

**ISSUES OF SCHOOL GOVERNANCE WITHIN THE TRANSFORMATIVE
PARADIGM: EXPLORING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN WATERBERG
DISTRICT.**

by

ADWELL MUTERO

submitted in accordance with the requirements for
the degree of

MASTERS OF EDUCATION

in the subject

EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: DR J NYONI

JUNE 2013

DEDICATION

Dedicated to the late Peter my father, all the surviving Muteros and my family (Kelebogile:Tatenda, Karabo:Tafara and Valry Makgae), I believe in you; I thank God.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study would not have been completed without the sincere support and assistance of the following people and institutions **Dr J Nyoni** my lecturer, my supervisor, for his tireless effort in assisting me and for being my valuable source of both encouragement and inspiration. He supported and motivated me throughout my research studies. He encouraged me when things were really difficult to do my best. I would like also to thank the principal, educators, learners of Waterberg District and the Department of Education for all the assistance they gave me. In addition hats off to parents and SGB members of the community where I conducted the research and to all my other extended family members and friends who were always concerned about how far we were from finishing. Lastly to my mother (**Leggie Ncube**), thank you very much for always be there for me.

RESEARCH ABSTRACT

The concept of parental involvement has been viewed as an ideal style of leadership and management for school development purposes. In South Africa's case, it is an educational policy which is expected to reign in all school management bodies. Many theorists envisaged parental involvement as enhancing active involvement of parents and it has been advocated by many scholars who believe it is the best leadership style in implementing democratic values to education, particularly South African rural education, which is still in a transitional stage. The primary purpose of this research was to investigate the extent to which parents contribute towards education of their children.

This study involved transformative case study as a research design at one rural school in Waterberg district in South Africa. This research employed three data collection techniques, namely semi-structured interviews, focus groups and document analysis. When formal education was introduced in South Africa schools it was regarded as exceptional environment for teachers, school administrators and learners. To a large extent, parents and the communities regarded themselves as something outside of the education system. The main findings of this study revealed that there is a lack of joint understanding and shared vision between educators and parents in the School Governing Body. This problem underpins other more symptomatic problems, such as lack of accountability in the matter of school finances, differences in understanding the roles of School Board members and lack of parents' motivation from the school management. It highlighted some of the challenges that hinder the effective involvement of parents in rural school governance, such as poor educational background among parents. The study has also revealed challenges and consequences of non-parental involvement in school governance.

The conclusion that could be drawn from the study is that in schools where parent-community involvement is highly visible, teacher effectiveness is apparent and this contributed significantly to the improvement of learner performance while in schools where parent-community involvement is non-existent or minimal, the result is the opposite.

TITLE OF DISSERTATION

**ISSUES OF SCHOOL GOVERNANCE WITHIN THE
TRANSFORMATIVE PARADIGM: EXPLORING PARENTAL
INVOLVEMENT IN WATERBERG DISTRICT.**

Key terms

Parental involvement, illiteracy, school management team, school governing body, partnership management, non-parental involvement, action research, transformative paradigm and case study

TABLE OF CONTENT

CHAPTER ONE: THE FRAME OF THE STUDY

1.1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.2	PROBLEM STATEMENT	2
1.3	AIMS OF THE STUDY	3
1.4	RESEARCH QUESTION	3
1.5	THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES	4
1.6	RATIONALE	5
1.7	RESEARCH METHODOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS	6
1.8	RESEARCH DESIGN METHODOLOGY	8
1.9	LITERATURE REVIEW	9
1.9.1	Research site	11
1.9.2	Population	12
1.9.3	Sampling	12
1.9.4	Data collection methods	13
1.9.5	Data analysis and interpretation methods	14
1.10	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	15
1.10.1	Confidentiality and anonymity	15

1.10.2	Informed consent	16
1.11	DEFINATION OF TERMS	16
1.12	ACRONYMS	17
1.13	CHAPTER DIVISIONS	17
1.14	CONCLUSION	18
1.15	PROJECTIONS OF NEXT CHAPTER	19

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	INTRODUCTION	20
2.2	SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES AND SCHOOL GOVERNANCE	22
2.3	FUNCTIONS OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES	24
2.4	SCHOOL GOVERNANCE MODELS AND THE ROLE OF LEGISLATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS	27
2.5	SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP WITH LEGITIMATE STAKEHOLDERS	30
2.5.1	Parental involvement and legal obligations	30
2.5.2	School and the community	33
2.5.3	Learner involvement	34
2.6	PROBLEMS WITH PARENTAL PARTICIPATION	35
2.7	PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMMES IN THE CHINESE, USA AND ZIMBABWE EDUCATION SYSTEMS	36

2.7.1	CHINA	37
2.7.2	USA	38
2.7.3	ZIMBABWE	40
2.8	THE EDUCATION ACT OF 2006 :ZIMBABWE	41
2.9	CONCLUSION	44

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1	INTRODUCTION	45
3.2	THE NOTION OF A PARADIGM	45
3.3	WHY THE TRANSFORMATIVE PARADIGM	46
3.4	LIMITATIONS OF TRANSFORMATIVE RESEARCH	48
3.5	RESEARCH DESIGN: CASE STUDY	49
3.6	THE RESEARCH SITE AND PARTICIPANTS	49
3.7	CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL	50
3.8	CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS	50
3.8.1	The School Governing Body (SGB)	50
3.8.2	The School Management Team (SMT)	51
3.8.3	Educators	51
3.8.4	Learners Representative Council (RCL)	51

3.9	DATA GATHERING TECHNIQUE: TRIANGULATION	51
3.9.1	Focus groups	52
3.9.2	Limitations of focus groups	54
3.9.3	Semi-structured interviews	55
3.9.4	Document analysis	56
3.10	DATA ANALYSIS	56
3.11	CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE FINDINGS	62
3.11.1	Reliability	62
3.11.2	Validity	62
3.11.3	Triangulation	62
3.11.4	Generalisation and applicability	62
3.11.5	Descriptive validity	63
3.11.6	Interpretive validity	63
3.11.7	Researcher effects	63
3.12	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	64
3.12.1	Introduction	64
3.12.2	Letters of permission	65
3.12.3	Confidentiality and anonymity	65
3.12.4	Informed consent	65
3.12.5	Avoidance of harm	65

3.13	CONCLUSION	66
------	------------	----

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1	INTRODUCTION	67
4.2	RESEARCH FINDINGS	68
4.3	THEME 1 :CAUSES OF NON-INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS	68
4.3.1	Lack of knowledge and poor educational background	68
4.3.2	Relationship and contact between schools and homes	71
4.3.3	Changes in education systems	72
4.3.4	Socio-economic factors	73
4.4	THEME 2:CONSEQUENCES OF NON-INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTSIN THE EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN	76
4.4.1	Poor school performance and attendance by the learners	76
4.4.2	Schools- home relationship	77
4.4.3	Monitoring the discipline of learners at schools	78
4.4.4	High failure rate and dropouts	80
4.4.5	Teenage pregnancy	81
4.5	THEME 3:The role of parent component of the SGB	81
4.5.1	The perception of teachers on the expected role of parents in SGB	82

4.5.2	How parents in SGB perceive their role	84
4.6	CONCLUSION	91
4.7	PROJECTIONS ON THE NEXT CHAPTER	91
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION		
5.1	INTRODUCTION	92
5.2	SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS	92
5.3	RECOMMENDATIONS	94
5.4	SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS IN MANAGEMENT	95
5.5	SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	97
5.6	LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	98
5.7	CONCLUSION	99
5.8	REFERENCE LIST	101
5.9	ANNEXURE LIST	110
	APPENDIX A	110
	APPENDIX B	112
	APPENDIX C	113
	APPENDIX D	114
	APPENDIX E	115
	APPENDIX F	116
	APPENDIX G	119

APPENDIX H	120
APPENDIX I	121
APPENDIX J	122
APPENDIX K	123

CHAPTER ONE: FRAME OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of school governing bodies (SGBs) has been viewed as an ideal style of leadership in governance practices in public schools in South Africa. School governing bodies were established in 1996 through the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996). Section 23, of the Schools Act states that; governing bodies of ordinary public schools must comprise the elected members, the principal and co-opted members. Elected members shall consist of parents, educators, members of staff who are not educators, and learners who are doing Grade 8 or higher.

In South African public school governance context, educational policies are expected to reign in all school governing bodies' practices. Many theorists envisage parental involvement as enhancing active involvement of relevant stakeholders and it has been advocated by many scholars who believe it is the best leadership style implementing democratic values to education, particularly South African education, which is still in a transitional state. As a transformative orientated study, this research had an interest in empowering parents, principals and all other stakeholders in education towards taking responsibilities towards the value of involving parents in the effective management of public schools and education of school going children. Likewise, Section 18 (2) of the Education Act of 2001 in Namibia states that school parents must constitute the majority of members of a School Board. Only a parent who is not employed at the school may be the chairperson of the governing body (South Africa, 1996, section 29(2); Namibia, 2001, section 19 (4)). This shows that the Acts want to empower and encourage parents outside the school premises to be fully involved in the education of their children.

The Namibian Education and Training Act of 1979 gave School Management Councils (SMCs) the power to govern traditional black schools at the micro level. Hence, the power of parents was widened giving them a say in matters such as appointments, promotions and

dismissals of staff (Ndlazi, 1999: 31). Though the government had passed the Act, some parents seemed reluctant to be members of School Management Councils (SMCs) because SMCs were not fully representative of the stakeholders in education. They were seen as puppets of the state since teachers and learners were not involved in the election, which means that the whole process was undemocratic and not transparent. Van Wyk (2004: 49) highlighted, “Parents have been placed in a powerful position with authority to influence fundamental issues, such as school budget, language policy, discipline, and appointment and promotion of teaching and administration staff.” The Education (White Paper 5): (DoE 2001), the National ECD Pilot Project Draft (DoE 1998b), Assessment Policy in General Education and Training (GET) and ABET (DoE 1998(a), and the Language in Education Policy (DoE 1997: 7). All these policy documents explicitly or implicitly acknowledge that parents play an important role in the education of children and that partnership should be forged between the home and the school.

The South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) gives governing bodies great responsibilities with regard to school governance. Significantly duties are given to school governing bodies as a whole, not the members as individuals. According to Section 20 (1) (b) (c) of the South African Schools Act no 84 of 1996, school governing bodies must formulate, adopt, and submit copies of their constitutions to the Department of Education. They must adhere to the provisions of their constitutions. School governing bodies must also develop vision and mission statements. In addition, they must support principals and the staff in performing their professional duties.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The participation of parents in the running of schools can be described as ceremonial ... most parents do not feel able to fully engage with teachers over the education of their children, nor do they have the resources to participate in the SGB or to hold it accountable. Hence the involvement of parents seems to be largely limited to control over school furniture and repairs and assisting with feeding schemes (HSRC 2005: 21)

The non-parental involvement in the education of their children in some of the South African schools in recent years requires an investigation into how parents can be encouraged or mobilised to take part in the education of their rural children. Without empowerment parents will find it difficult to contribute fruitfully to the welfare of schools. Molepo (2000: 73), suggests that the parties involved that is parents, educators and learners should be empowered to work as a three legged pot. If one of the legs breaks the pot will not be able to function properly.

1.3. AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study were

- To find out the extent to which the parent component of school governing bodies contributes towards the encouragement of other parents into taking part in the education of their children.
- What factors affect the participation of the parents in the school?
- To find out the level of awareness of the members of the parent component of the school governing bodies about what is expected of them in terms of the South African Schools Act.
- To explore the consequences of non-involvement

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTION

The study used the following key research question:

How do parent component in the SGB encourage other parents to participate in the education of their children?

The following sub-questions were investigated:

- (a) How do parents participate in the education of their children?
- (b) What role does SGBs play in encouraging parents to partake in school activities?
- (c) What strategies are being used to encourage parental involvement?
- (d) What are the consequences of non-involvement of parents?

1.5 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The approach for this study falls within the transformative (paradigm?). Kincheloe & McLaren (2000: 279) highlighted that a critical paradigm is concerned in particular with the issues of power and justice and the way that the economy, matters of race, class and gender, ideologies, discourses, education, religion and other social institutions and cultural dynamics interact to construct social systems. Mungunda (2003: 30) refers paradigm as a frame of reference or mental map through which we see the world. Transformative paradigm comes from the point of critical theorists and participatory researchers who realised the imperfections of the constructivist paradigm. Mertens (2005: 9) says that transformative paradigm focuses on multiple realities shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, gender, and disability values.

In this paradigm there is interactive link between researcher and participants; knowledge is socially and historically situated. The main aim of the study is to contribute towards changing parents, principals and all other stakeholders in education towards assumptions about the value of involving parents in the effective management of schools. Paradigms, according to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999: 6), are all-encompassing systems of interrelated practice and thinking that define for researchers the nature of their enquiry along three dimensions: ontology, epistemology and methodology. Ontology specifies the nature of reality that is to be studied, and what can be known about it. Epistemology specifies the nature of the relationship between the researcher (knower) and what can be known. Methodology specifies how the researcher may go about practically studying whatever he or she believes can be known. The choice of paradigms is guided by what the research seeks to achieve. According to Bhengu (2005: 61) positivists and empiricists aim to predict, control and explain, while interpretive/constructivists aim to understand and reconstruct. Of all the research paradigms, the transformative seems to offer more than the others, particularly in this study.

1.6 RATIONALE

In this study an observation was made, it has been discovered that some parents are there but not present for their children's needs at school.

Absence of parents during meetings arranged by schools and dysfunctional schools has inspired this study to investigate non parental involvement school governance and its effect on provision of effective and functional schools. The research offers suggestions for research that may deepen understanding of parents' motivators for non-involvement and schools and family practices that may strengthen the incidence and effectiveness of parental involvement across varied communities. The study sought to find out why some parents are not actively involved in the management of schools when they know the value of education. The research was motivated by the fact that most parents wish the best for their children and this encouraged the study to investigate why they are not involved in school governance.

These observations have inspired the study to investigate the impact of non-parental involvement. Non parental involvement is used across different fields. For example, in the medical sciences the term is simply understood as the act of parents not being involved in their children's care (Eckle and MacLean, 2001). In the context of education, the shift is evident from client-oriented type to a more interactive partnership between various stakeholders within the education sector. Though other education stakeholders such as school education officials can play a role in determining the child's education, the immediate stakeholders like teachers, the principal, parents or legal guardians of the child are more important as they are directly involved with the individual child. Smit, Moerel and Slegers (1999) assert that non-parental involvement in the education context is when parents are not actively participating in their children's education. This denotes a situation whereby parents are not working closely with school partners in their children's education and are rather passive clients who only have contact with the school when they come to pay school fees or called by a teacher regarding progress of their children.

From the above facts one can deduce that school governing bodies have been given a powerful and important role in effecting school effectiveness. Parents as the majority in School Governing Bodies have also been given a major role in the governance of public schools. If a school is properly governed, such a school will be effective. A school is viewed as effective when there is congruence between its objectives and its achievements (Moshana 2004: 5). The performance of the school in achieving its objectives can be used as a measuring tool of whether school is effective or not.

1.7 RESEARCH METHOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Qualitative research approaches and case study research were used in this study. Qualitative research aims at providing insight which is not possible to elucidate with purely quantitative methods. It can be described as “a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant’s setting.” Gorman, Hammersley and Foster (2000: 3) define the case study as referring to research that investigates a few cases, often just one, in considerable depth. The value of a case study lies in the potential richness of the data, and the extent to which the researcher can convey a sense of how the case functions. Among the advantages of case study is the notion that case studies present research or evaluation data in a more publicly accessible form than other kinds of research (Bassegy, 1999: 23). This is a significant advantage considering my purpose of stimulating interest among education managers and policy makers.

Bogdan & Biklen (2003:261) describe qualitative research as “an approach to social science research that emphasises collecting descriptive data in natural settings, using inductive thinking, and emphasizing understanding the subjects’ point of view”. Leedy (1997:105) defines qualitative researchers as researchers who begin by asking more general questions and collecting an extensive amount of verbal data from a small number of participants, and presenting their findings with words/descriptions that are intended to accurately reflect the situation under study. Leedy defines this study as “a study that may then conclude with tentative answers or hypotheses about what were observed. These tentative hypotheses may

then form the basis of future quantitative studies designed to test the proposed hypotheses”. Qualitative researchers enter the setting/context of the respondents/participants with open minds (Leedy 1997: 106), prepared to immerse themselves in the complexity of the situation. Qualitative researchers place much importance on data being gathered in natural or real life settings as the ‘action’ happens – for instance, in playgrounds, classrooms, at a work area and in the communities. Lankshear & Knobel (2004: 69) describe qualitative researchers as researchers who aim to collect data that is contextualized. They explain that such data take into account the kind of school and community in which the research study takes place, the socio-economic status of the community in which the school is located, and the history of the community. Taylor and Bogdan (1998:7) describe qualitative research as research that produces descriptive data about people, where even people’s own words are used. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:373) explain that in qualitative research words are used to describe and interpret findings rather than numbers. Gerson and Horowitz (2002: 199) describe qualitative research as a direct encounter with the participants to investigate how people construct, interpret and give meaning to their experiences.

The research comprised of qualitative components, to make sure that the findings are based on the views of the respondents. A qualitative inquiry was used to explore in detail parents’ experiences of their opportunities for involvement in the school, and the impact of these experiences on their own point of view or reasoning. This aim is congruent with qualitative research which is concerned with understanding the social phenomenon from the participants’ perspective (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993: 373). In using qualitative research the researcher wanted to gain a deeper understanding of events, people and processes and therefore falls within the transformative tradition. Qualitative research is seen as rich in detail, and also focuses on the feelings and thoughts of respondents and provides in-depth data. Schumacher & McMillan, (1993: 373) state that the outcome of the research depends on the participants’ participation and the meaning they attach to events and processes. According to Taylor & Bogdan (1998:3) the term research methodology refers to the philosophical basis on which the study has been built. The researcher acknowledged that there is an underlying philosophical basis. Creswell (2003: 6) suggests that the assumptions researchers have determine how and what they will learn about their investigation. The approach for this investigation falls within critical or transformative paradigm. The purpose of the critical or

transformative paradigm is to bring about more, just egalitarian society in which individual and collective freedoms are practised, and to eradicate the exercise and effects of eliminate power.

1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This was a transformative case study design. Gorman, Hammersley and Foster (2000: 3) define the case study as referring to research that investigates a few cases, often just one, in considerable depth. The value of a case study lies in the potential richness of the data, and the extent to which the researcher can convey a sense of how the case functions. Among the advantages of case study is the notion that case studies present research or evaluation data in a more publicly accessible form than other kinds of research (Bassey, 1999: 23). This is a significant advantage considering my purpose of stimulating interest among education managers and policy makers Mouton (2001: 55) defines the research design as a plan or a blueprint of how the researcher intends conducting his/her research. Lankshear & Knobel (2004: 27) say that the research design is something that can be thought of as an appropriate procedure or guideline for doing something under certain conditions. They also emphasize the fact that the success of a research study depends crucially on its being well designed, which means that the researcher has to be alert to the importance of design from the outset. Researchers cannot launch an investigation without first having thought about what sort of concepts, theories, methods, instruments and the like might best fit the question asked, and how these can be arranged in a systematic way. The study applied a qualitative research design and in order to address the explorative objective of this study, data was collected through formal structured interviews, diary method, student exercise books and focus groups.

The study implemented case study research in the form of school-wide research focusing on the concern about the lack of parental involvement in school governance, and looking for a way to reach more parents to involve them in meaningful ways This process creates new patterns of collegiality, communication, and sharing. Contributions to the body of knowledge about effective parental involvement in school governance may also result. Development of priorities for school-wide planning and assessment efforts arise from inquiry with potential to motivate change for improvement's sake. Teams of staff from the school work together to

narrow the question, gather and analyse the data, and decide on a plan of action. Team work and individual contributions to the whole are very important, and it maybe that problem points arise as the team strives to develop a process and make commitments to each other. When these obstacles are overcome, there will be a sense of ownership and accomplishment in the results that come from this school-wide effort.

In a climate that is at best stressful, case study research allows the researcher to focus energy in a positive way since they are many of the issues in education today are out of our hands. As education continues through the reform process, parents must have a say in how they change their own practices. Case study research is a process that will help to put some of my assumptions to the test. It changes the conversations that take place in a school. This has an incredible effect on the school climate for staff and the parents.

1.9. LITERATURE REVIEW

Glatter (2002: 228-229) states that there are four models of governance in education. In his analysis he states that these models are: the competitive market model, the school empowerment model, the local empowerment model, and the quality control model. In real life scenarios, governance in schools is not done with only one model. These models complement one another and some things are taken from one model and used with what has been taken from another model. In the competitive model each school is treated as an autonomous small business. Schools compete against one another for pupils and for funds. The school empowerment model intends at empowering school-level stakeholders. The quality control model occurs when the Department of Education lays down strict rules .local empowerment model as explained by Glatter (2002: 230) is viewed as an educational system where schools in an area are viewed as not being independent, but as depending on one another. Epstein's (2001: 408-410) model of home-school community involvement is widely used in the USA and beyond and it includes the following six types: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community. Davidoff & Lazarus (2002: 175) also emphasised that "Empowerment is fundamentally related to participation, and it is important simply because it is a basic human

need to feel a sense of control over your life”. Empowerment leads to human satisfaction, enhances a sense of confidence and belonging among individuals in the work place and this is the aim of participative management. The study of Msila (2004: 305) highlighted the need for parents’ empowerment: “parents from impoverished backgrounds also need to be empowered if they are to make a meaningful contribution to the education of the learners”. Bush (2003b: 65) also stressed the fact that “empowerment of school level governing bodies is one of the manifestations of many education systems”. All the above quotes emphasise the essence of empowerment, which I believe is one of the recipes for enhancing involvement. For example, a parent might be a professional doctor, lawyer, senior manager in the public service. His / her contribution will be of great value to the school if he/she is a member of the school governing body. In most cases it is easier to find such people in urban communities than in rural areas.

In this study, non-parental participation implied that parents are not involved, do not participate, and not attending their school meetings, sport activities, leisure activities and social activities. In this context the term non parental participation is used synonymously with non-parental involvement. In broader terms, non-parental involvement implies that parents not fulfilling the mandate of being responsible for their children and not participating in school activities of their children in my opinion, empowerment raises people’s confidence and assertiveness; Looock cited in Niitembu (2005: 9) also stressed: “the aim of empowerment is excellence”. He (*ibid.*) added “An empowered individual is neither the unwilling victim of externally driven changes, nor the innovator who reacts unthinkingly to every whim. He or she responds to the challenge by recreating his or her own vision and by releasing the energy and confidence to put his or her ideas into practice”. Empowerment is one of the strategies that the school management can adopt to enhance parents’ participation either in school governance or other school activities. In this regard, Moloji (2002: 70), writing in a South African context, strongly emphasised that “To survive in a highly competitive environment, knowledgeable and empowered school teams are crucial to success”.

The research offered suggestions for school and teacher practices involving parents in the effective governance of schools. The first focus on strategies to enhance school capacities for

inviting parental involvement, these includes steps schools may take to increase school invitations , teacher invitations and responsiveness family context issues .The second , includes strategies schools may take to enhance parents' capacities to be effectively involved.

In some situations proper governance of the school does not happen because of little or no contribution from the parent component. This emanates from some factors that affect the participation of parents. As the majority, parents in the school governing body must be effective and influential. This refers to the fact that parents are not supposed to sit back and let other members, like educators or the principal to dictate terms.

This research investigated the efficacy of the role played by parents' representatives in school governance. In this regard the efficacy is assessed in relation to the relevant provisions of the South African Schools Act (No 84 of 1996). This research made recommendations that will change, improve and empower parents to manage schools effectively in their communities. The researcher learnt from the parent component things that hinder their participation or contribution in governing their schools. The main problem that led the researcher to undertake this study is the absence of, or the small role, that is played by parents in school governing bodies to produce effective and functional schools. Parents, as the majority component, are supposed to play an important role like the other components of school governing bodies.

1.9.1 Research site

The research was carried out in Limpopo in Mogalakwena rural community: REBONE, Waterberg district. . The area is a rural developing area that favours the study as it consists of communities with different backgrounds. The research was carried out in one secondary school located in the rural area of Waterberg district at Mogalakwena rural community. Formal requests were made to the principal of the schools to allow their school and learners to participate in the study.

1.9.2 Population

The target population in the study were parents in the Baltimore circuit, Mogalakwena rural community, Limpopo. From this population, a sample of five learners from Mogalakwena rural community were selected and these included learners in the school representative councils, principal and SGB Chairperson. Five teachers and three (SMT) (school management teams) members from Mogalakwena rural area in Waterberg district were included in the study. In addition to five teachers from the same district, five parents or guardians participated. The principal and parents in the School governing bodies of the mentioned school were automatically involved since the study was focusing on one school.

1.9.3 Sampling

Sampling refers to the selection of site and population of the study. Vockel cited in Stofile (2005: 36) defined the population as that larger community from which the sample is to be drawn. The sample for my study will consists of all members of the School Board drawn from one rural combined school in Mogalakwena, Baltimore circuit in South Africa. I chose this school this school because it represented rural schools in South Africa where the impact of parental involvement in school governance matters has been little felt .Participants will be purposefully selected and used. Gay and Airasian (2000: 209) point out that the qualitative researcher relies on purposive selection of their participants. These participants were selected to provide rich data concerning the research topic. According to Johnson & Christensen (2004: 45) a qualitative researcher uses purposeful or judgment sampling, since sampling always aims at locating information-rich individuals, those who are knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon under investigation. “Researchers working within the transformative paradigm typically select their samples with a goal of identifying information-rich cases that will allow them to study a case in-depth”. Furthermore, Merriam (2001: 61) stated that “Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research”. A certain degree of homogeneity will be maintained in the sampling by including only parents who are either parents of learners at one of the two high schools involved, or current members of governing bodies of

the two schools. In order to get an academically balanced sample, parents who are illiterate and those who are literate will be included .Both females and males will form part of the sampling.

For the purpose of interviews I used purposive sampling , According to Huysamen (1994: 44), purposive sampling is the most important type of non-probability sampling. Judgement or purposive sampling gives a researcher a chance of selecting cases with a specific purpose. The benefits of using purposeful samplings according to Neuman (2000:198) are that:

- The researcher uses it to select cases that are especially informative
- A researcher can use it to select members who are difficult to reach, i.e. a specialized population
- A researcher can identify certain types of cases for in-depth investigation.

In the other school I interviewed learners and educators who are themselves involved in the school activities like sports and fundraising committees. I approached learners in the students' representative councils (SRC), because of their position in the running of the school, and in the governing body of the school. Also the two members of the educators in the governing body of the school formed part of my sampling size because of the knowledge that they possess about the parental involvement at school from the Governing Body's side.

1.9.4 Data collection methods

The main data collection methods in this research involved; semi-structured interviews, focus groups, diary and exercise books Since my goal was to find empowerment, good practice that will mobilise parents by letting them get involved in the education of their children in rural areas, I realised that the use of different data collection techniques would be the best option for me to get the full data. As stated by Schrunick, et al, (1998: 319) semi-structured interviews form part of an in depth face-to-face interview. I conducted the semi-structured interviews after looking deeply at the themes and topics that will emerge from the focus group interviews. I used the semi-structured interviews strategically knowing that they can last for a longer period and can become intense and involved, depending on the topic (De Vos et al., 2005: 297). I endeavoured to make them feel at ease and comfortable by allowing them

to pose questions to one another and dwell on their experiences of the non-involvement or involvement of parents in the education of their children.

Krueger, cited by Struwig and Stead (2001: 99) explains a focus group as “a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment”. Johnson & Christensen (2004: 185) explain a focus group as “a type of group interview in which a moderator/researcher (person leading the focus group discussion) leads a discussion with a small group of individuals, in the case of this study the educators, learners and parents. This is done to examine, in detail, how the group members think and feel about a topic. It is called the “focus” group because the researcher keeps the individuals in the group focused on the topic being discussed”.

1.9.5 Data analysis and interpretation methods

Data analysis consists of making a detailed description of the case and its context. I first started with the transcription of interview data since the interviews will provide me with a large amount of data. I listened to tape-recorded data several times. Where the interviews will be in the local language (Sotho) I translated them into English. Data was prepared for coding. Maxwell (2005: 96) refers to the goal of coding as “...to fracture the data and rearrange them into categories that facilitate comparison between things in the same category and that aid in the development of theoretical concepts”. After coding the data, I broke down the data into units of broad themes that emerged from the questions asked and the participants’ response and under each broad theme I presented a number of sub-themes. Taking field notes, descriptions and my comments as an observer formed the basis of the analysis of observation data. The data from the diaries and exercise books was also included wherever they were relevant to the themes identified. Document data was presented by interpreting and analysing it in a descriptive form. The data from the document analysis was presented under relevant themes.

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical issues are of significant importance in every research; therefore it was my role as a researcher to take into account the effects of research on participants. Bassey (2002: 110) claimed that “the closer one comes to the people being studied the more important it is to ensure that they are willing to be studied and that what they say or do is reported in such a way that it is not prejudicial to their best interest”. Before the commencement of the interview, I gave a brief description of all ethical concerns to the participants, clarifying the purpose of the research and explaining the research protocol which states clearly the participants’ rights to voluntary involvement in and withdrawal from the research at any time. I did this in the language the participant understands. I was personally well known by all research participants, due to the fact that I worked in the area. This degree of familiarity between the participants and myself was a challenge and very dangerous as it could jeopardise my research. It would be dangerous in the sense that one can only tell what they thought I knew, and since they were all my elders they could decide not to disclose important and sensitive information to a young man like me. To avoid all those problems I always made a clear introduction of myself, explained the purpose of my study, and clarified the state of confidentiality and participants’ rights before the commencement of the interviews.

1.10.1 Confidentiality and anonymity

De Vos et al, (2005: 61) define privacy as something that is not intended for others to observe or to analyse, and that it is the right of an individual to decide the time to reveal his/her attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour to the public. All educators, parents and learners were assured that the information obtained would be treated confidentially and only would be used for the purposes of the study. I also assured them that no names would be included in the study. Participants’ confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed. I changed all participant names into pseudonyms during data presentation for safety and confidentiality reasons. Data was stored securely and shown to participants for member checking and clarification purposes only.

1.10.2 Informed consent

According to Babbie (2001: 470) informed consent is called “voluntary participation”. Neuman (2000: 124) confirms what is said by Babbie by adding that no one should be forced to participate in a research project, people must take part voluntarily. The participants were made aware of the fact that they would be participating voluntarily and could withdraw at any time if they so wished.

1.11 DEFINITION OF TERMS

It is important for a researcher to define the terms used in the study. People have different knowledge and understandings of the meaning of the words, so as a researcher you have to define the context in which these terms have been used to make it easy for the readers to understand the researcher’s line of argument and his/her findings. McKernan (1997: 62) confirms that the concept definition is done for the purpose of uncovering meaning and bearing in mind the knowledge of defining attributes.

Action research- is deliberate, solution-oriented investigation that is group or personally owned and conducted. It is characterized by spiralling cycles of problem identification, systematic data collection, reflection, analysis, data-driven action taken, and, finally, problem redefinition. The linking of the terms “action” and “research” highlights the essential features of this method: trying out ideas in practice as a means of increasing knowledge about or improving curriculum, teaching, and learning (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). _

School Governing Body - a governing body is a statutory body of people who are elected to govern a school. In accordance with section 16 of the South African Schools Act of 1996. The SGB consists of teachers, principal, parents of learners who are not employed at the school and learners in the case of secondary schools.

Teenager - A teenager according to The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1991: 1253) is a child between the ages of 13 to 19 years.

Illiteracy - not being educated or unable to read and write.

Parental involvement- Being involved in the school's activities and school's functions; practically helping educators at school.

1.12 ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
DoE	Department of Education
HER	Education Human Resources
EPU	Education Policy Unit
FET	Further Education and Training
HOD	Head of Department
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
PI	Parental Involvement
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
WSD	Whole School Development

1.13 CHAPTER DIVISIONS

Chapter 1

Introduces the reader to the phenomenon of parents' involvement, starting with my personal interests that attracted me first, followed by the research context and the methodological approach in which the research is oriented. This chapter highlights the research goal and some of the concepts used in the study.

Chapter 2

Gives the overview of literature specifically relevant to my study and I refer to the historical background of parents' involvement, review the policy underpinning the phenomenon and discuss most influential research and their findings.

Chapter 3

Describes the methodology adopted in this study. Here I give a description of the research paradigm I am working in, the method and the techniques employed in data collection. I also highlight the data analysis method like coding and the ethical considerations of the research participants and the site.

Chapter 4

Discusses the presentation of the data collected. Here the data are presented as drawn from all techniques and discussions on the research findings through the lens of the literature.

Chapter 5

Contains the summary of the findings, recommendations, suggestions for further research and the limitations

1.14. CONCLUSION

The law relating to, and having an impact on, parental involvement has increased in quantity and complexity in the last couple of decades. It is therefore overwhelming to find out that parents are still taking a back seat as far as parental involvement is concerned in schools. Parents and educators have to work together towards one common goal, to assist learners in their journey through adulthood. The focus of the research was to explore the role of the school management team in promoting parental involvement in the education of their children; how the school's climate can be changed and be made accessible to parents. Parents and educators have to collaborate in building their educational objectives. The research attempted to determine all the possible causes and consequences of the non-involvement of parents in the education of their children. The researcher also believed that if the problem of non-involvement of parents can be solved, the learner's academic achievements can improve drastically. The findings from related literature indicate that parental involvement remains a crucial point in all the efforts to enhance school. The next chapter focused on previous literature on various states on parental involvement.

1.15 PROJECTION FOR NEXT CHAPTER

The next chapter provides the relevant literature review for the study. In this chapter the relevant literature and the nature of the other researchers for the same topic have been explored. Theories and processes, which are related to parental involvement in the education of their children, are also reviewed. Assumptions about the non-involvement of the stakeholders have been explained and argued. Struwig & Stead (2001: 38) state that “all researchers need to do a literature study that involves tracing, identifying and analysing documents containing information related to the research problem”. They also emphasize that the literature used for the study should be relevant to the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The new Education Department expects parents to play a major role in the education of their children. The new education policy and the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 demand parental involvement in schools activities. Parents are now expected to be involved in the education of their children and through School Governing Bodies (SGB), help in the governance of the schools. Another big problem that the education departments are still faced with is how to make these parents in the governing bodies effective in their duties. Parents need to be empowered to be able to work in schools because schools are learning organizations that deal with education and parents are not educated to be able to meet the school requirements. Bastiani (1995: 7) who states that families are by far the biggest influence on the attitudes, behaviour and academic performance of young people; I realized that eventually much of what children will eventually know and be able to do is shaped in the home. I felt even keener to do this study. Comparing the level of education of parents of the late 80's, Colclough (2002: 145) says that parents of the 21st century are at least better equipped in educational matters than the parents of the late 80's. According to Davies (2002: 1), assumptions were made by educators that parents are not involved because they did not care. As Creswell (2003: 6) suggests, one needs to find out the truth about common assumptions.

The study investigated stakeholders' experience and understanding of partnerships in the management of a rural school. To fully understand the complexity of this phenomenon this chapter presents a conceptual framework ranging from parents' involvement through to participative management theories. Moreover ,recognition that increased parental involvement should start in Early Childhood Development (ECD), received attention in recent legislation and policy documents, such as the Education (White Paper 5): (DoE 2001), the National ECD Pilot Project Draft (DoE 1998b), Assessment Policy in General Education and Training (GET) and ABET (DoE 1998(a), and the Language in Education Policy (DoE 1997:7). All these policy documents explicitly or implicitly acknowledge that parents play an important role in the education of children and that partnership should be forged between the

home and the school. Effective and meaningful education requires the participation and co-operation of both educators and parents (Squelch (1994: 3). Heystek (1998:18) indicates that a majority of schools do not provide enough opportunities for the parents to participate in the school activities. According to Heystek and Louw (1999: 22) the motivation of the parents to participate at schools depends on the educators and the principals. Some principals think that empowering parents means that parents will take over the running of schools, but that is not true. Empowering parents give them self-worth and self-esteem because they develop an ability, a capability and skills to do things that they were never involved with before, (Batey 1996: 21). Empowered parents can help and share in the policy-making process at the local school level, as well as at the district level. The first section deals with parental involvement starting with its definition and then moves to the concept of school governance. This is followed by some historical background of how parents' involvement started and evolved in South Africa and looks more specifically at rural schools. I discussed some of the reasons for involving parents in the management of schools and examine parents' involvement from a legal perspective by discussing the Acts, which present the expectations, and rights that are granted to parents in the governance of public schools including the functions of School Boards.

Comparisons of different countries were made on how they involve parents in their educational systems. Particular references of literature were made on Namibia. Poverty in Namibia is generally very high and, on average, 41% of homes in Namibia lived in either poverty or abject poverty in the years 2003/2004 (National Planning Commission, 2008). Whether or not the family lives in poverty depends highly on the educational level of the head of the household. The percentage of homes that live in poverty or abject poverty where the head of the household has no formal education is 76.7%. When the head of the household has either primary education or secondary education, the percentage of homes that live in poverty or abject poverty is 53.2% and 17.7% respectively. On the other hand, amongst the households where the head of the household has finished a university degree the percentage of homes who live in poverty or abject poverty is only 0.5%. These numbers show how important education is for the homes in the country.

The last part of section one deals with the problematic Dekker & Lemmer emphasise that “If the school (and thus education) is to be improved, we need parents who are critical and can make sensible judgements and who do not view changes in the education system as a threat” (1993: 165). Again, according to *Emerging Voices* (HSRC 2005: 119) “It is important for parents to be involved and supportive of their children’s education because children feel encouraged when their parents are informed about their progress at school.” Thus it is clear that it is not desirable to exclude parents from involvement in school governance when it is their children who are the main clients and potential beneficiaries of educational organisations. The representatives of parents play an important role in the school governing body since they are supposed to represent the interests of parents. They are the spokespersons of parents in their communities. In a school governing body, parents’ representatives constitute the majority.

2.2 SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES AND SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Barker (1990: 19) states that members of school governing bodies are also known as governors. He further states that governors are supposed to act as a crucial link between schools, communities, and the Department of Education. School governing bodies play a decisive role in the governance of schools. Section 16(1) of the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) mandates this role to them. Governance can be viewed to mean the exercise of directing influence over something. The World Book Dictionary (2003: 921) defines the word “to govern” as synonymous with “to rule, control, and to manage”. “To manage” is to work with resources to achieve objectives of the organisation by planning, organising, leading, and controlling (Megginson, Mosley, and Pietri 1992: G1). Glatter (2002: 227) agrees with the above definitions of governance as he defines them as the means by which an ensemble of activities are controlled or directed, such that they deliver an acceptable range of outcomes according to established sound standards. According to Maile cited in Xaba (2004:314), “School governance is regarded as an act of determining policy and rules by which a school is to be organised and controlled, which includes ensuring that such rules and policies are carried out effectively”. To achieve this, the School Board members are allocated functions. The Education Human Resources (HER) (Department of Education, 1999b: 10)

provide a clear picture of how the school governing body should be structured in South African Education management. Here is the structure presented by the EHR:

- Principal
- Elected members
- Educators
- Non-educators
- Learners (secondary school; grade eight and higher)
- Co-opted members

A case study on decentralisation in Hong Kong by Malen et al (1990) and Prawda (1993) goes a step further by arguing that administrative decentralisation in schools does not necessarily result in an improvement in education quality. Fiske, quoted by Leung (2001: 17-35) suggests that policy implementation in Hong Kong involves a shimmy of managerial restructuring where the main motive is alleged not to be to redistribute power or to empower the stakeholders, as is officially proclaimed. Fiske (1996: 12) argues that decentralisation has political implications, even if it is function of management. A case study on decentralisation in Hong Kong by Malen et al (1990) and Prawda (1993) goes a step further by arguing that administrative decentralisation in schools does not necessarily result in an improvement in education quality. Fiske, quoted by Leung (2001: 17-35) suggests that policy implementation in Hong Kong involves a shimmy of managerial restructuring where the main motive is alleged not to be to redistribute power or to empower the stakeholders, as is officially proclaimed. Fiske (1996: 12) argues that decentralisation has political implications, even if it is function of management. A case study on decentralisation in Hong Kong by Malen et al (1990) and Prawda (1993) goes a step further by arguing that administrative decentralisation in schools does not necessarily result in an improvement in education quality. Fiske, quoted by Leung (2001: 17-35) suggests that policy implementation in Hong Kong involves a shimmy of managerial restructuring where the main motive is alleged not to be to redistribute power or to empower the stakeholders, as is officially proclaimed. Fiske (1996: 12) argues that decentralisation has political implications, even if it is function of management.

Potgieter, Visser, van der Bank, Mothata & Squelch (1997: 11) define school governance as follows: School governance, as regarding the governing body's functions, means determining the policy and rules by which your school is to be organised and controlled. It includes

ensuring that such rules and policies are carried out effectively in terms of the law and the budget of the school. Parental involvement has always been problematic especially in rural schools (Ndlazi, 1999; Christie, 2001; HSRC, 2005). The history of parental involvement in rural communities in the system of education is provided for by means of School Committees, boards of control or some other means.” However, although the School Boards he refers to existed, they had no powers or rights to challenge the government or the school principal. Statements, which argue that parental involvement existed –such as the quotation from Visser above –, are therefore misleading. Amukugo (1993: 77) explains how, in a Namibian context, real power resided with the government and not the parents: in terms of Act 30 (section 4) of 1980, the active involvement of parents and communities shall be given a place in the educational system, but at the same time the Administrator General advocated for parents’ and communities’ participation in the area of school, he [the Administrator General] was responsible for establishing the school committee or advisory board for every state school. Even worse, he could, whenever he deemed it necessary, dissolve any schoolcommittee or advisory board, withdraw powers and duties, as well as replace members of such committees and boards (section 8). With Educational Act No. 30 of 1980, the Administrator General had an overwhelming power to control and direct education of Africans in accordance with the interest of the state [my emphasis].

2.3 FUNCTIONS OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

According to the DOE (2005: 57), School Governing Bodies have a responsibility to ensure that a code of conduct for learners is drawn up and adopted. In addition, they also have a responsibility to determine starting times and closing times. They have to decide on the choice of subjects and the extra-mural curriculum of the school. The acquisition of textbooks, and other educational material, is also their duty. The amount to be paid as school fees and fundraising is decided upon by school governing bodies. Thody (1992: 9) explains that school governing bodies have to be involved in managing almost every aspect of a school. Section 20 (1)(b)(c) of the South African Schools Act no 84 of 1996, school governing bodies must formulate, adopt, and submit copies of their constitutions to the Department of Education. They must adhere to the provisions of their constitutions. School governing bodies must also develop vision and mission statements.

In addition, they must support principals and the staff in performing their professional duties. According to Loock, Campher, Du Preez, Grobler, and Shaba (2003: 42), principals also need to have skills of working with governing bodies. This means that they have to learn to share the decision-making responsibility with the governing body. School governing bodies must prepare the annual budget. They must establish and administer school funds which mean they must collect and know how school funds are spent. School governing bodies must administer and control school property, buildings, and grounds occupied or owned by the school. They must determine language and religious policies to be followed at their schools (Province of the Eastern Cape DOE 2001: 4). It is of importance to note that school governing bodies are juristic persons. They can enter into contracts. School governing bodies can appoint school personnel. At some schools, there are teachers who are employed and paid by school governing bodies. School governing bodies have a right to terminate the contract signed between themselves and a teacher after giving the teacher a one-month notice or a one-month salary. The governing body has to play a role in finding and renting places and signing contracts when the school is trying to find premises for tuition. The South African Schools Act (1996), section (20) lay down the functions of all governing bodies of state schools. Most of the functions subject to this Act are similar to those of the Namibian Education Act (2001) Namibian Education Act of 2001, section 17, the powers and functions of a School Board are as follows:

- To develop the mission, goals, and objectives of the school
- To advise the school's management on the extra-mural curriculum of the school
- To advise the Regional Director of Education on educational needs and the curriculum of the school
- Subject to the Public Service Act, to recommend to the Permanent Secretary the appointment of teachers and other staff members at the school
- Subject to the restrictions imposed by the permanent secretary and upon conditions as the School Board may determine, to allow the reasonable use of the school facilities for community purposes
- To consider any case of misconduct by a learner or staff member of the school with the aim of:
 - (a) Ensuring that such misconduct is properly investigated and

- (b) Recommending to the Permanent Secretary the appropriate disciplinary measures to be taken regarding serious misconduct of a learner
- To exercise other powers and perform other duties and functions as may be authorised or imposed by or under this Act.

In her study of European School Governance, Riley (1998: 7) notes that schools do not exist in a vacuum. According to literature in general, parental involvement in school matters has been a negative one. Many schools, as Riley (1998: 131) outlines, adapted the “no parents beyond this point” principle in the 1960s. In the 1970s, Tyndale (cited in Riley, 1998: 131) brought the parental issue to the fore and questioned the legitimacy of parents in school governance. His findings were that parents are legitimate partners and that they should be given a legitimate say in the management of the school through representation on governing bodies (*Ibid.*: 131). Poster, (1982: 155) argues that by and large, it is in the structure and composition of the school governing bodies that change has been most marked in recent years. His concern is that the number of parents in the governing body is inadequate to fully represent them. He states that (*Ibid.*: 153) he does not believe that parent membership of the governing body is sufficient in itself to achieve the full involvement of all parents in the life and activities. Poster, (1982: 155) argues that by and large, it is in the structure and composition of the school governing bodies that change has been most marked in recent years. His concern is that the number of parents in the governing body is inadequate to fully represent them. He states that (*Ibid.*: 153) he does not believe that parent membership of the governing body is sufficient in itself to achieve the full involvement of all parents in the life and activities of the school.

Professional understanding of the problems of children at school enables parents a great deal of autonomy. In terms of communication, she highlights that teachers are not easily contacted and always available for meetings. In her research on the issue of parental apathy she found that some parents felt that the principals tried to keep their participation to a minimum. Fine, Deem, Johnson and Ranson (DoE, Vol. 27, 1999a: 416) unanimously concur that some parents feel patronized by the teachers or even antagonistic to them. All these studies conducted in Belgium, UK and USA prove that parental participation in educational management is still a problem, and it seems to be a universal issue.

In his study of school governance, Wilson (DoE, Vol. 29 January 2001: 49-51) propounds the following aspects as major hindrances in parental participation, namely: limited influence, unrealistic expectations, role conflict, internal division, inadequate training and support of governors, an unclear role for governors and unclear financial arrangements.

2.4 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE MODELS AND THE ROLE OF LEGISLATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Glatter (2002: 228-229) states that there are four models of governance in education. In his analysis he states that these models are: the competitive market model, the school empowerment model, the local empowerment model, and the quality control model. In the competitive model each school is treated as an autonomous small business. Schools compete against one another for pupils and for funds. The local empowerment model is similar to the school empowerment model. The only difference is that it has a local education system, which is not reflected in the South African situation. When a country uses this model schools are part of local systems. The focus in this model is on the locality as a social and educational unit Glatter (2002: 230). Quality control has a bureaucratic approach with laid down rules. Schools are seen as a delivery point 1.

The school empowerment model intends at empowering school-level stakeholders. Loock and others (2003: 40) state that government, educators' unions, non-governmental organizations, educators, parents and learners are all stakeholders who have a role to play in the field of school resources management. When the school empowerment model is used, functions and governance of the school are delegated to both teachers and parents. This is done so that all people who are participating in school activities can be Van Deventer and Kruger (2003: 262) also emphasise the importance of the role played by parents as they state that in school governing bodies' parents should always outnumber other members by one vote. There is an expected partnership between the community, teachers and the learners in achieving the objectives of the school and the Department of Education.

In addition to this, Glatter (2002: 230) states that perspectives underlying school empowerment are either political or managerial or both. Looking at South Africa's Schools Act, 84 of 1996 it clearly states that it aims to democratise public schools. This political undertone of democratising education makes South African public schools fit into school empowerment model. It is important to note that the school is professionally managed. This is done to ensure that the school reaches its intended vision and mission. The school Management Team, the governing body and the teachers do this professional management. Professional management has to be linked with school governance, which is done by the governing body. The principal has the task of liaising and co-ordinating professional management and governance. This shows that the school governing body has to collaborate with other school organs for it to function properly.

The local empowerment model as explained by Glatter (2002: 230) is viewed as an educational system where schools in an area are viewed as not being independent, but as depending on one another. Each school consults with another school when decisions are made, as they are a family. The leadership role of the school is that of a networker. The Department of Education's representative acts as a strategic co-ordinator only, and not as a supportive adviser as in the empowered (empowerment model?) and take part in decision-making processes. The idea of collectivism has been supported by Bush (2003) in his collegial model. Bush (2003: 64) reveals that the collegial model assumes that organizations determine policy and make decisions through a process of discussion leading to consensus. This model was closely associated with school effectiveness and school improvement (Bush 2003: 64).

Little (cited in Bush, 2003: 64) discusses the benefits of this approach as follows: the reason to pursue the study and practice of collegiality is that, presumably, something is gained when teachers work together and something is lost when they do not. In terms of leadership, the collegial model assumes that policy is determined "within a participative framework, therefore the head or principal is expected to adopt strategies which acknowledge that issues may emerge from different parts of the organization and be resolved in a complex interactive process" (Bush, 2005: 75). This collegial model goes hand in hand with transformational leadership. Bush (2003: 76) states that this form of leadership assumes that the central focus

of leadership ought to be the commitments and capacities of organizational members. Littlewood (cited in Bush, 2003: 77) conceptualizes transformational leadership along eight dimensions:

- Building school vision
- Establishing school goals
- Providing intellectual stimulation
- Offering individual support
- Modelling best practices and important organizational values
- Demonstrating high performance expectations
- Creating a productive school culture; and
- Developing structures to foster participation in school decisions.

The last dimension connects to Fullan's (1999) complexity theory in that though developing structures may cause its sets of problems, they are essential. Complexity theory according to Fullan (1999) focuses managerial thinking on the interrelationships between different parts of an organization and as the trade-off of less control for greater adaptation. Hoy and Miskel (1982) support the participative system as a typically good organizational structure. They state that supportive leadership and highly motivated employees who share in the decision making process characterize this kind of organizational structure. Transformational leadership culminates in organizational change. Norris (2001: 220) defines transformation as a form of enacted change that is planned and is intended to bring about significant changes in how an institution is managed. He suggests that this form of change is unlike other changes, in that it is intentionally planned to alter organizational structures and relationships.

Thomas and Robertshaw (1999) maintain that transformation as it relates to the internal environment of companies in South Africa can be described as a process for developing and maintaining a work environment in which everyone can be developed to his or her potential and be allowed to contribute fully to the life of the company and its objectives. Oxtoby (cited in Norris, 2001: 220) complained that the vast majority of the South African workforce still operates under management structures, which by overseas standards are to a significant extent authoritarian in nature. Norris (2001) asserted that what is required is to develop an organization in which the human relations culture is such that people are inspired rather than driven, and where the intrinsic motivation for delivering superior performance is reinforced

by management communication styles, and where meeting the organization's needs is the individual's pleasure rather than his or her duty.

2.5 SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP WITH LEGITIMATE STAKEHOLDERS

Department of Education Task Team Report (1996: 27) by stating that management should not be seen as being the task of the few; it should be seen as an activity in which all members of educational organizations engage. This relates very much to the idea of school-based management advocated by the South African Department of Education (1996: 31) in an assertion that school governors are integral partners in the process. This idea of involvement calls the community at large to be involved in school matters. It involves parents in the form of governing bodies, teachers and even learners in the form of Representative Council of Learners (RCLs). According to the Education Department (1996: 27) management is about doing things and working with people to make things happen. It is a process to which all contribute and in which everyone in an organization ought to be involved.

2.5.1 Parental involvement and legal obligations

Legally the parent is the primary educator of the child, and has a duty to perform, i.e. to give continuing attention to the child and be involved with the educational training of the child (Weeto, 1997: 17) and (Botha, et al. 2003: 193). The parent is the child's first and most important educator (Springate & Stegelin, 1999: 75). According to Ngcongco and Chetty (1994: 64), in South Africa management and governance was viewed as an activity that was done by a person who held a senior position in an organization. This has been portrayed by what has been taking place in schools whereby the authority to do everything was vested in the school principal. This gave the principal the power to take decisions with little or no input from the parents or staff members. This can be seen as a top-down approach.

Ngcongco and Chetty (1994: 64) further state that only parents who had children in former Model C schools were given a chance to participate in governance of schools. This might be due to the fact that parents in these former Model C schools were contributing large sums of money, as school fees were high. Beare et al in (Bell 2002: 259) argue that the parent body of

any school has a very rich fund of skills and expertise. Such knowledge and experiences are sometimes more than those of teachers. Oosthuizen (2002: 194) concurs with Beareet al in (Bell 2002) when he also agrees that parents can make a meaningful contribution to school activities, especially in those activities that fall outside the expertise of education, but where such a parent is an expert. The role of parents in management does not begin and end with the school governing body.

The research by Bridgemohan, Van Wyk, Van Staden (2005: 11), highlights the stereotype that links the low socio-economic parents to the non-involvement of parents. They also stipulate the fact that these parents are labelled as people who do not care about their children's education. Parry (2000: 68) says this is a belief and a generalization about people that leads to the insufficient attention given to individual differences. According to Epstein (1995: 703) it's not true that parents do not care about their children's education because he states that irrespective of parents' socio-economic status, all parents want their children to succeed.

According to Bell (2002: 260), a researcher known as Ng in Hong Kong in 1994 noted that teachers and school principals desired to co-operate with parents in the education of their children. This researcher noted that there was a problem on what type of co-operation or participation was desired. Ng (1994) designed a model for participation of the parents. This model has six levels. The first one is communicating with school. The second is the supporting of children learning at homes by parents. The third is taking part in organising a parent teacher-association. The fourth is taking part in providing help in classroom libraries and helping with extra-mural activities. The fifth is being part of the consultative process and the sixth is the fulltime participation in school governance.

South African Schools Act (1996) "in an attempt to give parents the responsibility of managing the schools their children attend and of legitimating parental participation in the life of the school" (HSRC, 2005: 120). Therefore, "The South African Schools Act provides formal power in education to parents as well as communities" (Msila, 2004: 301). Furthermore, according to Msila (2004: 301), "The SASA creates the expectation for parents to be meaningful partners in school governance". However, "Questions of school governance,

and the forms of school community relationships it expresses, have been a key concern of education policy in South Africa” (Christie, 2001: 56). At the same time, the Act required that schools establish School Governing Bodies (SGBs) to be composed of parents, teachers, students (in secondary schools) and members of school support staff (van Wyk, 2004; HSRC, 2005). The SASA section 23(9) states, “The number of parent members must comprise one more than the combined total of other members of a governing body that have voting rights.”

How Ng’s model looked (Bell 2002: 260), the researcher noted that both parents and teachers agreed to participate in the two lower levels. Ng’s (1994) research also noted that most teachers were sceptical of accepting parental participation as far as other levels were concerned. Moreover, the researcher also noticed that many parents were keen on becoming members of school management committees (school governing bodies), but in some cases where they wanted teachers had an unwelcoming attitude towards them. This might be the reason why the Department of Education devised Section 16 of the South Africa Schools Act no 84 of 1996, which gives parents a share in school governance.

One might reasonably argue that without that legislation, parental involvement in many schools would only be at the lower levels of Ng’s model and no parents would be involved in school governance. Not every parent who has a child at a school can be involved in the running of the school; they can only elect parents who will represent their interests. The Eastern Cape DOE (2001: B52) states that it is important for a principal to meet almost weekly with the Chairperson of the school governing body so that they keep each other informed about what is happening in the school. (Botha et al., 2003: 194). Weeto (1997: 5) and Squelch (1994: 2) list the following reasons why parental involvement is crucial:

- It contributes to the vital role of parents in giving attention to and love for their children.
- Children are born into a certain religious and cultural milieu which is characterized by particular practices, values and norms. Parents must see to it that the school does not interfere with these cultural and religious values.
- All parents are primary and natural educators and they want their children to succeed
- Educators’ and parents’ skills complement each other.

- Parents can influence their children's attitudes, behaviour and discipline towards schooling and education.
- Parents have certain legal rights regarding their children's education.

According to Griffith (2000: 162) "Involvement of parents in their children's education has long been advocated as integral to positive childhood development and school success." Griffith adds that the beneficial effects of parent involvement are mostly visible in children's academic learning and performance. In addition Squelch and Lemmer (1994: 93) claim "Parental involvement is vital with benefits such as improving school performance, reducing drop-out rates, decreasing delinquency and developing a more positive attitude towards the school." Namibia the Education Act of 2001 section 18 (2) states that school parents must constitute the majority of members of a School Board. Only a parent who is not employed at the school may be the chairperson of the governing body (South Africa, 1996, section 29(2); Namibia, 2001, section 19(4)). This shows that the Acts want to empower and encourage parents outside the school premises to be fully involved in the education of their children.

Van Wyk (2004: 49) highlighted, "Parents have been placed in a powerful position with authority to influence fundamental issues, such as school budget, language policy, discipline, and appointment and promotion of teaching and administration staff." Furthermore, the SASA stipulates other responsibilities of parents as follows:

- Parents must see to it that a learner attends a school from the first school day of the year in which a learner reaches the age of seven (7).
- A parent of a learner must pay the school fees that have been duly approved, except in the case where a parent has been exempted.
- Parent's failure to send the child to school without permission may result in a fine or imprisonment.

2.5.2 School and the community

Moloi supports the idea of making schools learning organisations. Moloi (2002:15) emphasised that "For our schools to become learning organisations we need to facilitate learning at the four levels of the individual, the team, the organisation and society." The lesson to be gained from learning at four levels is that if we combine our will, motivation and

action, and collaborate with parents and the wider community in our efforts to transform schools, we will not fail. Organisational learning can help the individual, groups and the whole organisation to continuously transform the organisation in the direction that can include and satisfy all stakeholders. Learning organisations can create an ideal situation that can be achieved through the highest participation of all involved individuals and groups.

Adaptation of the wise proverb, “It takes a community to raise a child,” is used by weaving culturally appropriate practices into the leadership structure and capacity building strategies to match local contexts that increase parent involvement in the local school communities. Research talks about the importance of home support to children’s learning and the impact on a child when there is consistency of support from an adult (not necessarily a parent) who takes the time to nurture the learning development and growth from early years (Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salinas, Johsorn, & Voorhis, 2002; Fehrmann, Keith, & Reiners, 1987). Research also confirms the natural phenomenon that when children know they are being held responsible for their learning, they will be encouraged to learn and, therefore, the interest to learn and motivation to stay in school longer will, moreover, assist in their achievement levels (Ingram, Wolfe, & Lieberman, 2007). How can schools and homes bridge this gap so all children have a model for learning? These types of conversations are what the cluster model process is encouraging at various levels and among groups, (e.g., teacher-teacher, teacher-parents; parent–parent; parents–traditional leaders, parents-local governments, schools-local governments). These dialogs are important because each community is unique, and the context of working with change for improvement purposes is not a “one size fits all” fix. It is interesting to compare the evolving changes in the school communities since the cluster model initiative started and how they have begun to infuse cultural practices that foster children’s learning growth into the school decision making process.

2.5.3 Learner involvement

Nongubo (2004) found that learner involvement in school governance is still problematic, though it is presently provided for by policies that govern schools, including the South African Schools Act. Nongubo (2004) suggests that the reason for minimal learner involvement is that there is an indecisive and autocratic mindset among educators regarding

the issue of learner involvement in governance and management. Nongubo (2004) states clearly that the democratic potential of learner participation is undermined. Riley (1998: 125) states that it is rare that children's voices are heard in educational debates. She proceeds arguing that (p. 126) children have much to learn, much to be taught, but they are not empty vessels, and they also have much to give. Riley's view (1998: 126) that learners' voices deserve to be listened to and that they can make a significant contribution to creating a vibrant school community of learners which includes teachers, as well as pupils, has been part of international thinking that has given birth to the Representative Council of Learners in South African educational circles.

The Greek Philosopher, Aristotle (cited in Riley, 1998: 137) stated that the citizen should be moulded to suit the form of government in which the literature survey conducted by Bisschoff & Phakoa (1999: 89) was based on the position of minors in governing bodies of public secondary schools in England, Japan and Kenya. According to the studies conducted, South African learners appeared to be dissatisfied with their representation, however, the findings of these scholars revealed that, compared with England, Japan and Kenya, South Africa represents a unique educational scenario in terms of learner representation. In other words, learners are hardly represented in other countries. Many schools, historically, have a prefect tradition (DoE 1999b: 11). With the passing of the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996, democracy was consolidated at school level with the introduction of the Representative Council of Learners (RCL). A short definition of a RCL, according to the Education Human Resources (DoE 1999b: 11) is an official body representing all learners in secondary schools. The RCLs are representative bodies that have a more definite function because they have a greater say in fundamental policy matters.

2.6 PROBLEMS WITH PARENT PARTICIPATION

The Education White Paper 2 as explained by Chetty and Ngcongco (1994: 68) provide that governance is the responsibility of School Governing Bodies to determine policies, whereas management refers to the day-to-day organization of teaching, learning and other activities that support it. Some parents get confused and want to do everything and they end up wanting to do the role of managing every aspect of the school, even if that is supposed to be done by

school managers (School Management Teams or the principal). There is a perceived lack of harmony in relationships between teachers and parents who are not members of a school governing body. It is a known fact, as noted by Van Schalkwyk (2002: 108), that many parents are illiterate and ignorant in the fields like Science and Maths and they have little understanding of their children's specific needs in the Pre-primary, Primary, or Secondary phase. Therefore most parents are unable to meet the expectations of education as mentioned in the duties of school governing bodies.

Van Schalkwyk (2002: 110) notes that the failure of co-operation between teachers and parents results from both sides. He states that "parents: -

- do not want to get involved
- do not know how to get involved
- do not have time to get involved
- find it difficult to get involved, in rural as well as in urban areas.
- And teachers regard themselves as superior and think they know better
- do not want to work with parents
- do not know how to involve parents
- are negative towards parents
- are often afraid of parental involvement "(Van Schalkwyk 2002 : 110).

2.7 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMMES IN THE CHINESE, USA AND ZIMBABWEAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

An avalanche of both South African and international literature stipulates the significance of involving relevant stakeholders in education management. This was advocated by the Department of Education Task Team Report (1996: 27) by stating that management should not be seen as being the task of the few; it should be seen as an activity in which all members of educational organizations engage. The research used the following countries (China, USA and Zimbabwe) to compare their parental involvement programmes in their education systems.

2.7.1 China

The education system in the People's Republic of China has been influenced greatly by the population which has led to the one-child policy as introduced in 1979, although in the past there is little evidence of Chinese influence in the education of their children due to their ultimate goal embedded in the Confucian philosophy which sought harmony by placing every individual in his/her appropriate station of life (Liu & Chien, 1998: 214). Nowadays their attitude has changed. Firstly, they have been influenced by the Western practices on parental involvement and secondly by their traditional beliefs (Gu, 2008: 575). The Chinese traditional culture emphasises a strong interdependent relationship between parents and children (Gu, 2008: 573), the kind of mentality the Zimbabwean education system has attempted to emulate through the concept of holistic education.

The Chinese believe that if they assist children with their educational opportunities and advancement, their children, as adults will be in a solid position to care for them at old age (Ming & Abbot, 1992:50). It characterises the legal respect the Chinese child particularly that of a son, should show to his parents (Vong, 2008: 155). Secondly, the one-child policy has made the Chinese's hopes and dreams be centred on the only child (Gu, 2008: 573). This has made them believe that education is the beginning rung on the ladder leading to future success and better life (Gu, 2008: 573). In that regard they try their best to provide their only child with the best education (Ming & Abbot, 1992: 51). It is against this historical background of events that the Chinese education system has two distinct approaches to parental involvement: non- involvement and home-based involvement. The latter view is based on the premise that education cannot be left solely to professional educators, but should provide the framework for parental participation in the educational process so that more parents can avail themselves of this opportunity (Winter, 2001: 314). Parents are expected to make sacrifices even if it means being impoverished by the additional enrichment programmes on offer they seek, for the benefit of their children's success (Vong, 2008: 155). Their one-child policy (Liu & Chien, 1998: 214), interdependent relationship between parents and children (Ming & Abbot, 1992: 50) and the notion that success is unquestionable and non-negotiable as learners commit themselves fully to their education enterprise (Li et al 2008:13) are what propels them to greater action. To the Chinese family, every child has the

capacity to succeed regardless of the individual differences endowed in them which Western educators always preach about (Vong, 2008: 155). Failure brings shame to the family and cases of children being disowned are reported in the Chinese society (Cao, Bishop & Forgasz, 2006: 88).

2.7.2 USA

According to Fitzgerald (2004:6), this was founded by 12 faculty wives at the University of Chicago with guidance from the University in 1916. Berger (2007: 109) further asserts that the women wanted high quality child care for their children, parent education and time to work for the Red Cross during the war. The cooperation followed the tradition of English nursery schools established in 1911 by Margaret McMillan. McMillan's open air-school for the poor in England emphasised health, education, play and parent education, rather than mere child watching. During this era, women took the centre stage because the men had left the profession so as to join the war (Fitzgerald, 2004: 6). Even nowadays, in most Third World countries (including Zimbabwe) women continue to play centre stage, not that because most of them are mere housewives, but due to the natural bond that exists between the mother and child. Management should not be surprised when female participants dominant the involvement process in their environments.

The of 1994 Act which preceded the 1965 Act according to Patrikakou et al (2005: 133-134) and added several Title 1 provisions for PI in section 118 of the Act. A certain amount (\$500 000 US or 1%) was allocated to parental involvement activities. Each Title 1 was supposed to develop jointly with parents a "school parent compact" meant to produce high-quality curriculum and instruction. The parent's responsibilities to support their children's learning at home and on-going school-home communication necessary for achieving high standards were emphasised. This compact was supposed to be signed by parents and key staff. It also required that schools develop with parents a written PI plan that included shared responsibility for high performance and make the plan available to parents of participating children. Apart from that, schools were supposed to convene parents' meetings annually to inform them of the school's parental involvement plan. According to Patrikakou et al (2005:

134), the parental involvement plan as enshrined in the NCLB Act entailed the following strategies:

- It should include “regular”, two-way, and meaningful communication on student learning and school activities, ensuring that parents play an integral role in assisting their child’s learning and act as partners in their child’s education.
- It also requires training materials for parents in working with their children, and training for educators on the value of parent contributions and how to reach and work with them as equal partners. Parents may help develop this training.
- Failing schools need to give parents an explanation as to why students were failing, what the school would do to address the problem of low achievement and how parents could be involved in working on the academic issues. In that respect parents would make a choice on whether to retain their child there or transfer to the next school. Transport was paid for or the school could give supplementary educational tuition outside school hours.
- It was also a requirement that annual report cards for all schools must show overall student performances by subgroups in each school and district on state assessment of basic subjects in grades 3-8, graduation and retention rates for secondary schools and teacher qualifications.
- Districts were expected to conduct, with parent input, annual evaluations of the content and effectiveness of parental involvement policies.
- States were to review district parental involvement policies and practices.

Extensive research conducted in the US have revealed that some parents of high-achievers do not want to be involved in the education of their children as they do not see the logic of doing so (Dun & Booth, 1996: 10). Consistent with this view are that working-class parents are less likely to attend to school events as compared to their middle-class counterparts (Gu, 2008: 8). In both instances, parents claim that they do not have time to do so (Gu, 2008: 8; Lareau, 2000: 7). Parsons (1994: 22), although seems to agree with the time constraints which usually lead to disengagement by working-class parents, he also criticises the cultural set up in schools which he thinks favours parents of higher socio-economic status as compared to the lower ones. Education managers with no background information to non-involvement may misconstrue this to mean that such parents neither care nor value the education of their

children (Knopf & Swick, 2006: 293). Such careless remarks may have a ripple effect on the attitudes of parents towards parental involvement. Education managers in this context according to Knopf & Swick (2006: 293) must remember that non-involvement may be caused by lack of resources such as transport or school events could be coinciding with the parents' busy schedules, aspects which need to be taken care of if all parents are to be brought on board.

Where the responsible authority of the school is:

- (i) A local authority, a councillor appointed by the local authority or
- (ii) Any other authority or body, a person appointed by the authority or body.

2.7.3 Zimbabwe

The ZANU PF Manifesto, believed to be the foundation of the educational reforms which swept across Zimbabwe in the 1980s to redress the racial anomalies of the past in education, is explored. The document is considered to be the blueprint of all the policies that followed thereafter as attempts were made to democratise and universalise the education system. Attempts have also been made to show how the ruling government of the time responded to these colonial concerns by the promulgation of several Acts of Parliament which sought to address the racial discriminatory anomalies of the past and localise the management of education. As a result of these statutes, the 1990s witnessed a paradigm shift in the area of educational management. The political debate of that time was that the costs and demands for educational provision were outstripping the available revenue. According to that view, the Zimbabwean government had no choice, save to bring parents on board through the SDCs/SDAs statutory instruments. The assumption was that communities, through legalised PI governing boards, would argue the meagre resources which government was trying equitably to rationalise as a way of bridging the gap caused by the racial educational policies of the past.

Even the majority were advocating for cost-sharing strategies on a dollar to dollar basis (Nziramanga, 1999: 23). According to that view, central government was left with no choice, save to decentralise some of its functions to local authorities (Chikoko, 2008: 246).

The 1987 Education Act and in particular the statutory instruments No 87 of 1992 about SDCs and No 70 of 1993 about SDAs (Chikoko, 2008: 247) offer starting points for the decentralisation of functions to lower tiers, in particular for the delegation of management to school level (Zvobgo, 1996: 38; 2004: 110). One of the major objectives of decentralisation was the strengthening of local political institutions and increase of people's participation in development to boost mobilisation of local resources (Zvobgo, 1996: 38). Similarly, decentralisation was meant to increase efficiency and effectiveness in government schools with the hope of improving service delivery (Zvobgo, 2004: 110).

This was in line with the holistic type of education Zimbabwe aspired to provide as spelt out by its Vision 2020 which intended to reform the educational system so that the rich diversity of the spiritual, cultural and moral values were incorporated into the curriculum (Nziramasanga, 1999: 1). Vision 2020 regarded the family as the key factor in passing on traditions and moral values to the children and the school was also viewed as an institution with a significant influence through the curriculum (Nziramasanga, 1999: 61). Vision 2020 (cited in Nziramasanga, 1999: 74) confirms this perception when it asserts that "the development of an individual's morality and sense of belonging takes place within the family", hence the view that the family and home are the first place of learning and of life-long learning which makes them irreplaceable institutions in the learning process. The Education Act (Chapter 25: 04) of 1996 (p 624) on School Development Committees reads as follows:

- (a) The assemble authority of every registered school to which a grant is made in terms of Section thirty-six shall establish a committee, to be known as a School Development Committee.
- (b) A School Development Committee if approved by the Minister shall be vested with the control of financial affairs of the school for which it has been established.
- (c) The composition, financial and procedure of every School Development Committee shall be prescribed.

2.8 THE EDUCATION ACT OF 2006: ZIMBABWE

This Act reads as follows:

1. Parents or guardians with children at any school shall constitute a School Parents Assembly.
2. The responsible authority of any registered school shall cause the School Parents Assembly to establish a School Development Committee (SDC).
3. The composition, function, duties, procedures and powers of SDCs shall be as contained in the constitution of the School Parents Assembly. Statutory instrument 70 of 1993, generally called the Education (School Development Associations) (Government Schools) Regulation, 1993 is equally based on Section 62 of the Education Act, 1987 as amended in 1991, 1996 and 2006. It provides the establishment of School Development Associations in state or government schools. The objects of SDAs (p620-621) are the same as those stipulated above which relate to SDCs. Their functions and duties are as follows:

- Use the land, buildings and other facilities at the school for educational, sporting, recreational or any other purposes which benefit the school as a whole.
- Assist, operate, develop or extend the school in consultation with the head and approval of the Secretary.
- Help preserve and maintain the school property and facilities in a sound condition fit for the intended purpose.
- Help in the organisation and administration of secular and non-academic activities of the school in consultation with the head.
- Engage or hire additional members of staff. Such teachers, who should be under seventy years of age are engaged in consultation with the head and Secretary, regardless of whether they are full or part-time teachers.
- Engage or hire, in consultation with the head and with the approval of the Secretary, an agreed number of ancillary staff whose qualifications for specified posts shall be approved by the Secretary.
- Ensure that only classes of not less than fifteen children and not more than fifty children start school at the beginning of each academic year.
- Undertake to provide, with prior consultation of the head and Secretary's approval, new buildings and additional facilities, and to carry out any alterations, additions, improvements or repairs to existing buildings.

Repair any damage caused to property and facilities in the school which its servants or agents or contractors may cause.

- Establish committees or sub-committees to assist expedite the association's work.
- Provide financial assistance to those pupils experiencing financial inadequacy through grants or scholarships.
- Submit, or request, annual audited books of accounts of the association, to the Secretary.
- Charge or impose a levy in respect of each child enrolled at the school.
- Increase levy in any period of not less than twelve months.
- Charge a capital development levy for a fixed number of terms; and
- Submit budgets to justify increase in levy or charge of levy for capital development

Both statutes are very clear on who belongs to these institutions. According to Section 6 clause

(1) Subject to subsection (2) and (3), a school development committee shall consist of-

- (a) five persons elected, subject to these regulations, by parents of pupils at the school;
- (b) the head of the school;
- (c) a deputy head of the school;
- (d) a teacher at the school, who shall be appointed by the Secretary; and
- (e) where the responsible authority of the school is-
 - (i) a local authority, a councillor appointed by the local authority: or
 - (ii) any other authority or body, a person appointed by the authority or body.

Therefore, education reform in the US, China and South Africa are historically traced. Since parental involvement, as viewed in this perspective, has ushered in radical reforms in the area of education, the concept had to be clarified within this context so as to avoid misunderstandings which arise from malpractices (Baloyi, 2003:3). The 1990's witnessed a wholesome adoption of PI programmes in both rural and urban Zimbabwean Schools by education managers. Earlier forms of involvement were only in non-curricular issues such as fund-raising and infrastructural development (Heystek, 2003:328), although current literature suggests otherwise. Models of parental involvement adopted elsewhere, which demonstrate the vital role a parent plays in the

child's education in such areas as volunteering , homework , coaching and advice outside school hours (Patrikakou et al, 2005:140) and in determining the environment where children spend most of their working hours (Darch, Miao & Shippen, 2004:21, Kgaffe, 2001:19), have been reviewed.

2.9 CONCLUSION

The research attempts to determine all the possible causes of the non-involvement of parents in the education of their children. The researcher also believed that if the problem of non-involvement of parents can be solved, the learner's academic achievements can improve drastically. The findings from related literature indicate that parental involvement remains a crucial point in all the efforts to enhance school development. The researcher in the study also investigates the assumption that parents from the rural areas do not take part in their children's activities because they don't care. Researching, writing and collecting data and putting it on the shelves do not solve our problems. The problems are escalating; steps need to be taken before it is too late. The focus of the research is managing school partnership in promoting parental involvement in the education of their children; how the school's climate can be changed and be made accessible to parents. Educators must be taught how to invite and involve parents in the school's activities. Parents have to be empowered as effective participants in school activities. Parents and educators should work together in solving their own problems and to overcome numerous challenges in their schools. Parents and educators have to develop trust and be able to remove the obstacles, various elements and factors that prevent them from working together to develop the schools as powerful working organisations.

In this chapter I presented an overview of parents' involvement in school governance starting with and moving to the present situation. I showed how democracy, the constitution, and Acts underpinned and supported this notion of parental involvement. I presented a picture of School Governing Bodies in rural schools and discussed them in relation to much current local research. Finally, I looked at the theories that underpin the whole idea of parents' participation, democracy and decentralisation in the education system. In the next chapter I present the methodological approach this research employed.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The goal of my study was to contribute towards changing parents, principals and all other stakeholders in education towards assumptions about the value of involving all stakeholders such as parents in the effective management of schools and investigated the stakeholders' experience and understanding of stakeholders' roles in school governance. The study implemented case study research in form of School-wide research focusing on the concern about the lack of parental involvement in school governance, and looking for a way to reach more parents to involve them in meaningful ways. Action research was deliberate, solution-oriented investigation that was group or personally owned and conducted since my goal sought to explore meaning and participants' perception of parents' participation in education governance, this research was oriented in the transformative paradigm.

The research was comprised of qualitative components, to make sure that the findings were based on the views of the respondents. A qualitative inquiry was used to explore in detail parents' experiences of their opportunities for involvement in the school, and the impact of these experiences on their own point of view or reasoning. A brief overview of research paradigms was presented, how they developed and changed over the past century in terms of ontology and epistemology. An argument of why I decided to base my study in the transformative paradigm and its limitations will be presented to conclude this section. Next, I present my reasons for selecting the case study method and clarify the research sample and data collection techniques. I also give a brief overview of how I analysed the data. Finally, I conclude the chapter by highlighting issues of ethical concern.

3.2 THE NOTION OF A PARADIGM

Many experts in the field of research have defined the term paradigm. Bassey (1995: 12) defined a paradigm as a: Network of coherent ideas about the nature of the world and of the functions of researchers, which are adhered to by a group of researchers, condition the patterns of their thinking and underpin their research actions. According to Mertens (2005: 7)

“A paradigm is a way of looking at the world. It is composed of certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action”.

“The dominant paradigms that guided early educational and psychological research were positivist and its successor post-positivist” (Mertens, 2005: 8). Positivist researchers believe in the assumption that ‘reality is out there’ and that reality is stable, observable and measurable. However, it is hard today to find any researcher referring his/her research as positivist due to the fact that it is outdated, “...excludes notions of choice, freedom, individuality and moral responsibility” (Cohen et al., 2000: 17). According to Cohen *et al.* (2000: 22) “the central endeavour in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience to retain the integrity of the phenomenon being investigated”. Mungunda (2003: 31) emphasised that “in the interpretive paradigm reality is seen as subjective and multiple, seen through the eyes of the participants within the context of their frame of reference”. According to Mertens: “The transformative paradigm arose partially because of dissatisfaction with the dominant research paradigm and practices and because of a realisation that much of sociological and psychological theory has been developed from the white, able-bodied, male perspective and was based on the study of male subjects” (2005: 17). Likewise, Kincheloe & McLaren (2000: 279) highlighted that: “critical paradigm is concerned in particular with the issues of power and justice and the way that the economy, matters of race, class and gender, ideologies, discourses, education, religion and other social institutions and cultural dynamics interact to construct social systems”.

3.3 THE TRANSFORMATIVISM PARADIGM

The approach for this study fell within the transformative paradigm. Kincheloe & McLaren (2000: 279) highlighted that a critical paradigm is concerned in particular with the issues of power and justice and the way that the economy, matters of race, class and gender, ideologies, discourses, education, religion and other social institutions and cultural dynamics interact to construct social systems. Mungunda (2003: 30) refers to paradigm as a frame of reference or mental map through which we see the world. Transformative paradigm comes from the point of critical theorists and participatory researchers who realised the imperfections of the constructivist paradigm. Mertens (2005: 9) says that transformative

paradigm focuses on multiple realities shape by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, gender, and disability values. In this paradigm there was interactive link between researcher and participants; knowledge was socially and historically situated. The main aim of the study was to contribute towards changing parents, principals and all other stakeholders in education towards assumptions about the value of involving parents in the effective management of schools.

Although no unified body of literature is representative of the transformative paradigm, four characteristics are common to the diverse perspectives represented within it and serve to distinguish it from the post positivist and constructivist paradigms (Mertens, Farley, Madison, & Singleton, 1994):

- (1) It places central importance on the lives and experiences of the diverse groups that, traditionally, have been marginalized (i.e., women, minorities, and persons with disabilities). Kelly, Burton, and Regan (1994) suggest that researchers not limit study to the lives and experiences of just one marginalized group, but to study the way oppression is structured and reproduced. Researchers must focus on how members of oppressed groups' lives are constrained by the actions of oppressors, individually and collectively, and on the strategies that oppressed groups use to resist, challenge, and subvert. Therefore, studying oppressed people's lives also means that a study of the oppressors' means of dominance must be included.
- (2) It analyses how and why inequities based on gender, race or ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic classes are reflected in asymmetric power relationships.
- (3) It examines how results of social inquiry on inequities are linked to political and social action.
- (4) It uses a transformative theory to develop the program theory and the research approach.

A program theory is a set of beliefs about the way a programme works or why a problem occurs.

3.4 LIMITATIONS OF TRANSFORMATIVE RESEARCH

Transformative researchers are pluralistic and evolving in their methodologies. The empiricists who work within the transformative tradition tend to use quantitative methods; however, they emphasize a need for more care and rigor in following existing methods commonly associated with the post positivist paradigm to avoid sexist, racist, or otherwise biased results (Eichler, 1991; Harding, 1993). Other transformative researchers use a wide diversity of methods; many make use of qualitative methods, such as interviews, observations, and document review, within a transformative framework (Reinharz, 1992). In transformative research that comes from the participatory action research tradition, it is viewed as essential to involve the people who are the research participants in the planning, conduct, analysis, interpretation, and use of the research. A common theme in the methodology is inclusion of diverse voices from the margins. Mertens (1995) identified three characteristics of the transformative paradigm with ethical implications for methodological choices:

- (1) Traditionally silenced voices must be included to ensure that groups marginalized in society are equally heard during the research process and the formation of the findings and recommendations.
- (2) An analysis of power inequities in terms of the social relationships involved in the planning, implementation, and reporting of the research is needed to ensure an equitable distribution of resources (conceptual and material).
- (3) A mechanism should be identified to enable the research results to be linked to social action; those who are most oppressed and least powerful should be at the centre of the plans for action in order to empower them to change their own lives.

The transformative paradigm's epistemological assumption centres on the meaning of knowledge as it is defined from a prism of cultural lenses and the power issues involved in the determination of what is considered legitimate knowledge. This means that not only is the relationship between the knower and the would-be known (i.e., the researcher and participants) interactive, it also involves a consciousness of cultural complexities in that relationship. In order to address issues of power in understanding what is valued as

knowledge, Harding (1993: 56) recommends that the researcher use a methodology that involves “starting off thought’ from the lives of marginalized people”. This would reveal more of the unexamined assumptions influencing science and generate more critical questions. The relationship should be empowering to those without power. Thus, research should examine ways the research benefits or does not benefit the participants (Kelly et al., 1994).

3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN: CASE STUDY

Gorman, Hammersley and Foster (2000: 3) define the case study as referring to research that investigates a few cases, often just one, in considerable depth. The value of a case study lies in the potential richness of the data, and the extent to which the researcher can convey a sense of how the case functions. Among the advantages of case study is the notion that case studies present research or evaluation data in a more publicly accessible form than other kinds of research (Bassegy, 1999: 23). This was a significant advantage considering my purpose of stimulating interest among education managers and policy makers.

3.6 THE RESEARCH SITE AND PARTICIPANTS

I conducted my research in a rural district of Waterberg, Limpopo. The problem I had in mind was a clear description of ‘rural’ since the school I wanted to conduct my research at was about 120 kilometres from the city. The school I conducted my research at is called Mashamaite Secondary. It was chosen because of its convenience since I am working there and that it would be convenient in all aspects for my research. I had previously worked with the school principal before, and the first time I approached him about allowing me to do my research in his school, he gave me a warm welcome. Since my research used focus groups, I selected three members of the School Management Team (SMT), five educators, five learners from the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) which was basically one representative from each grade (equals to five, from grade 8 to 12) and its chairperson, and I selected five parents, two of whom were members of the School Governing Body (SGB). The school principal was automatically chosen in the study. I chose those participants because according to Johnson and Christensen (2004: 45) a qualitative researcher uses purposeful or judgment

sampling, since sampling always aims at locating information-rich individuals, those who are knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon under investigation.

3.7 THE CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

The school is about 120 km northwest of Mokopane. The area is predominantly rural and is characterised by poverty and high unemployment. The school, which was used in this study, is in Baltimore circuit in Waterberg district. The majority of students who attend in this school come from poor families; some of the parents are unemployed and depend on social grants. Others who work earn a low income. In these communities, the able-bodied people leave these communities to search for employment in towns and cities. Moreover, the school lack many educational resources and do not have libraries, laboratories and even running water. Some children stay far from their schools and have to walk some kilometres to and from the school. The school consists of 375 learners and serves very poor socioeconomic community.

3.8 CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

Participants have been purposefully selected and used; I used the principal, parents, educators and learners at Mogalakwena rural community. Gay & Airasian (2000: 209) point out that the qualitative researcher relies on purposive selection of their participants. These participants were selected to provide rich data concerning the research topic. According to Johnson & Christensen (2004: 45) a qualitative researcher uses purposeful or judgment sampling, since sampling always aims at locating information-rich individuals, those who are knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon under investigation.

3.8.1 The School Governing Body (SGB)

The SGB Focus group consisted of five participants. Two of them were females of 60 years of age all the other participant was a male between 40 and 60 years of age. His position in the SGB is vice chairperson. All participants have served on the body for just one year.

3.8.2 The School Management Team (SMT)

The SMT Focus group consisted of four members, two Heads of Departments (HODs) and one deputy principal. The principal was deliberately left out to allow members of the SMT to talk freely even about him, without being intimidated by his presence. Three HODs were females between the ages of 35 and 40 years. They have been in management for two to five years. The deputy was a female, with ten years of experience in management and she was between 40 and 45 years old.

3.8.3 Educators

The Educators' focus group consisted of five participants: three males and two females. The male educators ranged from 30 to 40 years while females ranged from 35 to 45. Females had more teaching experience than males (in terms of years of service).

3.8.4 Learners: The Representative Council of Learners (RCL)

The RCL focus group consisted of six participants, one representative from each grade and the chairperson of the RCL who came from grade 12. There were three boys (including the chairperson) and three girls. They have served as learner representatives for one year, except for the chairperson who has two years' experience as a learner representative.

3.9 DATA GATHERING TECHNIQUE: TRIANGULATION

I used focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews, and the analysis of school documents. I used three types of instruments in this study to allow for triangulation. Terre Blanche and Kelly (2004: 22) explain that triangulation entails collecting material in as many different ways and from as many diverse sources as possible. This can help the researcher to "home in" on a correct understanding of a phenomenon by approaching it from several different angles. Newman & Benz (1998: 200) say triangulation refers to combining two or more data collection techniques or methods in one design. Struwig & Stead (2001: 145) say that various methods can be used to analyse the data, such as observation, quantitative

measures, interviews, or documents. I did this by using interviews, focus-group discussion, and document analysis as data collection methods. Apart from data triangulation, a researcher could also engage in method triangulation by analysing data both quantitative and qualitatively.

I did not, however, expect the same result when I used different methods of investigation, but to get a better understanding of my study. Gall et al. (1996: 547); Neuman (2000: 124-5) and Mason (2002: 66) have affirmed the function of triangulation. Patton put the advantages of triangulation in this way: “Studies that use one method are more vulnerable to arrows linked to that particular method (e.g., loaded interview questions, biased, or untrue responses) than studies that use multiple methods in which different types of data provide cross-data validity checks (2002: 248). However, triangulation has been criticised for some weaknesses. Flick (2004: 179) views triangulation “less as a validation strategy and more as a strategy for justifying and underpinning knowledge by gaining additional knowledge”. Fielding and Fielding cited in Cohen et al. (2000: 115) added “Methodological triangulation does not necessarily increase validity, reduce bias or bring objectivity to research”. Whereas those criticisms might be true, the use of triangulation allowed me to cross check my data from different data collection techniques.

3.9.1 Focus groups

Krueger, cited by Struwig and Stead (2001: 99) explains a focus group as “a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment”. Johnson & Christensen (2004: 185) explain a focus group as “a type of group interview in which a moderator/researcher (person leading the focus group discussion) leads a discussion with a small group of individuals, in the case of this study the educators, learners and parents. This is done to examine, in detail, how the group members think and feel about a topic. It is called the “focus” group because the researcher keeps the individuals in the group focused on the topic being discussed”. Focus groups can be defined as a group discussion in which a small number of participants typically six to twelve, talk about topics of special relevance to a study under the guidance of a moderator (Hoberg 1999: 136). The primary technique of data gathering was focus group with

school management team, members of RCL and teachers of Mogalakwena rural community. The reasons for using this method were that it is socially oriented, studies participants in the natural real life atmosphere I chose five educators who were conveners of different extra-mural activities at the schools, e.g. sports, fundraising, cultural, entertainment, and safety committees. This was done so as to find out the kinds of problems that they were experiencing in their different committees about parental involvement in these activities at the schools.

Five learners from RCL were chosen both boys and girls, some children of the parents mentioned above, and some children members of the SGB, and others who were involved in extra-mural activities at school. Both learners who participated in sport and those who were assisting in sports or extra-mural activities were selected, so as to get the real picture of what was happening about the parental involvement at these schools. It also allowed the facilitator the flexibility to explore anticipated issues as they arose in the discussion, the results had high face validity- the findings appeared believable, it was relatively of low cost. It provided quick results and it can increase the sample size of qualitative studies by interviewing more people at the same time (Marshall & Rossman 1994: 84). What was remarkable about focus groups was that its moderation was task-oriented, that means both the researcher and participants oriented to the task of producing opinions (Puchta and Potter, 2004: 17).

Focus group interviews are not really interviews, but rather discussions that can happen in a less formal and threatening environment. The aim of selecting this focus group was based on the assumption that I would obtain information from all stakeholders at school. Krueger & Casey (2000: 7) view the purpose of focus group interviews as promoting self-disclosure between participants and to give the researcher the idea of what people think and feel about the topic. This group was a homogeneous group (composed of similar kinds of people), not heterogeneous, so that the group could not form cliques and coalitions. When using this method of data gathering the researcher is advised to use more than one focus group, so as not to rely on a single focus group's information. Focus group interviews were repeated until the information became saturated (Schurink et al, (1998: 317). During interviews I used structured interviews. This view has been supported by Krueger (1994: 6) in his definition of focus group writing when he states that "a focus group is a carefully planned discussion

designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment”. The goal of focus groups is to elicit perceptions, feelings, attitudes and ideas of participants about a selected topic (Vaughn cited in Puchta & Potter, 2004: 5). Participants responded to open-ended questions as indicated by Schurink et al. (1998: 314). I also intended to see themes, topics and patterns emerging from the interview transcripts and avoided simply trying to confirm my own ideas.

3.9.2 Limitations of focus groups

Focus group method was not merely, as is sometimes argued (Vaughn *et al.* 1996), a quick way to pick up relevant themes around a topic, but a social event that includes performances by all concerned. From this perspective, language was viewed not as a neutral conveyor of information, but as functional and constructive, as a medium which people use to achieve a variety of actions (Potter & Wetherell 1987). This research was not primarily concerned with which level of analysis of talk to use, for example Discourse Analysis or Conversation Analysis (e.g. Billig 1999, Schegloff 1999); rather, I focused on some specific issues which might arise for any analysis of focus group data, and utilized techniques from both the above approaches. Wilkinson (1998) argues that many articles based on focus group research appear to be treating the data as identical to individual interview data, and the unique aspects of focus groups are habitually ignored in the analysis. An important characteristic of focus groups was that it often stated that groups, rather than individuals within groups, are the main unit of analysis (Kreuger 1994, Morgan 1988). Sifunda (2001: 42) states that the presence of the researcher as a facilitator in focus groups and the fact that the researcher’s interests drive the focus groups can contaminate data. Morgan (1997) argues that there is a very real concern that the facilitator in the name of maintaining the interview focus will influence the group interaction. Krueger (cited in Morgan, 1998: 49) highlights these limitations or possible problems about focus groups, namely:

- Distractions; this was true of my focus group interview with learners who kept on being distracted by other learners.
- Too few or too many participants;
- lack of equipment; and the problem posed by the size of the room in which an interview is conducted.

A question addressed in this research was: how could a group be seen as a “unit of analysis”? Another important but little discussed question which was being considered was, for what purposes were participants using the focus groups? These issues were treated as procedural “problems” for the moderator to minimize (Kreuger 1994, Vaughn et al. 1996). I suggest that these “problems” are an integral part of focus group use, and even if mitigated by moderator techniques, will still exist. Therefore, a question for the researcher is, “how can an analysis take account of these concerns”? The distinction between data collection and analysis is not clear cut (Silverman 1993, Potter 1996). For this reason my analysis was integrated with consideration of what goes on in focus group discussions.

3.9.3 Semi-structured interviews

Most of the data were collected by conducting interviews because I was interested in capturing people’s knowledge, experience and understanding of a certain phenomenon. According to Patton cited in Merriam (2001: 72) “We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe ... and the purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other people’s perspective”. The semi-structured interview has been selected as it provides me with the main questions of focus and guides me not to lose the aim of the interview. In addition, the semi-structured interview offered me the opportunity to ask probing questions that emerged from the interviewee’s responses and allowed the generation of new ideas that will lead to richer data. The interviews were focused on the roles, experience, understanding, issues and challenges of stakeholders in school governance.

Cohen et al. (2000: 278) emphasised the advantages of semi-structured interviews as follows: The framing of questions for a semi-structured interview considers prompts and probes. Prompts enable the interviewer to clarify topics or questions, whilst probes enable the interviewer to ask respondents to extend, elaborate, add to, provide detail for, clarify or qualify their response, thereby addressing richness, depth of response, comprehensiveness and honesty that are some of the hallmarks of successful interviewing. The choice was given to all participants to choose the language in which they felt comfortable and able to express themselves very well. As a result all five school management team members and one teacher chose their interviews to be conducted in the local language. The school principal and four

teachers were interviewed in English. All interviews were tape recorded and I translated those in the local language to English. I am fluent in both languages, since the participants' local language is my first language and English is my second language and the same language I am using in this course.

3.9.4 Document analysis

Merriam (2001: 126) emphasised that “Documentary data are particularly good sources for *qualitative* case studies because they can ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated” (emphasis in the original). I probed how parents have been involved in school governance by reading some school documents such as previous School Governing Board minutes, SMT meeting, RCL meetings, staff meetings and departmental meetings. These meetings were important for the study since I was interested in observing parents participation, the power relations in the meeting, the relationship between the learners, principal, teachers in School Board and parents and the flow of decision-making also looked at the meeting process, how it was planned, who chaired and his/her role and the parents' attendance.

3.10 DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative analysis can be defined as a “process of reviewing, synthesising and interpreting data to describe and explain the phenomena or social worlds being studied” (Fossey et al 2002: 728). The purpose of the analysis is to reduce the data to an intelligible and interpretative form so that the relations between the research problems can be studied and tested and conclusions can be drawn (Kruger, De Vos, Fouché & Venter 2005: 218). Interpretation means that the results of the analysis are taken, inferences that are pertinent to the research relations that have been studied are drawn and conclusions about the relations are made. The constant comparative (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) data analysis was completed first, and Tesch's (1990) eight step qualitative process was used to manually code the data for aspects of the partnership in school management. After an initial coding of the data generated topics and themes, a second review was com The constant comparative (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) data analysis was completed first, and Tesch's (1990) eight step qualitative process was used to manually code the data for aspects of the context of working-class identity. After

an initial coding of the data generated topics and themes, a second review was completed for data reduction and to shift to a conceptually oriented category codes and specific sub-category codes, and to make coding assignments in the data, pelted for data reduction and to shift to a conceptually oriented.

Qualitative analysis can be defined as a “process of reviewing, synthesising and interpreting data to describe and explain the phenomena or social worlds being studied” (Fossey et al 2002: 728). The purpose of the analysis is to reduce the data to an intelligible and interpretative form so that the relations between the research problems can be studied and tested and conclusions can be drawn (Kruger, De Vos, Fouché & Venter 2005: 218). Interpretation means that the results of the analysis are taken, inferences that are pertinent to the research relations that have been studied are drawn and conclusions about the relations are made. The study has implemented case study in form of School-wide research focusing on the concern about the lack of parental involvement in school governance, and looking for a way to reach more parents to involve them in meaningful ways. Action research is deliberate, solution-oriented investigation that is group or personally owned and conducted. It is characterized by spiralling cycles of problem identification, systematic data collection, reflection, analysis, data-driven action taken, and, finally, problem redefinition. The linking of the terms “action” and “research” highlights the essential features of this method: trying out ideas in practice as a means of increasing knowledge about or improving curriculum, teaching, and learning (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). This process creates new patterns of collegiality, communication, and sharing. Contributions to the body of knowledge about effective parental involvement in school governance may also result.

Qualitative data can be in the form of field notes, photographs, video recordings, personal documents, memos, public records or transcribed interviews. In qualitative research the researcher is the main tool, collecting data and examining the understanding the person himself has on his or her reality. The emphasis is on the subjective view of the participant. Such researches are methodical and demand accuracy and to follow fixed and predetermined rules, although they are not standardised. The researcher analyses his rich data to precision by reviewing them again and again and then cross checking them. The researcher’s intuitions the key factor in the data analysis. During the analysing, themes and ideas emerge and develop

from the data, which the researcher builds on. When data analysing has been completed, the researcher often uses quotations from the data to paint a picture and substantiate the presentation (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003). In qualitative research the sample size is usually small and therefore, generalisation from the sample over to the whole is not possible. Indeed, generalisation is not the aim of a qualitative research, but rather to understand and illustrate the experiences of individuals.

Like Bogdan & Biklen (2003) claim, qualitative researchers look at findings of each research as a small part of a bigger picture. Individuals experience things differently, and interpret their experiences and situations in different ways. Despite being fixed and have predetermined rules, qualitative approach is flexible. The researcher views, subjectively, people's experiences in their context. Thus, it is especially suitable to use qualitative approach when the researcher wants to gain a deep understanding of individual's experiences, in their correct settings. With this approach he gains an integral picture of peoples' lives, their experiences and encounters.

According to Bogdan & Biklen (2003), in order to conduct good qualitative research, there are a few things that the researcher needs to consider. First of all, the researcher must treat his participants with respect and develop a close relationship built on trust. Equality, closeness and informality in the relationship should be stressed. Second, the researcher must secure the participants' interest and make sure that participation in the research does not lead to loss of prestige or cause any harm to them. Bogdan & Biklen (2003) claim that, it is important to make sure that participants feel at ease and talk freely about their experiences and points of view. Such interviews produce good and rich data, which clearly convey the participant's perspectives. The golden rule of conducting good qualitative interviews is deep listening and if the researcher does not fully understand everything the respondent is saying, he needs to ask for clarification. He may also need to ask probing questions in order to get more details and particulars.

According to Taylor and Bogdan (1984: 130) data analysis is an on-going, creative and dynamic process whereby the researcher attempts to gain deeper understanding of what they have studied and continually refine the findings. The process of data collection is not an end

to itself. Birley & Moreland (1998: 58) maintain that data analysis along with data collection is the real essence of the research process. Miles and Huberman (1994: 23-24) identify three components of analysis namely data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification. He defines data reduction as a process of selecting, abstracting and transforming the raw data that appear in edited field notes. This process is part of the data that sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards and organises data in such a way that final conclusion can be drawn and verified.

Taylor & Bogdan (1984: 130) mention the following phases as essential to data analysis:

- The ongoing discovery phase where by themes are identified and concepts and propositions are developed.
- Coding the data and refining ones' understanding of the subject matter.
- The researcher attempts to discount his/ her findings that are to understand the data in the context in which they were collected.

Creswell (2009: 1) contends that, “whilst action research is a reflective process that allows for inquiry and discussion as components of the “research”. The inductive constant comparative manual data analysis process produced two levels of data codes. First, ten initial narrow sub-categories were generated that were reduced to three broad coding categories and applied to the data for understanding self-described causes of non-parental involvement, challenges and consequences of non-involvement by all stakeholders in school management. In the broad category ‘*Partnerships in school management,*’ Data analysis is an on-going process involving continual reflection about data, asking questions and writing memos throughout the study. It is conducted concurrently with gathering data, making interpretations and writing report (Cresswell, 2007). The following steps of Creswell (2009) (figure 4.2) were followed in processing the data which was both in form of primary and secondary.

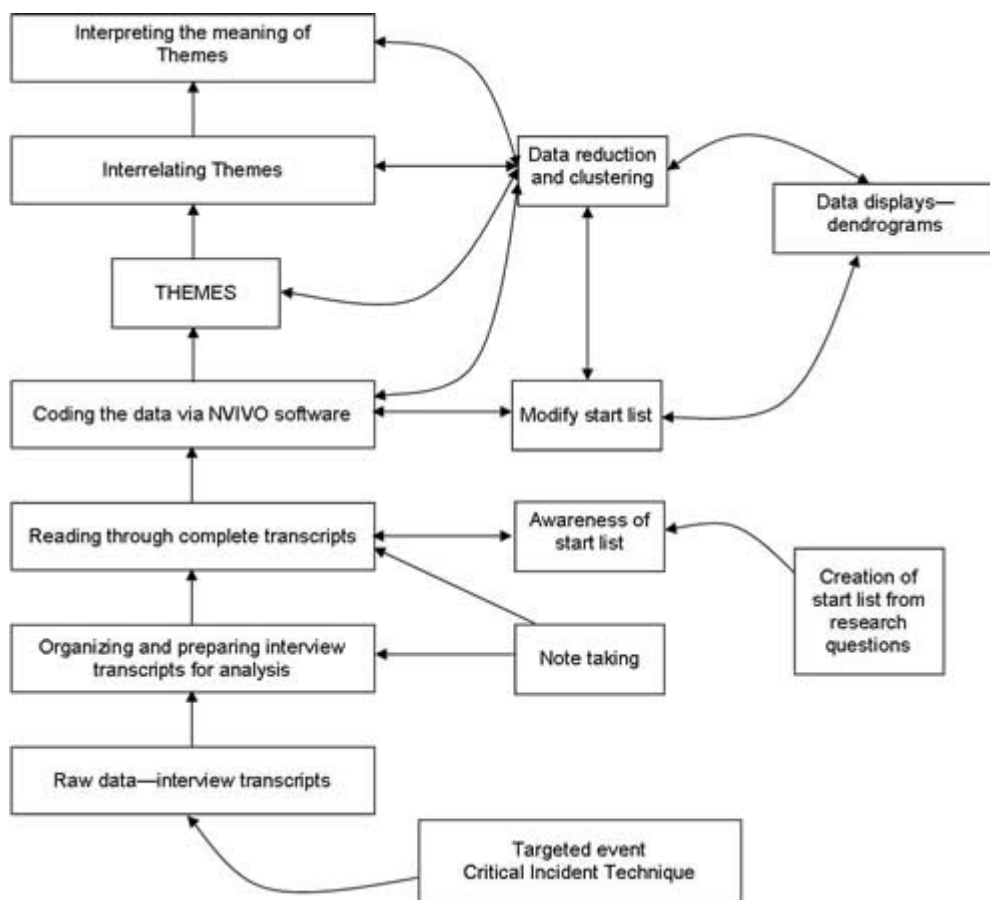


Figure 3.1: showing qualitative interpretive categorisation in relation to Creswell's (2009:185) seven step data analysis overview.

As there are specific research questions to address, *a-priori* categories were developed to encourage the researcher to look out for particular aspects within the data, providing initial focus. Miles and Huberman (1994) advocate a provisional *start list* of categories generated from the research questions (Miles and Huberman, 1994) a strategy often used in the health sciences (Cresswell, 2009).

Data in this study was collected and recorded on a tape recorder. When the interviews were completed, all the recorded data was transcribed. The researcher made the transcriptions by listening to the tape recordings of each interview with the aim of familiarising herself with the participant's words. The tape recorded interview was then transcribed into written text and a verbatim account of everything that was said during the interview was written down (Hycner 1999: 150). The data was transcribed manually with the aim of identifying the most

important themes and concepts.

The researcher coded the data herself by using open coding. The researcher coded the data herself by using open coding, which is described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) as the process of identifying themes that emerge from the raw data. All the themes in the coding scheme were straight forward and could be easily identified, which resulted in sub-themes emerging on their own. The open coding process for the semi-structured interviews resulted in a coding scheme with four (4) major themes indicated in the research findings below. In summary, the ten initial narrow sub-categories and three broad coding categories that were generated from the manual constant comparative data analysis confirm Barker's (1995) findings from a qualitative study that identified a series of themes describing working-class academics; they (a) possess fewer financial resources, (b) experience feelings of invisibility due to the myth of classlessness, (c) have few working-class based professional and social support systems, (d) experience insecurity about their intellectual ability, and (e) often have fears of inadequacy in social and professional situations. In addition, the results of this analysis mirror the issues identified in a series of edited volumes of essays written by working-class academics (Ryan & Sackrey, 1984; Tokarczyk & Fay, 1993; Dews & Law, 1995; Shepard, McMillan, & Tate, 1998; Welsch, 2005; Muzzati & Samarco, 2006) that identify important characteristics and descriptors from a personal viewpoint.

The challenge was that since rural communities are not easily accessible, particularly parents, I had to visit the school now and then, and at times visit during weekends when all parent participants I wanted to interview were there. This was time-consuming and tiring. The degree of familiarity between the participants and me was a challenge and very dangerous as it was jeopardising my research. It was dangerous in the sense that one can only tell what they think I know, and since some of the participants were my elders they decided not to disclose important and sensitive information to a young man like me. The language issue seemed to be a challenge. Rural learners express themselves badly in English, so this meant that I had to conduct my interviews in Sotho in order to accommodate both learners and parents who could not speak English. This meant the immense task of translating into English later on.

3.11 ENHANCING CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE FINDINGS

3.11.1 Reliability

McMillan & Schumacher (1993:168) state that reliability means that the measurement is consistent each and every time it is done the results are the same. The issue of reliability is relevant in this study because of the use of the interviews. The question to be asked in terms of reliability is how similar will the results of the instrument be if used on other occasions. The answer may be, they might be the same or similar.

3.11.2 Validity

Validity refers to trustworthiness or credibility. The semi-structured interviews used were intended to measure the extent to which parental involvement is already present in the schools. According to MacMillan & Schumacher (1993:167) the case of validity refers to the extent to which inferences made from the questions are appropriate and meaningful to the study.

3.11.3 Triangulation

Newman & Benz (1998:200) say triangulation refers to combining two or more data collection techniques or methods in one design. Struwig & Stead (2001:145) say that various methods can be used to analyse the data, such as observation, quantitative measures, interviews, or documents. I did this by using interviews, focus-group discussion, and document analysis as data collection methods. This confirmed the credibility of the data, and the different techniques guided similar results.

3.11.4 Generalisability or applicability

Maxwell and Patton cited by Struwig & Stead (2001:145), say “generalisability or applicability refers to the degree to which the data can be generalized within a group

(similar to internal validity) or to other groups (similar to external validity). Fien and Hillcoat cited by McFarlane (2000:28) say that the research can be seen as “situation specific”, which implies that the findings will only apply to the school in which the research was done - in my case Mogalakwena rural community. Fien and Hillcoat cited by McFarlane (2000:28), argue that although the findings will apply to the identified school, they could be relevant to schools in similar settings, which implies that the results can to a certain extent be transferred to other similar settings.

3.11.5 Descriptive validity

Struwig & Stead (2001:144) state that “descriptive validity refers to whether the information provided is factually accurate and comprehensive or whether it has been partly omitted or distorted”. As it is mostly the case with researchers to omit or distort the information collected from the participants. In order to guard against descriptive validity I had to ask the assistance of the participants and an educator from school in examining the accuracy of the data collected. In some instances we disagreed on the interpretation of the data, and then we had to reach an agreement.

3.11.6 Interpretative validity

According to Struwig & Stead (2001:144) interpretative validity is indicative of whether the participants’ meanings or perspectives, e.g. of events or behaviours, are accurately reported. The emphasis in this must be placed on the perspectives and language of the participants, rather than on the interpretations and terminology of the researcher. As a researcher in this case I used easy language and my advantage was that I could speak the language of the participants, and I refrained from using complicated terminology in the research.

3.11.7 Researcher effects

This term refers to the degree to which you as a researcher are biased in reporting and interpreting the findings of your study, Struwig & Stead (2001:145). I knew that I had to explain my background to the participants and also make them aware why I was doing this

study of parental involvement in the education of their children. I knew that they might be shy to give the correct information to me, so I made it clear that I wanted them to be involved in their children's education and help teachers in their plight to educate children. I also mentioned that I was there as a researcher not as an educator, since most of them knew me as an educator. I deliberately chose one school where I was working as a teacher. Our schools are not close to each other, but most educators and parents know each other. The information I received from both educators and parents was honest because we have known each other for some time.

3.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.12.1 INTRODUCTION

Janse van Rensburg (2001: 28) describes research ethics as referring to the moral dimensions of researching – about what is right and wrong while engaged in research. In order to ensure that all participants are happy, the use of consent forms is highly recommended. Ethical issues are often deemed to be resolved by procedures such as voluntary participation, informed consent, absence of risk or harm, confidentiality, and anonymity Mason (2002: 41) states that qualitative researchers should be as concerned to produce a moral or ethical research design as we are to produce an intellectually coherent and compelling one. This means attempting only to carry out data generation and analysis morally, but also to plan, “our research and frame our questions in an ethical manner too”. Before the commencement of the purpose of the research and explaining the research protocol which states clearly the participants' rights to voluntary involvement in and withdrawal from the research at any time.

I did this in the language the participant understands. I am personally well known by all research participants, due to the fact that I work in the area. This degree of familiarity between the participants and myself will be a challenge and very dangerous as it could jeopardise my research. It will be dangerous in the sense that one can only tell what they think I know, and since they are all my elders they can decide not to disclose important and sensitive information to a young man like me. To avoid all those problems I always make a

clear introduction of myself, explain the purpose of my study, and clarify the state of confidentiality and participants' rights before the commencement of the interviews.

3.12.2 Letters for permission

In order to collect data from schools I had to complete a form to apply to the Education Department for permission to visit the schools. Application letters were also sent to the principal of the selected schools and the Governing Bodies. The principal also allowed me to visit their schools and were enthusiastic about the whole research issue.

3.12.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

De Vos et al, (2005:61) define privacy as something that is not intended for others to observe or to analyse, and that it is the right of an individual to decide the time to reveal his/her attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour to the public. All educators, parents and learners were assured that the information obtained would be treated confidentially and only be used for the purposes of the study. I also assured them that no names would be included in the study. Participants' confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed. I changed all participant names into pseudonyms during data presentation for safety and confidentiality reasons. Data will be stored securely and shown to participants for member checking.

3.12.4 Informed consent

According to Babbie (2001:470) informed consent is called "voluntary participation". Neuman (2000:124) confirms what is said by Babbie by adding that no one should be forced to participate in a research project, people must take part voluntarily. The participants were made aware of the fact that they were participating voluntarily and could withdraw at any time.

3.12.5 Avoidance of harm

De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport (2005:57) say that "subjects can be harmed in a

physical or emotional manner”. The above made me very sceptical as to whom to involve in the investigation. My participants were made aware of the fact that they were not obligated to participate in the investigation and not forced to answer any questions that might be uncomfortable for them to answer.

3.13 CONCLUSION

What the researcher has done so far is to collect data as explained in this chapter. The methods used to collect data from all the school have been explained in detail. The question of how access had been gained has also been explained. The researcher was left with the task of analysing the data that had been collected.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The study has revealed important opinions of my questions investigated namely; how can stakeholders be mobilised to actively participate in the education of their rural high school children? The following sub-questions were investigated: How do rural high schools parents participate in the education of their children? What role does SGBs play in encouraging parents to partake in school activities? How can empowerment good practice be used to mobilise and encourage parents to take part in the education of their children?; And how can parent components be made aware of hindering factors and, how can they change after they have been empowered? And how can parents see and value their contribution in school governance?

The discussions include findings from literature review and the empirical study and comparisons were made giving account of what the study revealed about the questions investigated. The literature control was employed to provide a framework for understanding partnership in school management. Chapter 3 briefly explained the data collection techniques used in this research and touched on how the data was analysed. This chapter presents the data gathered from all three techniques used namely semi-structured interviews, group interviews, and document analysis. This chapter is strongly shaped by the interview data, in the form of document analysis, are then used to support the data generated from the interviews. Against the background of my research goal – to explore partnerships in school management at Mashamaite School, focused on and probed three issues facing SGB members: one, gaining a better understanding of the role of parents and functions of the School Board; two, what are the challenges facing School Board parent members; three, what are parents' experiences of being part of this body. The data is reported under three broad headings: 1. Consequences and challenges of non-involvement of parents in the education of their children as revealed by the study. 2. Causes of non-involvement of parents in the education of their children revealed by the study. 3. Parent involvement in school governing bodies and its enabling effect for parents in community to play a role in school governance. I

have developed several sub-themes under each broad heading in order to make the data more comprehensible.

The literature control was employed to provide a framework for understanding partnerships in school management. Participants were numbered (1; 2; 3) though some were pseudo-named, to ensure confidentiality.

4.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS

In order to determine and assess the extent to which stakeholders involved in their children's school homework, this section looks at the themes and sub-themes that were identified during the data collection process. From the questions that were asked and are reflected in the interview guide (appendix B), three (3) themes emerged from data that was analysed in terms of the focus group interviews.

4.3 THEME 1: Causes of non-involvement of parents.

The study clearly revealed that there are many complex factors contributing to the problem of non-involvement of parents. Doing the study in a rural area has taught me many things that I will treasure forever. The study reveals the main causes for the non-involvement of parents are as follows:

4.3.1 Lack of knowledge and poor educational background

Almost all teachers who participated in this study claimed that parents' poor educational background was the main cause of the problem with regard to the difficulties on the School Board. Teachers further revealed that due to the poor educational background and lack of understanding parents did not really understand and fulfil their roles as School Board members. The Principal stated, "*As far as my experience and knowledge is concerned parents do not fully understand their involvement in School Board*". According to Epstein (1995) studies have shown that most teachers would like to have the families of their students involved. The problem is that few of them know how to go about getting the parents to

participate and be involved. Baker et al. (in Ferrara and Ferrara, 2005), and Lawrence-Lightfoot (1999) say that teachers themselves freely admit their lack of training in working with parents, especially in the skills they need in order to have effective communication with parents. Since the practices of communication are so fundamental for schools in order to involve parents in their child's education, Caspe (2003) suggests that professional development and preparation programs for teachers should advocate the development of communication skills for teachers. Learners seem to be involved only in insignificant structures:

I only serve the school in terms of cleanliness, that is, I supervise learners when they clean the school (learner-4) I become involved in uniform inspection and that's it (learner-3). Sometimes when they make noise in the teacher's absence, I try to calm them down".

Teacher 1 emphasised that during the seven years she had served on the School Board only some parents fulfilled and understood their roles and duties on the board. The teacher went on to explain that those parents that did have some degree of understanding concerning what was expected of them were at least educated to the Grade 10 level. Some parents understand that there are colleagues on the board they just do not know what their duties are, the roles they need to play, or that they must fulfil and act in a certain manner (*Teacher 1*). Similarly, *Teacher 2* stated that the School Board is responsible for encouraging learners to know why they come to school and what their roles at school are. "*Some parents never visit the school and encourage learners to study hard*". Most of the parents do not understand their roles and only a few parents understand and fulfil them. *Parent 1* admitted that among the parents on the School Board there are some members who do not understand what their involvement is in the education of their children. *Parent 1* explained that as a parent and a member of the School Board she visits the school regularly even when there are no School Board meetings and reports things that she identifies as going wrong. "*...of course I regularly visits the school*". Because of the lack of understanding among parents, some participants felt that the School Board term should be expanded and lengthened. Most parents became better accustomed to and more familiar with School Board operations towards the end of the third year of their term. *Teacher 3* suggested that "*School Board terms need to be extended from three years to five years*". She said: The term is too short, and when parents start to know

their roles better the term is almost about to finish. The new members elected then have to re-start again from the beginning.

The respondents identified several challenges that hinder parents' involvement. The main challenge is poor educational background, which resulted in lack of understanding of educational terms and language in use (English) as pointed out by the respondents. Illiteracy and low educational level has played a role in inefficiency of School Boards particularly in rural schools, as Maile cited in Ngidi (2004: 260) remarked: "*Illiteracy among the members of SGBs which is specially the case in the rural areas may contribute to their inefficiency*". He further argued, "*This is possible because illiteracy precludes parents from accessing relevant management information from the principal*" During the colonial era the country was often at war which is why most parents' age of 40 upwards did not get a good education, as Teacher 3 explained: "*It was tough and very dangerous to walk to school in those days. Landmines and soldiers were everywhere; therefore, many parents did not want to be separated from their children during the dangers of wartime*". Most of the parents did not receive a good education: the participants' profile shows that the highest qualification obtained by parents in the School Board of this school is only grade 12. The quality of black education during the apartheid era was poor and resulted in poor understanding and lack of knowledge among its graduates.

All teachers expressed the view that more development and less problems would result if parents had greater educational "experience". *Teacher 1* emphasised:

"If all parents were well educated, the school could develop well and smoothly because now when the Principal or teachers rise any suggestions, for instance, to build a library, buy an overhead projector or other things parents do not even understand what an overhead projector is. And remember they, parents, are the majority, so it will take time for them to approve or support the idea".

But if they were better educated they could make suggestions or support different ideas when raised by other members in the board. Teacher 3 stated that: "*If parents on the School Board were better educated, they could easily notice teachers' mistakes especially when they are not*

providing effective teaching and identify the Principal's weaknesses". Furthermore, educated parents can look for donations and other financial sources that can help the school to develop further.

In addition, the study participants revealed that poor educational background, lack of understanding and interest in education exists not only with School Board members but also with other parents in the community. They further stated that lack of understanding among parents, which also resulted in unmotivated learners, was very common among some parents:

When parents do not know the importance of education they also do not motivate and encourage their children to go to school. There are still some parents who do understand that they have to control their children the way they want either by giving them domestic work to do during school hours or not to permit them to do extra-mural activities like sport. Most of those parents are illiterate (*Parent 1*). The principal pointed out that parents have not really been interested in education over the past six years. According to *Parent 1* a low level of education, the apartheid legacy, and the rural environment the general population lives in are some of the factors that contribute to a poor understanding and involvement of parents in education.

4.3.2 Relationship and contact between schools and homes

Catron and Allen (1993:51) agree and argue that in the Early Childhood Programmes, close contact and regular communication between home and the school improves the consistency with which parents and educators work towards the desired goals of promoting the child's development. Most of the respondents are of the view that if parents and the community would pay regular visits and give such talks about the issues confronting the communities in relation to the school and the behaviour and activities of the learners after school. It will inculcate some sort of awareness among the learners who would come to realise that they are required to become aware of the roles that they would have to play within their communities after school. They suggested that parents-communities bring the topic, which they would like to talk about and plan together with the school so that the views of the school head, the teachers and the learners would be incorporated for delivery to the learners. In this way, the

respondents believe, all the parties would be contributing towards efficiency and effectiveness of the school administrators, teachers and the learners' performance. The literature study also mentioned the issue of the gap between the school and the community, . McLaughlin (2001:14) emphasized the importance of the school's programmes and organizational programmes that include the community members and the young people, and how they are effective in moulding the lives of the young people. If schools and communities are not working together, it won't be easy to keep the learners busy after school hours.

4.3.3 Changes in education system

The Department of Education (1997b: 27), states that the involvement of parents is a crucial thing in education. Parents were sensitive before the implementation of OBE to be involved in school matters, how they can be involved now that there is even more of a change from OBE to RNCS (Revised National Curriculum Statement). That alone intimidates parents even more. Most parents state that they left school before OBE was introduced, so they don't know anything. They sometimes make jokes about the new changes in education, stating that the reason why learners are behaving so badly is because they are "the children of OBE. The children of OBE do not get any corporal punishment". The sarcasms will be directed to educators as if they are the people who are introducing the changes. Christie (1999:283) confirms that the new changes do not give educators a chance to take decisions or to know what is really happening. Education policies are a top-down process, where educators are expected to implement changes without questioning them. Parents feel that they must be included in the changes of policies.

Parents also suggested that they must be allowed to discuss the school policies and have an input, Stern (2003: 47) and Epstein and Dauber (1993: 61). Epstein (2009) also claims that in order to get parents involved, it is very important to include parents in developing, reviewing and improving school policies that affect students at the school. This will allow families to have some input in decisions that affect their children's education. It is quite valuable in order to strengthen school programs, family practices and student learning, to include the cooperation of community businesses, cultural and religious organisations, senior citizen groups and colleges and universities. Some community activities are after school recreation,

tutorial programs, health services, cultural events, summer programs and part-time jobs. Epstein claims that if this is well implemented, students, families and schools will increase their knowledge of community resources, and that will help students reach important goals for learning.

4.3.4 Socio-economic factors

Hoy and Miskel (1996: 19) state that feminists argue that organizations are dominated by a male culture that emphasizes conformity, defence to authority, loyalty, competition, aggressiveness and efficiency. It transpired from the interview that both female participants choose not to oppose the dominant male discourse of the organisation. To support Hoy and Miskel's view on conformity, here is what was said by another female participant: "*We keep quiet when they dominate us, and by so doing, we give them their place*" (parent-1). This means that these female participants are not fully recognized in the SGB as valued members but seem to be there for the sake of window-dressing so that the organization appears in public as if it involves women. This confirms Hoy and Miskel's (1996: 19) argument that the "feminist side of relations is devalued in bureaucratic organizations". This means that as long as bureaucratic organizations exist, women's voices will not be heard and they will remain subordinated to convention in male-dominated structures. This is a major challenge facing involvement of stakeholders in school management.

Illiteracy also plays a major role in parental apathy, especially in the rural areas. According to Baatjes (*The Natal Witness*, September 2004) "close to two million adults are poorly educated and lack the basic knowledge and skills for active participation in society" (*The Natal Witness*, September 2004). Lack of skills and basic education cause many rural parents to undervalue them. As a result they distance themselves from their children's school matters. In that way they leave everything up to the teachers with the attitude that teachers are experts and they can best do the job. In my research, it transpired that most parents are illiterate, so it becomes hard for them to serve in the governing body. Some teachers also have a tendency to look down on parents, treating them as inferiors and this has a negative impact on parental participation.

Lindle (1989) reports that surveyed parents want teachers to treat them as equals and with respect. Parents do not appreciate professional and cold approach from teachers. On the other hand, teachers who cultivate a personal touch in their communication style improve school/home relationships. Likewise, Lawrence-Lightfoot (1999) maintains that teachers need to express a value for parents' wisdom and authority about their children. Parents were asked how often, on average, the school contacts them. Four of the parents maintain that the school contacts them regularly, about once a month. According to them, this contact is mostly in the form of circular letters informing them what is happening or requesting their attendance at school. However, according to Parent 1 and 2 the school only contacts them once a term and Parent 3 said the school had not contacted her at all this school year: "*No, not much. I haven't been [contacted] since he moved to Mashamaite School, they haven't contacted me*". In spite of such lack of communication, she believes it is very important for the school to have a fair amount of communication with the family. Five of the parents contact the school themselves regularly, because they have a longing to know everything that is going on there. According to Laura, such contact between the home and school is very healthy. Hilda said that whenever she has any questions she does not hesitate to contact the school.

The SGB research participants revealed that though they could read and write, only one of them had completed matric. They made it clear that this is a real problem and many parents do not want to serve because they believe it is the duty of the literate and well educated people. Another research participant complained that when they interact with teachers, teachers do not attempt to make them feel comfortable. She complained that teachers do not accept their views, they do not cooperate and they just treat them badly as a way of telling them that there is nothing they (parents) can contribute to the teaching profession.

Most rural parents lack the necessary skills to participate in democratic and professional settings. If they can acquire basic skills and knowledge, undoubtedly, the attitude some teachers have given them (parents) is likely to change. Baatjes (2004: 3) concluded that "the education of adults is particularly significant because they are in the position to use what they learn immediately and can participate in the building of a new, participatory democracy." It must be borne in mind that most of the unemployed citizens of South Africa reside in the

rural areas. This may have a direct impact on parent participation in the school matters. Lezotte & Jacoby (1990: 147) states the importance of the climate and the environment of the school for parental involvement (2.7.5). It is emphasized that parents must feel safe around the school buildings and also sees the peaceful order in which the school is monitored. The literature made it clear that the parents will never complain if they see that their lives are threatened but instead just stay away from the school.

Rural dwellers need financial motivation to take part in certain matters. The financial status of the rural dwellers may be regarded by Marxists as “alienated workers” (Bowles and Gintis, cited in Haralambos, 1980). According to Bowles and Gintis (cited in Haralambos, 1980: 181), since alienated workers cannot be motivated by intrinsic rewards, since they cannot find satisfaction and fulfilment in work itself, they must be motivated by extrinsic rewards such as pay and status. The lack of full involvement was also raised by RCL participants when asked if they had any knowledge and skills regarding their duties. All of them except the chairperson answered in the negative. They also made it clear that there was no workshop or training course offered to them, and that caused them not to participate to their fullest potential. Failure to develop parental involvement in school management is therefore crippling the system in a number of ways. However, there are few positive aspects this study has observed, namely, ownership, commitment, shared vision and values.

According to Epstein (1995) studies have shown that most teachers would like to have the families of their students involved. The problem is that few of them know how to go about getting the parents to participate and be involved. Baker et al. (in Ferrara and Ferrara, 2005), and Lawrence-Lightfoot (1999) say that teachers themselves freely admit their lack of training in working with parents, especially in the skills they need in order to have effective communication with parents. Since the practices of communication are so fundamental for schools in order to involve parents in their child’s education, Caspe (2003) suggests that professional development and preparation programs for teachers should advocate the development of communication skills for teachers. Likewise, Lawrence-Lightfoot (1999) maintains that teachers need to express a value for parents’ wisdom and authority about their children. Furthermore, it may cause tension between the teacher and parents if the only contact from school is when the child is not behaving. According to Obeidat and Al-Hassan

(2009) it is, therefore, essential for teachers to contact the homes to notify parents of a job well done or their child's progress, not only when they are lacking in their performances, or when their behaviour is causing problems. This, in turn, will promote positive relationships with parents.

4.4 THEME 2: Consequences of non-involvement of parents in the education of their children as revealed by the study.

Parental involvement is an important part of the school management, which comes into operation through the school governing body and practises several vital roles as identified by Davidoff & Lazarus (2002: 38): School governing bodies have a central role to play in developing a common vision for the school, incorporating the values and principles embodied in the school's mission statement in a school policy that can guide the practices in the school, and overseeing the financial and other central roles in providing leadership to the school .

4.4.1 Poor school performance and attendance by the learners

Most of the teachers and the school principal do not take it lightly when every misbehaviour or poor performance of learners is heaped on their heads. According to teacher 1: "*I believe education is a societal issue all stakeholders must be involved*" They all feel that parents and the communities can contribute towards the performance of their children which they believe will impact positively on their effectiveness. They indicated that parents should have some time with their children every evening and inspect the work that their children bring home and make sure that their children do the homework or assignment. Teacher 2 stated that: "*parents are not taking part in assisting their children in doing their homework or even washing their uniforms*". To these respondents, this is a very important psychological strategy, which will have two positive effects on the performance of the learners. First, the learners become aware that, it is not the teacher only who will be looking at their schoolwork, homework and assignments. This will make the learners to know that they cannot escape from laziness and negligence and that both parents-community and the teachers will be in to make sure they are doing what they are supposed to do to be successful and improve on their performance.

Their conclusion was that if both the teachers and the parents-communities are pulling together, they would be able to make a success story together towards a better performance by their children. Parents' regular visits to the school without prior notice to inspect learners' schoolwork not called upon by the school. A good number of learners and teachers (85%) agree that parents should pop in their schools from time to time to find out what is going on. To these respondents, it will help parents to identify lazy teachers and irresponsible school heads who do not contribute towards the performance of their children's' school work. The Principal supported the collaboration of parents; he said, "*Parents are encouraged to make visits at school uninvited*". They believe that such impromptu visits are excellent means of putting teachers and school heads on their toes. However, 15% of the respondents believe that such visit could be disruptive and can also erase their control and dignity. Generally, the conclusion in this case was that there should be some collaboration regarding such visits so that they become organised to be able to achieve set objectives – better performance - for both teachers and learners.

4.4.2 School-home relationship

All the stakeholders realized the consequence of the gap between the home and the school. It was also mentioned that most of the damage that has already happened at schools and with some learners was caused by this huge gap between educators and parents. The gap was also causing problems as far as communication is concerned. The learners sampled for the study also made valid contribution in relation to the problem under investigation. Parents who responded to better communication between home and school were equally positive stating,

"I enjoyed the parent-teacher forum in the fall," "I believe that if a student is struggling in class and that specific teacher informs the parents and gives them ideas on how to help the student, then the student would benefit by having help both at school and home," and "It all starts at home. Parents have to be involved and have to encourage their children or help when they need it"

The majority of the learners are of the view that parents' involvement, especially in relation to checking them at home if their homework and assignments have been done will help them

to work hard not only at school but at home too. This means that they would be able to complete their homework and make the work of the teacher easy by only submitting them for marking and not chasing after them to complete their work.

They also indicated that the more parents ask and check their work when they are at home the more it will make them to pay attention in class and do their work knowing that they would also be checked by their parents. This is a good mark of collaborative effort where both the teacher and the parents would be monitoring children's activities not only at school but at home too. They also indicated that if parents are alert and check them, it will also have some effects on their behaviour outside the school, especially in the community. Their reason is that they would become aware that they are being watched in whatever they are doing both at school and at home thereby controlling bad behaviour. The remaining 5% believe that it will be interfering in their freedom as learners and will put more pressure on them making it impossible to enjoy their youthful years. They further insisted that it is their democratic right and should not be infringed by anybody. The conclusion in this case is that learner's acknowledge the need to be monitored in the communities, at home and at school because it will make them conscious of whatever they are doing at any place and time. Both educators and parents agreed that the communication between them was very poor; as a result there were assumptions from both sides. Parents on one side thought that educators do not need their assistance and educators on the other side thought that parents do not care about their children's education.

4.4.3 Monitoring the discipline of learners at schools

The views of all the learners and teachers are that discipline is not the duty of the school administrators only and do not take the blame parents and communities heap on their heads about learners' indiscipline and disrespect to elders and community property. To these respondents, the enforcement and monitoring of discipline should be initiated from the homes and among the communities. To these respondents, learners whose parents place good manners and obedience as priority from the home will definitely extend that behaviour into the school environment. To them, most disciplinary problems encountered in the school

environment can be resolved if parents are actively involved in the communities and monitor the way their children behave after school.

The respondents are of the view that they spend less time with the learners while parents and the communities spend longer time with their children and for this reason, parents participation in disciplinary measures will be highly effective and efficient and will have positive effects on the learner while at school. They further indicated that, when learners are regularly monitored to be disciplined, especially at home and in the communities they become conscious of their behaviour either in the home, the community or at school. They become punctual, pay attention in class, take part in school activities and contribute to peaceful school environment conducive to teaching and learning. Their conclusion is that disciplined learners from disciplined homes and communities do not put up disruptive behaviour in class. They do not disturb other learners and do not participate in disruptive behaviour because they have built that positive attitude to life from home. To them, most of the successful initiatives required to succeed, as disciplined learners should be initiated from the home and in the communities that the learners live and interact.

The study highlighted the huge problem faced by educators at schools when it came to the discipline of learners. Educators explained that learners were disrespectful at school because they knew that their parents would not come to school or won't hear about their misbehaviours at schools. The literature explained some possible reasons for learners behaving the way they do. Robertson (1999:78) and Jones & Jones (1995:6) in (2.6.6) explained the social factors that can cause a child to misbehave. All the stakeholders (parents, educators and learners) agreed that learners behave differently in front of their educators, parents and their friends, which make it even more difficult to be able to trace the cause. Parents and educators were the most affected about the moral degeneration of the learners. The most disturbing part was that it seemed as if it was difficult for them to come up with effective means of disciplining these learners. According to them (parents and educators) the government was protecting the children with all the laws of the children's rights. They specifically did not like the idea of abolishing corporal punishment in schools, Department of education (2000:12).

4.4.4 High failure rate and drop-outs

The learners sampled for the study also made valid contribution in relation to the problem under investigation. The majority of the learners (95%) are of the view that parents' involvement, especially in relation to checking them at home if their homework and assignments have been done will help them to work hard not only at school but at home too. The learners themselves appear to enjoy these visits, as parent 1 says about her daughter:

... If we plan a route, he says: 'But mommy can we also make a turn here so I can see what I have read in history or what I have read somewhere in reality also happening'.

This means that they would be able to complete their homework and make the work of the teacher easy by only submitting them for marking and not chasing after them to complete their work. They also indicated that the more parents ask and check their work when they are at home the more it will make them to pay attention in class and do their work knowing that they would also be checked by their parents. This is a good mark of collaborative effort where both the teacher and the parents would be monitoring children's activities not only at school but at home too.

When asked about their attitude towards Mashamaite School, the parents all agree that their attitude is very positive, except for one parent. Parent 4 was not very positive and on the scale of one to five, where one is very negative and five is very positive, she only valued Mashamaite School at two: I would say, compared with other public schools. *"I am not happy with what we get out of the school. Every year, the mark for students is very low and that is not what I expect compared with other schools around"*. They also indicated that if parents are alert and check them, it will also have some effects on their behaviour outside the school, especially in the community. Their reason is that they would become aware that they are being watched in whatever they are doing both at school and at home thereby controlling bad behaviour. The remaining 5% believe that it will be interfering in their freedom as learners and will put more pressure on them making it impossible to enjoy their youthful years. They further insisted that it is their democratic right and should not be infringed by anybody. The conclusion in this case is that learners acknowledge the need to be monitored in the communities, at home and at school because it will make them conscious of whatever they are doing at any place and time.

4.4.5 Teenage pregnancy

The study reveals the frustration that is brought about by the teenage pregnancy in the different families. Parents were complaining about the high ratio of unemployment that they as parents have to deal with and the extra burden that their teenagers are bringing home. The fighting between the married couples blaming each other for the pregnant child caused another stir. Parents were blaming themselves for not making sure that their children were not dodging school and being involved in sexual activities. Both parents and educators were blaming the government for allowing pregnant children to come to school. The empirical study and the literature have proven that teenage pregnancy is an extra burden to the already bad socio-economic status in the townships. It has also proven that teenage pregnancy reduces the chances of teenage mother improving their lives. Bartell (1999:19) concurs that teenage mothers have to drop out of school and care for the new born baby and not return to school to further their studies. They either join the unemployed group or the domestic workers while some are lucky to be able to receive the government grant.

4.5 THEME 3: The role of the parent component of the SGB.

The researcher wanted to know whether parents value their inclusion in school governance and deliberate at School Governing Body meetings. Moreover, he was interested in finding out whether teachers dictate when decisions are taken and parents just follow. Moreover, if they do deliberate, what role do they play and is their role of importance? Most of the participants value the contribution made by parents in school governing, whilst only few feel that it is not necessary. This means that parents believe that it is important to have parents in school governing bodies. On the perceptions of the perceived benefits which accrue to the learner, educator, school and society in general, when parental involvement programmes are fully operational reveal that respondents have agreed that the motivation of learners, the two-way communication system from home to school

- the home-school relationship
- the attitudes of learners
- the participation of parents
- which both parents and education managers

- view as a form of empowerment in itself, parents' insight in school programmes and innovations
- the academic performance of learners
- the supervision of homework
- which no doubt enables parents
- to reinforce learning at home, school resources
- the learners' attendance at school
- and their behaviour improve dramatically as noted by the high scores on these attributes.

Educators at the elementary level are required to know the cultural home backgrounds of their learners if they are to execute their duties in a professional manner, most of the participants agreed that PI enabled them (education managers) to know the learners better. In the same light, early-learners in the primary school are usually given some reading assignments to read to their parents at home. When they were questioned on how this approach reinforces learning, most of these indicated that children's reading skills improved both at home and school due to parental intervention together with the monitoring of television programmes. These two attributes may be tied with the supervision of homework already alluded to above which perhaps answers the question why children's academic performance improves, when children are monitored in that manner both at home and school.

4.5.1 The perception of teachers on the expected role of parents in SGB.

The participants stated that the SMT recommends the new appointment of teaching and non-teaching staff at their school. The Chairperson claimed that he is not involved in recruitment and appointment procedures. The school Principal seemed to agree: "*The main role of SMT is to recommend suitable candidates when we have teaching and non-teaching vacancies at school*". Molepo (2000:73) in his study suggests that the three stakeholders (parents, educators and learners) have to be empowered to work like a three legged pot, where one could not work without the others. Each party must value and acknowledge the presence and need of each other. Teacher 2, however, expressed difficulties with the low level of literacy of the parents. He put it this way:

“Parents felt that the school is for educators, so the reason for sending their children to school was for them to be educated. We experienced difficulties. Especially when it comes to recommending teaching staff ... parents do not know which candidate is suitable for the post, therefore we teachers have to play a role and explain things to parents or direct them, otherwise they cannot make a meaningful contribution and choose the right person for the job”.

Once again, as on the above issues, they misunderstood the point of involving illiterate parents in their education. Of the 5 learners questioned about the problem of illiterate parents not understanding school’s ethos 1 out of 5 answered that they strongly agreed, and 0 agreed, 2 strongly disagreed and 2 agreed. One of the learners said, *“Neither of my parents can read nor write. Why should they be brought to participate in school activities – to make a laughing stock of them I suppose?”*

Another problem that Teacher 2 identified was that English was the language used in conducting interviews for teaching vacancies at the school. According to him: The interviews are done in English, which is the official language, and since most of the parents on the School Board do not understand English only teachers ask questions during interviews while parents observe. Parents can comment only on the ‘behaviours’ of the interviewees but cannot understand or comment on how the interviewees answered the questions. Because of the language problem they cannot influence the outcome of the interview. Hence, it seems that although parents are seen to have a significant role to play in the appointment of new staff, there is doubt whether they really have the competence to play an effective role. This indicates a possible area of tension among members of the School Board.

4.5.2 How parents in SGB perceive their role.

Disciplinary issues emerged as a strong theme across all the data. The importance of all the stakeholders in disciplinary issues was identified and stressed by all respondents. Both parents and learners have to devise means of behavioural strategies to deal with violence at schools as advised by Mayer (2002:100). Learner 1, for example, said, *“The School Board is really working in terms of developing the school, disciplining learners and teachers as well.”*

Another RCL respondent also believed that she plays no role in the school discipline management because “...if a learner is suspended we as learners we are not involved” (learner-5).

There were very few RCL members, however, who felt that their role in the school discipline is significant. Others stated clearly that they had no role, and seemingly they appeared to be in the midst of confusion regarding what is expected of them. This confusion has been identified by Sithole (1995: 93) as follows: Although it is the stated policy of the national educational ministry of education that students at secondary level, for the purpose of school governance, constitute one of the main stakeholders, how students are going to participate in school governance and over which issues is yet unresolved.

This claim by Sithole (1995) obviously clarifies the fact that there is still ice to be broken in order to promote learner participation in school management. Some adults, like teachers, are very uncomfortable with the idea of working with learners. One of the research participants in Nongubo’s (2004: 60) study stated the following: They are seen by the law as minors, for instance even if we have got some committees and we want to put up a tender they can’t come into that sub-committee, because if there are legal implications there could be problems, and in the appointment of teachers they are not there but when we report to the SGB they are there. Parent 1 saw their role as problem-solvers as a positive one, explaining that the School Board is really needed because without it no development will take place: “*The School Board needs to be there to solve teachers’ and learners’ problems*”. According to the teachers sub committees are available but dysfunctional, In addition, the Chairperson explained that they mostly discuss learners’ and teachers’ problems in School Board meetings but they do not engage the disciplinary committee. The disciplinary role was also stressed by Parent 1:

“*I am a treasurer and like other members my other roles are to advise teachers and learners and to solve disciplinary problems at school*”. And by Teacher 4: “*The role of parents on the School Board is to listen to anything such as discipline among learners, teachers who apply corporal punishment and other things that need their attention*”.

Parent 3 was elected to the School Board in May 2006 and has had limited experience on this Board. However, he had been a member of another School Board and said that his roles had not changed much. He mentioned that for instance he would keep the school in good order and bring about peace and co-operation between teachers and learners. *Teacher 3* also emphasised: “*I remember that normally in the School Board people discuss factors such as learners and teachers’ behaviour*”.

The principal made the interesting point that those disciplinary matters – regarding either teacher (when teachers violate rules) or learners – had to be dealt with by the School Board: “the Principal has no power especially when teachers violate certain offences. “In contrast, the Chairperson believes that the School Board has a ‘policing’ role to play in the school both in terms of learners and teachers. She claimed that:

“The School Board is very much needed in the sense that if there is Board then teachers will work and behave the way they want and there will be no one to control the Principal’s work. Now teachers know that whatever they are doing the School Board is watching them and is ready to step in when things start going wrong”.

Many interview responses stressed the role of the School Board concerning learners’ discipline. The principal said that undisciplined behaviour was one of the problems the SGB had to deal with the most. “*Learners have a tendency of denying the truth*”. Similarly, *Parent 1* explained that the main problem they met with on the School Board is learner misbehaviour: “*They used to insult each other and teachers sometimes*”. *Parent 1* acknowledged the fact that they failed in some cases. For example learners previously went to shops at break time or on their way to school and drank alcohol. She said: “*We (parents) failed to address this problem seriously and today you would see learners walking around shops during school hours*”. Unfortunately disciplinary issues can also lead to conflict which can harm relationships between parents and teachers.

According to *Teacher 3*:

“In some cases when learners misbehave and the School Board call their parents in order to deal with the issue it resulted in damaging the relationship between some School Board members and learners’ parents just because such Board members were asking more questions or giving punishment”.

Consequently, the affected School Board member will no longer feel free to participate in such meetings or make decisions in disciplinary matters. The Principal also viewed disciplinary issues in a positive light, since it was one of the problems that enabled them to invite parents to school. He revealed that generally, parents in the community only visit the school whenever they are individually invited to do so especially in connection with learners’ behaviour. The Principal stated:

“Teachers used to send learners to report themselves at school with their parents when learners misbehave or in accordance with other matters but in most cases parents did not come. Teachers have to send three to four letters or prevent learners from attending classes until parents report themselves is when parents will come”.

Document analysis bore out these views. The staff meetings minutes that I reviewed confirmed that learners’ behaviour was one of the matters most often discussed in meetings since 2006 as confirmed by all interview respondents. Likewise, during the time I spent at this school my observation of parental involvement and the school in general substantiates this situation as this entry in my journal shows: Since I started observing, no parents had shown up to see how education is taking place and their children’s performance. Only two parents came to school since teachers requested it. One parent came in connection with old school uniform of her son, which according to teachers was no longer in good condition. Another parent was called to report herself at school as teachers sent her daughter home after fighting with other learners. Otherwise, most parents that I met at this school only came to sell their goods such as breads, meat and nuts. The important issue in this section is that there is a sense of misunderstanding concerning the roles of parents on the School Board. For instance, the Chairperson believes that they have a policing role (watching teachers). The

other interesting issues is the view that the principal has little power in disciplinary affairs and the relationship with the SGB is harmed because of disagreement over disciplinary matters, which shows limited understanding of participative management.

The parents I spoke with all agree that homework is very important and they emphasise that their children do their homework. They see it as an opportunity for their children to revise what they learned at school. Like *parent 1* said: “*Yes. It’s normally very important; it’s just a way of revising and a way of practicing what he learned*”. When *parent 3* was asked about the importance of homework, he said:

“Absolutely! I think it’s absolutely important because in my view work done at home will demonstrate retention and learning, because work done in the classroom, the information is there and they’ve got skilled help. But when they go home, they are practicing the skills they learnt at school... All the parents monitor their child’s homework and make sure that the homework is finished”.

Parent 3 looks at his daughter’s homework to make sure she has completed everything. Hilda requests that her son writes everything he is supposed to work at home in a book so that she has a better overview of his homework. This makes it easier for her to monitor his homework and to make sure that he completes it. Some researchers have pointed out that many parents wish to be more involved with their children’s schoolwork and want to receive more information and assistance from schools in order for them to reach this goal (Richardson, 2009; Epstein 1995; Keith and Keith, 1993). However, *Parent 1* said that: “*this year my monitoring is not as much as I would like it to be*”. The reason being that she has a young daughter and much of her time is geared towards her: “*Yeah. I mean... not this year much ‘because I have a one year old daughter... But, yeah, before because I had to constantly check what he’s writing, especially in his English...’*”.

When *parent 2* was asked about the importance of homework, she said: “*Absolutely. I think it’s absolutely important because in my view work done at home will demonstrate retention and Learning and work done in the classroom, the information is there and they’ve got skilled help. But when they go home, they are practicing the skills they learnt at school...’*”.

According to Epstein (1995) studies have shown that most teachers would like to have the families of their students involved. The problem is that few of them know how to go about getting the parents to participate and be involved. Baker et al. (in Ferrara and Ferrara, 2005), and Lawrence-Lightfoot (1999) say that teachers themselves freely admit their lack of training in working with parents, especially in the skills they need in order to have effective communication with parents. Since the practices of communication are so fundamental for schools in order to involve parents in their child's education, Caspe (2003) suggests that professional development and preparation programs for teachers should advocate the development of communication skills for teachers. Lindle (1989) reports that, according to surveyed results, parents want teachers to treat them as equal and with respect. Parents do not appreciate professional and cold approach from teachers. On the other hand, teachers who cultivate a personal touch in their communication style improve school/home relationships. Likewise when asked whether or not there is enough parent supervision on learner's homework, the general response was that parents do not supervise their children's work. The reason for lack of supervision is that most learners stay alone and are heads of families. When asked what can be done to encourage parent supervision of their learner's homework, the responses were that: " *Parents should be called for a meeting in which the importance of learner's supervision should be indicted to parents*".

"Parents should be motivated to help children with their homework and be urged to sign homework books thereafter". "School management team and teachers should encourage parents to attend ABET lessons which will make them understand the importance of education. Competition and learner awards can encourage seriousness to do homework".

"Announcement of learner performance during parents meetings scan encourage parent involvement as no parent will be happy to be called in public about his/her learner performance".

The participants claimed that the School Board is responsible and accountable for school finances. The respondents emphasised that it is the School Board's responsibility to approve purchases when the school needs to buy something. For example, Teacher 3 stated that: It is the responsibility of the School Board to approve money to buy school needs such as photocopy machine, books, stationeries etc. Likewise, The Chairperson of School Board had

this to say: School monies are our responsibility as well, teachers just collect them from learners and the elected treasurer (a parent member of School Board) calculates the money to see if the amount collected from learners is the same amount available.

Parent 1, the treasurer, confirmed this: “*My role is to check the financial books and see if what is written is exactly what is used and received by teachers. In other words I check the income and expenditures of the school*”. The Principal explained that the school finance committee is responsible for finance issues: “*The treasurer is a parent but since she lived far from the SGB teachers representative assists her*”. Although parents felt responsible for school finances, their lack of financial skills made it possible for teachers to gain access to school money. Teacher 3 was of the opinion that though parents read some information in booklets they still needed teachers’ assistance, especially in financial matters: “*though the treasurer of the School Board is a parent she cannot calculate the incomes and expenditures without teachers’ assistance*”. However, the principal freed himself from many of his financial responsibilities; for instance, safe-keeping the school financial records were no longer a priority. The Principal positively claimed that he did not deal with or control the school finances except for signing the withdrawal forms. In his own words: “*School money is not part of my responsibility. My role as a Principal is only to find out what the school needs are and bring them to School Board meetings so that the Board can agree with such a need or not and approve the amount required* ” . Although, Parent 1 stated that she does not carry or keep school money in cash, she insisted all school monies were saved at the school bank account. However, the safety and security of school money remains questionable as she further revealed an interesting point:

“When the school needs some cash to use, they always consult me but I am not one of the members who signs or has power to withdraw money from the school account. When I became a treasurer I found some teachers with that authority therefore we did not change it or take it away from them”.

In a similar vein, *Teacher 1* revealed that only the principal and one teacher (not a member of the School Board) had the authority to withdraw money from the school bank account.

According to her, this teacher was not authorised to do so by the School Board but he is just doing it because he had been granted that power before the implementation of the Education Act 2001. *Teacher 1* further expressed concern that “*this teacher takes care of all school money either that in the bank account or the cash at school, therefore I do not fully understand the role and use of the treasurer we elected in School Board*”. Thus, an ignorance of policy and misuse of formal procedure is common. *Parent 1*(the treasurer) also revealed that: “*Because the school development fund is usually received by class teachers, some teachers used to use this money for personal purposes and pay it back later*”.

Though there is a sense of inappropriateness concerning school funds *Parent 3*, a new member, felt that he would work according to the School Board roles and powers that were articulated in the School Board members’ booklet and he stressed that “*we will take good care of school finances to avoid its misuse by the Principal and teachers*”. Despite the poor control of school money, some parents claimed that they had used school finances to buy school assets in the past year. According to one, they still needed more financial aid to assist them in developing and purchasing school equipment and supplies. The Chairperson put it as follows: At our school, we achieved some things like buying the photocopy machine, now we are trying to get a school patron and donors to help our school finances and to provide assets like computers, overhead projectors, video machines and other things. In brief, what is interesting here is that parents feel that they are responsible and accountable for school finance but according to teachers, parents lack competence since they cannot control the finances alone without teachers help. In reality, what the School Board is doing here is only approving the amount of money needed. Other issues are that a non-School Board member has signing authority, and the misuse of school development funds by teachers (using it the money for personal purposes), which shows an ignorance of policy and a degree of carelessness in the School Board members and the principal. The principal feels totally justified and not responsible for financial matters, which is not always the case.

4.6 CONCLUSION

From what have been sourced from the literature consulted, the interviews and document analysis administered it is pertinent to indicate that, all the stakeholders favour a kind of partnership where every member of the partnership will participate effectively in the achievement of the goals set for schools in every community. Once there is effective and efficient collaboration among all stakeholders, there is every possibility that teachers will be highly effective and learners would be able to improve in their performance culminating into excellent results at the end of the school year.

4.7 PROJECTION FOR THE NEXT CHAPTER

The following chapter concludes the study. I will present the key findings of this research, recommendations for further research, and a critique of the study. In this chapter I will summarise the conclusions that can be drawn from the study, I will also make some recommendations or suggestions for further action to be taken to improve partnerships in school management involvement in school activities. According to Hall & Hall (1996:246), “recommendations should suggest attainable improvement, and therefore should arise best from the people you have interviewed.” Robson, cited by Hall & Hall (1996:246) says that recommendations should ‘be clearly derived from the data.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will summarise the conclusions that can be drawn from the study, I will also make some recommendations or suggestions for further action to be taken to improve parental involvement in school activities. According to Hall & Hall (1996:246), “recommendations should suggest attainable improvement, and therefore should arise best from the people you have interviewed.” Robson, cited by Hall & Hall (1996:246) says that recommendations should ‘be clearly derived from the data. This study has revealed important ideas and opinions on each of the three themes that were investigated. As a result of the study I would proudly suggest the following as strategies to be taken in improving parental involvement in the education of their children. These recommendations also provide answers to the SMT of both schools in answering the sub-questions about the causes of non-involvement of parents, the consequences of non-involvement and the solution to the problems of non involvement.

5.2 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

The investigation of the problem revealed both anticipated and unanticipated findings. Generally, from the literature consulted and data collected, what came out are the following: There is a need for regular interaction and communication among the stakeholders of the school community to be able to find solutions to problems together when they arise. The activities of the school are not the sole responsibility of teachers and the school administrators alone. This is reflected in monitoring learners after school Mashamaite School have been partially involved in school activities despite the fact that most primary and secondary schools are community owned.

There is general consensus that the school administration should rope in the community in the year programme planning and copies of the planned activities made available to guide them

so that they are able to know when they are required to make inputs to issues of mutual importance and welfare of the school, the learners and the community. There is agreement that monitoring learners from several perspectives would make them become aware of their activities thereby making them to behave responsibly wherever they would be. Teachers believe that parent-community involvement would help them to improve in their effectiveness because they would be pulling resources together for instance when learners are given homework parents will make sure learners attend to it. Learners feel that the combined efforts of parents, community and the school will make it possible for them to excel to be able to please their parents and teachers. It is necessary that teachers should go into the community with empathy and interact meaningfully with their constituents for mutual co-existence and progress. Parents and the community should be called upon in emergency situations outside the planned programme. Parental and community involvement help to:

- (a) Improve discipline.
- (b) Punctuality of learners to school.
- (c) Make learners responsible and take their school duties seriously.
- (d) Make teachers feel confident that parents and community are with them in whatever they do at school adding to their confidence and effectiveness.

The following were the unanticipated findings which were considered relevant to be included in the study. Parents and the communities claim that they cannot take responsibility for something that they have not been trained to do. This indicates that there is need for some education to orientate parents and the communities to be involved in the management of the schools in their communities. Parents and communities feel that they cannot be held accountable for responsibilities that they have no lawful control. Most members of the SGBs and PTA are either illiterate or semi-illiterate and for that matter cannot be expected to understand academic and management procedures of the schools in their communities. However, this study revealed a number of challenges that hinder the effective involvement of parents in school governance. These include lack of educational background among parents, poor knowledge of the English language and lack of general understanding of educational terms. According to the participants, training of School Board members has been ineffective, inadequate, and provided only to some members, so they are now appealing to the Ministry

of Education to provide training to all members in the language that parents and other participants understand.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has revealed very interesting and easy-to-follow results that have been presented in a very simple narrative for easy understanding. The recommendations that are worth making as a sum total of the study are that Members of the SGBs and PTAs should be literate and given adequate orientation about their responsibilities. Regular interaction with all the stakeholders of the school government should be encouraged so that there is no redundant time lapse to contribute to the ferment of Parent-community should exist in tandem for progressive development and better performance for both teachers and their children. According to Boyer (1991:33) the policies must be well structured, they must “build bridges between home and school”. Through empowering parents, bridges can be easily built and partnership will be strong. The stronger the partnership the more effective becomes the school and the relationship between educators and parents become stronger.

Parents must also be taught the boundaries within which they have to be involved so that they don't transgress. These boundaries must be stipulated clearly in the policy that involves parents and simple and easy language must be used, so that the parents could understand it easily. On the basis of the findings of this study it is recommended that:-

- Parents and educators should try their best to develop trust and good working relations at schools.
- Parents should develop interest in the education of their children from an early age up to high schools, so that the learners can be successful in their studies.
- Educators and parents should work together towards one goal, to help children to be responsible and dedicated citizens of the country.
- Co-operation between parents and educators is a crucial thing for proper learning and teaching to take place.
- Strong 'bridges' between schools and homes should be built.
- The Education Department has a big role to play in levelling the fields between these two parties (Parents and educators) and by promoting collaboration and communication between the two.

- Educators and learners should be empowered to work with parents and also have skills to empower parents to be able to participate effectively in school activities.
- The government should work hand in hand with schools and make use of the retired educators to educate illiterate parents, so that most parents can learn to read and write and thus read with their children. (A certain percentage of payment can be agreed upon, between the government and retired educators).

5.4 SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS IN MANAGEMENT

The understanding of the sense of interdependence between parents and educators is crucial with regard to effective parental involvement. However, a sense of being a team in which members are interdependent on each other may not be enough for effective integration in the functioning of a school as an organisation where interconnectedness is more than interdependence. This study and others of the same nature (Heystek, 2004; van Wyk, 2004) have shown that there is little sense of interconnectedness of people in school governance, which shows the need for adopting the systems thinking discipline. The discipline of systems thinking emphasises the linkage between people in the team, “the roles of their team in the organisation and the organisation’s relationship to the larger environment” (Moloi, 2002: 62). In similar vein, Senge (2000: 8) described the discipline of systems thinking as follow: In this discipline, people learn to better understand interdependence and change and thereby are able to deal more effectively with the forces that shape the consequences of their actions. Parents in the form of SGBs, learners in the form of RCLs, the management team and educators all revealed that involving stakeholders in the governance of the school is a crucial aspect. The three groups, namely educators, SMTs and SGBs all agreed on the idea of shared decision making. Except for most RCLs, the other groups revealed that they participate in decision-making and that their participation in decision making is an integral aspect of their school effectiveness.

We have to understand and adapt to changes of the system we are working in, for instance to adapt to the changes brought by the South African Schools Act no 84 of 1996. Moloi (2002: 67) stated that: “we need to understand that change is given and is here to stay. How we accept and deal with change, from both within and outside our schools, will set us apart as

educators *or stakeholders* [my emphasis]”. The findings further revealed that learners are hardly involved in decision-making. In most cases it is only the chairperson of the RCL who gets an invitation from the principal, particularly to share decisions on pressing and problematic matters. According to Bell (2002: 260), a researcher known as Ng (1994) noted that teachers and school principals desired to co-operate with parents in the education of their children. Oosthuizen (2002:194) concurs with Beare when he also agrees that parents can make a meaningful contribution to school activities, especially in those activities that fall outside the expertise of education, but where such a parent is an expert.

The role of parents in management does not begin and end with the school governing body. Other learner representatives have not yet been empowered to participate in decision making. This was confirmed by one of the SMT respondents who made it clear that “learners can be involved in decision-making to a limited extent. There are critical decisions we cannot make with children”. Potgieter et al. (1997: 6) stressed the idea of transformation and democratisation of education in the South African context: The democratisation of education includes the idea that stakeholders such as parents, teachers, learners, and other people (such as members of the community near school) must participate in the activities of the school. The governing body makes decisions on behalf of the school and sees to it that the school is administered properly. Through representation on the governing body all stakeholders can share in the decisions of that body. The members of the governing body are also accountable to these stakeholders.

Nongubo’s (2004) respondents made it clear that since children are not on the same level with staff members, it is hard to work with them. Similarly, Davidoff & Lazarus (2002: 5) also stressed the point that “The school is at the heart of educational change. It therefore needs to equip to manage such change effectively, which means that it needs to become a learning organisation”. The school is a place where most educational policy is implemented, therefore teams and individuals in schools need a better understanding of those changes in order to effectively implement those policies, and this is one of the aspects that are lacking in the school under investigation. Senge (2006: 3) clarified that “a learning organisation is a place where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to act together”. This idea of a

learning organisation can help the school to create conditions that can make individuals (parents and teachers) and teams (School Board) learn through shared understanding, shared meanings and shared visions. The governing body is regarded as a guardian of the school, which should exercise the capacity of guarding the school with wisdom, insight, skills, courage and understanding.

The discipline of system thinking not only promotes interdependence and the ability to change among individuals and teams in the organisation but also stresses the interconnectedness between the school and the environment. For instance, one of the respondents (parent 1) stressed the point that some teachers do not like to attend parents' meetings. The idea is simply that the interaction between parents and teachers is not effective. The Principal also emphasised that parents do not visit the school except when specifically requested by the school to do so. Against this background I agree with Moloï who stressed that: When educators interact with the parent community they create a context that allows them to identify their assumptions about what happens in the school and provides clarity when it needed. Through this interaction, parents and educators learn from each other and make efforts to work together and solve problems together (2002:3).

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study may open up potential avenues for other research. I suggest that further research needs to be done on the following aspects of parents' involvement:

- My study has explicitly brought out the issues surrounding the notion of partnerships in school management and decentralisation of power in the African education system that other researchers might note when studying the same phenomenon.

- Stakeholders' perceptions and experience of parents' involvement in school governance, which should include learners and inspectors of education as my research excluded them. I believe they might have had different experiences and perceptions of parents' involvement. Including learners and inspectors may provide new insight and help to clarify the challenges more sharply.

- This research also provides guidelines on how stakeholders' participation in schools maybe encouraged which may be of value to principals and their SMTs who want to practise effective management in their schools through the notion of a learning organisation.
- Further research needs to be done on investigating the financial responsibilities and accountability of School Board/SGB members, especially in rural schools. The aspect of school finance has many problems that School Boards may find difficult to control because of their limited understanding of finance.
- This study has found that this school is doing little to involve stakeholders in governance. There is a need for research to explore what school management teams are doing to enhance parental involvement.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This is a small-scale-case study it has a number of limitations, such as the time, scope constraints and non- generalising of the findings. I researched a small group of people (sample of educators, parents, teachers SMT, learners and the principal) only one school. Since this was a case study, it tended to focus on a single case and therefore it is not statistically generalizable. This study is aimed at understanding people's perceptions in a naturalistic setting, which is the notion of the case study as outlined by Smith (1994: 6) who makes the following comment: Case studies make a "drama of the commonplace"...In making it vivid, even creating suspense, the researcher appeals to more than one way of knowing, to more than one epistemology. However, there are understandings of the notion of generalizability that it is more appropriate to interpretive research .This concept shifts the inquirer's responsibility from one of demonstrating generalizability to one of providing sufficient description of the particular context studied. So that others may adequately judge the applicability or fit of the enquiry findings to their own context.

In terms of the limitation of site and participants, my study makes no attempt to generalise its findings beyond the informants studied. My aim in this study was to explore views,

understanding and experiences of participants of the phenomenon of parental involvement in school governance as I outlined throughout the thesis. I used different data methods that allowed me to triangulate and provide rich data. I cross-checked the data collected from all techniques namely interview and document analysis and provided the interview data to participants for member checking. Furthermore, I presented the data as provided by research participants and gathered through interviews and document analysis. To claim the validity of my study as a researcher working in the transformative paradigm, I suspended my knowledge of the notion of parents' involvement and leave the data to speak for themselves. Again I did not make an attempt to influence the setting or participants in one way or another. As I claimed earlier, my study is not statistically generalizable but like all other case studies it is possible for readers to find my findings similar or applicable to their own context. Stake refers to this as naturalistic generalisation: Naturalistic generalisations develop within a person as a product of experience. They derive from the tacit knowledge of how things are, why they are, how people feel about them, and how these things are likely to be later or in places with which this person is familiar.

5.7 CONCLUSION

From what have been sourced from the literature consulted, the focus interviews and data analysis it is pertinent to indicate that, all the stakeholders favour a kind of partnership where every member of the partnership will participate effectively in the achievement of the goals set for schools in every community. Once there is effective and efficient collaboration among all stakeholders, there is every possibility that teachers will be highly effective and learners would be able to improve in their performance culminating into excellent results at the end of the school year. Contributions of parent members are informed by other parents in their communities. This means that if parent structures work properly in their communities their influence can be transferred to the parent component of the school governing body. This means that the parent component can be a link and transfer the interests of community members to the school since they are also members of those communities

REFERENCES

- Amukugo, E.M. (1993). *Education and politics in Namibia: Past trends and future prospects*. Windhoek: New Namibia Books.
- Baatjes, I. (2004). *Wanted: Teachers for 2 million illiterate in KwaZulu-Natal*, The Natal Witness, 3 September.
- Babbie, E. (2001). *Survey research methods* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Bartell, S. S. (1999). *Teen Pregnancy: The Impact on a Family System*. 20(2), 19.
- Bassegy, M. (2002). Case study research. In M. Coleman & A.R. Briggs (Eds.), *Research in educational leadership and management* (108-121). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Bastiani, J. (1995). *Taking a few risks: learning from each other – teachers, parents and pupils*. London: Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce.
- Batey, C.S. (1996). *Parents Are Lifesavers: A Handbook for Parent Involvement in Schools*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.
- Bell, L. (2002). *New Partnerships for Improvement*. (225-237) In L. Bush and L. Bell (eds). *The Principles and Practice of Educational Management*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing
- Berger, E.H. (2000). *Parents are partners in education*. London: Prentice-Hall.
- Bisschoff, T. & Phakoa, T.S. (1999). *The Status of Minors in governing bodies of public secondary schools*. South African Journal of Education, 19 (1), 251-396.
- Bogdan, R & Biklen, S.K. (2003). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. 4th (ed.) Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Bogdan, RC. & Biklen, SK. (2007). *Qualitative research in education: An introduction to theory and methods* (5th Ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Boyer, E.L. (1991). *Ready to learn: A mandate for the nation*. Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
- Bush, T. (2003a). *Theory and practice in educational management*. In M. Thurlow, T. Bush & M. Coleman (Eds.), *Leadership and strategic management in South African schools* (pp.43-64). London: Commonwealth Secretariat.
- Caspe, M. S. (2003). *How teachers come to understand families*. *The School Community Journal*, 13(1), 115-131.
- Catron, C. E. & Allen, J. (1993). *Early childhood curriculum*. New York: Macmillan.

- Christie, P. and Potterson, M. (1997). *Final Report: Schools Development in South Africa: A research project to investigate strategic intervention for quality Improvement in South African Schools*, Johannesburg: University ofWitswatersrand
- Christie, P. (1999). *OBE and unfolding trajectories: Lessons to be learned*. In: Jansen, J. & Christie, P. (eds). *Changing the curriculum: Studies of outcomes-based education in South Africa*.Kenwyn: Juta
- Clark, R. (1993). *Homework-Focused Parenting Practices That Positively Affect Student Achievement in* Chavkin, Nancy Feyl (Ed.), *Families and Schools in a Pluralistic Society* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 85–105
- Chikoko, V. (2008). The role of parent governors in school governance in Zimbabwe: Perceptions of school heads, teachers and parent governors. *International Review of Education*. Vol 54 (2), 243-263.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2007) *Research Methods in Education* (6th edn). London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2000).*Research Methods in Education* (5thed.). London: Routledge.
- Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research design. Qualitative, quantitative and mixed Method approaches*. London: Sage.
- Creswell, J. (2009) 'Research design: *Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*', Sage Publications Ltd.
- Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1992). School matters in the Mexican-American home: Socializing children to education. *American Educational Research Journal*, 29, 495–513.
- Department of Education.(1997a). *Understanding the South African Schools Act*. Pretoria: Department of Education.
- Department of Education. (1997b). *Curriculum 2005: Lifelong learning for the 21st century*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Department of Education.1997(c).*Building a brighter future: Curriculum 2005*.Pretoria: Government Printer.
- De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Fouche, C. B. & Delport, C. S. (2005). *Research at grass roots*.(2nd edition). Pretoria: Van Schaik
- Dews, B., & Law, C. (Eds.), (1993).*This fine place so far from home: Voices of academics from the working class*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

- Dun, J.F. & Booth, A. (1996). *Family school links: How do they affect educational out comes*. New Jersey: LEA Pub.
- Eckle, N.& MacLean, S. (2001). *Assessment of family centred care for paediatric patients in the emergency department*. *Journal of Emergency Nursing*, 27:238-245.
- Epstein, J.L. (1995). *School/family/community partnerships: Caring for the children we share*. Phi Delta Kappa May.
- Epstein, J.L. & Dauber, S. L. 1993. *Parents' attitude and practices of involvement in inner-city elementary and middle schools*. In *Families and schools in pluralistic society*, ed. N. Chavkin. Albany: State University of New York.
- Flick, U. (2004). *Triangulation in qualitative research*. In U. Flick, E. von Kardoff & I. Steinke (Eds.), *A companion to qualitative research* (pp. 178-183). London: Sage Publications.
- Fehrmann, P. G, Keith, T. Z.& Reiners, T. M. (1987). *Home Influence on School Learning: Direct and Indirect Effects of Parental Involvement on High School Grades*. *Journal of Educational Research* 80, 330–336
- Fossey, E, Harvey, C, McDermott, F & Davidson, L. (2002). *Understanding and evaluating qualitative research*. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* 36:717–732.
- Fullan, M. (1993). *Change Forces Probing the Depths of Educational Reform*. Bristol: Falmer
- Fullan, M. (1999). *Change Forces: The Sequel*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Gay, L. R. & Airasian, P. (2000). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and application*. Chicago: Irwin Press.
- Gerson, K. & Horowitz, R. (2002). *Observation and interviewing: Options and choices in qualitative research*. In May, T. (ed.). *Qualitative research in action*. London: Sage.
- Glanz, J. (2006). *What every school principal should know about: School-community leadership?* Thousands Oak: Corwin Press.
- Glaser, B.& Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Goldring EB & Shapira R (1996). *Principal's survival with parental involvement*. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 7:342-360.
- Government of Zimbabwe. 1987. *The Education Act*; Chapter 25:04. Harare: Government Printers

- Greeff, M. (2005). *Information collection: interviewing, in Research at grassroots for the social sciences and human service professions*, edited by Sde Vos, H Strydom, CB Fouché & CSL Delport. 3rd edition. Pretoria: Van Schaik: 286–313.
- Griffith, J. (2000). *Principal leadership of parent involvement, Journal of Educational Administration* 39(2), 162-186
- Grolnick WS, Benjet C, Kurowski C O & Apostoleris NH (1997). Predictors of parental involvement in children's schooling. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 89:583-548.
- Gu, W. (2008). New horizons and challenges in China's public schools for parental involvement. *Education Journal*. Vol 128 (4), 570-578.
- Hammersley, M. (2001). *The Politics of Social Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Gu, W. 2008. New horizons and challenges in China's public schools for parental involvement. *Education Journal*. Vol 128 (4), 570-578.
- Hall, D. & Hall, I.(1996). *Practical Social Research: Project work in the community*. London: MacMillan Press.
- Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. (2007) 'Ethnography: Principles in practice', Taylor & Francis.
- Haralambos, M. & Heald, R. (1980). *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*. Slough: University Tutorial Press.
- Heystek, J. (1998). *Empirical research: Parental involvement in school activities*. University of Pretoria: Unpublished research report
- Hoberg, S.M. (1999). *Education management. (Research Methodology) Study Guide MEDEM2- R*. Pretoria: UNISA.
- Hoy, W.K. & Miskel, C.G. (1996). *Educational Administration: Theory, Research and Practice* (5th edition). New York: McGraw-Hill
- Hycner, RH. (1999). *Some guidelines for the phenomenological analysis of interview data, in Qualitative research*, edited by A Bryman & RG Burgess. London: Sage: 143–164.
- HSRC. (2005). *Emerging voices: A report on education in South African rural communities*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., Battiato, A.C., Walker, J.M.C., Reed, R.R., De Jong, J.M & Jones, K.P. (2001). *Parental Involvement in Homework*. *Educational Psychologist*, 36(3), 195–209.

- Iannelli, V. (2003) *How Parents Can Help with Homework: Homework Tips for Parents*. [O]. Available: <http://pediatrics.about.com/bio/Vincent-Iannelli-M-D-8777.htm> Accessed on 201/09/12
- Ingram, M., Wolfe, R., & Lieberman, J. (2007). *Role of parents in high-achieving schools serving low income families*. *Education and Urban Society* 39 (4), 479-497.
- Jones, V. F. & Jones, L. S. (1995). *Comprehensive classroom management: Creating positive learning environment for all students*(4th Ed.) Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (1988). *The action research planner* (3rd ed.).Victoria, Australia: Deakin University Press.
- Kingry, MJ, Tiedje, LB & Friedman, L. (1990). *Focus groups: a research technique for nursing*. *Nursing Research* 39 (2):142–125.
- Kincheloe, J.L., & McLaren, P. (2000). *Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research*. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 279-324). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Kitzinger, J. (1994). *The methodology of focus groups: the importance of interactions between research participants*. *Sociology of Health and Illness* (16):103–121.
- Kruger, DJ, De Vos, AS, Fouché, CB & Venter, L. (2005). *Quantitative data analysis and interpretation, in Research at grassroots for the social sciences and human service professions*, edited by S de Vos, H Strydom, CB Fouché & CSL Delport.3rd edition.Pretoria: Van Schaik: 217–245.
- Lankshear, C. &Knobel, M. (2004). *A Handbook for Teacher Research: From Design to implementation*. London: Open University Press.
- Leedy, P. D. (1997). *Practical research: Planning and design*. New York:
- Lindle, J. C. (1989). *What do parents want from principals and teachers?* *Educational Leadership*, 47(2), 12-14.
- Liu, K., & Chien, C. Y. (1998). *Project approach and parent involvement in Taiwan*. *Childhood Education*. Vol 74 (4), 213-219.
- Loock, C., Campher, T., DuPreez, P., Grobler, B., Shaba, S. M. (2003). *Effective Education Management Series: Module 3 Education Leadership*. Sandown: Heinemann Publisher
- Mason, J. (2002), *Qualitative interviewing: Asking, listening and interpreting*. In May, T. (Ed). *Qualitative research in action*. London: Sage.
- Mayer, G.R. (2002). *Behavioural strategies to reduce school violence*. *Child and Family*

Behaviour Therapy 24(1&2), 83-100.

Marshall, C. and Rossman, G.B. (1995). *Designing Qualitative Research*, (2nd edition). Thousand Oaks, London and New Delhi: Sage Publications

Mungunda, C. (2003). *An investigation into school principals' experience and perceptions of participative management*. Unpublished Master's thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown.

Maxwell, J.A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

McLaughlin, M.W. (2001). *Community counts. Educational Leadership*, 58(1), 14-18.

McMillan..Leedy, P. D. (1997). *Practical research: Planning and design*. New York: McMillan.

Merton, RK. Fiske, M, & Kendall, PL. (1990). *The focused interview: a manual of problems and procedures*. 2nd edition. London: Collier MacMillan.

Miles, M., & Huberman, A. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis* (2nd edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ming, Z., & Abbott, D. A. (1992). Preschool education in China. *International Journal of Early Childhood*. Vol 24, 50-52.

Molepo, M.M. (2000). *Parental empowerment in the democratisation of education*. *Journal of education and training*. 21(2), 70-85.

Moloi, K.C. (2002). *The school as a learning organisation: Reconceptualising school practices in South Africa*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Morgan, DL. (1997). *Focus group as qualitative research*. 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Mouton, J. (2001). *How to succeed in your master's and doctoral studies*. Pretoria: Van Schaik

Msila, V.T. (2004). Black parental involvement in education. *South African Journal of Education*, 24(4), 301-307.

Muzzatti, S., & Samarco, C. (2006). *Reflections from the wrong side of the tracks: Class, identity, and the working class experience in academe*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

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

Neuman, W.L. (2003). *Social research methods*. 4th ed. Boston, M.A: Allyn & Bacon.

- Newman, I., & Benz, C. R. (1998). *Qualitative- quantitative research methodology. Exploring the interactive continuum.* Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Ngidi, D.P. (2004). Educators' perceptions of the efficiency of school governing bodies. *South African Journal of Education*, 24(4), 260-263.
- Nongubo, M.J. (2004). *An Investigation into Perceptions of Learner Participation in the Governance of Secondary Schools.* Unpublished M Ed. thesis. Grahamstown: Rhodes University.
- Norris, B.D (2001). *Transformation, diversity and organizational change within institutions of higher education.* South African Journal of Education 21(4): 2003-348.
- Nziramasanga, C.T. (1999). *Report of the Presidential Commission of inquiry into Education and Training.* Harare: Government Printers
- Obeidat, O. M. and Al-Hassan, S. M. (2009). School-parent-community partnerships: The experience of teachers who received the queen Rania award for excellence in education in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. *The School Community Journal*, 19(1), 119-136.
- Oosthuizen, I. 2002. Discipline at schools under the microscope. Pretoria News, May 2.
- Parsons, C. 1994. *Quality improvement in education.* London: David Fulton Pub.
- Patrikakou, E.N. Weissberg, R.P. Redding, S. & Walberg, H.J. (ed) 2005. *School-family partnerships for children's success.* New York: Teacher College Press.
- Patton, M.Q.(2001) *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd edition). Newsbury Park, CA: Sage Publishers.
- Patton, M. (2002) 'Qualitative research and evaluation methods', Sage Publications Ltd.
- Poster, C. (1982). *Community Education. Its Development and Management.* London: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Potgieter, J.M., Visser, P.J., van der Bank, A.J., Mothata, M.S., & Squelch, J.M. (1997). *Understanding the South African Schools Act: What public school governors need to know.* Pretoria: Department of Education.
- Puchta, C. & Potter, J. (2004). *Focus Group Practice.* Sage Publications.
- Ryan, J., & Sackrey, C. (1984). *Strangers in paradise: Academics from the working-class.* Boston: South End Press.

- Riley, K.A. (1998). *Whose School is it Anyway? Educational Change and Development*. London: Falmer Press.
- Thomas, A and Robertshaw, D (1999). *Achieving Employment Equity. A guide to effective strategies*. Randburg: Knowledge Resources.
- Schalkwyk, O.J. (2002). School Management (108-118). In D.C. Bardenhost, L.P. Calitz, O.J. Van Schalkwyk, J.G. VanWyk, A.G. Kruger (eds). *The task and role of the teacher (Revised Edition)*. Pretoria: Kagiso Publishers.
- Schurink, WJ, Schurink, EM & Poggenpoel, M. (1998). Focus group interviewing and audiovisual methodology in qualitative research, in *Research at grassroots, a primer in care professions*, edited by AS de Vos. Pretoria: Van Schai.
- Senge, P.M. (2006). *The fifth discipline: The arts and practice of the learning organisation* (revised ed.). New York: Doubleday.
- Shepard, A., McMillan, J., & Tate, G. (1998) *Coming to class: Pedagogy and the social class of teachers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Shumow, & Miller, JD. (2001). *Parents' At-Home and At-School Academic Involvement with Young Adolescents Journal of Early Adolescence, 21(1), 68–91*.
- Sifunda, C.T. (2001). *An Exploration of Focus Groups as a Means of Investigating Career Thinking and Exploration in a sample of Black Learners in an Under resourced School*. Unpublished M.Ed. Dissertation. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal.
- Sithole, S. (1995). *The Participation of Students in Democratic School Governance: Democratic Governance of Public Schooling in South Africa*. Pietermaritzburg: Natal Education Policy Unit.
- Strauss, A & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, Calif: Sage.
- Smit F, Moerel H & Slegers P (1999). *Experiences with parents' participation in the Netherlands*. In :Smit F , Moerel H , Van der Wolfe K and Slegers P (eds) , *Building bridges between home and schools*. Amsterdam; Kohnstamm Instituut.
- Smith, C.K.O. (1994). *Case Study: Study Notes for Research Methods Course*. Work in progress. Grahamstown: Rhodes University.
- Stern, J.(2003). *Involving Parents*. Continuum: London

- South Africa. Department of Education. (1996). *Changing management to manage change in education: Report of the task team on the education management and development*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- South Africa. Department of Education. (1996) *South African Schools Act* (Act No. 84 of 1996). Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Taylor, S.J. & Bogdan, R.(1998). *Introduction to qualitative research methods*. A guidebook and resource. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Tesch, R. (1990). *Qualitative research: analysis, types and software tools*. London: Falmer.
- Thody, A.(1992).*Moving to Management. School Governors in the 1990's*.London: David Fulton Publishers
- Tokarczyk, M., & Fay, E. (Eds.), (1993). *Working-class women in the academy: Labourers in the knowledge factory*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Van Wyk, N. (2004). *School governing bodies: The experiences of South African educators*. *South African Journal of Education*, 24(1), 49-54.
- Vong, K.P. (2008). *Developing creativity and promoting social harmony: relationship between government, school and parents' perceptions of children's creativity in Macao-SAR in China*. Vol 28 (2), 149-158.
- Walker, JMT, Hoover-Dempsey, KV, Whetsel, DR and Green, CL. 2004. *Parental Involvement in Homework: A Review of Current Research and Its Implications for Teachers, After School Program Staff, and Parent Leaders*.
- Welsch, K. (2005). *Those winter Sundays: Female academics and their working-class parents*.Lanham, MD: University Press of America
- Wilkinson, D. (2000).*The researcher's toolkit: The complete guide to practitioner research*. New York: Routledge Falmer.
- Winter, A.R. (2001).*Travelling on parallel tracks: Chinese parents and English teachers*. *Educational Research*. Vol 43 (3), 311-328
- World Book Dictionary Volume one* . (2003). Chicago: Scott Fetzer Company.
- ZANU (PF) 1980. *Election Manifesto*. Harare: Jongwe Printers.
- Zvobgo, R.J. (2004). *The organisation and administration of Primary and Secondary School Education*.Harare: ZOU.

LIST OF ANNEXURES

APPENDIX A

P O BOX 46
PLATINUM REEF
0602

08 March 2013

PARENTAL CONSENT LETTER FOR MINORS

Dear Parent

I am a graduate student under the direction of Dr Nyoni in the college of Education UNISA .I am conducting a research study on: Issues of school governance within the transformative paradigm: exploring parental involvement in Waterberg district. The main purpose of this study is to expose the contribution made by parent members of school governing bodies of rural schools in governing their schools.

Your child's' participation will involve responding to questions during interviews of five minutes.

Your participation as well as that of your child in this study is voluntary. if you or your child choose not to participate or to withdraw anytime there will be no penalty, it will not affect your child's treatment.

The results of the study may be published, but your child's name may not be used. Information obtained during the course of the study will remain confidential to the extend allowed by the law. Although there may be no direct benefit to your child the benefit to your child's participation is to contribute towards changing parents, principals and all other stakeholders in education towards assumptions about the value of involving parents in the effective management of schools. If you have any questions concerning the research study or your child's participation in the study, please call Dr Nyoni, my supervisor at UNISA telephone: 012 429 4474

Sincerely

Mutero Adwell

I give consent for my childto participate in the above study.
Information will be treated confidentially..

Parents' name

Date -----

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or you feel you have been placed at undue risk, you can contact Dr Nyoni at 012 1249 4474

ANNEXURE B

INFORMED CONSENT FOR MINORS ON BEHALF OF PARENTS

TITLE OF RESEARCH: Issues of school governance within the transformative paradigm: exploring parental involvement in Waterberg district

I have been informed that Mutero Adwell, who is master's student at UNISA, has requested my minor child's participation in a research study at this institution .the purpose of this research is

My child's participation will involve answering question during interviews of five minutes. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to me .Although there may be no direct benefits to my child's 'participation the possible benefits in this research are is to contribute towards changing parents, principals and all other stakeholders in education towards assumptions about the value of involving parents in the effective management of schools.

The results of this research study may be published but my child's name will not be revealed. In order to maintain the confidentiality of my child's records will treat the information as private and confidential. Any questions I have concerning the research study of my child's participation before or after consent will be answered by name, address, telephone or email. If you have questions about your child's participation or right as subject or participate in this research please contact Dr Nyoni at nyonij@unisa.ac.za or 0124294474. The nature, demands, benefits and any risks of the research have been explained to me. I knowing assume any risks

I have read the above consent form, I understand that I may withdraw my Childs' consent and discontinue participation at anytime without any penalty or loss of my child's benefits .In signing this consent form I am not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies .A copy of this consent form will be offered to me.

Signature _____ date _____

Childs' name _____

ANNEXURE C

ASSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN

I have been told that my parents have given permission for me to participate, if I want to in a research about : Issues of school governance within the transformative paradigm: exploring parental involvement in Waterberg district

My participation in this research is voluntary and I have been told that I may stop my participation in this study at any time. If I choose not to participate, it will not affect my treatment in any way or I know that I can stop at any time I want to and it will be okay if I want to stop.

Name: _____

ANNEXURE D

P O BOX 46
PLATINUM REEF
0602

08 March 2013

LETTER FOR CONSENT FOR ADULTS

Dear Sir/ Madam

I am a masters student under the direction of Dr Nyoni in the college of Education , UNISA.I am conducting a research on:**Issues of school governance within the transformative paradigm: exploring parental involvement in Waterberg district**

Your participation in this study is voluntary if you choose to participate or to withdraw from the study at anytime there will be no penalty it will not affect your treatment, the results of the study will be published but your name will not be published.

Information obtained during the study will remain confidential to the extent allowed by the law. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts if I agree to participate in this study .Although there may be no direct benefit to the study , the possible benefits Involve participation in the development of school management.

Participation involves answering questions during interviews of five minutes. If you have any questions concerning this research study contact Dr Nyoni, my supervisor at UNISA email nyonij@unisa.ac.za or 012 012429 4474

Sincerely

Mutero Adwell

I give consent to participate in the above study, information obtained will remain confidential to the extent allowed by the law.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

ANNEXURE E: CONSENT FOR ADULTS

TITLE OF RESEARCH: Issues of school governance within the transformative paradigm: exploring parental involvement in Waterberg district

I have been informed that Mutero Adwell, who is a masters student at UNISA requested has requested my participation in a research study at this institution.

The purpose of research is to explore the contribution made by stakeholders in school governing bodies of rural schools in governing their schools.

My participation will involve responding to questions during interviews of five minutes.

ANNEXURE F: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Teachers: members of the SMT

1. State the functions of SMT?
2. How did parents become members of the School Board the (criteria)?
3. What is your experience of being with parents in the School Board?
4. What do you think are main roles of parents in the School Board?
5. According to your experience, do you think parents fulfil and understand their roles in School governing body? Why or Why not?
6. What are the obstacles/challenges facing parents in the S M T?
7. How can parents' involvement in the School Board be improved?
8. What are the benefits/advantages of effective parents' involvement in the S M T?
9. As a member, how is your relationship with parents in the School Board?
10. Can you think of some contribution/achievement made by parents in the SMT to this school so far?
11. Do you think the SMT are working /needed? Why or why not?

Principal:

1. What do you think should be done to improve the current situation?
2. What are your experiences of parents' involvement in the School Board of your school in the past 10-5 years?
3. What do you think are roles and powers of parents in the SMT?
4. To what extend do parents fulfil those roles and why?
4. How do you describe parents' understanding of their involvement in school governance?
5. What are the issues/problems you experienced in working with parents in SMT & in general?
7. What are your roles or the key functions of the principal in the School Board?
8. How is your relationship with parents in the School Board and all parents in general?
9. What have the parents/School Board done so far to improve the school?
10. What are the key issues of concern in the SMT of your school?

Learners: RCL

1. How did you become a member of the RCL?
2. What are your duties in the RCL?
3. Do you know parents roles? Were they trained? How effective this service was provided?
4. How often do you meet with parents, for meetings? {What are the items you mostly discuss}?
5. What are the other activities you think you should discuss that you are *not* involved now and why?
6. Are parents involved in school decision-making and finance?
7. What difficulties and problems did you meet in fulfilling your role in school governance?
8. How do you describe your relationship with parents?
9. Is being a member of RCL significant?
10. What motivates you and what do you enjoy most in involving in school activities?
11. What are the contributions parents made as stakeholders to develop school?
12. Is the school functioning independently? Why or why not?

Governing Body: Parents

1. What is the role of Governing Body?
2. How satisfied are the parents' representatives with their body and what is the highest level of education of these parents?
3. How many parents are representatives and were they trained?
4. Do you feel representing and what do they know about the regulations of the body?
5. What do parents expect from their participation in the school governance?
6. What do they think the consequences of the body are for the school if not involved or involved?
7. How often does the body meet? How do members get invited to the meeting?
8. What do you think is your role in management meetings? To what extent are your views heard?
9. To what extent do you influence in school governance?

10. How can involvement of parents be improved in the Governing Body?
11. How can you describe your relationship with other stakeholders?

School Management Team

1. What is your understanding of the purpose of staff meetings?
2. How often do you have meetings and what are the factors that make you hold meetings? What are the obstacles/challenges facing parents in the S M T?
3. How can parents' involvement in the School Board be improved?
4. What are the benefits/advantages of effective parents' involvement in the S M T?
5. What is the level of involvement in decision-making of the following stakeholders, namely: Teachers, Learners, and Parents?
6. How do you plan for each academic year? Who is involved and how?
7. How can you describe your relationship with other stakeholders?
8. What is your understanding of partnership management?
7. What do you think are the benefits of participative management?

ANNEXURE G: The letter asking for permission the Department of Education

P o box 46

Platinum Reef

0602

08 march 2013

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH

I am currently registered for the degree of Master of Education at University Of South Africa. My studies include a treatise with the following research topic: Issues of school governance within the transformative paradigm: exploring parental involvement in Waterberg district. The main purpose of this study is to expose the contribution made by stakeholders of rural schools in governing their schools. I hereby request permission to undertake research at above school in your district. I wish to research parent members of the school governing body of your schools. Participation of the respondents will be voluntary with the option of withdrawing at any stage of the process and there will be no negative consequences linked to non-participation. An informed consent will be requested before the respondents' participation in the research process.

Confidentiality will be ensured. Information obtained will be used for the purposes of the study only and I undertake to ensure that the information will be used in such a way that the respondents cannot be identified. Therefore, the final report will not include identifying information. Questionnaires will be used to collect data from parent members of the School Governing Body of your school.

Respondents will be informed that they are not obliged to answer all questions. If they feel uncomfortable to answer certain questions, they may not answer them. By participating in the study, respondents could contribute towards the improvement of the role played by parent members of school governing bodies in education. The research findings will be disseminated to the Department of Education and schools which participated in the study.

Yours faithfully

A MUTERO (Student no: 46369473)

ANNEXURE H: Letter for parent members of school governing bodies

P O BOX 46
PLATINUM REEF
0602
08 March 2013

Dear Parent

REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

I am currently registered for the degree of Master of Education at University of South Africa. My studies include a treatise with the following research topic: Issues of school governance within the transformative paradigm: exploring parental involvement in Waterberg district. The main purpose of this study is to expose the contribution played by parent members of school governing bodies of rural schools in governing their schools. I hereby invite you to participate in my study by completing a questionnaire. Participation is voluntary with the option of withdrawing at any stage of the process and there will be no negative consequences linked to non-participation.

Your responses will be used for the purposes of the study only and I undertake to ensure that the information will be used in such a way that you cannot be identified. Therefore, the final report will not include identifying information. You are not obliged to answer all questions. If you feel uncomfortable to answer any question, you may not answer it. By participating in the study, you could contribute towards the improvement of the role played by parent members of school governing bodies in education. The research findings will be disseminated to the Department of Education and your school.

Yours faithfully

Mutero Adwell (Student no: 46369473)

ANNEXURE I: (The letter asking for permission from the Director General of the Department of Education in Limpopo and the school to be used in the study)

P o box 46
Platinum Reef
0602
08 march 2013

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH

I am currently registered for the degree of Master of Education at University of South Africa. My studies include a treatise with the following research topic: Issues of school governance within the transformative paradigm: exploring parental involvement in Waterberg district. The main purpose of this study is to expose the contribution made by parent members of school governing bodies of rural schools in governing their schools. I hereby request permission to undertake research at above school in your district. I wish to research parent members of the school governing body of your schools. Participation of the respondents will be voluntary with the option of withdrawing at any stage of the process and there will be no negative consequences linked to non-participation. An informed consent will be requested before the respondents' participation in the research process.

Confidentiality will be ensured. Information obtained will be used for the purposes of the study only and I undertake to ensure that the information will be used in such a way that the respondents cannot be identified. Therefore, the final report will not include identifying information. Questionnaires will be used to collect data from parent members of the School Governing Body of your school.

Respondents will be informed that they are not obliged to answer all questions. If they feel uncomfortable to answer certain questions, they may not answer them. By participating in the study, respondents could contribute towards the improvement of the role played by parent members of school governing bodies in education. The research findings will be disseminated to the Department of Education and schools which participated in the study.

Yours faithfully

A MUTERO (Student no: 46369473)

ANNEXURE J: Letter for parent members of school governing bodies

P O BOX 46
PLATINUM REEF
0602
08 March 2013

Dear Parent

REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

I am currently registered for the degree of Master of Education at University of South Africa.

My studies include a treatise with the following research topic:

Issues of school governance within the transformative paradigm: exploring parental involvement in Waterberg district.

The main purpose of this study is to expose the contribution played by parent members of school governing bodies of rural schools in governing their schools. I hereby invite you to participate in my study by completing a questionnaire. Participation is voluntary with the option of withdrawing at any stage of the process and there will be no negative consequences linked to non-participation.

Your responses will be used for the purposes of the study only and I undertake to ensure that the information will be used in such a way that you cannot be identified. Therefore, the final report will not include identifying information. You are not obliged to answer all questions. If you feel uncomfortable to answer any question, you may not answer it. By participating in the study, you could contribute towards the improvement of the role played by parent members of school governing bodies in education. The research findings will be disseminated to the Department of Education and your school.

Yours faithfully

A MUTERO



Research Ethics Clearance Certificate

This is to certify that the application for ethical clearance submitted by

Mutero A [4636-947-3]

for a M Ed study entitled

**Issues of school governance within the transformative
paradigm: exploring parental involvement in Waterberg district**

has met the ethical requirements as specified by the University of South Africa
College of Education Research Ethics Committee. This certificate is valid for two
years from the date of issue.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CS le Roux'.

Prof CS le Roux
CEDU REC (Chairperson)

lrouxcs@unisa.ac.za

Reference number: 2013 Aug/4636-947-3/CSLR

15 August 2013