other hand, the secondary data was collected through the analysis of relevant literature which relates to the research topic. Both the primary and secondary data

were used to study parental involvement as a strategic tool to improve the culture of teaching and learning in the township schools.

Houser (2009:78) has identified six variations of mixed models, namely, (1) sequential explanatory which typically use qualitative results to assist in explaining and interpreting the findings of a primarily quantitative study. (2) Sequential exploratory which is meant to use quantitative data and results to assist in the interpretation of qualitative findings. (3) Sequential transformative design that is intended to employ the methods that will best serve the theoretical perspectives of the researcher. (4) The concurrent triangulation design whereby both the quantitative and qualitative methods are given equal emphasis and typically are introduced concurrently. (5) The concurrent nested design which is used to simultaneously collect data, but in more depth in certain areas. (6) The concurrent transformative design which is intended to allow the researcher to flexibly decide whether to use triangulation or nested approaches depending on the purpose of the study.

In this study, the concurrent triangulation mixed research model was used. The purpose of this model is to use the strengths of both the qualitative as well as the quantitative methods and combine them in the interpretation phase, which promotes the triangulation of the data (Houser, 2009:79). This model is said to have won the hearts of too many researchers because it is easily understood and has shown solid outcomes.

3.6.1. Primary data

In this study, one-on-one semi-structured interviews and the structured questionnaire were used as methods to collect data regarding parents' and educators' responses and perceptions about parental involvement in the township schools.

3.6.1.1. Structured interviews

After initial contact with the Gauteng Education Department, Ekurhuleni North district, the three concerned schools and the parents has been made and the necessary permission granted, interviews were conducted with the active and supportive parents.

Face-to-face interviews (Appendix F), as a primary data collecting technique, were conducted with six (6) purposively selected parents in the three participating secondary schools in Tembisa. The face-to-face interviews consisted of both male and female parents. The parents were interviewed in their natural, community setting to allow free responses from each of them and the researcher used the open-ended questions. These interviews were conducted over the weekend to minimise disruptions to teaching times and any inconvenience to the parents such as travelling to and from the school. According to Foch-Lyon and Trost (cited in Kgaffe, 2001:71) structured interviews are recognized as helpful in answering questions of how and in particular, why people behave as they do. One-on-one interviews use an individual interaction explicitly as research data and in this manner differs from any other form of interviews, especially those participants who may experience focus groups as threatening. It can therefore be concluded that this study adopted an interview as a technique for collecting data because it would enable the researcher to probe issues during the interview process, promote self-disclosure among respondents and as such, elicit diversified responses in a permissive, non-threatening environment (Kreuger, 1994:6). The one-on-one interview provides access to the respondents' level of meaning, in addition to clarifying arguments and revealing diversity in views and opinions. It can also serve to assist the respondent to re-evaluate a previous position or statement that is in need of "amplification, qualification, amendment or contradiction. In other words, the interview is proposed as a source of validation (Mouton, 2001:198).

In this study, the one-on-one interviews were guided by means of interview guide (Appendix E: Interview schedule) which included all the categories of questions to be covered by the researcher. The purpose of the interview guide was to ensure that the researcher remained consistent during the interview with all the individual parents by asking them the same questions.

Furthermore, in this study, the following procedures were adopted in respect of the interview process (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:263-267; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008:142 and Maree, 2007:87-89):

- A structured interview was conducted during which the interviewer asked every question to each parent.
- The interviewer encouraged interaction with the respondents. This allowed the interviewer to probe some questions.
- From the onset, the interviewer explained the procedures to be followed and thanked the respondents for their willingness to voluntarily participate in the study.
- The researcher guaranteed participants' confidentiality.
- The respondents were made aware that the interview was being tape-recorded.
- A preliminary face-to-face interview was conducted as a pilot interview to increase the precision of the study; and thereafter the results were analysed first to determine the correctness and relevance of the research questions before the rest of the interviews were conducted. Mouton (2001:103) concedes that one of the most common errors in doing research is that no piloting or pretesting is done. According to him, prospective researchers are often overly hasty to get to the main investigation; and are therefore inclined to neglect the pilot study.

All interviews in this research project were audio-taped after a request was made and permission was granted by the interviewees. Kgaffe (2001:73) states that the use of audio-taping ensures accuracy, avoids the problem of selective hearing and note taking during the interview, minimizes distortion and allows the researcher to

take down the interviewees responses verbatim. Furthermore, audio-taping allows the researcher to participate fully in the conversation and to pose particular questions on topics that have not necessarily been covered or need further probing.

3.6.1.2. Structured questionnaire

The researcher further used a structured questionnaire (Appendix D) as a primary data technique to glean relevant information from the participants. This study adopted a questionnaire as a technique for collecting data because the educators and the SMT members would respond freely without even writing their names on the questionnaire. Moreover, the usage of the questionnaire would allow the respondents to enjoy a high degree of freedom in completing the questionnaire without any fear of being biased, and information can be obtained from a large number of respondent(s) within a short period of time. In addition, the questionnaire will allow the researcher to use the Likert scale when he designs it (questionnaire) to allow the respondents to be both objective and subjective in response. Close ended questions were used and the educators and the SMT members were purposively selected from the three township schools in Tembisa. The choice of close ended questions is meant to prohibit the respondents from answering out of context. Questionnaires were hand delivered to the selected schools by this researcher. The logic behind the hand delivery of the questionnaires was to ensure that the researcher receives a high rate of response since mailed questionnaires have proven to draw a poor response rate. The content of the questionnaire was informed by the identified gaps in the literature studied in chapter 2. It is a self-administered questionnaire which required no assistance from a third party to complete. According to Burns and Ronald (cited in Magolego, 2011:32), a Likert item is simply a statement which the respondent is asked to evaluate according to any kind of subjective or objective criteria; generally the level of agreement or disagreement is measured. This technique is considered to be symmetric or “balanced” because there are equal amounts of positive and negative positions.

Questionnaire has been chosen because it is regarded as a measuring instrument which has the greatest influence on the reliability of the collected data (De Vos, 2002:65). This assertion is further supported by Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:87) when they mentioned that a questionnaire is applicable to large samples and it demands individual's own view or perception and not pre-determined answers from carefully prepared questions. It is useful to discover what happened in the past and what is happening currently.

In this study, the researcher has developed a structured questionnaire (Appendix D) based on different Likert scales which will comply with the following principles:

- Keep questions simple and clear
- Avoiding ambiguity
- Not using negatives in the statements
- Not leading the respondent
- Ensuring that statements are in line with possible choices.

The categories of the Likert scale were allocated as follows:

5=strongly agree, 4= agree, 3=unsure, 2=disagree; and 1= strongly disagree.

The second variation of the Likert scale was: 1= Extremely important, 2=Very important, 3= Important, 4= Slightly important, 5 = Has no effect on learner success.

The third variation of the Likert scale was: 1= frequently, 2 = Often, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Seldom, 5 = Never.

The researcher will appoint a field worker (one educator) in each of the selected schools to administer the questionnaires to the other educators and SMT members. The researcher would have given the questionnaire to the chosen educator to distribute it to the other selected educators while he stayed in the background so

that the respondents are not intimidated or become nervous. In doing all of these, the researcher would have sought and granted the permission from the schools concerned and from both the district and provincial departments of education to conduct a research at those selected school. Moreover, the researcher would have tested the reliability and consistency of the questionnaire through a pilot study in another region to check the research instruments before they were administered. The significance of the pilot study is to assist the researcher to identify possible teething problems from this study.

3.6.2. Secondary data

In order to conduct any effective research process, a review of related secondary sources on the problems and issues under consideration is a prerequisite. In this study, the researcher has used secondary sources by reading a myriad of information sources related to the topic of the study. These secondary sources included journals, books, newspapers, articles, internet, dissertations, government policies and circulars. According to Potter (cited in Mashaba, 2008:22) documents are important to researchers who have to also interview respondents because such documents may provide confirmatory evidence and strengthen the credibility of the interviews. The topics of the related literature reviewed as presented in chapter two include: parental involvement theories; parental involvement in South Africa and internationally; the impact of non-involvement of the parents; parents roles, functions and responsibilities in education; the promotion of a culture of teaching and learning; and the role and responsibility of the school governing body in a culture of teaching and learning.

In the final analysis, the secondary data will be compared with the primary data already gathered, and then added as new information to the present study where they can be of use. The data from all the available sources that were utilised during the research process will be integrated and collated, to conclude the data collection stage (Mouton, 2001:198).

3.7. VALIDITY, RELIABILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Qualitative and quantitative research may sometimes be interrogated pertaining to their validity and reliability. Since documents are written by people who are susceptible to errors and some are written with an element of subjectivity and objectivity; it is vital that the quality of measurement procedures for such documents should be adequately controlled for validity and reliability purposes. Validity and trustworthiness in mixed methods research concerns examining aspects of truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality (Osborne, 2008:131). According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997:235) validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness and usefulness of the specific inferences researchers make based on the data they collected. To enhance the validity of this study, the researcher submitted the questionnaire to the supervisor for the checks and balances in terms of covering all the aspects that are required. One-on-one interviews were conducted with parents as a pilot study; and parents were interviewed in a natural setting. Interview questions were phrased according to the participants' language proficiency. In this regard, interviewees were allowed to use the language of their choice to narrate their experiences about the parental involvement. In addition, the researcher would document this information by means of the interview transcripts which are attached as an addendum (see Appendix F) to this research project. This study will therefore be comparable because it will be adequately described so that the researcher could use it to extrapolate its findings to other studies. Nevertheless, it is equally important to note that the issues for qualitative research are more about transferability, faithfulness and dependability rather than reliability and validity (Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006: 381). As a qualitative researcher, your job is to give thick descriptions so that readers are able to make decisions to see whether the results of the inquiry are transferable. The conceptual analysis must be faithfully derived from the data and be checked out against the consistency of different data sources.

McMillan and Schumacher (1997:239) further define reliability as a reference to the consistency of the research and to the extent to which the findings could be replicated. This argument is further advanced by Krathwol (cited in Lebeko, 2011:74) when he mentions that reliability refers to the consistency of an instrument in measuring whatever it measures, and there are several measures through which reliability may be determined, viz. increasing internal consistency, increasing equivalence reliability and increasing stability. In this study, the researcher has kept a documented trail of data collection and data analysis throughout the entire research process. There is a verbatim account of the transcripts and interviews, as well as evidence of completed questionnaires. Analysis strategies were employed, member checks and direct quotations are used; and a tape recorder was utilised for recording purposes to confirm the reliability of the study. The use of member checks helps to clear up any misinterpretations that may be made by the researcher.

In quantitative research, truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality are addressed in terms of construct validity. According to Messick (cited in Osborne, 2008:132) validity is “the meaning of the test scores” as well as “a summary of both the evidence for and the actual as well as potential consequences of score interpretation and use.” The integration of test score meaning, interpretation, and use creates a construct framework known as construct validity.

In order to address validity in the quantitative perspective in this study, Benson’s stages of construct validation were followed. First, the substantive stage was explored by using theory found in the research literature and empirical evidence. Next, the structural stage was examined by exploring relationships between the variables and constructs that compose the parental involvement in the township schools. This entails using descriptive statistics, item analysis, reliability analysis and confirmatory analysis (Osborne, 2008:132). In this study, Cronbach’s alpha coefficient ($\alpha=.7$) was computed for the items in the questionnaire. The average reliability for the question 3 ($\alpha=.891$); question 13 ($\alpha=.860$) and question 14

($p=.786$). The average reliability test for the questionnaire is $p=0.831$, which is reliable. It can therefore be confirmed with a measure of certainty that the items can be regarded as internally consistent. This is in line with Muijs' (2004:73) assertion that when this measure is calculated it should be over 0.7 before the items could be considered to be internally consistent and reliable.

3.7.1. Triangulation

An effective researcher needs to investigate all sources and combine multiple perspectives to increase the credibility of the study. Both the primary and secondary data have been used in an attempt to address the objectives of the study. According to Creswell (cited in Hadebe, 2010:17) this process of corroborating data from multiple perspectives is called triangulation. Hadebe (2010:17) posits that the process of triangulation enhances the depth of understanding of a particular theme and to provide verification. Merriam (1998:207) concurs with this notion when she postulates that “especially in terms of using multiple methods of data collection and analysis, triangulation strengthen reliability as well as internal validity. On the bases of these definitions, the researcher’s understanding is that triangulation infers the combined use of different research methods to investigate and comprehend a particular phenomenon. In this study, multiple methods were combined to achieve triangulation. The researcher therefore argues that the use of complementary methods in this research project is intended to compensate for any one-sidedness or distortion that may result from an individual method, theory or researcher. To this extent, in this study, a collective approach of interviews, transcription of recorded interviews, questionnaire and literature review was utilised as a means of triangulation. This is the means through which the researcher has guarded against any accusations that could be levelled against him that the study’s findings are simply an artifact of a single method, a single source or even worse a single researcher’s biases.

3.8. DATA ANALYSIS

Subsequent to the process of data collection; the collected data is expected to be analysed and conclusion drawn that respond to the research question. Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to collected data. Since the researcher has used the mixed methods in this case, the sequential mixed analysis was used. According to Osborne (2008:131) sequential mixed analysis involves analysing qualitative and quantitative data that have been collected sequentially. The data from the interviews was analysed using an inductive process.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997:501) qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organizing the data into categories and identifying patterns (relationships) among the categories. Monette et al (as cited in Mashaba, 2008:24) argue that the content or the data analysis process is a form of measurement broadly defined as a measurement of aspects of data gathered during interviews. In addition, Zikmund (2003:170) posits that observer impression is the most common analysis of qualitative data. It is therefore safe to say that it is a process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes and other materials that the researcher accumulates (Kgaffe, 2001:78). This will enable the researcher to present what was discovered to the reader. In this study, data from the focus group interviews was analysed in an orderly and systematic manner; and the following protocol as espoused by Strauss and Corbin (1992:67) was used to analyse it:

- Each transcript was read once. All pre-conceived answers were ignored
- Relevant words, sentences or phrases were underlined and named according to conceptual themes
- Themes were sorted into categories and sub-categories
- The interview protocol and transcriptions were given to an independent decoder or an expert for analysis

- The researcher and the independent decoder discussed the results of the analysis and the interview document was compared with the one previously coded until consensus was reached regarding the final categories of data.

To ensure that this study complied with the ethical code of the research, each respondent was assigned a code instead of using their real names. This was done purely to maintain the respondents' anonymity as it was initially guaranteed. For this reason, any names of places or materials in the data that could be used to identify the source of the data were removed from the list or the questionnaire.

Equally so, the quantitative aspect was analysed as ongoing process and consisted of multiple studies. After the scale is created and data have been collected using the preliminary items that were created from the questionnaire, the item reduction process had begun (Osborne, 2008:131). Cronbach's alpha coefficient ($\alpha=.7$) was computed for the items in the questionnaire. The average reliability for the question 3 ($\alpha=.891$); question 13 ($\alpha=.860$) and question 14 ($\alpha=.786$). The average reliability test for the questionnaire is $\alpha=0.831$, which is reliable. The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS), which contains a comprehensive set of procedure for organising, transforming and analysing quantitative data, was used to analyse data. According to Magolego (2011:35) the advantage of SPSS is that any information can be analysed and interpreted perfectly in a short period of time. An SPSS can handle a big surveillance data and a complex data can be analysed in simple way.

Descriptive statistical analysis will be done by computing means scores, standard deviations, correlations, t-test, frequency tables, pie charts and histograms for data presentation and analysis (Chapter four). This method is relevant when describing situations and events (Magolego, 2011:35). Tables, pie charts, graphs, frequencies and percentages were used to present quantitative descriptions in a manageable form, such as describing single variables and describing associations that connect one variable with another.

3.9. COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics consists of the general standards of behavior, conduct or beliefs. They generally determine what is acceptable or unacceptable, right or wrong, proper or improper and good or bad (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:418). It is in this spirit that the researcher had set the ethical standards to which this study would adhere. De Vos (2002:62) supports this idea when he mentions that anyone involved in research needs to be aware of the general agreements about what is proper and improper in scientific research. It is against this background that qualitative and quantitative researchers need to be sensitive to ethical principles because of their research topic and data collection methods. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997:418) ethical guidelines include, but are not limited to, informed consent, deception, confidentiality, for a research design involve not only the selection of information – rich informants and efficient research strategies, but also adherence to research ethics. This is precisely because qualitative and quantitative researchers become involved in the settings and everyday lives of participants and therefore, these researchers are often drawn into morally and ethically problematic situations.

In this study, the researcher complied with the following ethical principles as espoused by Merriam (1998:198):

1. Informed consent: The researcher had requested permission and an informed consent from all the participants in the study. Letters requesting consent were written to the Gauteng Department of Education and the schools concerned to explain the process. The data collection instruments used bear reference to this. (Please see the cover of the questionnaire). According to Gray (cited in Lebeko, 2011:78) good ethical involvement by participants is not just about giving their consent, but giving informed consent; which includes explaining issues like the aims of the research, how much of respondent's time is required, that participation is voluntary and that participants will remain anonymous.

2. Confidentiality and anonymity: This entails that settings and participants should not be identifiable in print. In this study, the researcher maintained the level of confidentiality and anonymity by not requesting the participants to use their names when completing the questionnaire. Similarly, the names of the schools where research was undertaken have not been exposed to anyone. According to Merriam (1998:198) the researcher has to ensure that the personal details of the participants are kept confidential at all times.
3. Protection from harm and fairness: Participants should be protected from physical and mental harm and danger. If any of these risks is possible, the researcher must inform the participants of these risks. Creswell (2002:64) supports this notion when he puts it blatantly that the researcher should never put the participant at risk and that at all times the researcher should respect vulnerable population. Thus, in this study, the researcher had discussions with the participants prior to the commencement of the research to ensure that they are protected and understood what's going to happen. Fortunately, there were no incidents of any harm that the researcher had exposed his participants to.
4. Contribution to the profession: The researcher should consider the potential misinterpretation of the research results, providing misleading results and should make effort to ensure that the research contributes towards the development of the profession. The researcher should try to communicate results so that misunderstanding is minimised. This notion is supported by Johnson and Christensen (cited in Lebeko, 2011:79) that a researcher must at all times guard against cheating or presenting fraudulent results to the research community. And finally,
5. The researcher should provide participants with the opportunity to receive the results of the study in which they are participating, if they so wish.

Based on what has been said above, it is only relevant and acceptable to say that throughout this study, the researcher has completely adhered to the ethical considerations of social research. The privacy and confidentiality of the respondents'

data was guaranteed before the research was conducted as well as after the completion of the study. Not even at a single moment were the respondents coerced to comply with the requirements of the research against their will. Furthermore, the anonymity of the respondents was guaranteed at all times.

3.10. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the empirical investigation for the research design and methods of data collection were described and discussed in an attempt to validate the choice of the research process for this study. A brief explanation was given to justify why case study was chosen as the appropriate strategy for a research study of this nature. Semi-structured one-on-one interviews were conducted with the inactive or unsupportive parents; and so were the structured questionnaires distributed to the educators, active parents and SGB members. Furthermore, considerations of validity, reliability and ethical aspects have been reviewed. The study mainly used documents, interviews and questionnaire to come to its logical conclusion. The research process as outlined in this chapter was followed to allow presentations of the analysed data and research results in the next chapter. Despite the limitations of mixed methods research, the ability to combine the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods is appealing to many researchers. In essence, the mixed methods research can be considered to be the best of both worlds.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Data analysis is an important stage of research. According to Sharp and Howard (1996:105), until a feasible outline of the type of analysis to be undertaken has been determined; the research plan must be considered incomplete. According to these two authors, one key function of analysis is to communicate the value of the findings. As indicated in chapter three, this chapter presents the results of the primary data collected through the distribution of an open-ended questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews that were conducted, as well as the analysis and the interpretation of data collected thereof by the researcher. Since the researcher has used the mixed methods approach, quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics. Data collected is reported using the tables, graphs, frequencies and percentages with follow up explanation. Data collected has been divided into three categories, namely, the biographical data; parents' roles, functions and responsibilities, as well as the role and functions of educators and the school management team. Tables of data reveal the frequencies and percentages of responses. All schools used were referred to using pseudonym and identifiable as "School A, B and C".

Conversely, the qualitative data collected through the interview was constructed and presented in a narrative form. The researcher has presented data as quotations from the interviewees' own words, citing field notes and interview transcripts (audio-tape) as sources. Data was analysed in an orderly and systematic manner. An inductive process was used where the interviews were categorised by coding so that dominant themes could be identified. Similarly, parents' identities were kept anonymous.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF THE QUANTITATIVE DATA

4.2.1. SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Questions 1 - 9 related to the personal particulars of the respondents, such as which school, gender, age, teaching experience, rank, academic and professional qualifications to gain insight into the current biographical information of teachers, parents, and SMT members.

Table 4.1: School

School	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
School A	30	33.3	33.3
School B	30	33.3	33.3
School C	30	33.3	33.3
TOTAL	90	100.0	100.0

Figure 4.1. School

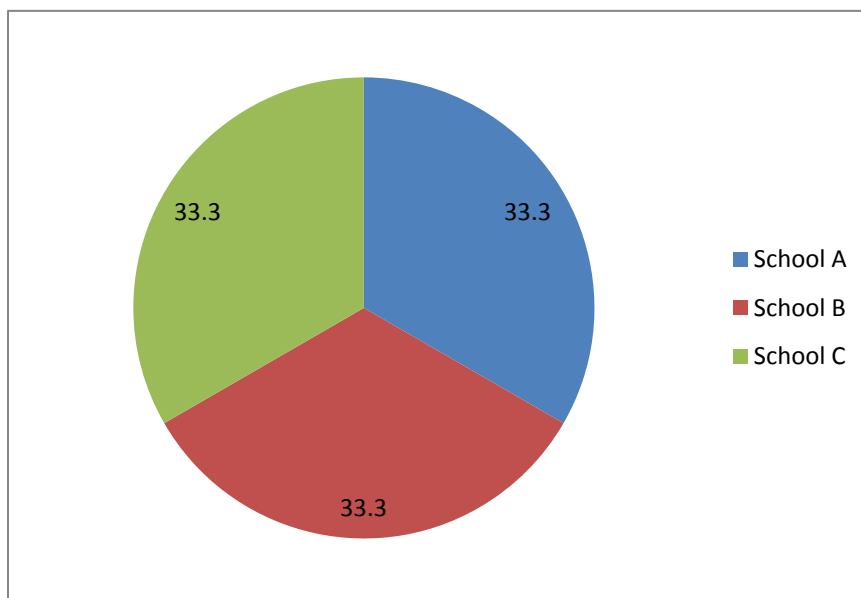


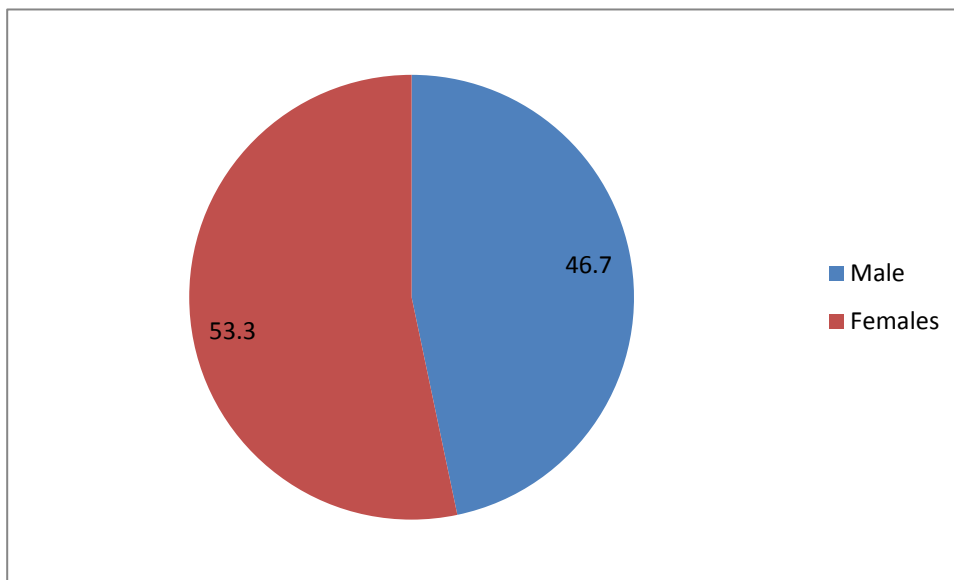
Table 4-1 and pie chart 1 represents the number of respondents as per school. Based on the table and pie chart an even number of response rate 33.3% was obtained from each of the three schools

Table 4.2: Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Male	42	46.7	46.7
Females	48	53.3	53.3
Total	90	100.0	100.0

Figure 4.2: Gender

Data collected in relation to gender is reflected in the graph below:



This figure 4.1 represented a total number of the gender (male and female) respondents from the three schools. According to the Table 4.2, the majority of the respondents in this study were females (53.3%) and minority being males with 46.7%.

Table 4.3: Age

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
20-29	3	3.3	3.3
30-39	22	24.4	24.4
40-49	50	55.6	55.6
50-59	14	15.6	15.6
60 +	1	1.1	1.1
Total	90	100.0	100.0

Pie Chart 4.3: Age

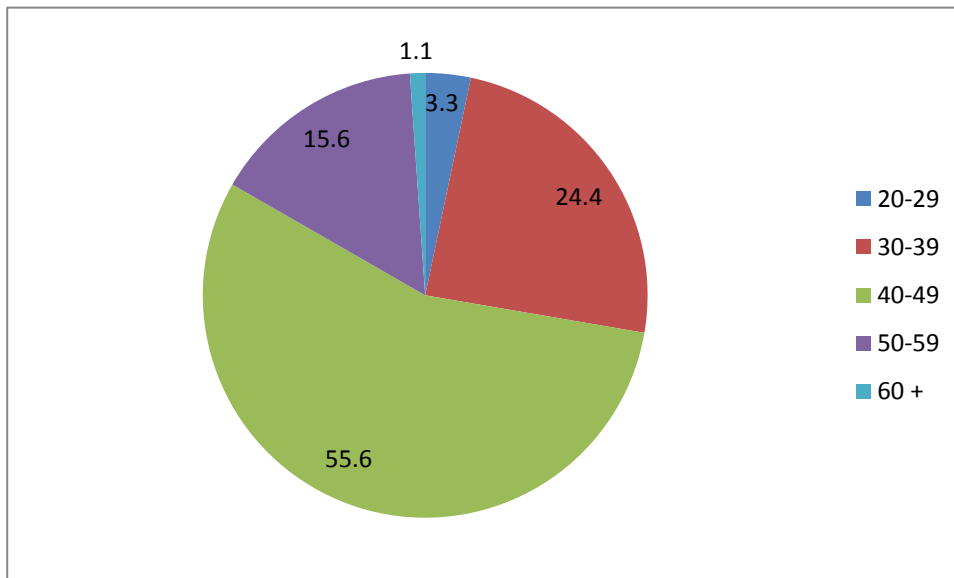
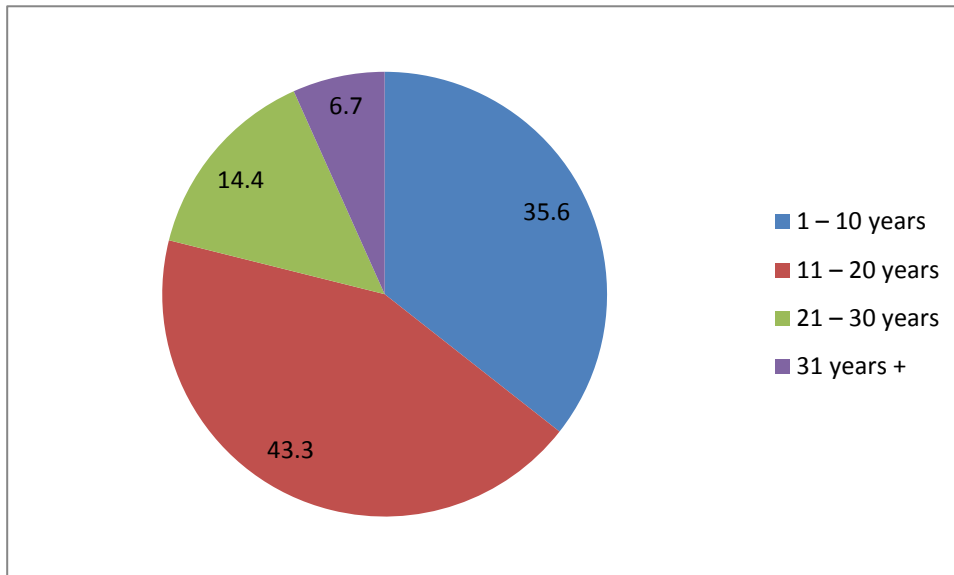


Table 4.3 above indicates that majority of the respondents (55.6%) were between the ages of 40 to 49 years old. This was followed by 24.4% being between the ages of 30 to 39 years old. A close inspection of Table 4.3 shows that 15.6% of the respondents were between the ages of 50 to 59 years of age with 3.3% being of between 20 to 29 years whilst the only 1.1% was between the ages of 60 years and above.

Table 4.4: Teaching Experience

Teaching Experience	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
1 – 10 years	32	35.6	35.6
11 – 20 years	39	43.3	43.3
21 – 30 years	13	14.4	14.4
31 years +	6	6.7	6.7
Total	90	100.0	100.0

Pie Chart 4.4: Teaching Experience

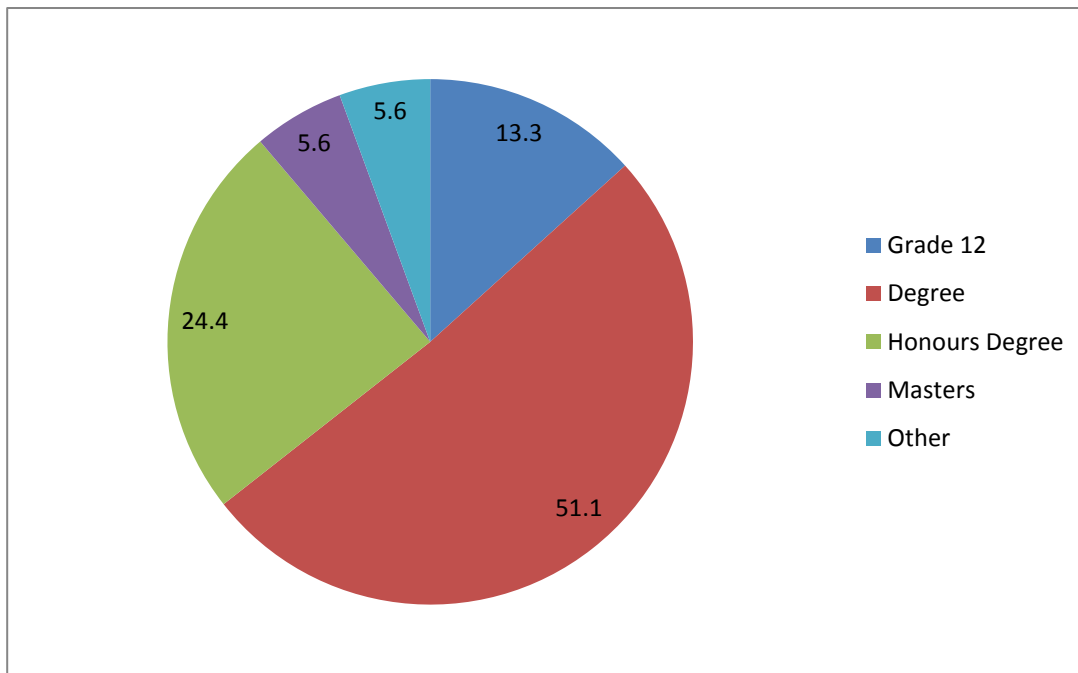


The biographical information was used to obtain information with regards to employees' years of teaching experience. Table 4.4 above indicates that 43.3% of the respondents had teaching experience of 11 to 20 years. This was followed by 35.6% with 1 to 10 years of teaching experience. A close inspection to the table indicated that 14.4% of the respondents had teaching experience of 21 to 30 years whilst 6.7% of the respondents had 31 years and above of teaching experience.

Table 4.5: Highest Qualification

Highest Qualification	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Grade 12	12	13.3	13.3
Degree	46	51.1	51.1
Honours Degree	22	24.4	24.4
Masters	5	5.6	5.6
Other	5	5.6	5.6
Total	90	100.0	100.0

Pie Chart 4.5: Highest Qualification



Based on the data in Table 4.5 and Pie chart 4.5, biographical information was also used to obtain information of respondents' academic highest qualifications. Table 4.5 indicates that 51.1% of the respondents had a Degree as their highest qualifications. 24.4% of the respondents had Honours Degrees followed by 13.3%

having obtained a Grade 12 certificate whilst 5.6% of the respondents had obtained a Master’s Degree and other qualifications respectively.

Table 4.6: Rank/Position

Rank/Position	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Principal	2	2.2	2.2
Deputy Principal	6	6.7	6.7
Head of Department	14	15.6	15.6
Educator	68	75.6	75.6
Total	90	100.0	100.0

Pie Chart 4.6: Rank/Position

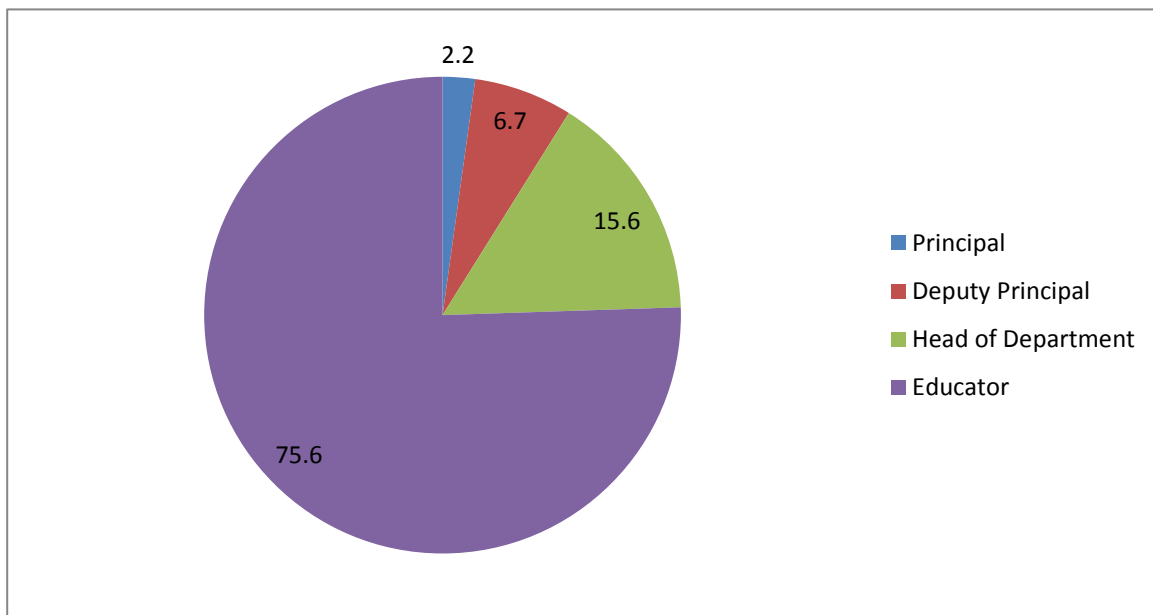


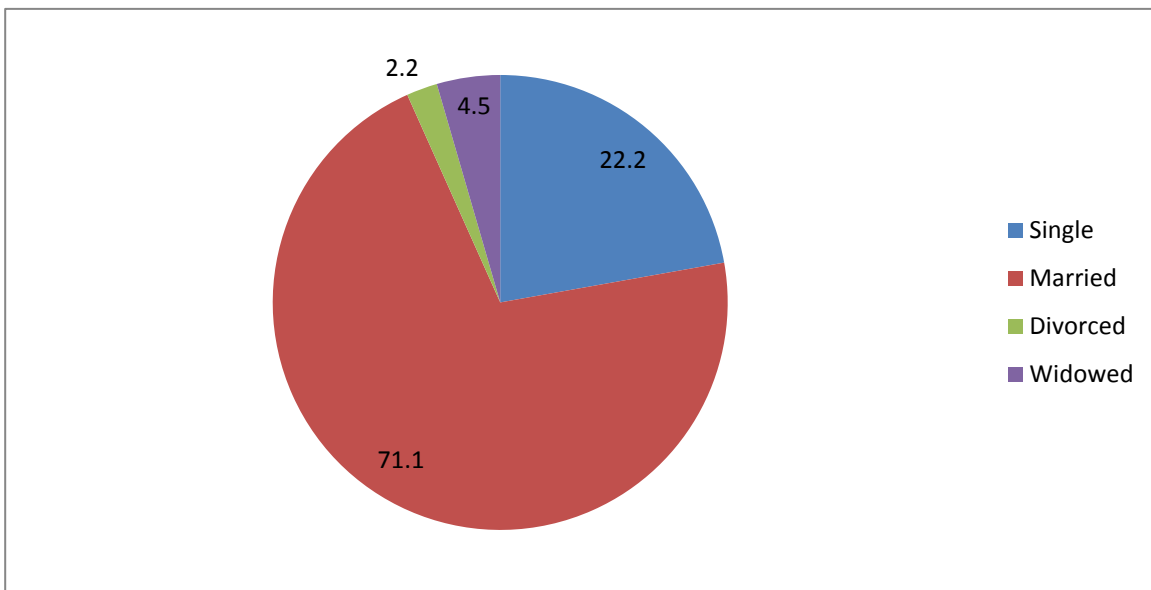
Table 4.6 above indicates that 75.6% of the respondents were educators by rank. It further indicated that 15.6% of the respondents held positions of Head of

Departments. A closer inspection of the table showed that 6.7% of the respondents held Deputy Principal positions whilst 2.2% of the respondents were Principals.

Table 4.7: Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Single	20	22.2	22.2
Married	64	71.1	71.1
Divorced	2	2.2	2.2
Widowed	4	4.5	4.5
Total	90	100.0	100.0

Pie Chart 4.7: Marital Status

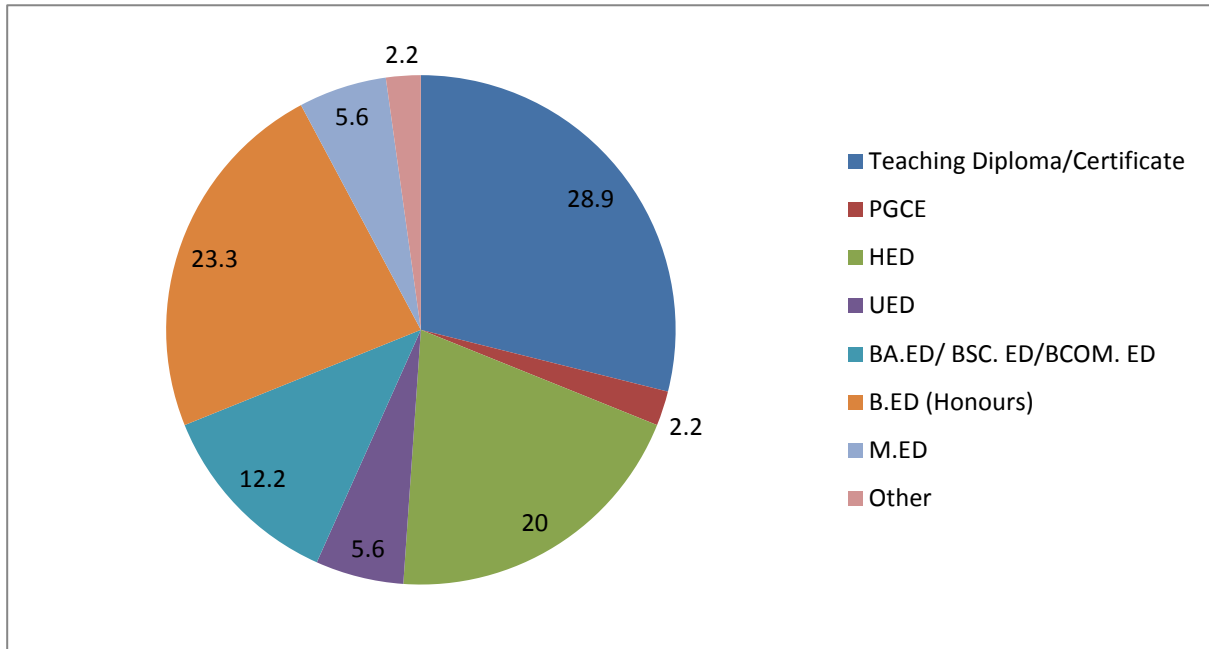


Biographical information was also used to obtain information on Marital Status of the respondents. According to Table 4.7 above, 71.1% of the respondents were married. Furthermore, 22.2% were Single whilst 4.5% were widowed. A close inspection of the table also indicated that 2.2% of the respondents were Divorced.

Table 4.8: Highest Professional Qualification

Highest Professional Qualification	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Teaching Diploma/Certificate	26	28.9	28.9
PGCE	2	2.2	2.2
HED	18	20.0	20.0
UED	5	5.6	5.6
BA.ED/ BSC. ED/BCOM. ED	11	12.2	12.2
B.ED (Honours)	21	23.3	23.3
M.ED	5	5.6	5.6
Other	2	2.2	2.2
Total	90	100.0	100.0

Pie Chart 4.8: Highest Professional Qualification



Biographical information was also used to obtain information on respondents Highest Professional Qualification. Table 4.8 above reflects that 28.9% of the respondents had Teaching Diploma/Certificate as their highest professional qualification. This was followed by 23.3% of the respondents having B. Ed Honours as their highest professional qualification. Furthermore, the table indicated that 20.0% of the respondents had HED as their highest professional qualification whilst 12.2% of the respondents had either a BA.ED/ BSC. ED/BCOM. ED and 5.6% of the respondents had a UED and M.ED respectively. A close inspection of Table 4.8 also indicated that 2.2% of the respondents had PGCE whilst the other 2.2% possess the highest professional qualifications in fields not specified by the research question.

4.2.2. SECTION B: PARENTS' ROLES, FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Section B of the questionnaire, relating to questions 1-3, with sub-questions 3.1 up to 3.6, intended to ascertain the role parents played; functions, responsibilities and strategies in advancing their involvement in their school community.

4.2.2.1. Parents' role, functions, responsibilities and strategies for parental involvement at school

The parents' and educators' role, functions, responsibility and strategies for parental involvement stats gives indication as to how respondents responded to the general questions asked in relation to their role, functions and responsibility and strategies for parental involvement. Table 4.9 illustrate how parents (mean scores and standard deviations) responded to the questions asked and explanations and interpretations of the results in percentages will follow.

Table 4.9: Parents' role, functions, responsibilities and strategies for parental involvement (n=90)

Statements on parents role, functions and strategies of their involvement in the school	Mean	SD	1. Excellent	2. Good	3 Fair	4. Poor	
Rate of parental involvement at school	3.74	.752	2.2%	8.9%	21.1%	67.8%	
Referring to Table 4.9, the respondents (mean=3.74; SD=.752) from the three schools were asked to rate the level of parental involvement in their respective schools. The majority (67.8%) of the respondents rated parental involvement as poor from their respective schools. Only 21.1% of the respondents rated it as fair. Whilst 8.9% considered it to be good, the other 2.2% rated it as excellent.							
Statements on parents role, functions and strategies of their involvement in the school	Mean	SD	1. Extr. important	2. V. important	3. Important	4.S. important	5. Unimportant

Importance of parental involvement in scholastic achievements at School	1.81	1.059	50.0%	33.3%	4.4%	10%	2.2%
<p>The question here was intended to find out how important parental involvement is to the learners' scholastic achievement. Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents (mean=1.81; SD=1.059) rated it as extremely important. Similarly, 33, 3% of the respondents considered it to be very important whilst 4.4% of the respondents rated it as important. However, 10% of the respondents rated it as slightly important whereas only 2.2% of the respondents rated it as unimportant.</p>							
Stressing the value of education to children	1.98	1.070	41.1%	35.6%	8.9%	13.3%	1.1%
<p>The respondents were requested to indicate how important parental involvement is in stressing the value of education to their children. Table 4.9 revealed that 41.1% of the respondents (mean=1.98; SD=1.070) felt that it is extremely important of the value of education to their children. Furthermore, 35.6% stressing very important and 8.9% view it as being important for the child. The other 13.3 respondents rated it as slightly important; and only 1.1% considered it to be unimportant.</p>							
Parents' attendance of meetings and participating in curriculum planning	2.24	1.063	26.7%	38.9%	21.1%	10%	3.3%
<p>Based on the data in Table 4.9, 38.9% of the respondents (mean=2.24; SD=1.063) consider the attendance of the parents' meetings and participation in curriculum planning as very important whilst 26,7% regard it as extremely important. About 21.1% view it as important. Nevertheless, 10% of the respondents rated it as slightly important whilst the remaining 3.3% concluded that it is unimportant.</p>							
Ensuring that homework is completed	2.13	1.153	35.6%	35.6%	13.3%	11.1%	4.4%

According to the results of table 4.9, an equal percentage of 35.6 respondents (mean=2.13; SD=1.153) unanimously agreed that monitoring of homework is both extremely important and very important. Whilst 13.3% regarded it as important, the other 11.1% and 4.4% rated it as slightly important and unimportant respectively.

Reading becomes an every night activity	2.26	1.117	26.7%	43.3%	11.1%	15.6%	3.3%
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Table 4.9 shows that 43.3% of the respondents (mean=2.26; SD=1.117) concur that it is very important that reading should become a daily activity. 26.7% are unanimous that it is extremely important for reading to take place every night. 15.6% of the respondents view reading at night as slightly important. Only 11.1% considered reading to be important whilst 3.3% regarded reading activity as unimportant.

Active involvement in parent/teacher organization	2.34	1.051	21.1%	41.1%	24.4%	8.9%	4.4%
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Referring to data from table 4.9, it is evident that 41.1% of the respondents (mean=2.34; SD=1.051) are of the view that active involvement in parent/teacher organisation is very important. In the same breath, 24.4% of the respondents consider it to be important. 21.1% regard it as extremely important. However, 8.9% of the respondents rated it as slightly important and 4.4% of the respondents have evaluated it as unimportant.

Teaching good work habits, responsibility & Respect	1.94	.987	41.1%	33.3%	15.6%	10%	0%
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Referring to table 4.9 above, 41.1% respondents (mean=1.94; SD=.987) agree that teaching good work habits, responsibility and respect for others is extremely important, whilst 33.3% consider it to be very important and 15.6% of the respondents rated it as important. Contrary to that, about 10% of the respondents view it as slightly important.

SECTION C

Statements on the role, functions and responsibilities of educators and the school management team in parental involvement at school.	Mean	SD	1. strongly disagree	2. disagree	3. agree	4. strongly agree
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Educators in this school work hard to maintain good relations with parents	2.02	.670	21.1%	55.6%	23.3%	0%
Data based on table 4.9 shows that 55.6% of the majority of the respondents (mean=2.02; SD=.670) agreed that educators in their respective schools work hard to maintain good relations with the parents. A further 21.1% of the respondents had strongly agreed with the assertion. On the other hand, about 23.3% of the respondents were in disagreement with the statement.						
Involving parents in the school activities is Educator's responsibility	2.14	.728	18.9%	48.9%	31.1%	1.1%
In accordance with the results of table 4.9, approximately 48.9% of the respondents (mean=2.14; SD=.728) had agreed that involving parents in the activities of the school is the responsibility of the educators. A further 18.9% strongly agreed with the statement. This was, however, contrasted by about 31.1 % who had expressed their disagreement that educators are responsible to involve parents in the activities of the school. Only a meager 1.1% had strongly disagreed with the statement.						
Parental involvement can increase educator effectiveness	1.39	.648	67.8%	27.8%	2%	2%
According to data from table 4.9, it is evident that 67.8% of the respondents (mean=1.39; SD=.648) had strongly agreed that, indeed, parental involvement increases the effectiveness of the educators. 27.8% of the respondents just agreed that it is necessary to have parental involvement to increase educators' effectiveness. Only the equal number of 2% each tended to disagree and strongly disagree with this assertion respectively.						
Educators in this school do not have time to involve parents in useful ways	2.53	.837	8.9%	50%	35.6%	5.6%
Based on the results of table 4.9, it is pretty obvious that 50% of the respondents (mean=2.53; SD=.837) agreed that educators do not have time to involve parents in useful ways. On the contrary, 35.6% of the respondents had expressed disagreement with the statement. While only 8.9% of the respondents had strongly agreed with the assertion, the other 5.6% of the respondents had strongly disagreed with it.						
School Management Team views parents as partners	2.06	.709	18.9%	60%	17.8%	3.3%

The results of table 4.9 illustrates that 60% of the respondents (mean=2.06; SD=.709) had agreed that school management team views parents as important partners and the other 18.9% strongly agreed with them. Just about 17.8% of the respondents had disagreed with the statement; and they were seconded by just about 3.3% of other respondents who had expressed strong disagreement.

School informs the parents about meetings& Events well in advance	2.12	.859	24.4%	45.6%	23.3%	6.7%
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Owing to the results of both table 4.9 above, almost 45.6% of the respondents (mean=2.12; SD=.859) agreed that their school informs the parents about the meetings and special events well in advance. This notion was further supported by 24.4% of the respondents who had expressed a strong agreement to it. However, about 23.3% of the respondents had refuted the statement by expressing their disagreement to it. This was further seconded by another 6.7% respondents who had strongly disagreed with the statement.

Educators encourage parents to help out in the school	2.18	.773	20%	44.4%	33.3%	2.3%
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According to table 4.9 above, about 44.4% of the respondents (mean=2.18; SD=.773) affirmed that educators do encourage parents to help out in the school. This was further supported by 20% of other respondents who strongly agreed with the statement. In the same breath, about 33.3% respondents disagreed that parents are being encouraged to help out in the school. Just only 2.2% of the respondents had strongly disagreed with the statement.

School Management Team makes frequent contact with parents using a wide variety of formal and informal methods	2.27	.776	14.4%	50%	30%	5.6%
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Table 4.9 shows that 50% of the respondents (mean=2.27; SD=.776) agreed with the statement that the school management team makes all efforts to frequently contact parents using a wide variety of formal and informal methods. They were supported by a further 14.4% of the respondents who had strongly agreed with the statement. In contrast, about 30% of the respondents had disagreed with the assertion; and they were seconded by just about 5.6% of the respondents who had strongly disagreed.

Parents' activities are scheduled at School to encourage involvement	2.38	.728	8.9%	50%	35.6%	5.6%
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While 50% of the respondents (mean=2.38; SD=.728) in table 4.9 agreed that parents' activities are scheduled in a manner that allows parents to attend; about 35.6% from the opposite side seemed to have disagreed with that notion. A further 8.9% of the respondents strongly agreed that school activities are really planned and scheduled to allow parents to attend. This was refuted by about 5.6% of the respondents who strongly disagreed with the statement.

SECTION D

Statements on the strategies for parental involvement.			1. Check the work	2. Help the child	3. Ask learner	4. Leave it up to child
Level of parental involvement most preferred when it comes to homework assigned to learners			44.4%	45.6%	1.1%	8.9%

Table 4.9 reflects the outcome of the parents' level of parental involvement which the educators would prefer when it came to assisting their children with homework. About 45.6% of the respondents (mean=1.74; SD=.868) would love to see parents getting involved by practically helping the children to do the work. This was closely followed by 44.4% of the respondents who would love to see the parents conducting regular check just to ensure that the work was done correctly. Only about 8.9% suggested that parents should leave everything up to the learners. A meager 1.1% of the responded would love to see parents asking learners if work was done and leave it at that.

Statements on the most effective way for teachers to communicate with parents to gain better parental involvement.			1. Face to face meetings	2. Email	3. Telephone	4. School Newsletter
Most effective way for teachers to communicate with parents to gain better parental involvement			77.8%	2.2%	2.2%	17.8%

The respondents were asked to identify the most effective way for teachers to communicate with parents to gain better parental involvement. Table 4.9 shows about 77.8% of the respondents (mean=1.60; SD=1.169) are unanimous and overwhelmingly agree that face to face meetings at school could be used as a best tool to achieve the desired outcome. A further 17.8% would prefer a school newsletter as an option; whilst about 2.2% of the respondents would each prefer an email and telephone engagement respectively.

Summary of the results on the parents' roles, functions and responsibilities

To conclude the information presented in table 4.9 above, the results of the statistical analysis of the parental involvement in the township schools can be summarized as follows:

- The results, in fact, suggest that parental involvement in the township schools is poor. There is a huge gap between the school and home. This finding is consistent with the results of an earlier study by Singh, Mbokodi and Msila (2004:303).
- Parental involvement is viewed as extremely important for the scholastic achievement of the child. Commitment to participation in school activities is a desirable quality which would improve the academic performance of the child and the overall culture of teaching and learning.
- The results also emphasized the value of education to the child. Educators view the involvement of the parents as extremely important. It is anticipated that parents should assist their children with the reading every night and the completion of the homework.
- There is a strong need for collaboration between the parents, educators and learners to improve learner performance. Schools cannot continue to work alone in isolation. To this end, parents need to take responsibility. It is evident that without the participation from the parents, the dream of a better education for all cannot be realized particularly for learners in the township schools. Consequently, many learners in the township schools will continue to fall by wayside or fail to acquire the requisite competences in numeracy

and literacy. This will then perpetuate the township schools as dysfunctional learning centres.

4.2.2.2. Gender: Effect size and ANOVA on parental involvement in the school

In this part of data analysis, the effect size and ANOVA regarding the parents' role, functions and responsibility and strategies of parental involvement in the school. Table 4.10 displayed the effect size and ANOVA on parental involvement at school level

Table 4.10 Effect size and ANOVA on parental involvement at school level

Parents' role, functions, responsibilities and strategies of parental involvement at school (n=90)										
					95% confidence interval of the difference					
	<i>Scale</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	
Questions 1 to 3	Excellent	5	1.14	.572	.229	1.43	2.25	1	4	
	Good	10	1.70	.677	.577	1.52	2.48	1	4	
	Fair	34	3.02	1.347	.366	1.33	3.22	1	4	
	Poor	41	3.30	1.783	.323	2.33	3.55	1	4	
ANOVA										
		<i>Sum of squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean squares</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig</i>				
Questions 1 to 3	Between groups	1.230	2	.615	.425	.661				
	Within groups	21.714	15	1.448						
	Total	22.940	17							

* $p \leq 0.05$

The results in Table 4.10 indicated that parental involvement in the school community is poor (mean = 3.30, SD =1.783) to fair (mean = 3.02, SD =1.347) between parents, which is not statistically significant ($p = 0.661$). Results further indicated that poor parental involvement in the school community have a strong

effect ($1.230 \div 21.714 = 0.053$) as a barrier to learning and development on learners at the school

4.2.2.3. Means and Levene's sample t-test for gender on parental involvement

The t-test is computed to find whether there are statistically significant differences between the means of two groups. To calculate the t-test, the following formula is used:

$$t = \frac{\text{Sample one mean} - \text{sample two mean}}{\text{sample error of difference in means}}$$

Table 4.11 Mean scores and Levene's independent sample test for parental involvement in the school

	Who are you	N	Mean	SD	SE mean
What are parents' roles, functions and responsibilities regarding parental involvement in the school	Male	42	3.02	2.282	0.322
	Female	48	3.57	2.704	0.282

	Levene's test for equality of variances			t-test for equality of means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean	SD differences
What are parents' roles, functions and responsibilities regarding parental involvement in the school	Equal variances assumed	8.344	0.004	1.99	896	0.057	1.04	0.166
	Equal variances not assumed			2.31	811.75	0.044	0.148	0.452

*p=0.05

Table 4.11 reflects the mean scores and sample t-test for the females compare to males respondents on the variable “What are parents’ roles, functions and responsibilities regarding parental involvement in the school?” (Mean=3.57, SD= 2.704) is statistically higher ($t=2.31$, $df=811.75$), two tailed ($p=0.004$) than those of males (Mean=3.02, SD=2.282).

In the next section of the questionnaire, the roles, functions, responsibilities of educators and School Management Team is highlighted in response to parental involvement in the school.

4.2.3. SECTION C: THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF EDUCATORS AND THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM

Section C of the questionnaire, relating to questions 4-12, intended to ascertain the role, functions, responsibilities of educators and school management team in advancing quality of teaching and learning at the school.

4.2.3.1. Educators and school management team in terms of parental involvement

The mean scores and standard deviations are computed to find whether there are statistically significant differences between the means of two groups. Table 4.12 depicted the results.

Table 4.12. Roles, functions, responsibilities of educators and school management team in terms of parental involvement (n=90)

Statements on role, functions and responsibilities of educators and SMT in parental involvement at the school	Mean	SD	1. Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3 Agree	4. Strongly agree
4. Educators work hard to maintain good relations with the parents at school	3.46	.972	0%	23.3%	55.6%	21.1%

The results shows that about 55.6% of the respondents (mean=3.46; SD=.972) agreed that educators in their respective schools work hard to maintain good relations with the parents. A further 21.1% of the respondents had strongly agreed with the assertion. On the other hand, about 23.3% of the respondents were in disagreement with the statement. No one has expressed a feeling of strongly disagreed hence it is reflected as 0% on the graph.

5. Involving of parents in the school activities is a responsibility of education	3.30	.818	1.1%	31.1%	48.9%	18.9%
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According to table 4.12, 48.9% of the respondents (mean=3.30; SD=.818) had agreed that involving parents in the activities of the school is the responsibility of the educators. A further 18.9% strongly agreed with the statement. This was, however, contrasted by about 31.1 % who had expressed their disagreement that educators are responsible to involve parents in the activities of the school. Only a meager 1.1% had strongly disagreed with the statement.

6. Parental involvement can increase educator effectiveness	3.78	1.882	2.2%	2.2%	27.8%	67.8%
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According to data from table 4.12, it is evident that the majority of the respondents, approximately 67.8% (mean=3.78; SD=1.882) had strongly agreed that, indeed, parental involvement increases the effectiveness of the educators. 27.8% of the respondents just agreed that it is necessary to have parental involvement to increase educators' effectiveness. Only the equal number of 2% each tended to disagree and strongly disagree with this assertion respectively.

7. Educators in the school do not have time to involve parents in useful ways	2.95	.788	12.2%	39.9%	38.9%	10.0%
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Based on the results of table 4.12, it is pretty obvious that 50% of the respondents (mean=2.95; SD=.788) agreed that educators do not have time to involve parents in useful ways. On the contrary, 35.6% of the respondents had expressed disagreement with the statement. While only 8.9% of the respondents had strongly agreed with the assertion, the other 5.6% of the respondents had strongly disagreed with it.

8. The school Management Team views parents as important partners	3.33	1.153	3.3%	17.8%	60%	18.9%
The results of table 4.12 illustrates that more than half (60%) of the respondents (mean=3.33; SD=1.153) had agreed that school management team views parents as important partners and the other 18.9% strongly agreed with them. Just about 17.8% of the respondents had disagreed with the statement; and they were seconded by just about 3.3% of other respondents who had expressed strong disagreement.						
9. This school informs the parents about meetings and special events well in advance	3.12	.874	6.7%	23.3%	45.6%	24.4%
Owing to the results of table 4.12 above, almost 45.6% of the respondents (mean=3.12; SD=.874) agreed that their school informs the parents about the meetings and special events well in advance. This notion was further supported by 24.4% of the respondents who had expressed a strong agreement to it. However, about 23.3% of the respondents had refuted the statement by expressing their disagreement to it. This was further seconded by another 6.7% respondents who had strongly disagreed with the statement.						
10. The educators encourage parents to help out in the school	3.02	.689	2.3%	33.3%	44.4%	20%
According to table 4.12 above, about 44.4% of the respondents (mean=3.02; SD=.689) affirmed that educators do encourage parents to help out in the school. This was further supported by 20% of other respondents who strongly agreed with the statement. In the same breath, about 33.3% respondents disagreed that parents are being encouraged to help out in the school. Just only 2.2% of the respondents had strongly disagreed with the statement.						
11. Our School Management Team makes frequent contact with parents, using a wide range of formal and informal methods	3.52	.903	5.6%	30%	50%	14.4%

Table 4.12 shows that 50% of the respondents (mean=3.52; SD=.903) agreed with the statement that the school management team makes all efforts to frequently contact parents using a wide variety of formal and informal methods. They were supported by a further 14.4% of the respondents who had strongly agreed with the statement. In contrast, about 30% of the respondents had disagreed with the assertion; and they were seconded by just about 5.6% of the respondents who had strongly disagreed

12. Parents' activities are scheduled at this school to enable them to attend meetings	3.32	.879	5.6%	35.6%	50%	8.9%
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While 50% of the respondents (mean=3.32; SD=.879) in table 4.12 agreed that parents' activities are scheduled in a manner that allows parents to attend; about 35.6% from the opposite side seemed to have disagreed with that notion. A further 8.9% of the respondents strongly agreed that school activities are really planned and scheduled to allow parents to attend. This was refuted by about 5.6% of the respondents who strongly disagreed with the statement.

Summary of the results on the role and functions of educators and the school management team

The overall results of the role and functions of the educators and the school management team indicate that educators want parents to be partners with them and to support them in their work. This would include inculcation of the educational values that are supportive to the culture of teaching and learning. These values include respect for authority and regulations, a positive attitude and belief in hard-work. Parents should also try to find out what their children are doing at school regularly and make effort to get involved in the activities of the school.

To conclude specific information presented in table 4.9 above, the results of the statistical analysis of the parental involvement in the township schools can be summarized as follows:

- Despite the fact that parents are now one of the major stakeholders in formal education; and the numerous attempt by the schools to get them involved, the results of this study indicate the extreme levels of apathy and reluctance from them.
- The School Management Teams continue to recognize and value parents as key stakeholders.
- The results further indicate that the schools communicate a lot with parents. However, there is a lower rate of response from the parents.
- Schools have tried to exercise flexibility by organizing their events and meetings in such a way as to accommodate parents; but without a success.
- Educators are at all times very much willing to accommodate parents as far as school activities are concerned

4.2.3.2. Means and sample t-test for educators and school management team on parental involvement

The t-test is computed to find whether there are statistically significant differences between the means of two groups. To calculate the t-test, the following formula is used:

Table 4.13 Mean scores and Levene’s independent sample test for parental involvement in the school

	Who are you	N	Mean	SD	SE mean
What are educators and SMTs’ roles, functions and responsibilities regarding parental involvement in the school	Educators	68	2.32	1.182	0.422
	SMT	22	3.07	2.424	0.382

Table 4.14 Levene's test for t-test for educators and SMT on parental involvement

	Levene's test for equality of variances		t-test for equality of means					
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean	SD differences
What are parents' roles, functions and responsibilities regarding parental involvement in the school	Equal variances assumed	6.041	0.021	2.09	899	0.027	1.04	0.366
	Equal variances not assumed			1.51	791.05	0.014	1.18	0.452

*p=0.05

Tables 4.13 and 4.14 reflect the mean scores and sample t-test for the SMT compare to educators respondents on the variable "What are parents' roles, functions and responsibilities regarding parental involvement in the school?" (Mean=3.07, SD= 2.424) is statistically higher (t=2.09, df=791.05), two tailed (p=0.021) than those of educators (Mean=2.32, SD=1.182).

4.2.4. SECTION D: STRATEGIES FOR PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

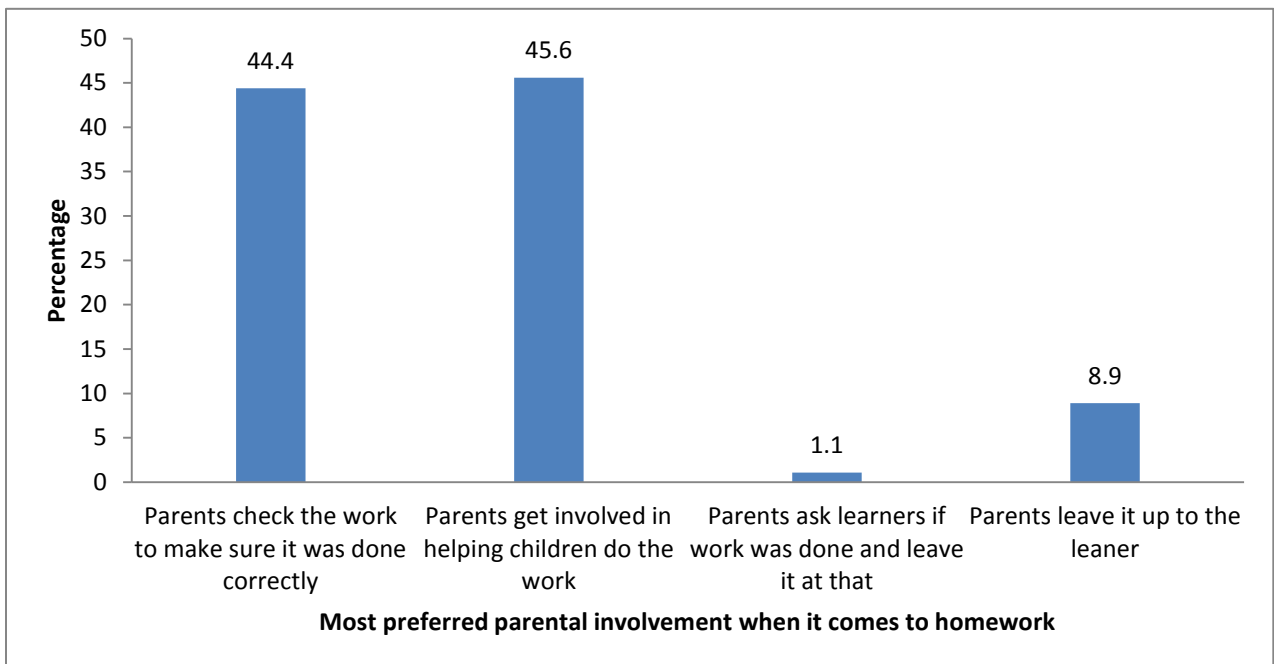
Section D of the questionnaire, relating to questions 13 intended to ascertain the level of parental involvement to homework assigned to learners in the classroom.

4.2.4.1. Level of parental involvement to homework assigned

The frequencies, percentages and level of parental involvement in homework assigned to learners in the classroom. Table 4.15 and Graph 4.9 depicted the results.

Table 4.15: Level of parental involvement to homework assigned to learners in class

Question	Statement	f	%	Level of involvement
13.1	Parents check the work to make sure it was done correctly	40	44.4	2
13.2	Parents get involved in helping children do the work	41	45.6	1
13.3	Parents ask learners if work was done and leave it at that	1	1.1	4
13.4	Parents leave it up to the learner	8	8.9	2



Graph 4.9: Level of parental involvement to homework assigned to learners in class

Table 4.15 and Graph 4.9 reflect the outcome of the parents' level of parental involvement which the educators would prefer when it came to assisting their children with homework. About 45.6% of the respondents would love to see parents

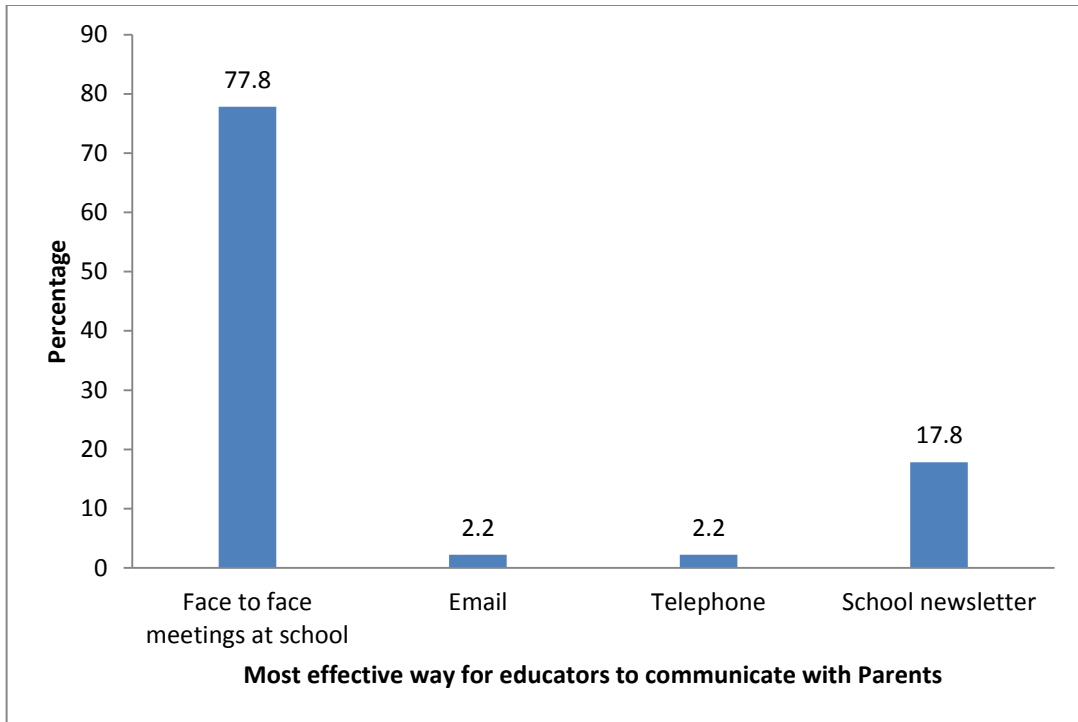
getting involved by practically helping the children to do the work. This was closely followed by 44.4% of the respondents who would love to see the parents conducting regular check just to ensure that the work was done correctly. Only about 8.9% suggested that parents should leave everything up to the learners. A meager 1.1% of the responded would love to see parents asking learners if work was done and leave it at that.

4.2.4.2. Most effective way for teachers to communicate with parents

The frequencies and percentages of the most effective way for teachers to communicate with parents to gain better parental involvement. Table 4.16 and Graph 4. 10 depicted the results.

Table 4.16 Most effective way for teachers to communicate with parents to gain better parental involvement

Question	Communication strategies	f	%
14.1	Face to face meetings at school	70	77.8
14.2	Email	2	2.2
14.3	Telephone	2	2.2
14.4	School newsletter	16	17.8



Graph 4.10 Effective way for teachers to communicate with parents to gain better parental involvement

The respondents were asked to identify the most effective way for teachers to communicate with parents to gain better parental involvement. Table 4.16 and Graph 4.10 shows that the majority of the respondents (77.8%) are unanimous and overwhelmingly agree that face to face meetings at school could be used as a best tool to achieve the desired outcome. A further 17.8% would prefer a school newsletter as an option; whilst about 2.2% of the respondents would each prefer an email and telephone engagement respectively.

4.2.5. CONCLUSION

This section served the purpose of analysing and presenting data as collected using the questionnaires. Data was presented in the form of tables and graphs with interpretation following. Analysis of data was done based on the results obtained through the use of the questionnaires and thereby enabling the researcher to reflect the information in the form of percentages with the belief that the highest numbers

(percentages) were most prevalent without undermining the least percentages that make a difference in the data. Moreover, this section has attempted to capture and reflect on the personal profiles of each of the respondents such as their age, gender, marital status, rank, highest academic qualifications and their teaching experience. Although the respondents have indicated that schools are creating an enabling environment for parents' participation in the activities of the school, it is, however, disheartening to note that the majority of them (67.8%) have rated parental involvement as being poor. This is a cause for concern because parental involvement is one of the key factors in improving the culture of teaching and learning in the township schools.

The subsequent section of this chapter presented the qualitative data analysis and interpretation.

4.3. ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE DATA

In this part of Chapter 3, the researcher's qualitative analysis focuses on four areas, that is: firstly is understanding rather than explaining social actions and events within their particular settings and contexts; secondly is remaining true to the natural setting of the actors and the concepts they use to describe and understand themselves; thirdly is constructing, with regard to the social world, stories, accounts and theories that retain the internal meaning and coherence of the social phenomenon rather than breaking it up into its constituent components and finally, to contextualise and give valid account of social life rather than formerly generalizable explanations (Mouton, 2001:167). This assertion is further supported by Henning (2007:3) when she argues that we want to understand, and also to explain in argument, by using evidence from the data and from the literature, what the phenomenon or phenomena that we are studying are about.

The aim of this section is therefore to analyse and interpret the data that was collected through the interviews as empirical evidence to answer the research questions posed earlier in Chapter 1. In this study, semi-structured interview

questions (Appendix B) were used, and these questions basically revolved around the challenges or barriers faced by the parents in terms of getting themselves involved in the activities of the schools in the townships; as well as the possible solutions that could be implemented to improve the culture of teaching and learning. The interviews were conducted as a measure to triangulate the analysis of the data gleaned through the questionnaires, the interview recordings and the literature studied so as to correlate the responses to the research question. The data from the interviews was analysed using an inductive process. Similarly, data are presented as verbatim quotations from the parents, citing field notes and transcripts as sources. During analysis in this study, data was organised categorically and chronologically; reviewed repeatedly and continually coded. Subsequently, data was categorised according to the dominant themes that emerged from the interviews. Once these themes have been developed, the researcher then sought to identify those that are similar or somehow related in some respect to enable him to embark on the process of putting them together on the basis of similar content in order to develop patterns. From the interviews that were conducted with the parents, the following six themes were identified:

Theme 1: Dysfunctional/ Child-headed families

Theme 2: High level of illiteracy

Theme 3: Socio-economic factors

Theme 4: Apathy

Theme 5: Negative attitude from the educators

Theme 6: Poor communication between the school and the parents

Context and participants' profiles

Although this may not heading is not part of the identified themes from the interviews, it has been included for the benefit of the reader. Presenting the context or rather the background of the participants is significant for the reader to understand the study, as well as to have a sense of who had participated in the

research project. In this study, a total number of seven parents participated in the interviews. Four of them were females whilst the other three were males. The criterion that was used to select these parents was purely based on those who are supportive and involved in the school activities and those that are not. The real names of the participants were disguised and pseudonyms were used for confidentiality purposes. Since this study was limited to Tembisa in Ekurhuleni North district, the parent sample was also derived from the same district.

An analysis and discussion of the parents' responses are outlined below.

4.3.1. Presentation, analysis and discussion of the research findings

The following are the findings, analysis and discussion of the interviews that were conducted with the six parents from the three schools to determine their level of involvement in the activities of the school in order to enhance the culture of teaching and learning. The analysis is quite significantly predicated on the primary information sourced from the respondents.

4.3.1.1. Dysfunctional/ child-headed families

From the interview with the parents, it has emerged that one of the biggest challenges for the lack of parental involvement in the township schools is the fact that most house-holds are headed by children themselves; and whenever the schools convened the parents' meetings such children could not attend because of other pressing basic family needs such as having to find food for the younger siblings. According to Townsend and Dawes (cited in van Wyk and Lemmer 2009:157) current data in South Africa suggests that 13% of children aged two to fourteen years have lost a mother, a father or both to HIV and AIDS. Even if these figures prove to be an overestimate, a large number of children in South Africa, now and for many years in the future, will grow up without the benefits of an intact family. In a significant number of cases, the eldest sibling has to assume the full-time care of young children, thus taking on unfamiliar adult roles for which they are ill prepared. Moreover, the high rate of single parents as a result of divorce in the black

communities compounds the problem of parental involvement. Far too many single-parents are the sole breadwinners and tended to prioritise the need to provide the family with the basic necessities; and this compromises the education of their children because it leaves them with no time to participate in the activities of the school. As a consequence, their level of participation is either poor or non-existent. This finding is affirmed by van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:152-154) when they assert that many children have parents who are separated or divorced. By far most of these single-parent homes are headed by women who usually face parenting with a total or partial absence of emotional support and guidance from another adult. Northmore (cited in Fieldgate, 2000:45) concurs with the above-mentioned authors when he argues that mothers are often the sole breadwinners and the demands of holding down a job and trying to provide the family with basic necessities leaves them little or no time for involvement in their children's schools. This, actually, confirmed the results of the first question on the questionnaire where educators were asked to rate the level of parental involvement in their respective schools (Graph 4.10 on page 14). During the interview, the first parent (respondent number 1 from school A) to be interviewed said:

“Most families are child-headed and there is no parent at all who could become involved in the activities of the school.”

These words were further reiterated by the 6th parent (respondent number 6 from school C) when he said:

“Poor family background, unstable marriages and the issue of single mothers/fathers who do not always believe they should be the only one to attend to the welfare of their children”

4.3.1.2. High level of illiteracy among the parents

It has also emerged from this study that most of the parents in the black communities are illiterate or have a low level of education owing to the legacy of apartheid. Consequently, the majority of them feel helpless to assist their children

with their school work, let alone to participate in the overall school activities. This assertion is confirmed by Reynolds (2005:13) when she mentions that concerns about their own abilities prevent parents from helping children with their homework. Strauss and Burger (cited in Majola, 2008:13) confirmed this point further when they indicated that parents in previously disadvantaged communities are illiterate and poor; they cannot assist their children with school work and support the school financially. Parents are also concerned that they might be doing things wrong because teaching methods have changed since they were at school. Van Wyk (cited in Mncube, 2009:8) highlights that illiterate parents are unable to keep abreast of new challenges in education, and so some parent governors tend to delegate their responsibilities to the school principal, thus becoming passive participants. The language of instruction at schools is English and parents could hardly express themselves in the Queen's language. This is precisely the reason why parents have shirked their responsibility to the educators. For most of them, the school is the place reserved only for the highly educated individuals. Ndlazi (1999:85) corroborate this finding when she argued that because the parents and guardians are illiterate, some teachers have a tendency to think that they cannot come up with valid suggestions to solve the problems. The teachers themselves exacerbate the matter by speaking English in meetings. This alienates parents even more because some parents cannot express themselves in English, which results in communication breakdown. Lemmer and van Wyk (2010:212) supported this argument when they mentioned that a large number of people in South Africa still live below the poverty line. In addition many are illiterate and are unable to find employment. Parent involvement on SGBs in such communities is often difficult as many parents are struggling to survive and have little or no energy for social obligations, such as serving on a SGB. Nyama (2010:20) reckons that parents find it difficult to assist their children due to the fact that they are illiterate. Moreover, most illiterate parents feel that they cannot possibly help their children and feel embarrassed to participate and willingly contribute to their children's education, yet they can.

The fact that the Education Department generally uses a sophisticated and too technical language in its policies, which at times is even too difficult to the learned to interpret, scare the hell out of the parents to participate in the school governance structures despite the good intention that are expressed in the South African Schools' Act (RSA, 1996) . Very few schools had considered differences in parents' literacy and language skills and had not taken account of these when asking parents to help their children; even when schools became aware of the problem; they rarely suggested alternatives or solutions (Reynolds, 2005:14). In corroborating this information, one parent (respondent number 1 from School A) commented that:

“On the other hand, most parents remain unconvinced of the importance of their role in the education of their children because they, themselves, are not educated.”

4.3.1.3. The socio-economic factors

One other factor that was identified during the interview is the socio-economic factors. Just too many parents in the townships are either unemployed or work as migrant labourers. This implies that they spent quite a number of time away from home and their children. Such parents leave home very early and they come back very tired in the evening by which time children had already gone to bed. This makes it difficult for the parents to assist their children with their school work or even at most to monitor their progress. This finding is corroborated by Ndlazi's research (1999:83) when she mentions that some parents are working shifts, or working strenuous extra hours therefore they cannot participate in school governing activities, let alone bother to ask about requests and complaints from the school. The work commitment overrides any commitment that parents have as it is a means of survival. For him to be able to provide the money for his children's bare necessities for school he has to work. Furthermore, Lemmer and van Wyk (2010:213) assert that often parents who are working do not have time to serve on a SGB. The problem is even worse when parents live far from the school and travelling to meetings becomes very time-consuming. It is this anomaly that creates the impression in the face of some school children that their parents neither care nor

value their education. As a result of this, they start playing truant or seeking attention in ways that are not appropriate in a school environment.

The employers or the corporate in South Africa has not come to the party in terms of creating an enabling environment for parents in the township schools to become involved in the education of their children. This is a sorry state of affairs. This finding is confirmed by Mncube (2009:9) when he posited that most black parents are full-time employees. When schools hold their meetings during the day, these black parents have to obtain permission to attend the meetings. In most cases their employers refuse to give them time off. Most of the times, the schools also schedule their activities/meetings or official events during the awkward times for the parents to attend. It is a known fact that crime is prevalent in the townships; and most parents would rather stay away from the school activities than to risk losing their lives due to crime particularly when such events are taking place at night. Transport to attend some of the school events is a problem. Kenway (cited in Beaumont, 2010:1) argues that for many parents, a major obstacle to becoming involved is lack of time. Working parents are often unable to attend school events during the day. In addition, evenings are the only time these parents have to spend with their children, and they may choose to spend time with family rather than attend meetings at school. During the interview, one respondent (parent number 2 from School A) had commented that:

“Yes, you see we do not always have time to do what the schools expect us to do. We work long hours and we get tired. We do not even have our own cars, so it’s difficult to get involved in school matters.”

Another parent (respondent 5 from School C) commented further that:

“Parents leave home for work when the children are still sleeping and by the time they return home the child is already sleeping leaving no time to attend to the educational needs of the child. Lack of transport might also be cited as a major problem for the parents”

4.3.1.4. Apathy

Despite all other factors that have been mentioned during the interview, parents in this study have also highlighted the perennial challenge of apathy that has always existed within the black communities. Parents had mentioned that some parents are just not committed to the education of their children. These parents have adopted the “I don’t care type of an attitude” irrespective of how much time do they have at their disposal to participate in the activities of the school. These parents are of the view that their responsibility ends when they send their children to school. According to Machet (cited in Nyama, 2010:30) “... parents frequently feel that they have nothing to give to their children that will be of educational value, as a result, they do not participate in their children’s formal education”. It is this type of parents who make it highly difficult for the schools to implement policies for they cannot do so without a buy-in from all stakeholders as per the prescripts of the South African Schools’ Act (RSA, 1996). This finding was also identified by Lemmer and van Wyk (2004:271) when they posit that working parents who are hard pressed for time, are less concerned about policy issues and are primarily interested in their own child’s progress. One parent (from school A) lamented this during the interview that:

“I am not really impressed with the parental involvement in this school because it is absolutely minimal. It is ineffective in the sense that a lot of parents seem to show apathy. Every parent knows what is expected from them; they just choose to be apathetic. Consequently, no one can hold educators accountable if they fail to perform.”

These sentiments were also echoed by the second parent (from school A) when he mentioned that:

“Most of the parents have been brought up in a society whereby there is a general attitude that school matters are meant for teachers and school children only.”

4.3.1.5. Negative attitude from the educators

It has also emerged from this study that most parents complained about the negative attitude that they normally get from the educators. Parents mentioned that they always feel disempowered whenever they have to attend school meetings because the educators continue to use English as a medium of communication despite numerous appeals for them to use one of the indigenous languages. As a result of this, some educators have developed feelings of resentment towards the parents. Reynolds (2005:15) puts it very clear when she mentioned that most teachers are resistant to parents having more say in school management, curriculum decisions or governance. The author went on to mention that one of the biggest barriers to helping was the attitude of the school; where parents felt “shut out” and feared they would be seen as interfering. Similarly, Majola (2008:64) concurs with Reynolds when she points out that most parents complained that the school climate is not free and accommodative to parents. Parents said that they always felt nervous around educators and around the school. Nyama (2010:31) supported the afore-mentioned authors when she asserts that the attitude and treatment that parents and their children receive from school personnel may very well be sending them the message that they are no better than their context of poverty, thereby discouraging them and maintaining low levels of morale and initiative. Staff attitudes can aggravate these anxieties, particularly where teachers appear judgmental, distant or unhelpful (Crozier, cited in Reynolds, 2005:13). The danger here is the eventual division of the school between “them” and “us”. This is not a good idea because the school should be seen moving towards the same direction. In the response during the interview, one parent (respondent number 2 from school A) commented that:

“It’s the negative attitude of some of the teachers. Because they are educated and we are not, they do not respect us. When we talk, they always shoot us down and we have since stopped attending any school functions. And they also use difficult language deliberately in their meetings and we cannot follow or interpret their messages.”

In contrast, however, the third responded (from school B) had argued that:

“The idea of School Governing Body is sometimes monopolised by the bully parents who like to dominate; when you have a different opinion you are seen as a problem parent. Most parents decide to stay away from the school management activities.”

“This alienates our parents because they do not see themselves as part of the decision making process and yet they are expected to implement decisions taken by the educators”

4.3.1.6. Poor communication between the school and the parents

From the interviews, it also emerged that parents had also complained about poor communication between the school and them. The complaint was mainly about the delivery of the official communiqué from the schools to home within a short period. As a result, parents are usually left with little time to respond or to make the necessary arrangements to get involved. This assertion is confirmed by Lemmer (2007:224) when she indicated that many schools do a poor job of communicating with families. Examples are schools with multilingual families that make information available in English only even though the majority of the parents are illiterate such as in the township schools. This makes it difficult for the parents to plan and accommodate such events in their very tight schedule. Myeko (cited in Nyama, 2010:35) argues that the manner in which schools communicates with parents is extremely important since the efforts of improving parental involvement cannot succeed without effective communication with the parent community. There should be communication between the school and home to benefit the child (Nyama, 2010:89). One parent (respondent number 1 from school A) had commented that:

“These educators stifle the involvement of the parents through poor communication or a last-minute distribution of very important information.”

4.4. CONCLUSION

In this section, the researcher has presented the views of the six parents as discussed during the interviews with them. A special attention was paid on the five themes that had emerged during the interviews with the parents with the sole intention of answering the research question. Views expressed by the parents were summarised and sample of their extracts are also presented verbatim. The verbatim quotations are meant to provide an account of what parents had said in their own words. Where feasible, the researcher has taken special care to integrate the quantitative and qualitative components of the study. In the final analysis, what has emerged from this section is the unanimity that parental involvement in the township schools is poor. However, it could be improved if proper care is taken to address the concerns of the parents, as well as to bring them on board.

The next chapter will provide a summary of the results of the study, draws conclusions and offer recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter (Chapter 4) the researcher presented the results of primary data (c.f.4.1) that was collected through the interview with the parents and the distribution of a structured questionnaire among the educators. The data interpreted in chapter four of this study revealed some gaps or weaknesses with regard to parental involvement in the township schools. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to furnish a synoptic overview of the entire study, which will be followed by a succinct discussion on the significance of the study. Furthermore, this chapter will provide the conclusions of the study based on the research questions that have been raised in chapter one (c.f.1.3). The chapter also looks at a summary of recommendations as derived from the findings of the study. The researcher would discuss the findings that emanated from the primary data and then to assess the relationship between the findings and the literature reviewed. The discussion of these findings would be guided by the research objectives as set out in Chapter one. Finally, the chapter would also highlight the limitations of the study, as well as to make recommendations for further study.

5.2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The primary purpose of the researcher in this study has not been to be prescriptive but rather to provide a framework for parental involvement in the township schools in an effort to improve the culture of teaching and learning. This study is grounded on the theory of family-school relations, which is characterized by a set of overlapping spheres of influence as espoused by Epstein. Invariably, the researcher has sought to add new body of knowledge to the existing literature by undertaking this study. Flowing from the research question, this study envisaged to determine how can parental involvement be optimized to contribute to the enhancement of teaching and learning in the township schools. It is hoped that this study will help to identify

barriers to parental involvement and suggest possible strategies that could be used to increase the levels of involvement so that the culture of teaching and learning could be maximised.

5.3. SYNOPTIC OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

In this chapter, a synopsis of the content of the study is provided particularly on the five key chapters that form the bedrock of this research.

Chapter one, which also serves as an introduction to the study, presents a detailed discussion of the research problem and motivation of the study. The chapter further deals with the significance, the scope and delimitations of the study. Moreover, this chapter presents the research questions and the objectives which guide the entire study.

Chapter two provides for a detailed literature review on the phenomenon of parental involvement in the township schools. This chapter also looked at the definition of concepts and context within which they have been used. The concept of parental involvement was explored from different angles to understand its challenges and implications for both the learners and the schools in the townships.

Chapter three presented a description of an appropriate research paradigm that has been used. The researcher made a particular reference to a comprehensive programme for the effective parental involvement based on the approach of Epstein. The research design, data collection methods chosen for this study, population and sampling are justified in this chapter. The chapter also focuses on the intricacies of the formulation of the questionnaire, conducting the interviews and analysis of data. Equally so, the issues of ethical considerations, reliability and validity of the study are thoroughly explained in this chapter and so are the approaches utilized in the analysis of collected data.

Chapter four provides the analysis and interpretation of the qualitative and quantitative research findings on the extent to which parents are involved in the

education of their children in the township schools. The analysis and interpretation of quantitative data is captured in the form of tables and graphs whilst the qualitative data is interpreted through the emergent themes or categories. The data were then interpreted according to the identified themes by means of juxtaposing it with information gleaned from the literature review. At the beginning, the biographical details of the respondents are discussed in details; and they are followed by the statistical analysis of different concepts involved in the study. Similarly, views expressed by the interviewees are summarized in this chapter and some of the comments echoed by the interviewees are captured verbatim.

5.4. FINDINGS

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate and evaluate the factors that influence or inhibit parents' participation in the education of their children in the township schools. In order to realize the purpose of this study, the research was predicated on the main research question and the four sub-questions as outlined in Chapter one (see number 1.3). Subsequently, the study reflects the findings which emanated from both the literature and the empirical studies. To this end, the researcher has compared the literature study and the empirical study to provide an account of what this study has revealed in terms of its response to the research questions. Several key findings have emerged from this study.

5.4.1. Findings with regard to the first research question and the aim of the study: How can parental involvement be optimized to contribute to the enhancement of teaching and learning in the township schools?

In spite of the acknowledgement of the importance of parental involvement in the education of the child by various authors from the literature studied (van Wyk & Lemmer 2010, Mncube 2009), this study has revealed that parental involvement in the township schools is at its lowest ebb. The study has recorded an overwhelming 67, 8% (c.f. 4.10) of the respondents who had rated parental involvement as poor. These results are in line with the previous research that confirmed that parents in

the township schools are apathetic. In many communities parent involvement has been virtually nonexistent due to political turbulence, poor socio-economic conditions, teacher reluctance and parent apathy (Lemmer & van Wyk, 2004). This is precisely the reason why the culture of teaching and learning in the township schools is so poor and some of the schools have been performing dismally over the years. The research further revealed that there is a compelling reason for all parents to become more involved in the education of their children on a sustained basis. This study has corroborated the previous research which has shown that learner achievement is dependent also on the level of support and active involvement of the parents and members of the community. It is critical that parents take greater responsibility for the education of their children; and where there are challenges they should lead efforts to find solutions.

5.4.2. Findings with regard to the second research question and the aim of the study: What constitute parental involvement?

Various authors (Desforges 2003:12, Kgaffe 2001:9, Kruger 2008:42) have defined parental involvement as the active and willing participation of parents in a wide range of school-based and home-based activities which may be educational or non-educational. It extends from supporting and upholding the school ethos to supervising children's homework at home (c.f. 2.4). It has therefore emerged from this study that parental involvement has a potential to increase the child's academic achievement and motivation to focus on their studies. Parental involvement, especially in the form of parental values and aspirations modelled in the home, is a major force shaping pupils' achievement and adjustment. It therefore stands to reason that parents are a valuable resource for increasing the quality of our educational system (c.f.2.5). It is against this backdrop that the majority (87%) of the respondents had rated the value of education of the child as important (c.f. 4.11).

5.4.3. Findings with regard to the third research question and the aim of the study: What challenges and frustrations are faced by the schools in terms of parental involvement?

The study has further revealed myriad of complex factors which contribute to the challenge of parental non-involvement such as dysfunctional families, illiteracy, apathy, teachers' negative attitude, socio-economic factors and poor communication between the school and home. This argument is further confirmed by Baloyi's research (2003:35) when he indicated that research studies taken in South Africa especially in exclusive black communities indicate that the obstacles, which hamper parents from becoming involved in the education of their children are illiteracy, a lack of time, a negative school climate, a lack of parental involvement opportunities, urbanization, social circumstances, attitudes of parents, and the attitude of both educators and school managers (c.f. 2.3.2). Although most parents might have wished to be involved in the education of their children, it became increasingly difficult to do so because most of them live or work far away from the schools that their children attend whilst the others are held back by the negative attitude that they get from the educators. The deliberate use of the English language as a language of communication during parents' meetings does not only create a barrier but serve as a tool to frustrate the illiterate parents. Consequently, parents feel inferior and begin to withdraw their participation from the school.

5.4.4. Findings with regard to the fourth research question and the aim of the study: What are the implications of the lack of parental involvement for the teaching and learning in the township schools?

The empirical study has also found that children respond positively whenever they realize that their parents take interest in their school work (c.f. 2.5). Similarly, parents who become aware of what their children are doing at school are able to better assist them. Results of the literature reviewed revealed that parents who are involved in the education of their children make the process of gaining education more valuable and meaningful to children (Lemmer & van Wyk(2004); Singh, Mbokodi & Msila (2004). By contrast, when parents are not involved there are humongous negative implications for the child and the community at large such as a decline in the performance of the learners, teenage pregnancy and high incidences of violence. Consequently, the implications for high level of drop-out, unemployment

and economic growth are catastrophic, especially as the figures from the annual national assessment reaffirm the truth about the long-term degradation of the education system in general and the culture of teaching and learning in the township schools in particular (c.f. 2.6).

5.4.5. Findings with regard to the fifth research question and the aim of the study: What possible strategies/suggestions could be formulated to empower, to advocate, to enhance or to increase parents' involvement/participation in the teaching and learning?

The empirical research shows that the relationship between the school and home is a much neglected one in the townships. It is without any doubt that many of the challenges besetting the township schools could best be solved by a greater degree of parental involvement. Amongst the possible strategies that parents preferred to enhance their involvement one could mention checking the work to ensure that it was done correctly (45, 6%); and whilst 44,4% preferred to help children to do their homework (c.f. 4.2.4). This assertion is in line with the literature study which emphasized that schools could establish sub-committees to involve parents more effectively in extra-mural activities and disciplinary committees (Fieldgate, 2000:47). Whenever parents assist in the extra-mural activities of the school, it helps to alleviate the workload from the educators and allowed them more time to focus on the academic aspects of the school. It is also worth mentioning that the empirical study also revealed that there is a serious need to develop an efficient and effective communication system to link the school and home. In this regard, 77, 8% of the respondents have identified a face-to-face communication as the most effective way to exchange communication between the parents and educators (c.f. 4.2.8). Similarly, every school needs to develop, in consultation with the parents, a clearly defined vision that is owned by all. In emphasizing the importance of a common vision, Dr David Cormack (quoted in Balltron Yearbook of 2001) said "without a vision there is no direction, without direction there is no purpose, without purpose there is no targets, without targets there are no priorities, without priorities there is no plan; and without a plan there is no hope". Presently our greatest challenge is to

change our schools into learning organisations. Changing schools into learning organisations is an attempt to make schools more effective, through realizing personal visions and encompassing collective thinking and continuous learning as a basis for this objective. New ideas, skills and capabilities need to be adopted and applied if we are to improve the learning conditions of our students (Moloi, 2005:74). It is therefore safe to conclude that unless the school has a vision to its activities, the culture of teaching and learning will remain a pipe dream.

5.5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the general purpose of this study and its subsequent findings presented above, an attempt was made to try and answer the research question. The following five recommendations are therefore made, based on the conclusions reached in the preceding section.

5.5.1. Recommendations regarding the literacy levels of the parents

It is recommended that the government, in consultation with the schools, should use the unemployed teacher graduates through the Internship programme in the community to educate and empower illiterate parents. Whilst the graduates would be gaining teaching experience on one hand, on the other hand the parents would also be empowered through literacy and numeracy so that eventually they would be able to play their meaningful role in the activities of the school. Very few parents have the necessary skills to be able to engage fully in the affairs of the school. Nyama (2010:21) confirms this argument when she mentions that parents may not have required time and skills to assist their children. Parents working far from home might not have time to assist their children with school work; other parents may find it difficult to assist their children due to the fact that they are illiterate. In view of the afore-mentioned findings, it is further recommended that the School Governing Bodies and the School Management Teams should develop strategies to capacitate parents by organizing special ABET and voluntary literacy classes for them. Parents need to be empowered in their different roles and responsibilities. Once these

parents are empowered through their ability to read and write, they will find it easier to assist their children with homework. Moreover, parents who are available during the day could volunteer their services at school to help assist children whose parents might still be at work to complete their homework, read for them or even coach their teams.

5.5.2. Recommendations regarding the socio-economic factors

It is further recommended that government through the amendment to the South African Schools' Act (Act no. 84 of 1996) should make it mandatory for employers to give parents some time-off to attend school events or meetings where their children are involved, at least the minimum of two events per academic year. Schools in return should provide confirmation letters to any parent who would have attended any of the events. According to Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:34) nowhere is school support of families more needed than in South Africa. South African family life should be seen against the background of cultural diversity and extreme socio-economic differences among racial groups. Most families-primarily black families-live in disadvantaged conditions and struggle to satisfy their basic needs such as housing, clothing and food. The success of the child in school does not only depend on the parent and the school, but also the Business community. If Business really wants to have a skilled work force, it needs to step up to the plate. For far too long, Business has failed to value and recognize the contribution and the difference that parental involvement can make to the economy and to raising standards in the township schools. This has led to a perennial cycle of underperformance in these schools and a future workforce which is unable to meet the demands of a globalized economy. Too few employers support their employees to play their parental role as far as the education in the township schools is concerned. Business community should be encouraged to adopt schools in the townships; and where possible best practices should be copied to enhance the culture of teaching and learning. In this regard, Business community could share their expertise with the schools in terms of the financial, human resources, assets, performance and time management skills. Bursaries and performance bonuses should be awarded to the best performing

learners and educators respectively. In addition, the police or members of the Community Policing Forum, as law enforcement agencies, could form partnership with the schools to assist in instilling discipline of children, deal with the problems of bullying and substance abuse around the school. On the other hand, the councilor, as a community representative, should ensure that the local government builds the roads to gain access to the schools, avail sports fields and libraries as places for learners to study.

5.5.3. Recommendations regarding communication between the school and the parental home

It is recommended that schools should adopt one indigenous language that should be used parallel to English as a medium of communication to accommodate parents during the meetings or whenever official communiqué is sent out to parents. Currently, schools use written English communication when they communicate with parents. This is problematic because most of the parents are limited by the language barrier and they are unable to participate. The progress and innovations of schools should focus mainly on improving communication. Communication is not only the biggest challenge facing the township schools today, but also the most important element in building strong relationships with parents, which can be turned into successful partnerships. It is very important to have effective communication between the school and the parental home if there is to be any real partnership between parents and teachers. Successful communication is an important part of any parent involvement (Kruger, 2008:44).

To ensure that every parent receive information from school, the SGB and the SMT are strongly recommended to make use of the community radio stations to disseminate their messages. Alternatively, specific churches should be targeted to help to distribute the message to the parents in their own home languages. Furthermore, parents could also ensure that those (parents) who have specialized skills and knowledge get invited to every school on a regular basis to motivate learners and to demonstrate lives that were changed through education.

5.5.4. Recommendations regarding the levels of apathy or indifferent amongst parents

It is further recommended that every school in the township should develop a parental involvement policy, approved by Gauteng Department of Education, which clearly outlines how parents should be involved. Both the empirical study and the reviewed literature have revealed that parents in the township schools are somewhat not knowledgeable about the importance of their involvement and the role that they can play thereof in the school activities to improve the culture of teaching and learning. The parental involvement policy would make it mandatory for parents to assist their children by monitoring their homework, signing their homework books, as well as to volunteer their services to the schools in the form of classroom or library aides, parent patrols to assist with the safety issues and by assisting educators with the extra-mural activities. The parental involvement policy should contain principles and goals to provide a framework within which parental involvement may be planned and operated. This policy should be communicated to all stakeholders in the school. This participatory approach needs to be adopted as bedrock of our schools which will provide an impetus for parents to feel more valued and contribute towards the education of their children. As it stands, poor communities have less energy to become direct participants in the school structures. They tend to shy away from participation simply because they are apathetic (Joubert, 2002:17). More importantly, every school should be encouraged to draft and adopt a Parents' Charter which simply gives an indication of a level of commitment from the school in terms of how that particular school looks at these parents. Parents' Charter recognizes the contribution that parents can make towards the success of the school. This in turn gives the parents a sense of pride when they know that their efforts are being recognized and appreciated. It is also recommended that township schools should organize Open Days which could be utilized as a mechanism to try and change the mindset of the parents.

5.5.5. Recommendations regarding the improved relations between the educators and parents

It is also recommended that educators and parents should work closely to improve their interpersonal relations for the betterment of education in the township schools. Both educators and parents need to work in partnership with each other as opposed to working against each other to improve the culture of teaching and learning in our schools. It is of no value to give each other a negative attitude. Too many schools in the township are working in isolation, without access to parental support network. Joubert (2002:9) confirmed that the self-interest of both parents and educators is one of the main factors why there is a lack of effective collaboration and support. Teamwork therefore becomes an essential component for addressing the issue of parental involvement because it builds trust, improves communication and develops interdependence. The township schools can only become the centres of excellence once the educators and the parents realizes that they need to provide mutual support to each other. It is in this spirit that the researcher recommends that educators from different grades in the school should invite parents to their respective classes to come and have a look at their learners' work. As much as educators have become role models to most of these children by default, successful parents in the community should be encouraged to become mentors to these learners. Mentoring helps to build trust, understanding and shared values, as well as teaching these learners life and business skills.

5.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study has attempted to place issues of parental involvement in the township schools in a perspective so that they could be understood better. In this study, the reasons that inhibit parental involvement in these schools were unpacked. Through its findings and recommendations, this study would assist to:

- Provide knowledge and insight into the factors that inhibit parental participation in some of the township schools.

- Permit the researcher to make valuable recommendations which would, hopefully, be used to improve the culture of teaching and learning in the township schools.
- To bring to the attention of the parents the importance of taking responsibility for the education of their children by getting involved in the school activities.

5.7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

In this study, the researcher has made a careful attempt to give an understanding of the parental involvement in the township schools. Inadvertently, other aspects of parental involvement might not have been covered or dealt with in this study. To this end, this study has raised some questions which could be responded to by conducting a further research. This study therefore suggests the following areas for further research:

- Since the study revolves around a limited sample of only three schools; more schools could be used to expand on the current research topic so that the results of the findings could be generalized. Moreover, an increased sample size would render the findings reliable, valid and credible.
- Secondly, the approach in this study was to elicit the responses from the educators and the parents through the questionnaire and the interview respectively. The alternative approach could have been to ask the learners about the attitude of their parents towards involvement in their education.
- Alternatively, a comparative study of parental involvement in the private schools that are located in the townships and the public schools (in the townships) could have been explored, or
- To investigate the impact of parental involvement in the most consistent and successful township schools.

5.8. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although every effort was made to ensure that the study remained objective and empirically justifiable, the researcher acknowledges that there might have been

some factors which posed limitation to it. Some of the limitations could be identified as follow:

- The findings of this study may not be generalized to all schools in the townships because the sample size was too limited to warrant such generalizability. Only ninety (90) educators and six (6) parents from three schools were used. A far much bigger sample should be utilized in future studies to reflect the representativity of the findings.
- The questionnaires were distributed over a short period of time, just before the commencement of the final exam to be precise; it is therefore possible that educators might have completed the questionnaires only for compliance purposes rather than really to understand the questions and provide substantive answers due to time constraints.
- Similarly, the responses from the interviewees may be flawed. The views and opinions expressed by the chosen sample may not necessarily represent the views and opinions of the entire parent community in the sampled schools. There might have been a propensity from the interviewees to express what they thought I was interested in rather than to give an impartial version of the responses.
- Despite the significance and relevance of the topic to the South African context, there seems to be a dearth of current literature on the topic. Most of the literature that is available is Euro-centric, not Afro-centric; and the challenges of parental involvement as well as their context are completely different to those experienced in the township schools.

5.9. CONCLUSION

The challenges of education in the township schools can no longer be blamed on the legacy of apartheid, but every member of the community needs to roll-up their sleeves and work together to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Education does not only belong to educators and learners. It is a national priority

and all of us are expected to play our part to turn our schools around; and parents are key to this.

The purpose of this study has been the desire to help improve the quality of teaching and learning in the township schools. This research study therefore provided an overview of parental involvement within the context of the many daunting challenges which the township schools face in their attempt to improve the culture of teaching and learning. These challenges require commitment of all stakeholders in education, namely parents, learners and educators. It cannot be disputed that parents are indispensable and of cardinal importance in the academic success of the child. Equally important is the co-operation between home and school to raise the quality of teaching and learning. Both literature review and empirical study have indicated that the relationship between parents and the school and the extent to which parents meet their educative obligation, have a direct bearing on the child's potential and academic performance at school, social and emotional wellbeing.

In the same vein, the study has revealed a stark reality of lack of parental involvement in the township schools and pointed out possible barriers, as well as to make recommendations for the development of involvement strategies to enhance the culture of teaching and learning. It is without a doubt that the need for parental involvement in the township schools is very urgent and critical if we ever hope to maximize benefits for our children and the country at large. In the final analysis, it is also worth mentioning that key issues that are highlighted as problematic for parental involvement in this study have been drawn from the primary data.

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APPENDIX A: LETTER FROM STUDY LEADER

Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies
Room 6-64
AHJ van der Walt Building
College of Education

District Manager
Gauteng Department of Education
Private Bag
Johannesburg
Gauteng Province

2012 /08/29

REGISTRATION OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL

I. Prof MM van Wyk (Supervisor), hereby confirmed that Mr JT Mogale (Student No: 32187343) has been registered as a MEd student in our Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies, College of Education. He is currently conducting research in Parental Involvement in schools. The title of his Med mini-dissertation is: **Parental involvement as a strategic tool to improve the culture of teaching and learning in the township schools.** With this research study my student hope to contribute to the effective teaching in Gauteng schools.

It is further hoped that when the outcomes (Findings and Recommendations) of this study is completed, the findings will be of great value for the empowerment of teachers in the GDoE.

Regards



Prof MM van Wyk

APPENDIX B: LETTER FROM GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



GAUTENG PROVINCE

Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

For administrative use:
Reference no. D2013/205

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	18 September 2012
Validity of Research Approval:	18 September 2012 to 28 September 2012
Name of Researcher:	Mogale T.J.
Address of Researcher:	840 Helen Joseph Street
	Hospital View
	Tembisa
	1632
Telephone Number:	012 315 1079 / 082 318 2307
Fax Number:	012 329 0348
Email address:	mogale@dirco.gov.za
Research Topic:	Parental involvement as a strategic tool to improve the culture of teaching and learning in a township school
Number and type of schools:	FIVE Secondary Schools
District/s/HO	Ekhuruleni North

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research

9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

David Makhado

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
3. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
4. A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
5. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
6. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
7. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
8. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
9. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
10. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
11. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.
12. On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.
13. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
14. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards



Dr David Makhado

Director: Knowledge Management and Research

DATE: 2012 / 09 / 19

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research

9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

APPENDIX C: LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL

840 Helen Joseph Street
Hospital View
TEMBISA
1632

TEL (w) (012)351 1079
TEL (h) (011) 920-3303
CELL: 082 318 2307
EMAIL: mogalet@dirco.gov.za

TO : The principal- Boitumelong Secondary School

CC : The Chairperson- The School Governing Body

DATE : September 2012

SUBJECT : RESEARCH ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The attached letter, from Dr David Makhado-Director: Knowledge Management and Research, dated September 2012, bears reference.

The main purpose of this research study is to explore the educators' perceptions on the involvement of parents in the improvement of the culture of teaching and learning in the township schools, with a view to suggesting possible strategies which the school may use to involve parents more effectively.

To this end, I will be collecting data from educators and parents through questionnaires and interviews respectively during the month of September 2012. I will make arrangements with the principal to ensure that there are no disruptions whatsoever on the planned learning activities of the school.

Your assistance in this regard will be highly appreciated

Yours sincerely

MOGALE THABO JAMES

CONSENT BY THE PRINCIPAL:

- () Permission is granted for you to conduct your research at our school
- () Permission is NOT granted for you to conduct your research at our school.

My signature means that I consent to your request.

Principal's signature: Date:

Name: (Please print).....

Researcher's signature: Date:

APPENDIX D: STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear educator

RESEARCH INTO THE INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS IN THE BLACK TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS IN EKURHULENI NORTH DISTRICT

The South African education system has undergone remarkable changes over the past eighteen years. These changes have presented us with an exciting set of opportunities for making learning and teaching relevant, qualitative and effective. It is against this background that parents should play a pivotal role to steer the education of their children in the right direction. The involvement of parents in the activities of the school is therefore, non-negotiable.

The aim of this study is to ascertain whether the involvement of parents in the black township schools is effective. The involvement of the parents needs to be measured in order to ascertain if there are any barriers experienced in meeting the change agenda and the legislative mandate. Your opinion is required since you are the first point of contact between the school and home.

One way of eliciting educator opinion is through a questionnaire. You have firsthand knowledge of problems experienced. We believe that without your opinion, we cannot make inferences about parental involvement in the education of the African child in the black township schools in Ekurhuleni North district. This questionnaire should not take more than 10 minutes of your time.

Your confidentiality is assured at all times; and you may opt out of the study at any time if you so wish without a penalty or any form of duress from the researcher to provide reasons. Your name will not appear anywhere as participants will be given fictitious names. All the necessary means will be undertaken to ensure that participants are not caused any harm by participating in this study. The results of the questionnaire will not be shared with anyone apart from my supervisor.

Should you wish to know about the outcomes of this research, this will be made available to you upon request.

Thank you for your participation.



.....
J.T. MOGALE (Researcher)

Prof. M. Van Wyk (Supervisor)

Consent by the participant:

I have read and understood the written details provided for me about the research; and agree to participate in the research project.

.....
Signature of the participant

.....
Date

7. Marital Status

Single

Married

Divorced

Widowed

17

18

8. Highest professional qualification

Teaching Diploma/ Certificate	1
PGCE	2
HED	3
UED	4
BA.ED/ BSC. ED/ BCOM. ED	5
B. ED (HONOURS)	6
M. ED	7
Ph. D	8
Other (Specify)	9

SECTION B: Parents' roles, functions and responsibilities

Kindly mark only one option with an X to the following questions in terms of the Likert scale of five responses, viz: **1.** Excellent, **2.** Good, **3.** Fair, **4.** Poor and **5.** Non-existence; AND **1.** Extremely important, **2.** Very important, **3.** Important, **4.** Slightly important and **5.** Unimportant

1. How would you rate parental involvement at your school?

Excellent	1
Good	2
Fair	3
Poor	4
Non-existence	5

2. How important is parental involvement to your learners' scholastic achievement?

Extremely important	1
Very important	2
Important	3
Slightly important	4

3. How important are each of the following types of parental involvement to your learners?

Unimportant	5
-------------	---

19

20

21

3.1. Stressing the value of education to their child	Extremely important	1	22	
	Very important	2		
	Important	3		
	Slightly important	4		
	Unimportant	5		
	3.2. Attending parents' meetings and participating in curriculum planning	Extremely important		1
		Very important		2
		Important		3
		Slightly important		4
		Unimportant		5

3.3. Making sure that homework is completed	Extremely important	1	23
	Very important	2	
	Important	3	
	Slightly important	4	
	Unimportant	5	

3.4. Insisting that reading becomes an every night activity	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Extremely important</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>Very important</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Important</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>Slightly important</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>Unimportant</td><td>5</td></tr> </table>	Extremely important	1	Very important	2	Important	3	Slightly important	4	Unimportant	5	24
Extremely important	1											
Very important	2											
Important	3											
Slightly important	4											
Unimportant	5											
3.5. Active involvement in parent/teacher organisation	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Extremely important</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>Very important</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Important</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>Slightly important</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>Unimportant</td><td>5</td></tr> </table>	Extremely important	1	Very important	2	Important	3	Slightly important	4	Unimportant	5	25
Extremely important	1											
Very important	2											
Important	3											
Slightly important	4											
Unimportant	5											
3.6. Teaching good work habits, responsibility and respect for others	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Extremely important</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>Very important</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Important</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>Slightly important</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>Unimportant</td><td>5</td></tr> </table>	Extremely important	1	Very important	2	Important	3	Slightly important	4	Unimportant	5	26
Extremely important	1											
Very important	2											
Important	3											
Slightly important	4											
Unimportant	5											

SECTION C: The role and functions of educators and the school management team

Kindly mark only one option with an X to the following statements in terms of the Likert scale of four responses, viz: **4. Strongly agree** **3. Agree**, **2. Disagree** and **4. Strongly disagree**

4. Educators in this school work hard to maintain good relations with parents	Strongly Agree	4
	Agree	3
	Disagree	2
	Strongly Disagree	1
5. Involving parents in the school activities is a responsibility of the educators	Strongly Agree	4
	Agree	3
	Disagree	2
	Strongly Disagree	1
6. Parental involvement can increase educator effectiveness	Strongly Agree	4
	Agree	3
	Disagree	2
	Strongly Disagree	1
7. Educators in this school do not have time to involve parents in useful ways	Strongly Agree	4
	Agree	3
	Disagree	2
	Strongly Disagree	1
8. The School Management Team views parents as important partners	Strongly Agree	4
	Agree	3
	Disagree	2
	Strongly Disagree	1
9. This school informs the parents about meetings and special events well in advance	Strongly Agree	4
	Agree	3
	Disagree	2
	Strongly Disagree	1
		33

10. The educators encourage parents to help out in the school

Strongly Agree	4
Agree	3
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

11. Our School Management Team makes frequent contact with parents, using a wide variety of formal and informal methods

Strongly Agree	4
Agree	3
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	1

12. Parents' activities are scheduled at this school to enable them to attend

Strongly Agree	4
Agree	3
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

SECTION D: Strategies for parental involvement

Please mark only ONE option per question below

13. Which level of parental involvement do you most prefer when it comes to homework you assign to learners in your classes?

13.1 Parents check the work to make sure it was done correctly		36
13.2 Parents get involved in helping children do the work		
13.3 Parents ask learners if work was done and leave it at that		
13.4 Parents leave it up to the learner		

14. What is the most effective way for teachers to communicate with parents to gain better parental involvement?

14.1 Face to face meetings at school		37
14.2 Email		
14.3 Telephone		
14.4 School newsletter		

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire.

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The six respondents were interviewed over a period of two weekends. Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. The interviews were conducted at the homes of respondents and lasted from thirty minutes to over an hour. Most averaged forty-five minutes.

Demographic information was collected by asking the respondents to complete a personal data sheet at the end of the interview process. The information was then arrayed on a matrix that shows respondents by pseudonym on the vertical axis and the demographic data points such as age, gender, education etc. on the horizontal axis. The table below illustrates the respondents' demographics:

Respondent pseudonym)	(By	Age	Male %	Female %	Education
Respondent 1					
Respondent 2					
Respondent 3					
Respondent 4					
Respondent 5					
Respondent 6					
Total: 6					

The following are the guidelines and the pre-determined questions that were used. The questions were not exhaustive as the interviewer had to probe further where the respondents' had given the answers that were not clear enough. All the six respondents were asked more or less the same type of questions, though they differed slightly from one respondent to the next depending on how they have responded to the enquiry. The questions had focused on the following categories:

Question 1 focused on the extent to which parents are involved in the education of their children in the township schools.

Question: To what extent are parents in this school involved in the education of their children?

Question 2 asked the respondents' perceptions, opinions and values about the importance of parental involvement.

Question: Why do you think parental involvement is important?

Question 3 followed up on question 2 by asking about the barriers faced by parents in terms of getting involved in the school activities.

Question: What do you think are the barriers that prevent parents from getting involved in the activities of the school?

Question 4 probed the reasons why parents in the township schools have abdicated their responsibility towards the education of their children.

Question: Why have parents abdicated their responsibility towards the education of their children?

Question 5 focused on the implications of the lack of parental involvement for the culture of teaching and learning in the township schools

Question: What are the implications of the lack of parental involvement for the teaching and learning in the township schools?

Question 6 revolved around the roles and responsibilities of parents in supporting their children to achieve their academic goals.

Question: What do you think are the roles and responsibilities of parents in supporting their children to achieve their academic goals?

Question 7, as a follow up question, asked specifically how do parents go about helping their children with their studies to maintain the academic standards

Question: How do you go about helping your child with his/her studies?

Question 8 asked about the possible strategies that the schools can use to increase parental involvement in the teaching and learning activities.

Question: What possible strategies do you think the schools can use to increase parental involvement in the teaching and learning activities?

Question 9 asked about the importance of home-school partnership for the child's success.

Question: In what ways can the school encourage parents to be involved in the education of their children?

Question 10 asked parents to briefly explain how their lack of interest influences their children's scholastic achievement.

Question: Briefly explain to me how lack of interest from the parents influences their children's scholastic achievement.

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

1. Transcription of an audio-taped individual interview with Ms P (a parent)

The purpose of this interview is to ascertain how effective is the involvement of parents in the black township schools in Ekurhuleni North district, to identify any barriers that are experienced in meeting the change agenda and the legislative mandate in order to optimize the culture of teaching and learning.

Interview was conducted with a parent (Respondent 1) whose child attends School A at her house on Saturday, 29 September 2012 at 15:00.

I: Interviewer (Researcher)

R: Respondent (Parent)

Interviewer (I): Ms P thank you for your willingness to assist me with this research project. As I have indicated in my cover letter that anything that we are going to discuss here will be treated confidentially, I would like to re-assure you once again that it will be treated as such.

Respondent (R): Thank you very much for assuring me that. (She is nodding her head)

Interviewer (I): I trusted you have read through the statement of consent. I am going to read through it just so that you understand exactly why we are here together this afternoon.

You hereby agree to participate in the research to ascertain how effective is the involvement of parents in the black township schools in Ekurhuleni North district, to identify any barriers that are experienced in meeting the change agenda and the legislative mandate in order to optimize the culture of teaching and learning; and that you will make yourself available to be interviewed for approximately forty-five minutes.

Thank you now that you are here this afternoon. Do you give permission for the interview to be recorded? Do you understand that, as a researcher, I will adhere to the following ethical considerations as espoused by Merriam (1998:198)?

- The right to human dignity and protection against any harm. This implies that I will be sensitive to your emotional state as my respondent at all times.
- The right to freedom of choice, expression and access to information. This entails that I will be honest about the nature of the research at all times. I will not manipulate the respondents to say things that they are not comfortable to say.
- The right to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. This means that I will not associate the collated information with any individuals, but instead codenames will be used.
- The respondents will have the right to withdraw from the participation at any time if they no longer feel comfortable.
- The respondents will not be forced into participation.
- The respondents will have access to the completed research. So if you would like to see the research when it is completed, I will gladly make it available.

It is a very informal setting, Ms P, so you talk as freely as you can.

Interviewer (I): Now, could you tell me to what extent are parents in this school involved in the education of their children?

Respondent (R): (leaning against the chair) For me personally, I am not really impressed with the parental involvement in this school because it is absolutely minimal. It is ineffective in the sense that a lot of parents seem to show apathy. Consequently, no one can hold educators accountable if they fail to perform.

Interviewer (I): Alright, I hear you. Why do you think parental involvement is important?

Respondent (R): To be honest with you sir, it helps the school to perform better because the education of a child requires co-operation between the child, the parent and the teacher. The parent remains the primary teacher of the child at home and has direct contact with him. Parents are responsible for instilling fundamental values and principles in their children, and that is the first step of education. Parents should ensure that the education of the child continues at home and should not just be left on the educators. Every parent knows what is expected from them; and they just choose to be apathetic. This makes the organisational climate to become negative and unbearable for the educators. Our school is now inefficient and ineffective.

Interviewer (I): What do you think are the barriers that prevent parents from getting involved in the activities of the school?

Respondent (R): (Scratching her chin) Well in most cases parents are too engaged in acquiring the immediate basic needs of the family such as food, shelter and clothing such that the education of the child becomes a secondary necessity. On the other hand, most parents remain unconvinced of the importance of their role in the education of their children because they, themselves, are not educated. Furthermore, most families are child-headed and there is no parent at all who could become involved in the activities of the school. Our educators are also partly to blame with their negative attitude towards the parents. These educators stifle the involvement of the parents through poor communication or a last-minute distribution of very important information.

Interviewer (I): Poor communication?

Respondent (R): Jaa, you see a lot of times the school calls a meeting and the few parents that avail themselves get bombarded with this difficult English that is spoken during the meetings. Not all parents are educated, remember! Parents become easily frustrated and begin to see their participation as non-existent. Hence their reluctance to attend the parents' meetings. There is a lot of jargon that is used in our meetings and our parents are not happy about it. This alienate our parents because

they do not see themselves as part of the decision making process and yet they are expected to rubber-stamp or even implement decision taken by the central authority.

Interviewer (I): Why have parents abdicated their responsibility towards the education of their children?

Respondent (R): Just like I have said, the fact that we have demoralised and alienated parents is a disadvantage. Many parents cite time constraints as a major factor that limits their participation in the education of their children. They indicate that they are often caught up in what they deem to be immediate responsibilities that require their immediate attention, such as work, looking after little children at home etc. In the midst of all these, the education of their children is not prioritised.

Interviewer (I): What are the implications of the lack of parental involvement for the teaching and learning in the township schools?

Respondent (R): To a great extent, it has eroded the level of professionalism that used to be the hallmark of the teaching profession. This has created an educational gap. The education of a child becomes incomplete. As a result, children in township schools grow apathetic about education and this contributes to high drop-out rate. Ultimately, the problem becomes societal, resulting in social ills such as crime, drug abuse, high teenage pregnancy and increased levels of violence. Our matric results are dismal as compared to the former model C schools. Furthermore, our educators do as they please as they come to work late and leave early. Their union, SADTU, always is ready to protect them even when they impregnate the learners. As parents, we should not allow a situation like this to happen. Otherwise we have no reason to be parents. We cannot compromise the education of the child because a pocket of teachers do not respect the prescripts of the South African Schools' Act. We should try by all means to create the conditions where our children can perform to their potential in a fashion in which they and the school are comfortable.

Interviewer (I): What do you think are the roles and responsibilities of parents in supporting their children to achieve their academic goals?

Respondent (R) :(licking her lips) Parents play a pivotal role in assisting their children to grow academically. The support such as assisting with homework and projects will benefit the child and instil a sense of confidence in them. The psychological support from the parent will heighten the child's confidence. Parents must also create a conducive environment for the child to be able to complete his homework and work on his project. Parents must therefore liaise with the school and help by attaching their signatures on the homework books.

Interviewer (I): How do you go about helping your child with his/her studies?

Respondent (R): I do not really have enough time to help him because by the time I get back home from work I am so tired I could hardly look at their books. I only rely on their words that they have done their work. Perhaps because I guess they are old enough not to take their studies seriously. Secondly, because my child knows more than I do. I have never been to the school and so I cannot tell the wrong from the right.

Interviewer (I): What possible strategies do you think the schools can use to increase parental involvement in the teaching and learning activities?

Respondent (R): Parents' meetings must be made compulsory to them. Children whose parents fail to attend a meeting without a valid reason should not be allowed into the school premises until they bring their parents. Parents could also be brought in through their participation in the extra-curricular activities, in the governing body and by their involvement in the various committees in the school.

Interviewer (I): In what ways can the school encourage parents to be involved in the education of their children?

Respondent (R): Parents need to be educated about the importance of their involvement. They must be made aware that it is not enough to simply send their child to school as that does not guarantee his academic growth and is likely to discourage him from pursuing his dreams.

Interviewer (I): Briefly explain to me how lack of interest from the parents influences their children's scholastic achievement.

Respondent (R): The children's academic commitment will generally be affected negatively because of their parents' lack of interest. Children will subsequently lose interest in education and ultimately produce mediocre performance. Given the fact that children are impressionable by nature, without anyone to impress, they will not see any need to work harder in their academic performance.

Interviewer (I): (looking at his watch) I think we have come to the end of our interview. I have asked you all the questions that I wanted to ask. Ms P, thank you very much for your time and inputs.

Respondent (R): You are welcome!

2. Transcription of an audio-taped individual interview with Mr and Mrs Masilela (parents) as respondents number 2

The purpose of this study is to identify and understand the factors that prevent parents from becoming involved in school matters. Interview with Mr and Mrs Masilela (parents from school A) who are not adequately involved in the educational matters of their children was conducted on Sunday, 30 September 2012 in their house at 14:00.

I: Interviewer (Researcher)

R: Respondents (Parents)

Interviewer (I): Good afternoon Mr and Mrs Masilela. My name is Thabo Mogale. I am currently enrolled for my M.ED degree (Education Management) at Unisa. I am sure you have received the letter indicating to you why we are here this afternoon. I would like to thank you for your time and for making time available to assist me with the research. All that you have to say will be kept strictly confidential. After the completion of my research, I will provide you with my findings. The research is on the parental involvement or the lack of thereof in the education of their children. It is important that we should know one another at least, so I am going to start with you please sir, if you can please state your name (nom-de plume), your children, how old they are and what grade they are in. Thank you.

Respondents (R): Good afternoon, Mr Mogale, my name is Prince Masilela and this is my wife Charmaine. We have got one child, Jacob who is sixteen (16) and is doing grade 10 here at School A.

Interviewer (I): Thank you very much. I trusted you have read through the statement of consent. I am going to read through it just so that you understand exactly why we are here together this afternoon.

You hereby agree to participate in the research on the involvement of the parents in the education of their children and that you will make yourself available to be interviewed together for approximately forty-five minutes.

Thank you now that you are here this afternoon. Do you give permission for the interview to be recorded? Do you understand that, as a researcher, I will adhere to the following ethical considerations as espoused by Merriam (1998:198)

- The right to human dignity and protection against any harm. This implies that I will be sensitive to the emotional state of all the respondents at all times.
- The right to freedom of choice, expression and access to information. This entails that I will be honest about the nature of the research at all times. I will not manipulate the respondents to say things that they are not comfortable to say.
- The right to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. This means that I will not associate the collated information with any individuals, but instead codenames will be used.
- The respondents will have the right to withdraw from the participation at any time if they no longer feel comfortable.
- The respondents will not be forced into participation.
- The respondents will have access to the completed research. So if any of you would like to see the research when it is completed, I will gladly make it available.

It is a very informal setting, my honourable parents, so you talk as freely as you can. I have set my alarm for 14:45 so that you can go back to your other household chores.

Right, let us start; to what extent are parents in this school involved in the education of their children?

Respondent (R): (Prince) For us we do all that is required from us by the school like to pay the school fees, buy uniform and pay the transport for our child Jacob

Interviewer (I): Is that all you do Mr Masilela?

Respondent (R) :(Prince) Yes, you see we do not always have time to do what the schools expect us to do. We work long hours and we get tired. We do not even have our own cars, so it's difficult to get involved in school matters.

Respondent (R): (Charmaine)To be honest with you, we are not really involved except to give them pocket money and to buy whatever the school asks us to buy, provided we have money and if money is not available, we do nothing about it. As you can see my husband is not always here because of work commitments. Moreover, these school meetings happen at an awkward time when it is very late. We live in the township and after sunset it is not safe to walk outside.

Interviewer (I): Alright. Why do you think parental involvement is important?

Respondent (R): (Prince) I think it helps both the school and parents to pull in the same direction in terms of assisting the child to succeed at school. But more than anything else, it enables the parents to be part of decision-making at school. This will help to improve how the school is run. I think the home needs to be an extension of what is happening at school. The success of our kids does not have to rely on the teachers only; even we the parents have that responsibility.

Interviewer (I): What do you think are the barriers that prevent parents from getting involved in the activities of the school?

Respondent (R): (Charmaine) it's the negative attitude of some of the teachers. Because they are educated and we are not, they do not respect us. When we talk, they always shoot us down and we have since stopped attending any school functions. We need..... (Interrupted by her husband) And they also use difficult language deliberately in their meetings and we cannot follow or interpret their messages.

Interviewer (I): Ok. What more?

Respondent: (Charmaine) Like I said the employers do not want to allow us time to attend the school meetings. They don't care about the education of the black child.

They want us to remain their slaves forever. The typical example is my husband. Every time when he is supposed to attend these meetings; his employer refused to let him knock-off early so that he could attend. What do you call that, heh?

Respondent (R) :(Prince) But after all the principal and the teachers are responsible for the school and NOT US. Why should we be involved? What will be their job?

Interviewer (I): Why have parents abdicated their responsibility towards the education of their children?

Respondent (R): (Charmaine) Parents take the view that their responsibility ends in sending their child to school. Normally, parents tend to complain about their lack of education. The lack of discipline from these learners is also cited as a reason for a dereliction of duty by the parents.

Interviewer (I): What are the implications of the lack of parental involvement for the teaching and learning in the township schools?

Respondent (R): (Prince) Disciplinary problems are likely to rise. There will be no respect for the culture of teaching and learning as well as the school property. Teachers will become disillusioned and frustrated by the extent of the delinquency.

Interviewer (I): What do you think are the roles and responsibilities of parents in supporting their children to achieve their academic goals?

Respondent (R): We really feel that we need to assist our kids to achieve better results, but sometimes the school does not communicate well with the parents. They don't give us enough time in advance before the meeting. Whenever they convene a meeting, it is exactly at the end of the month when most parents have to run family errands or do the shopping for the groceries. I think the timing of the meetings is a

problem. We would also love to assist them, but remember some of us are not literate and cannot deal with the difficult assignments that are given to our kids.

Interviewer (I): How do you go about helping your child with his/her studies?

Respondents (R) :(Prince) We try at all times to motivate him to study, to be ambitious and not to settle for less.

Interviewer (I): What possible strategies do you think the schools can use to increase parental involvement in the teaching and learning activities?

Respondents (R): Parents' meetings and participation in governing bodies could be used to reinforce parental participation in schools. Secondly, sub-committees could be established to involve parents more effectively in extra-mural activities and staff appointments.

Interviewer (I): In what ways can the school encourage parents to be involved in the education of their children?

Respondents (R): (Charmaine) The parents are the key stakeholder and there is a strong sense of buy-in which is required from them. Parents' participation in other areas such as sport and culture is also important. Well, even if you don't like sport, I think you still need to support your child who has interest in sport. This will motivate them even more when they realise that their parents support what they are doing. Sport teaches them discipline and strategic planning. If they don't get support they are likely to commit crime.

Respondents (R) :(Prince) Just to add on that, I think that's true; I think we have not done justice to our kids. There should be more parental participation in the schools, especially during special functions such as the Open Days, Sports Days and even cultural events.

Interviewer (I): Briefly explain to me how lack of interest influences their children's scholastic achievement.

Respondents (R) :(Charmaine) children need to be motivated to learn. This must come from their parents, who must create a home environment where learning is

encouraged and where there is a strong interest in school work and positive engagement. If these factors are non-existent, children will be disinterested and will manifest a below par type of performance in their scholastic achievements. They will also display a lax attitude towards their school work with no sense of purpose or a vision at all.

Interviewer (I): Thank you, Mr and Mrs Masilela, for your time. I suppose we have now come to the end of our interview.

Respondents (R): (Mr Masilela) Thank you, Mr Mogale for conscientizing us to our responsibilities as parents. I hope we have learnt one or two things that we still need to work on for the betterment of our children's education.

Interviewer (I): I just feel honoured to have spoken to you. Thank you so much for your time.

3. Transcription of an audio-taped individual interview with Mr K (a parent)

The purpose of this interview is to ascertain how effective is the involvement of parents in the black township schools in Ekurhuleni North district, to identify any barriers that are experienced in meeting the change agenda and the legislative mandate in order to optimize the culture of teaching and learning.

Interview was conducted with Mr K, a parent and respondent 3) whose child attends School B at his house on Saturday, 06 October 2012 at 11:00.

I: Interviewer (Researcher)

R: Respondent (Parent)

Interviewer (I): Good morning, Mr K and thank you for your willingness to assist me with this research project. As I have indicated in my cover letter that anything that we are going to discuss here will be treated confidentially, I would like to re-assure you once again that it will be treated as such.

Respondent (R): You are most welcome, my friend. I trust everything that you say.
(With a smile)

Interviewer (I): I trusted you have read through the statement of consent. I am going to read through it just so that you understand exactly why we are here together this morning.

You hereby agree to participate in the research to ascertain how effective is the involvement of parents in the black township schools in Ekurhuleni North district, to identify any barriers that are experienced in meeting the change agenda and the legislative mandate in order to optimize the culture of teaching and learning; and that you will make yourself available to be interviewed for approximately forty-five minutes.

Thank you for hosting me and allowing me to be a nuisance this morning. Do you give permission for the interview to be recorded? Do you understand that, as a

researcher, I will adhere to the following ethical considerations as espoused by Merriam (1998:198)?

- The right to human dignity and protection against any harm. This implies that I will be sensitive to your emotional state as my respondent at all times.
- The right to freedom of choice, expression and access to information. This entails that I will be honest about the nature of the research at all times. I will not manipulate the respondents to say things that they are not comfortable to say.
- The right to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. This means that I will not associate the collated information with any individuals, but instead codenames will be used.
- The respondents will have the right to withdraw from the participation at any time if they no longer feel comfortable.
- The respondents will not be forced into participation.
- The respondents will have access to the completed research. So if you would like to see the research when it is completed, I will gladly make it available.

It is a very informal setting, Mr K, so you talk as freely as you can.

Respondent (R): I am happy to be of any assistance to you, my friend especially where your studies are concerned.

Interviewer (I): To what extent are parents in this school involved in the education of their children?

Respondent (R): Parents in this school are less involved in the education of their children. For an example, they do not attend scheduled school meetings and they also do not come to school when called for by educators with regard to their children's related educational problems.

Interviewer (I): Why do you think parental involvement is important?

Respondent (R): Parental involvement is important because it motivates school children to like schooling and school environment. It also encourages

communication to take place between the learner and parent about general school matters. It instills a sense of responsibility to the learner.

Moreover, it is a learning experience for the parent in that the parent learns more from the school child and vice versa through opening up to each other. It is also good for the development of society in general.

In addition, it is fulfilling.

Interviewer (I): What do you think are the barriers that prevent parents from getting involved in the activities of the school?

Respondent (R): There are no incentives for parents to get involved. There are no regular communication between parents and schools. Often communication is limited to instances when there are problems at school about the conduct of the child.

Most of the parents have been brought up in a society whereby there is a general attitude that school matters are meant for teachers and school children only.

There is also the “I do not care attitude from parents”.

Interviewer (I): Why have parents abdicated their responsibility towards the education of their children?

Respondent (R): Parents do not understand their specific role in the ever changing educational systems.

Interviewer (I): What are the implications of the lack of parental involvement for the teaching and learning in the township schools?

Respondent (R): There will be high rate of drop outs and failures.

Interviewer (I): What do you think are the roles and responsibilities of parents in supporting their children to achieve their academic goals?

Respondent (R): Parents should act as supervisors of their children’s homework and studying when they are at home.

They should help their children with research matters whenever their children asked them to.

Parents should refuse the temptation to do the homework for their children but should rather monitor how their children are doing it.

Interviewer (I): How do you go about helping your child with his/her studies?

Respondent (R): By supplying him or her with the necessary educational resources such as exercise books, pens, rulers, school uniforms, etc. You can also help your child with his or her studies by creating an environment that is friendly to studying at home.

Interviewer (I): What possible strategies do you think the schools can use to increase parental involvement in the teaching and learning activities?

Respondent (R): Organize activities such as fun walks at school whereby children and parents would participate in them together. Such gatherings would enable the teachers and parents to talk to each other about issues of mutual concern albeit at social level. Regular meetings between parents and teachers should take place.

Arts and sports activities at school whereby parents are invited to join in could also be used to increase parental involvement in the teaching and learning activities.

Calendar of events scheduled for the school during a particular academic year should be made available to parents for noting and recording.

Interviewer (I): In what ways can the school encourage parents to be involved in the education of their children?

Respondent (R): Regular feedbacks between the school and parent about the performance of the child should take place; and active participation of parents in SGB meetings.

Schools should make their classes available to parents who are interested in studying privately as an incentive.

Interviewer (I): Briefly explain to me how lack of interest from the parents influences their children's scholastic achievement.

Respondent (R): It makes children to end up choosing the wrong careers.

Children end up not attaching any value to their educational needs. They end up seeing schooling as a waste of time.

Interviewer (I): Thank you, Mr K, for your time. You have really answered my questions.

Respondents (R): (Shaking hands) Thank you, Mr Mogale

4. Transcription of an audio-taped individual interview with Ms X (a parent)

The purpose of this interview is to ascertain how effective is the involvement of parents in the black township schools in Ekurhuleni North district, to identify any barriers that are experienced in meeting the change agenda and the legislative mandate in order to optimize the culture of teaching and learning.

Interview was conducted with a parent (Respondent 4) whose child attends School B at her house on Saturday, 06 October 2012 at 17:00.

I: Interviewer (Researcher)

R: Respondent (Parent)

Interviewer (I): Ms X thank you for your willingness to assist me with this research project. As I have indicated in my cover letter that anything that we are going to discuss here will be treated confidentially, I would like to re-assure you once again that it will be treated as such.

Respondent (R): Thank you very much for assuring me that.

Interviewer (I): I trusted you have read through the statement of consent. I am going to read through it just so that you understand exactly why we are here together this afternoon.

You hereby agree to participate in the research to ascertain how effective is the involvement of parents in the black township schools in Ekurhuleni North district, to identify any barriers that are experienced in meeting the change agenda and the legislative mandate in order to optimize the culture of teaching and learning; and that you will make yourself available to be interviewed for approximately forty-five minutes.

Thank you now that you are here this afternoon. Do you give permission for the interview to be recorded? Do you understand that, as a researcher, I will adhere to the following ethical considerations as espoused by Merriam (1998:198)?

- The right to human dignity and protection against any harm. This implies that I will be sensitive to your emotional state as my respondent at all times.
- The right to freedom of choice, expression and access to information. This entails that I will be honest about the nature of the research at all times. I will not manipulate the respondents to say things that they are not comfortable to say.
- The right to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. This means that I will not associate the collated information with any individuals, but instead codenames will be used.
- The respondents will have the right to withdraw from the participation at any time if they no longer feel comfortable.
- The respondents will not be forced into participation.
- The respondents will have access to the completed research. So if you would like to see the research when it is completed, I will gladly make it available.

It is a very informal setting, Ms X, so you talk as freely as you can.

Interviewer (I): To what extent are parents in this school involved in the education of their children?

Respondent (R): There is a little involvement of parents in the education of their children in the townships. Most parents when they have paid the school fees they have met their obligation. The idea of school governing body is sometimes monopolised by bully parents who like to dominate, when you have a different opinion you are seen as problem parent. Most parents decide to stay away from school management.

Interviewer (I): Why do you think parental involvement is important?

Respondent (R): When you have bully parents who bulldoze other parents and teachers who speak English only when addressing parents, which parent will be interested to become involve. As long as school fees are paid, children are assisted

with home-work to pass at the end of the year, the job of a parent is done and results are achieved.

Interviewer (I): What do you think are the barriers that prevent parents from getting involved in the activities of the school?

Respondent (R): The usage of the language that parents do not understand, the system of school governing body which is not clear to most parents, the teachers who look down upon parents who are not well educated and parents who believe that payment of school fees is be all and end all.

Interviewer (I): Why have parents abdicated their responsibility towards the education of their children?

Respondent (R): They don't have time to attend to the school meetings, let alone school activities. Parents feel that they have enough stress at work; additional stress needs to be avoided at all cost.

Interviewer (I): What are the implications of the lack of parental involvement for the teaching and learning in the township schools?

Respondent (R): The school is sometimes badly managed when parents are not involved, teachers sometimes run school like their own tuck-shop, using school funds to pay their account and buy groceries.

Interviewer (I): What do you think are the roles and responsibilities of parents in supporting their children to achieve their academic goals?

Respondent (R): Parents need to help children with their home work and pay school fees and other activities. Parents need to be involved as much as they can in the running of the school.

Interviewer (I): How do you go about helping your child with his/her studies?

Respondent (R): Parents need to organize extra classes for better performance of their children.

Interviewer (I): What possible strategies do you think the schools can use to increase parental involvement in the teaching and learning activities?

Respondent (R): Make parents part of the school by treating them with respect when there are school activities. Parent needs to be treated like a customer.

Interviewer (I): In what ways can the school encourage parents to be involved in the education of their children?

Respondent (R): School can provide a space in child's books where parents need to sign after looking at the books of the child.

Interviewer (I): Briefly explain to me how lack of interest from the parents influences their children's scholastic achievement.

Respondent (R): Children get motivated when they are watched by parents during sporting activities; they perform to their level best. Children, who are assisted on their homework, perform better than children who are neglected.

Interviewer (I): That's all I had to ask you. Thank you for your participation.

Respondent (R): Thank you, sir.

5. Transcription of an audio-taped individual interview with Mrs Mba (a parent) as respondent number 5

The purpose of this study is to identify and understand the factors that prevent parents from becoming involved in school matters. Interview with Mrs Mba (parent from school C) was conducted on Sunday, 07 October 2012 at her house at 14:00.

I: Interviewer (Researcher)

R: Respondent (Parent)

Interviewer (I): Afternoon Mrs Mba. My name is Thabo Mogale. I am currently enrolled for my M.ED degree (Education Management) at Unisa. I am sure you have received the letter indicating to you why we are here this afternoon. I would like to thank you for your time and for making time available to assist me with the research. I must mention that all that you have to say will be kept strictly confidential. After the completion of my research, I will provide you with my findings. In case you don't understand any question, please let me know so that I may try to paraphrase it. The research is on the parental involvement or the lack of thereof in the education of their children. Without any waste of time may I proceed?

Interviewer (I): To what extent are parents in this school involved in the education of their children?

Respondent (R): Unfortunately, my brother, with the newly adopted lifestyle parents do not have time to get involved with the education of their children due to the demands from work. In this school, it is no exception because the involvement of the parents is poor.

Interviewer (I): Why do you think parental involvement is important?

Respondent (R): Parents are the primary source of education in the lives of the children and they remain the care givers to the children for the rest of their lives. Without parents knowing the children actually look up to them as role models. The children will do all they can in their lives not to disappoint the parents. That shows us

the level of importance they attribute to parents. Hence parents should do reciprocity in terms of their involvement.

Interviewer (I): What do you think are the barriers that prevent parents from getting involved in the activities of the school?

Respondent (R): Depending on various reasons from literacy levels of parents, the knowledge of the subject matter in question, long working hours of parents, single headed households, migrant labour and at times just pure negligence or apathy.

Interviewer (I): Why have parents abdicated their responsibility towards the education of their children?

Respondent (R): In most of the cases the parents of the parents did not get involved in their education when they were at school and the vicious circle continues to have a negative effect to this day. In townships, the distance to work also plays a negative role as the parent has to take a full day's leave if he has to attend to a matter that requires his attention at school. Parents leave home for work when the children are still sleeping and by the time they return home the child is already sleeping leaving no time to attend to the educational needs of the child. Lack of transport might also be cited as a major problem for the parents.

Interviewer (I): What are the implications of the lack of parental involvement for the teaching and learning in the township schools?

Respondent (R): Core values on the importance of education are not instilled in the minds of the children. Possibilities are that when they become parents their behaviour is not going to be any different from that of their parents. They will not view education as a priority in the lives of their children.

Interviewer (I): What do you think are the roles and responsibilities of parents in supporting their children to achieve their academic goals?

Respondent (R): They should be actively involved by making sure that they always ask the child about the progress being made at school. Ensure that they go through the books of their children especially making sure that the child has got enough of time for studying and doing their homework every single day.

Interviewer (I): How do you go about helping your child with his/her studies?

Respondent (R): Be a pillar of support at home by going through the books, helping out with homework, continuously check on the progress of the child, attend to parents meeting at school and be present during the time the child is involved in extra mural activities and encourage the child to participate in those activities. In short, a total commitment from the parents is key.

Interviewer (I): What possible strategies do you think the schools can use to increase parental involvement in the teaching and learning activities?

Respondent (R): Develop teacher-parent forums where both role players have the opportunities to engage one another on how to continually develop the child to become a better citizen of the country.

Interviewer (I): In what ways can the school encourage parents to be involved in the education of their children?

Respondent (R): The school must constantly keep the parents informed of the child's progress via circulars, newsletters and the use of technology like SMSs and emails. Ensure that there are parents meeting on a quarterly basis where attendance is mandatory to a certain extent there should be social agreements between parents and the school.

Interviewer (I): Briefly explain to me how lack of interest from the parents influences their children's scholastic achievement.

Respondent (R): Just as iron sharpens iron there will be a decline in the scholastic achievement of the children. In most of the times the lack of scholastic achievement of a child are signs that there is no parental involvement. In simple arithmetic, parental involvement is equal achievement and non-involvement is equal to non-achievement. Parents therefore serve as a motivating factor for their children.

Interviewer (I): You couldn't have said it better Mrs Mba. Let me thank you for your time and the spot on responses that you've given.

Respondent (R): (Smiling) Thank you too and all the best with your studies

6. Transcription of an audio-taped individual interview with Mr Jub (a parent) as respondent number 6

The purpose of this study is to identify and understand the factors that prevent parents from becoming involved in school matters. Interview with Mr Jub (parent from school C) was conducted on Sunday, 07 October 2012 at the Caprivi Restaurant at 16:00.

I: Interviewer (Researcher)

R: Respondent (Parent)

Interviewer (I): Afternoon Mr Jub. My name is Thabo Mogale. I am currently enrolled for my M.ED degree (Education Management) at Unisa. I am sure you have received the letter indicating to you why we are here this afternoon. I would like to thank you for your time and for making time available to assist me with the research. I must mention that all that you have to say will be kept strictly confidential. After the completion of my research, I will provide you with my findings. In case you don't understand any question, please let me know so that I may try to paraphrase it. The research is on the parental involvement or the lack of thereof in the education of their children. Without any waste of time may I proceed?

Respondent (R): Firstly, let me also welcome you, Mr Mogale. I hope I will be able to give you the right answers for your research (he's giggling).

Interviewer (I): Now tell me Mr Jub to what extent are parents in this school involved in the education of their children?

Respondent (R): The involvement of parents is at the lowest-ebb due to various reasons.

Interviewer (I): Due to various reasons?

Respondent (R): Certainly. You see some of the reasons are high levels of illiteracy amongst the parents, work commitments, socio-economic factors, dysfunctional family structures, poor communication between the educators and parents and sheer apathy amongst parents.

Interviewer (I): Why do you think parental involvement is important?

Respondent (R): The involvement of parents is importance as they are also party to the children's academic future. Furthermore, it is also important for the parents to

know the strengths and weakness of their children so that they could also make interventions. Responsible parents are of the view that their involvement is also meaningful and should not be left in the hands of the educators alone. Some parents do also have better understanding of the related subjects as a result this could assist children who find it difficult to ask their teachers questions even in the midst of misunderstanding.

Interviewer (I): What do you think are the barriers that prevent parents from getting involved in the activities of the school?

Respondent (R): (snorting) Just like I have said before, Illiterate and semi-literate parents often find it difficult to intervene. Some are gullible, thinking that both the teachers and children are doing the right thing. Ignorance is also a factor. Some parents are not sure that they can make meaningful contributions to their children. Lack of confidence because of not being sure that one is imparting correct information

School policies that do not remind parents to take charge of their children' works. Some of these policies are too difficult to interpret because the language used is unfamiliar to the parents. Ignorance and not knowing why their children should get educated. Parents regard school as an outlet where their children could go while they are at their respective workplaces.

Interviewer (I): Why have parents abdicated their responsibility towards the education of their children?

Respondent (R): (thinking...) Poor family background, unstable marriages and the issue of single mothers/fathers do not always belief they should be the only one to attend to the welfare of their children.

Interviewer (I): What are the implications of the lack of parental involvement for the teaching and learning in the township schools?

Respondent (R): Children might not do school work as expected e.g. homework. Children might create impression of doing well while the opposite is true. Creating trends for irresponsible society, not encouraging children to work hard, blame game on the part of the educators. Total support that is needed from both the educators and parents will be compromised. It can lower standards and negatively affect the

culture of teaching and learning. We might even end up with poor results and manifestation of social ills such as teenage pregnancy, substance abuse and high levels of HIV infections.

Interviewer (I): What do you think are the roles and responsibilities of parents in supporting their children to achieve their academic goals?

Respondent (R): Making sure that the children are well equipped with the study materials, advise them to consult when they encounter difficulties, monitor and make sure their work is done accordingly and consult educators on the poor performance of the children as to work closely with the educators.

Interviewer (I): How do you go about helping your child with his/her studies?

Respondent (R): Having been informed that he/she has work to do, I then look at the assignment and show him/her how to arrive at the answer. Encourage her/him to read and watch educational programmes on both print and electronic media.

Interviewer (I): What possible strategies do you think the schools can use to increase parental involvement in the teaching and learning activities?

An open door policy that invite parents to contact educators about the performance of the children or parents-educators session. Teachers should see parents as their equals and not to give them an attitude whenever they try to get involved in school activities.

Interviewer (I): In what ways can the school encourage parents to be involved in the education of their children?

Respondent (R): A note/message can be dispatched to the parents informing them about the deterioration of their children's performance, therefore their intervention is needed. The assumption is that the two parties could finally discover what disturb the children from performing satisfactory and the identified problem can be dealt with on the spot.

Interviewer (I): Briefly explain to me how lack of interest from the parents influences their children's scholastic achievement.

Respondent (R): If parents shy away from their children's education, the latter often have lackadaisical approach to education which eventually leads to their failure in life. Children might be fed with a low standard of education which the parents could

have been avoided by taking his/her children to better schools. Parents could miss the opportunity to identify their children's ability and disability as quick or slow uptake learners hence they could make interventions by assisting the kid with an alternative career that will best suit the ability of their children. Poor performing children play truant as they are continuously sneered by better performing colleagues as a result the former become disinterested and drop-out of the school. Children should regard their parents as role models who are always keen to assist and encourage on their school work.

Interviewer (I): (nodding) Thank you, Mr Jub for your time. I guess this was a very informative interview.

Respondent (R): Thank you too Mr Mogale for your patience; and all the best with your research.