THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN ENHANCING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE METRO-CENTRAL EDUCATION DISTRICT,WESTERN CAPE

by

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DECLARATION

I Mxhasi Gwija Student **No. 36689254** hereby declare that: **The role of parents in enhancing academic performance in secondary schools in the Metro-Central Education District, Western Cape**, is my own work and that all primary and secondary sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature   **Date: 28/11/2015**

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ABSTRACT

The role of parents in their children's education presents significant evidence in schools' academic results, when parental roles in education are given priority. It is noted that parents play a significant role in improving a school's academic results. The aim of this study was to investigate the techniques utilised by schoolteachers to involve parents in children's education in selected secondary schools within the Metro-Central Education District, Western Cape. A qualitative research approach was utilised, employing research methods which included face-to-face interviews, reading school polices and going through parents' meeting minutes. The investigation focused on two secondary schools that were purposefully selected to participate in the study. This investigation revealed that participants in the study overlooked the role of parents in their schools. Therefore, although they involve parents in some school activities, there is a need for training on how the school principals should optimally involve parents in school activities.

KEY WORDS

Decision-making

Democracy

Education Management

Home-School Collaboration

Langa Township (Langa)

Parent

Parent Involvement

Qualitative Research

School Governing Body

School Personnel

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

c.f.	Chapter reference or section in the chapter
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
EST	Ecological Systems Theory
HIV& Aids	Human Immune Virus & Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HSRC	Human Science Research Council
MCED	Metro Central Education District
PTP	Parent–Teacher Partnership
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SASA	South African Schools Act (84 of 1996)
SGB	School Governing Body
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMS	Short Messages System
UK	United Kingdom
UNISA	University of South Africa
USA	United States of America
WCED	Western Cape Education Department
WCGE	West Cape Government Education

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This chapter aims to introduce this qualitative case study, which envisions exploring and shedding light on the role parents play on their children's education. This quest was accomplished in conjunction with the improvement of parental involvement in children's schools; including school governance, school-community collaboration, and the participation of all community stakeholders to enhance students' academic performance in two purposefully selected secondary schools in the Metro-Central Education District, in the Western Cape. An interpretive case study research approach was utilised, employing the qualitative research methods which included literature review, face-to-face interviews, reading of school policies, visiting the parent teacher and school governing body meetings and going through parents' meeting minutes. Furthermore, the management *modus operandi* utilised by schoolteachers in participating schools to involve parents at their schools were investigated and presented in this study. The management *modus operandi* included, but was not limited to, encouraging parental participation in school activities; both academically and non-academically, promoting a shared decision-making process, encouraging parents to work on a volunteer basis at the schools, collaborating with the local community for the exchange of its resources to be used at the schools in teaching and learning, and encouraging home-school partnerships.

The parental role in education involves educating children both at home and in school (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001, as cited in Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005:164), in addition to the fostering of a wide range of cognitive and effective activities (Deslandes, 2009:80). Furthermore, Standing (1999:58) views the parental role in education as an activity that involves a range of pedagogical and educational tasks that articulate the school, including the provision of a positive learning environment, and the organisation of routine household tasks that fit the school day. The parents' role in their children's education presents significant evidence when their role in education takes a priority. Parents play a significant role in improving students' academic results when they are involved in their learning.

The above definitions show that researchers have divergent opinions regarding parental roles in education. In other words, it could be realised that literature gives many definitions of parental role in education. This could be because of the fact that the schools' needs and circumstances vary from country to country. The South African perspective on parental roles in education is considered to be that of parents and communities being involved in educating children at home and in school (Lemmer, 2012:83). In addition, it is an enactment of a wide range of cognitive and effective activities (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005:164). Parental involvement and parent-school-community partnerships receive wide acclaim for making a positive difference in the educational and transition outcomes for learners with and without disabilities (Epstein, 2005:152). Recent studies reveal that over time, parents are becoming more involved in their children's education with a shift in mind-set from seeing a child's education as mainly or wholly the responsibility of schools (Skaliotis, 2010:976).

In literature, there is considerable evidence regarding the significance of the parent-family-school partnership as a strategy to complement good quality teaching and learning (Mmotlane, Winnaar & wa-Kivilu, 2009:527; Taliaferro, DeCuir-Gunby & Allen-Eckard, 2008:278). Loera, Rueda and Nakamoto (2011:133) sustain this argument when stating that, "Parental involvement is a critical factor increasing student academic achievement." Accordingly, Mmotlane *et al.* (2009:527) state that there is a need to increase parental participation in order to improve children's quality of education. This is supported by Mmotlane *et al.* assertion (2009: 527) who are in line with the South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996 that promotes the parent-school collaboration policies, while also acknowledging and authorising the role of parents in school governance (Department of Education, 1996).

In an attempt to address the non-involvement of parents in their children's education, a lack of parent and family school partnership continues to act as a barrier concerning the shared decision-making in school matters between schoolteachers and parents. Hence, parent-school (and community) collaboration should be "focusing on the joint involvement of parents, community and schoolteachers in their children's education" (Amatea, 2013:24). However,

Lemmer (2012:83) regards the parental role in a child's education, as it is historically limited to fundraising for schools by parent organisations, volunteering in school activities, and attending parent-teacher meetings. The above authors' view on the significance of parents in education highlights the need for schoolteachers to design strategies to enhance community and parental interests to be involved in their children's education. To increase the parents' participation, more direct impact programmes and interventions aimed at enhancing the relationship between parents, learners and teachers, other than their governance, are needed (Mmotlane et *al.*, 2009:528). In this way, the schools would produce quality education.

In South African public schools, the parental role in education is limited to certain roles such as school fundraising activities and attending parent-teacher conferences and meetings (Lemmer, 2012:83). In addition, the researcher observed that the parental role in schools seems to be limited to certain tasks, as Lemmer (2012:83) mentions above. This is supposedly so because of the previous experiences of parents and teachers in the apartheid government education system in South Africa before 1994. In the above paragraphs, the researcher could apprehend that in some of the South African schools, parents are not fully involved in school governance matters. However, they are involved in employing staff and in other duties such as conducting interviews and making recommendations for schoolteachers and non-teaching staff to be appointed at the school, and governing the school finances. Hence, this involvement appears to be insufficient.

According to Lemmer (2012:83) and Mncube (2009:85), schoolteachers expect parents to engage in scheduled non-professional roles at school. Roles such as working on a volunteer basis, performing non-professional duties, maintaining the school building, fencing the school, attending parent-teacher meetings or conferences, and paying school fees or voluntary contributions during school fundraising events. However, the South African education system mandates a full partnership between parents, communities, and schoolteachers in decision-making and policymaking processes concerning their children's education. Thus, in South African education, some extreme changes have occurred. For instance, parents are now carrying the status of being in full partnership with teachers in their children's education.

This mandate of the school-parent and community partnership intends to involve parents in school decision-making and sharing accountability of the outcomes.

An effective partnership-orientated approach to enhance the quality of education is needed. Parents should be allowed to take the initiative in school governance matters without any fear that their children will be victimised or facing any sort of embarrassment from school personnel. Amatea (2013:24) states that, the parent teacher partnership-orientated approach involves a two-way exchange of information between the school and family. Correspondingly, in the South African education context, parent-school collaboration should not only mean an exchange of information between home and school concerning educational behaviour and a child's life. This partnership-orientated approach should be taken seriously in schools to achieve the good quality of teaching and learning, because the main aim of a school's existence is to provide quality education and to improve the quality of life in the community. This could hardly be achievable, according to Mncube (2009:84), unless school personnel acknowledge the importance of the governing body and the parental role in schools.

In view of the above, effective communication in parent-school partnership is imperative to attract parents. In this study, an effective parents-school communication means the act of developing between the schoolteachers and the parents and learners. It signifies the effective communication between the school personnel and parents about school programmes and learners' progress to improve quality academic outcomes. Michael, Dittus and Epstein (2007:567) are in line with Epstein (1995:702) when stating, "Family and community involvement in schools is likened strongly to improvements in the academic achievement of students, better school attendance, and improved school programmes and quality". In addition, the school personnel should bear in mind that effective communication motivates parents to be part of the school-community partnership, and this is a positive endeavour to get good student results. Communicating with the parents' community constitutes the process of forming partnerships between the school and community, and partnerships promote sharing the school's recourses for the benefit of learners in their studies. The school principals may use longer sessions with parents at longer intervals to have a useful exchange of views.

Furthermore, schoolteachers may create a better outcome using occasional seminars for parents on issues where the school could needs to understand parents' views better. In addition, in communities where residents plant their own food, they can have a market day at the school wherein parents come in and sell their produce to help raise funds for the school.

In Epstein's (1995:701) view, schools should co-ordinate the work of the community, business, college or universities, and other groups to strengthen school programmes, family practices and learners' education and development. Epstein's (1995:701) view could be achieved when schools work in collaboration with and engage parent-governors into some special management tasks. These management tasks are planning, organising, communicating, leading, controlling, motivating, and evaluating the progress of their action plan (Botha, 2013:20). The first activity of managing parents in schools is drafting and implementing the school-parent involvement plan to improve the school-parent partnership in enhancing the quality of education. This effective parent-school partnership is an imperative catalyst in enhancing the student's academic performance in secondary schools. Hence, partnership means parents serving in the school governing body where they participate in decision-making processes (Kruger & van Zyl, 2006:234).

The elected parents represent all parents in making major decisions in school governance such as adopting learners' code of conduct, employing the teaching and non-teaching staff at the school, approving and controlling the school budget, fund raising and representing the school on matters beyond teachers' influence. There is a famous saying, 'It takes a community to educate a child'. This shows that school personnel alone cannot do all, but when working collaboratively with the community, they can do more. The school may accomplish these roles only if parents are heard and their role is acknowledged in their children's education.

1.2 CONCEPTUALISING THE PARENTAL ROLE IN EDUCATION

This study defines parents' role in education as that of helping a child with their homework, preparing school uniform, buying learning resources for the child, communicating with the school, attending school activities that are relevant to school performance, paying school fees, and having high expectations for the child to progress into higher education studies. Thus, the parental role in education incorporates a range of socio-pedagogical and educational tasks. These may include the organisation, development, or provision of a positive learning environment that will be conducive for teaching and learning to take place. In addition, the preparation of scheduled home-tasks can enhance the school curriculum. The parental role implies support given by parents to the school, or as any involvement, that affects a child's present or future situation outside of the classroom. This role, therefore, takes the form of co-operation, participation, and partnership. The parental role in education is associated with a range of enhanced school outcomes in all school grades, which include a varied range of indicators of achievement and the development of student attributes that support academic achievement (Green & Walker, 2007; Hoover-Dempsey, 1997; & Sandler, 2007:532). Likewise, an effective parental role in student education improves a student's self-efficiency for learning, the perceptions of personal control over schoolwork, and self-regulatory skills and knowledge (Green *et al.*, 2007: 533). In addition, parent involvement in education is the participation of parents in a wide range of school and home-based activities to improve the education of a child (Kruger & van Zyl, 2006:234).

The parental role in education not only includes having direct involvement in schools, but also indirect or hidden behaviours such as discussing school, parent and family issues, while also conveying educational expectations (Hayes, 2012:567). Furthermore, when a parent helps a child with homework, pays school fees, buys learning resources, and communicates with the school, he or she practises their role in the education of their child. Other roles are observed when a parent attends school activities, engages in parent-child discussions for higher education studies, and listens to adolescent thinking. Parents' participation in their children's school activities forms part of important facets of successful education (Mmotlane *et al.*, 2009:529). The parental role is enhanced through the promotion of parent involvement,

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which sometimes depicts a one-way flow of information between schools and the family (Amatea, 2013: 24). Parent involvement occurs when families take an active role in creating a caring educational environment (Epstein, 1995:701).

1.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

Taliaferro (2008:278); Mackety, Linder and Jennifer (2008); Squelch and Lemmer (2004), cited in van Deventer and Kruger (2009:09) state that parent involvement in education improves academic performance, reduces dropout rates, decreases delinquency and motivates students towards their school work. In agreement with the above authors, van Deventer and Kruger (2009:09) confirm that parent involvement has a significant effect on the quality of the learners' experience of teaching and learning in the school, and in their academic results. Therefore, students perform better in school based on a range of social and academic indicators when schools reach out to families and communities (Glanz, 2006:16).

Parents have a natural role of supporting their children during examination periods, building a child's self-esteem, providing support in schoolwork, monitoring homework, visiting the school and attending parent-teacher meetings and sporting activities. This is in agreement with Shumane (2009:32) who states that "parents can make a consequential contribution to school activities, especially in those activities that fall outside the expertise of education but also where such a parent is an expert." For instance, since the school is a juristic body, a parent who is a lawyer may represent a child's school in a court case, or in the drafting of school contracts that are between the school and other parties. Parents who attained qualifications or higher degrees and reside in the community close to the school may be invited to the school to provide assistance using their respective expertise and knowledge to boost teaching and learning. This may contribute to the achievement of a higher pass rate in the school. Other parents who do not have specific qualifications or higher degrees can help the school using their manual skills in maintaining school buildings, working in the school garden, among other tasks that will benefit the school. In agreement with Botha (2013:229), Kruger and van Zyl (2006:234) state that parental co-operation in education is an inclination for parents to support schoolteachers at home through their actions. In an education setting,

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this parental co-operation in education could be demonstrated by parents when showing loyalty towards the school and supervising the student's homework. However, a well-planned school management programme is mandatory to manage and sustain parental cooperation in education. In addition, schoolteachers are responsible for promoting parental co-operation by encouraging parents to monitor their children's school attendance, and to guide them in their social and emotional challenges. Likewise, home-school co-operation can be promoted when schoolteachers inform parents about their child's progress at the end of each school-term, while also reporting a student's good and bad behaviour to parents.

Kruger and van Zyl (2006:234) regard participation as the involvement of parents in school activities. For example, a parent can be a member of a school disciplinary committee, or accompany students during their educational outings. Furthermore, these activities could involve the organisation of a school-fundraising concert, helping teachers in the classroom, bringing community resources to the school to support teaching and learning, volunteering in the classroom, in-school maintenance, and representing a child's school in court cases where necessary. Schoolteachers can promote parents' accountability by involving them in the implementation of school policies such as in the use of school learning resources.

Although teachers at school often take on the role of parents in that they protect learners until the end of a school day, parents are also expected to play their role as decision-makers, primary teachers at home, caregivers, child-protectors, counsellors, career advisors, good listeners to adolescent thinking, best friends, and progress monitors. Furthermore, schoolteachers are not legally considered the absolute decision-makers by the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 regarding the curriculum, the amount of school fees charged and disciplinary matters in the school. Therefore, parents together with the School Governing Body (SGB) should be in partnership with teachers concerning the process of making decisions at the school. Parents have a responsibility to see to it that schools are housed in decent buildings with fully staffed and stocked libraries, science laboratories, suitable furniture, healthy feeding schemes, and sufficient sporting facilities. Parents who are elected members of the SGB are given some responsibility to choose good teachers to teach their children. However, parents are unable to choose suitable teachers because of contextual

factors in the school; a governor's vocal domination, favouritism from teacher-governors, and lack of information about the legal procedures in the shortlisting and recommendation processes of the selection panel (Mncube, 2009:94).

1.4 THE HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

Parental involvement in schooling is an old education management phenomenon. The importance of parents in the education of their children is not a new concept (Berger, 1991:211). Parental involvement was present during prehistoric times and will persist to be a debatable issue in education (Berger, 1991:211). Earlier attempts at parental involvement in schooling were observed during the ancient civilisations of the Egyptians, Sumerians, Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans (Berger, 1991:211). Vincent (1996:01) confirms that parental involvement in education was also prevalent in the nineteenth century, whereby teachers were missionaries preparing their pupils for manual employment. Therefore, parental involvement in schooling is a very old worldwide phenomenon practiced to improve the quality of education. Vincent (1996:01) agreed with Berger (1991:211) when stating that "parental involvement in education existed in the nineteenth century, it could thus be declared that parents have been educating children at home since prehistoric times."

1.5 PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

In the South African education system, parental involvement is considerably imperative in improving the quality of education in schools. For instance, the South African parliament passed the South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996 in order to address the inequities and discriminatory practises, which, were used in the schools before 1994. In this Act, Section 3(1) obligates parents to bring their children to school from the time they are seven years old until they are fifteen years old, or enrolled in grade nine. Along these lines, "Subject to this Act and any applicable provincial law, every parent must cause every learner whom he or she is responsible for to attend a school [Section 3(1)]. This should be executed

from the first school day of the year in which such a learner reaches the age of seven until the last day of the year in which such a learner reaches the age of fifteen or ninth grade, which ever first occurs" (Department of Education, 1996). Parents are responsible for the education of their children. In addition to being obligated to send their children to school, they should ensure that their children attend school every day, and are learning while at school. Parents, who frequently visit their children's schools to consult teachers regarding their progress, attend parent-teacher meetings when there is a need, and being involved in making decisions about their children's education can easily monitor and manage learners' attendance (Department of Education, 1996).

The South African schools Act No. 84 of 1996 mandates all public schools to have democratically elected School Governing Bodies (SGBs). In this Act, Section 16 (1) declares that, "Subject to this Act and any other law in the country, every public school in South Africa must have democratically elected school governing bodies in which the school principal, teachers, non-teaching staff, parents of learners and learners in the school are the components. Again the same Act, Section 16 (2), expands upon the previous declaration that, "The governance of any public school is vested on its school governing body" (Department of Education, 1996). In spite of this, Section 16 (3) states that the day-to-day professional management of the school is vested upon the powers of school principals under the authority of the head of department (Department of Education, 1996).

The South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996 mandates parents to dominate the governing body membership by fifty-plus one, in total of all other members [(Section 23 (9)]. This allows parents to make good and trusted decisions in the best interests of their children's education, without being out-voted by other members of the school governing body. The parental role in education is vital for children, as per the South African Education Act No. 84 of 1996, Section 16, which deems the school governing body as a legitimate structure that should stand in a position of trust towards the school. This shows the commitment of the South African government in establishing a democratic education system in school governance and professional management. Nevertheless, Mncube (2009: 83) is of the opinion

that, "parent-governors are not fully involved in school management and governance matters, as mandated by the Act No. 84 of 1996." Hence, this study investigated the school-parent involvement strategy as an attempt to involve parents, propagate the school's homework policy for parents and learners, address the barriers experienced by schoolteachers when trying to involve parents in education, and evaluate the perceptions of school personnel on the role played by parents and families, including communities in children's education.

In the argument above, Section 16 of SASA Act 84 of 1996 deals with governance and the day-to-day professional management of public schools. The school governing body is mandated by SASA to co-opt some valuable members of the school's community. The governance of every public school is vested in its school governing body [Section 16 (1)], which is dominated by the parents of learners. Furthermore, this Act deems school governing bodies as legitimate structures that stand in a position of trust towards a school [(Section 16 (2)]. Mncube (2009: 83) sustains that parent and family participation in school governing bodies is an important component in building democracy in the schooling system, as well as in South Africa's wider society. The issue of involving parents and families in school governing bodies is still challenging. Mncube (2009: 84) claims, "At some schools in South Africa, parents are not yet playing their full role as governors mandated by legislation." The South African policymakers, educational planners, and education practitioners should be working towards effective governance in schools. Furthermore, the occurrence of institutional-governance and management practice in public schools is mandated to promote the creation of an inviting parent-teacher friendly environment in school activities. In addition, it is the endorsement of a parent-teacher partnership culture in decision-making on school matters, encouraging parents to work on a volunteer basis for the benefit of students' learning, putting in place their parental involvement strategy and communicating their homework policy to parents and families.

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 [Section 20 (1) (e)], addresses the significance of school governing bodies in a democratic education system and acknowledges the parental role in children's schools. It states that the public schools' school governing body must support the school principal, educators and other staff in the performance of their professional

functions (Department of Education, 1996). Parents serving in the school governing body should perform their full roles as mandated by the schools Act No. 84 of 1996 and undertake their responsibility of standing in for other parents when undertaking their duties in the school. For instance, in adopting school policies, making strong and trusted decisions, drafting the school budget and monitoring the school improvement plan. In addition, they (school governing bodies) should work in collaboration with the school personnel towards attracting and motivating parents to be involved in their children's education and in giving their full support to teaching and learning in their schools.

The District Director for Ekurhuleni North in the Department of Basic Education (DBE), Mr M E Tau, supported the above agreement by stating; "the South African government takes parental involvement in education as a serious issue. As a parent, you have the chance to assist all learners at your child's school." This was at a school governing body awareness road show in Mehlaneng Stadium, Tembisa in the Gauteng Province on 14 February 2015. He further stated, "Education is a societal issue and parents must take the opportunity to ensure that the best possible quality of education is provided to learners. Experience has shown that increased parental involvement has a positive effect on academic and social performance in schools," (Department of Education, 2015).

Lemmer (2012:83) testifies that parent-teacher conferences are characterised by a client orientation rather than a partnership orientation to home-school relations. She further argues that parents and teachers need to share with and learn from each other during regular open two-way communication sessions, which are in the interests of the child. Van Deventer and Kruger (2009:09) argue that the phenomenon of parental involvement has a significant effect on the quality of learners' experience of teaching and learning in the school, and on their results. In addition, some benefits attached to parental involvement are an improvement in the school academic performance, reduced dropout rates, a decrease in delinquency, a more positive attitude towards the school, and less behavioural problems (Squelch & Lemmer, 2004, as cited in van Deventer & Kruger, 2009:09).

1.6   PROBLEM STATEMENT

The researcher, who is a deputy principal with teaching experience in primary and secondary schools, observed the lack of parental involvement in children's learning. He observed that the school personnel are still experiencing more challenges in the understanding of the parental role in their schools whereas it is emphasised in the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 that parents should take control in the education of their children. In this Act, parents are given a constitutional right of vote for the best educational interest of their children. Epstein, Sanders, and Clark (1998:06) state that, "For numerous decades, researchers, and teachers have been discussing how school administrators should be prepared to work with families and communities to improve the education of their students."

The "silence" of parents in professional day-to-day running of schools in as far as teaching, learning, and governance matters are concerned has been continuing for many years in South Africa, and more specifically prior to the inauguration of the Constitution of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996. This "silence" could be the cause and effect of having a limited parental role in education, even if they are professional parents. According to Lemmer (2012:83), schoolteachers are still treating parents as clients, rather than partners in education. Mmotlane *et al.* (2009:528) also supports this when stating that parents as clients of the school have little say in school governance, and as such, a partnership-orientated approach is necessary to allow them to be proactive within their children's education. However, the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996, Section 16, (1) and (2) addresses this 'silence' of parents in education when giving parents a higher number of votes in the school governing body, which stands in a position of trust towards the school.

At some schools, the principal or staff members convey school memorandums and messages to parents through learners. Moreover, on those memorandums, there are no expectations for parents to give their views regarding school matters and the parents' role is then regarded as restricted to the home setting. In agreement with Smith as cited in Kruger and van Zyl (2006:231) "The best curriculum developers and teachers in the world will be of no avail unless the investors (parents) are clearly seen as the *raison d'tre* (meaning parents are the

main important component) of the whole process. Hence, it is noticed that the parental role in education is conceptualised in various ways, since each school is unique.

Parents and teachers, on the other hand, blame each other at the end of the year, during the release of Grade 12 results. Parents blame teachers for underperforming, while teachers blame parents for not playing their role of assisting students to complete their homework (Gernetzky, 2012:5). This blame-game between parents and teachers triggered the researcher's interest to investigate this research problem. The above discussion shows that academics on this subject had embarked on investigations on the techniques of involving parents in their children's education to improve their academic results. Furthermore, the Minister of Basic Education in South Africa, Mrs Angie Motshekga stated that "as the school principals were required to implement strategic plans to improve academic performance, parental participation in governance would demand to know 'how and why' their children perform at a particular level" (Gernetzky, 2012:5). However, there is a concern that the level of parental participation in children's education is still low in the South African education system. The Director General of Education, Bobby Soobrayan ,also supports the above view on the lower level of parental participation when stating that "school governing bodies had 'huge potential' to improve the system, so far this 'was not happening" of particular concern was the effect in some schools of differing levels of participation by parents (Gernetzky, 2012:1). Furthermore, Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga states that the functional and effective school governing bodies would make the improvement of schooling outcomes more plausible and realistic (Gernetzky, 2012:5). The Minister showed how important the role of parents in improving their children's academic results is. Therefore, this study's aim is to enable participants to shed some considerable light on the factors they have to consider in managing inactive parents in their schools. This rationale serves to motivate the study's succeeding research question. The main research question is presented below. Hence, the researcher addressed the research problem by investigating the following research question and sub-questions:

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTION

How can school personnel involve parents in their children's education to enhance academic performance in the Metro-Central Education District, Western Cape?

1.7.1 The following were this study's sub-questions:

What is the role of parents in their children's academic achievement?

What are the perceptions of teachers on the role of parents in their children's education?

What are the barriers to parent involvement in selected secondary schools?

1.7.2 Aim of the Study

- To explore and describe parents' involvement techniques utilised by participating schools when attempting to involve parents and the community in their children's education and the role of parents in education.

- To investigate the role of parents, and the parent or family school partnership in education in light of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996.

- To investigate teachers' perceptions on the role of parents in children's education.

- To investigate barriers to parent involvement in selected secondary schools.

- To propose recommendations that would possibly improve parental involvement in the Metro-Central Education District, in the Western Cape Province.

This objective was achieved by addressing teacher perceptions on the role of parents in their children's education. Similarly, this study intended to trigger participants' voices to speak out about their observations and give suggestions on possible solutions to the existing problem, as cited above (c.f., 1.8 in paragraph, 1.8.1, &1.8.2). The researcher was expecting to get participants' voices using in-depth interviews, school policies and analysing meeting minutes, as an endeavour to bring forth the experiences, beliefs, and expectations of teachers on the parental role phenomenon in education.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study endeavours to close the gap on parent involvement strategies in secondary schools, a technique to achieve good examination results; and the Elish-Piper (2008:58) dimension that is often a neglected aspect in children's middle and high school years. It aims to add value to existing knowledge on the role of parents in children's education, improve practice, and inform policy debates on parental involvement in secondary schools as in three perspectives: legal, educator and manager perspective (c.f.2.10). The school personnel, school governing bodies, and parents will hopeful refer to the findings and recommendations in this study to supplement existing gaps in policy implementation to improve their techniques on working with parents and the community for the benefit of teaching and learning in their schools.

1.9 DELIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

According to Simon, (2011:02) delimitations in a study are those characteristics that limit the scope and define the boundaries of the researcher's study. The delimiting factors include the choice of objectives, the research questions, variables of interest, theoretical perspectives that the researcher adapted (as opposed to what could have been adopted) and the accessible population (Simon, 2011:02). The first delimitation was the population size and the number of participants. The researcher addressed this delimitation by collecting information about a number of secondary schools in the Metro-Central Education District (MCED), which provided an accurate picture of these schools. Ideally, the researcher could have examined every school, teachers, HODs, deputy principals and school principals in the district. However, a research sample of two participating schools was drawn from secondary schools in Circuit 4 under the MCED with a population of sixty-one (61) secondary schools (c.f., Table 4.1, in paragraph 4.3). The rationale behind this selection was:

- These schools are in the same area and category (quintile 3), both offering Grade 8 to 12 classes. However, their Grade 12 results were different in terms of pass percentages. For instance, School B attained at least 89% and above while School A attained 70% or less for a period of 5 consecutive years. In this case, the researcher

became interested in how these two schools involved parents and what the perceptions and barriers of teachers in these schools on parental role in education are.

- The researcher purposeful selected these participating schools. The reason being that they are nearer to his place of work and this would save time when he needed to visit the research participants to collect data after schooling hours and to enhance the participants' trust since he works in a neighbouring school.

- Furthermore, these schools were selected because they are situated nearer to all types of public transport utilised by participants from school to home, such as the train, bus and taxicabs. Therefore, it would be easier and much safer for participants to leave the participating schools' venue in the evening from parent-teacher meetings, school governing body meetings and interview sessions.

The second delimitation was the literature review. This was addressed by reviewing as much international literature as possible, rather than focusing on local literature on the topic. Hence, the study reviewed literature on the topic 'parental role in education', with the intention of exploring and describing ways of dealing with parents at school to answer the study problem (c.f.1.7). It was realised that the issue of involving parents in their children's education has been explored by several studies in the past with all pointing towards greater success in learners whose parents work in partnership with schoolteachers. Furthermore, the importance of Parent-Teacher Partnership (PTP) and parental involvement in children's education is recognised and promoted in South Africa through SASA, mentioned in c.f.1.5 and 1.7. However, the gap still exists on the role of parents in secondary schools. It was noticed that schoolteachers still expect parents to play little or no role in their children's education and the parents share the same sentiments. Most studies focus on pre-primary and primary school grades. There are few studies on the parental role in secondary school education as compared to pre-primary and primary, particularly in South African rural and township schools. As a result, the researcher took an interest to investigate the role of parents and techniques used to involve parents in South African township secondary schools.

The third delimitation in this study was the choice of theory used. In this case, the researcher reviewed past studies on the topic. It was discovered that there are as many theories as there

are studies on parent involvement in education. However, the ecological systems theory on human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:25) was more relevant to this study and to the South African socio-educational circumstances in context. Ecological systems theory is relevant in this study because it claims that the development of a child takes place at home, school and in the community in which the child is at the centre; meaning that when parents and teachers are not working together, children's educational performance deteriorates (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:25). Moreover, parents' role, school activities, and the community overlap and share a similar mission and goals. This is also supported by Epstein (1995:705) and Lemmer (2012:84), when stating that "the family, school and the community are the major overlapping spheres or environments that influence the academic performance of a child at school." In other words, academic performance in every school depends on teachers, parents, community, and the students themselves. For this reason, all three components (parent, school, and community) should work harmoniously to achieve the students' good academic performance. Since there is a positive correlation between these three components, school managers should always try to balance the role of parents, school (teachers), and community in enhancing the students' performance. Parents and schoolteachers affect the students' performance in some way (Bronfenbrenner, 1979: 24; Isa, 2007:390).

This study's gist was the school-parent co-operation and partnership in education that is this study's theoretical foundation. Hence, Bronfenbrenner's (*ibid*) ecological systems theory is relevant since it states that every student develops within a microsystem; parents, friends, school activities, and teachers. Inside a mesosystem (the interactions among all the microsystems elements), embedded in an exosystems (social settings that affect the student, even though a student is not a direct member such as community resources, parents' work place, etcetera). All of these issues mentioned above are part of the Macrosystem; the larger society and its laws, customs, values, and so forth (Woolfolk, 2007:104). This study's findings are only applicable to the selected schools in the Metro-Central District, Western Cape, South Africa. However, they may serve as a guideline to other schools seeking information on the topic under investigation and needing an improvement in parental involvement.

1.10   CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

1.10.1 Adolescence

Adolescence is the transitional period between childhood and adulthood during which boys gradually become men and girls women. Typically, it includes the teenage years 13 to 19 that are stages of child development in Piaget theory (Mwamwenda, 1995:63). This is commonly the stage of secondary school students in the South African education system.

1.10.2 Democracy

The concept 'democracy' is derived from the Greek words *demos,* which means the people and *kratos* meaning to rule. Therefore, democracy means to rule by the people as opposed to a monarch, dictatorship, or unelected elite (Harber & Mncube, 2012:10). There are many definitions of democracy in international literature according to Harber and Mncube (2012:10), but they acknowledge that Beetham and Boyle capture its salient features. They are quoted below:

.......they argue that democracy embodies the ideal that decisions affecting an association as a whole would be taken by all its members and that they would each have equal rights to take part in such decisions. Democracy entails the twin principles of popular control over collective decision-making and equality of rights in the exercise of that control (Harber & Mncube, 2012:10). Currently in South Africa, democracy is maintained in education by giving trust and more powers to parents in school governing bodies (Department of Education, 1996). In addition, the head of the education department grants the school governing bodies permission to co-opt useful community members with no voting rights.

1.10.3 Decision-making

For the purposes of this study, decision-making is a voluntary act or a democratic act of deciding on school matters without being influenced by external factors. According to Epstein (1995:705), schools should include parents as participants in school decisions,

governance and advocacy activities through parent-teacher associations or committees, school governing body, school council, and other parent organisations.

1.10.4 Education management

Deventer and Kruger (2003:66) define education management as a specific kind of work, that is management of learning and teaching consisting of management tasks or activities known as planning, problem-solving, decision-making, communicating, policy making, organising, coordinating, delegating, leading and control of school events. Van der Westhuizen (2002:55) gives a precise definition of education management when stating that it is "a specific type of work in education that comprises those regulative tasks or actions executed by a person or body in a position of authority in a specific field or area of regulation to allow formative education to take place."

In this study, education-management refers to a process of utilising the available school resources such as human (including parents), physical and financial to achieve the school vision and mission. Moreover, this study regards the school personnel as having a duty of frequently applying educational leadership and management theories at their schools to improve the culture of teaching and learning. The schoolteachers execute school policies to achieve the ultimate aim of their schools' existence; which is to produce quality teaching and learning for their students; build a better community around their schools; and improve the country's socio-economy. Therefore, the school leaders have a responsibility to motivate and inspire every member in the school community to work towards achieving the school's goals, vision, and mission.

1.10.5 Langa Township

Langa Township is the first township where Black people resided in Cape Town, Western Cape Province. It was established in the 19th century. It is about five kilometres away from Cape Town. It was the first place where black people arrived from the homelands in the Western Cape Province during a time when urbanisation commenced. They settled in Langa whilst searching for job opportunities in the big city. This is where the study was conducted.

1.10.6 Parent

The term 'parent' in current studies is conceptualized in terms of the South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996 hereby referred to as the education law of South Africa. SASA ,Section 1 (xiv) conceptualizes the concept 'parent' as including : (a) biological parent or guardian of a learner , (b) The person legally entitled to custody of a learner and (c) the person who undertakes to fulfil the obligations of a person referred to in (a) and (b) towards the learner's education at school" (Department of Education, 1996). Parents, families, child-caregivers, and communities are jointly referred to as parents in this study. The conceptualization of the concept 'parent' in (a), (b) and (c), stipulated in SASA applies in this study.

1.10.7 Parent involvement, parental involvement, or parental engagement

Parent involvement is provision of a positive learning environment, pedagogical tasks, and the organisation of routine household tasks (Standing, 1999:59). Doucet (2008:110) views parental involvement as "creating partnerships between the home and school sometimes formally (e.g., when parents share in the decision-making)." The educational role parents provide at school, such as when they serve as volunteers or instructional aids and attend school events or support their child's academic learning by setting goals, monitoring homework, and establishing expectations are considered as involvement.

This study defines parental involvement and parental engagement in education as indivisible concepts because this conceptualization is about parents, families, and the communities' role in serving on school activities. In other words, the concepts 'parent involvement' and 'parental engagement' in schooling jointly refer to the parental role in education. To play a role on children's education means to be actively involved in a child's education. For example, the action of parents serving in the School Governing Body (SGB) as parent governors; in conducting parent-teacher conferences in the name of school improvement and organising teaching and learning resources and sharing their expertise in the content knowledge and pedagogic knowledge with the schoolteachers is more than involvement, it is engagement. On the other hand, it is when a parent helps their child with homework and

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schoolwork. In addition, it is assisting schoolteachers by reading for the child or with the child at home, taking part in school and extra-curricular activities.

1.10.8 School Governing Body (SGB)

"School Governing Body (SGB) is a legal governing school structure in the South African education system that stands in the position of trust towards the school" (Department of Education, 1996). It comprises the school principal, democratically elected members from teaching staff, non-teaching staff, parents, and learners in the case of secondary schools [SASA, Section 16 (s 1)] (Department of Education, 1996).

1.11 CHAPTER DIVISION

This study comprises of five chapters: Chapter 1 focuses on the introductory background, problem formulation, and aims of the investigation. Chapter 2 was divided into two parts. Part one covered the theoretical frameworks on parental involvement in schooling, and part two is the main theme on the research problem. Chapter 3 is on the research methodology and design. Chapter 4 discusses the findings, processes of data analysis and interpretations in the study. Lastly, Chapter 5 is on the research recommendations, limitations, and conclusions.

1.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter comprehensively explained the introductory background, problem statement, significance and limitations of the study; related literature on the research problem; clarification of concepts; the 'projected' research methodology of gathering data, sampling procedures, methods of analysing data; qualitative case study inquiry; ethical considerations; findings; conclusions and recommendations including the proposed chapter division.

The next chapter will focus on the benefits attached to parental involvement in secondary schools in literature, factors increasing parental involvement; barriers attached to parental involvement; and the perceptions of parents and teachers on the role of parents in schooling. Techniques involving parents or parents' management programmes in secondary schools were the study's main themes.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2. 1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a theoretical and literature review on the role of parents in enhancing students' academic performance. Theory is defined as a framework that offers an explanatory device, often in the form of categories and relationships (Ridley, 2010:20). It is useful to explain and predict the output in a scientific enquiry based on the academic thinking on a particular issue or phenomenon (Anonymous). In this case, it is the parent's role to enhance their children's academic achievement in secondary schools. The researcher utilised the ecological systems theory to explore parents' role in secondary school education.

Bronfenbrenner (1979:24) developed a theory in the subject of human development. This theory claims that the development of children is influenced by ecological systems. Thus the core concept in Bronfenbrenner theory is that the student's development takes place in microsystems (parent, family, school and the community as a system); for that reason school personnel ought to effectively initiate and manage parents, school and community partnerships to enhance academic performance. Therefore, teachers, learner and parent behaviour, and development are the joint function of the characteristics of the individual and of the environment (Stewart, 2011:16). For this reason, the school-community and home partnerships play a major role in the academic performance of students.

As it is mentioned in section c.f. 1.7 above, the core in this study's research problem is the lack of effective parent-school and community partnerships, particularly in Langa Township Schools, which leads to poor academic performance in some of the Metro-Central Education District secondary schools. Nonetheless, enhancing student learning is a complex process in itself and is related to a variety of factors. For instance, parents, schools, and teachers affect students' performance (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:24; Isa, 2007:390). In this presentation, it could be deduced that the community in which adolescents live can negatively affect their academic performance. In addition, this view depicts the notion that parents can play their

role effectively if the school personnel value the parent-school and community partnership as a constituent in the school culture. It is also revealed in international literature that in promoting achievement across elementary and secondary school levels, the significant role of families (parents), family-school relations, parenting and parental involvement in education is highlighted (Hill & Tyson, 2009:740).

This is supported by the fact that when parents are involved, students' behaviours are recorded as more positive and productive in nature (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:24). In addition, higher test scores are reported to be achieved at school (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:24). Accordingly , Isa (2007:390) and Mmotlane *et al.* (2009:528) are in the same motion when stating that "To increase participation of parents, more direct impact programs and interventions aimed at enhancing relationships between parents, students and teachers are needed". In this regard, one may argue that these programmes should vary from school to school and country to country. In *précis,* good academic results, especially in Grade 12 should be the outcome of these programmes in secondary schools.

In this chapter, the researcher reviewed national and international literature on the role of parents in enhancing students' academic performance in secondary schools. This was achieved by scrutinising global literature on the role of parents in their children's education with the aim of improving their academic performance. The researcher perceived the parental role in their children's education in three broader perspectives: legal perspective, the management perspective, and the educator perspective.

2.2 THEORETICAL VIEW ON PARENT-SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

2. 2.1 The sequential overview of ecological systems theory

The ecological system's theory was utilised in this study to form its theoretical foundation on the role of parents in enhancing students' academic performance in Metro-Central Education District in the Western Cape. During the late 1970s, Bronfenbrenner (1986:723) developed an interesting ecological systems theory. This mission was accomplished by identifying the

interconnectedness that influences human development (Amatea, 2013:85), or student learning in this case. The ecological system's theory is internationally acclaimed in the fields of academic development at school; in the discipline of students living with learning barriers or disabilities and students with no learning barriers or disabilities. In other words, this theory fits into all kinds of students' conditions in any institution of learning.

Accordingly, Aldrich, Eloisa and Darwin (2009:302) give two axioms of ecological paradigm regarding human development. The first axiom is that, development is an evolving function of a person's environment (school, home, and community) and interaction. The second axiom is that ultimately, this interaction must take place in an immediate face-to-face setting in which the person exists (Aldrich *et al.,* 2009:302). Hence, this gives plea to parental control in their children's education. The researcher is in line with the Michigan Department of Education's (MDE) two recommendations on parent involvement in their children's education (MDE, 2001):

- Parents should be involved in their children's education as early as possible (i.e. from infant, pre-primary, and primary and throughout higher education).

- The most effective forms of parental involvement are those which engage parents in working directly with their children on learning activities at home.

In addition, secondary school going students need their parents to be involved in their education because they need to be controlled and monitored in their homework, school work and getting private tutoring when necessary. This identification behaviour may affect a student's performance, behaviour at home and at school. Based on the above discussion, one may argue that this is overwhelming evidence on the relevance of ecological systems theory and the role of parents in schooling.

2.2.2 Ecological systems theory and the role of parents

According to the Ecological System's Theory, development of a human being is in systems namely; microsystems; macrosystems; mesosystems; exosystems and chronosystems (Amatea, 2013:85; Bronfenbrenner 1986:723; Lemmer, 2012:24; Muuss, 1996:322*;*

Stewart,2011:15). The biological aspects internal to the individual and the nested social and cultural contexts that shape development (of a student in this case), may influence the child's learning at school. The emotions of a student caused by unhealthy parent-teacher relationship could have a negative effect on their academic performance.

2.2.2.1 Microsystems model

Microsystems in this study are patterns of activities. These patterns include roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social, and symbolic features which invite, permit, or inhabit engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activities in an immediate environment (Aldrich *et al.,* 2009:302; Bronfenbrenner, 1986:724; Muuss, 1996: 322; Stewart, 2011: 19). There is evidence that students perform better in their schoolwork when they get adequate parental support at home.

This denotes that parents should motivate and build their children's self-esteem through supporting them in their schoolwork by monitoring their homework, visiting their school, attending parent-teacher meetings and sporting activities and organising a private academic tutor to support them at home, when necessary.

Furthermore, parents are expected to support their children during the examination period, which practice is related to the Microsystems perspectives. Microsystems is an interaction between the student and the immediate environment which includes the parents' role and the school's role in education (Taliaferro *et al.,* 2008, as cited in Mmotlane, Winnaar & wa-Kivilu *,* 2009:527). In addition, a microsystem is the immediate interpersonal context in which the child interacts (Amatea*,* 2013:85). For example, the type of community in which a child lives, poverty, parents' poor education and the school culture in teaching and learning could be factors which affect the student's academic progress.

2. 2.2.2 Macro-system model

The macro-system consists of the overarching pattern of micro-meso and exosystems. It is characterised as a given culture, subculture, or other extended social structure with particular reference to the developmental instigative belief systems, resources, hazards, lifestyles,

opportunity structures, life course options and patterns of social interchange that are embedded in such overarching systems (Aldrich *et al.,* 2009:317; Patrikakou *et al.*, 2002:185). Therefore, a good culture of teaching and learning in this study is regarded as a culture that consists of parent-school partnerships.

2. 2.2.3 Mesosystem model

Mesosystem is about how the parent's role and school influences the development (academic performance) of a student at school (Bronfenbrenner, 1986:725). It comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person (Aldrich *et al.,* 2009: 314). The interactions between parents, teachers, and the school can form the child's meso-system (Amatea, 2013:86).

2. 2.2.4 Exosytem model

Exosytem refers to settings beyond the student such as parents' work place (Woolfolk, 2007:104).). Parents' work conditions may affect the child's academic performance. For example, a parent may be unable to assist his or her child with schoolwork because he or she gets home very late and exhausted, and leaves very early in the morning for work. The exosystem comprises linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person, but in which events occur that indirectly influence processes within the immediate setting in which the developing person lives (Aldrich *et al.*, 2009: 316; Patrikakou *et al.*, 2002:185).

2.2.2.5   Chronosystem model

Chronosystem refers to the influence of change that takes place over time on the other systems (Lemmer, 2012:85; Patrikakou *et al.*, 2002:185; Woolfolk, 2007:104). These changes are social, demographic, and financial circumstances in a child's home. Overall, it includes major life transitions, environmental events, and historical events that occur during development. The specific incidents tend to change or transition how the child interacts with all the rest (Education-portal.com). In this case it could be fellow students, teachers and people at home. Moving to another city is one example because the child will join a new

school in the middle of the year. Changes in family finances create changes in the student learning resources.

2.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS IN THIS STUDY

The enhancement of students' academic performance in South African schools could be understood by applying the ecological systems theory that claims the development of a child takes place at home, school and in the community; whereby the child is at the centre. The family, school, and community are the overlapping spheres or environments in which children develop (Epstein, 1995:706; Lemmer, 2012:84). Based on the ecological systems theory, parents, schoolteachers, home, community, and peers have a greater impact on the academic performance of a student at school. In spite of this, the balance between parent's role and the school's role regarding the child's schoolwork should be in equilibrium, in order for a student to acquire good academic performance. However, this denotes that the schoolteachers have to design measures to help parents in establishing a home environment that is conducive to the student's learning.

The schoolteachers may improve on their academic results by allowing parents to play their expected role at home and at school (c.f. 2.10). It is the imperative task of the schoolteachers to develop strategies to improve parent involvement in their schools and to improve the role of parents in their schools. In other words, the schoolteachers have a task of building the relationship between these ecological systems (c.f. 2.2) in their schools. They ought to devise a strategic plan for parental involvement, creating an inviting school climate thus improving parent and teacher instruction in elements of parent involvement. The schoolteachers have to improve their means of communication with the child's home. The school should design effective forms of school to home and home to school communication on school programmes and children's progress. The two–way positive communication between home and school promotes positive students' academic performance. When teachers use relevant means of communication to inform parents about school programmes and students' progress, parents

are able to contact schools about their children's school life (Epstein, 1995:706; Lemmer, 2012:24). Furthermore, the schoolteachers may make use of newsletters, report cards, memorandums, telephone calls, accessible internet software to parents, home visits, and parent-teacher conferences (Epstein, 1995:706; Lemmer, 2012:24).

The family supervision and assistance on children's schoolwork may improve their academic performance, but parents need to be trained to deal with young-adults. That means schoolteachers have a responsibility to design measures to help all families establish a conducive home environment for children. Epstein (1987a:121) claims that it is the parents' basic obligation to provide for their children's needs. These are primary and secondary needs as espoused in Maslow's hierarchy of needs; love, food, shelter, health, and safety, education, brighter future and a sense of belonging. Epstein (1995:705) also sustains this point of view when claiming that parenting skills can be highlighted in parent-teacher workshops. The parents should prepare for their children's schooling and continue parenting throughout childhood, adolescent, and university level. However, literature reveals that schools could help parents improve their parenting to develop their children's level of performance, even in high school education. One may claim that improving the home environment increases the learner's school achievement. Moreover, international literature highlights that educational aspirations have a strong positive effect on learners' academic growth regardless of socio-economic status or ethnic group.

The schools should form parents committees that can provide support at school. The parents' committees would improve the perception of parents' role, both at home and school. Another important activity is to engage parents committee members in school activities that can establish effective opportunities for contact between the school and home, and draw up an annual programme for parental involvement in education (Kruger & van Zyl, 2006:241); and to encourage other parents to participate in the school programmes. Hence, the knowledge of the ecological systems theory is related to school-home and community partnerships in the sense that every student develops within a Microsystems (parents, friends, school activities, and teachers). Inside a mesosystems (the interactions among all the microsystems elements),

embedded in an exosystems (social settings that affect the student, even though a student is not a direct member such as community resources, parents work place, and etcetera). All of these are part of the macro system (the larger society and its laws, customs and values) (Woolfolk, 2007:104).

2.4 CONCLUSION

The heart of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is that the school, home and community affect a student's academic achievement. For this reason, all three components (parents, school, and community) should work harmoniously to achieve the students' good academic performance. Literature confirms that there is a positive correlation between these three components. Therefore, the school managers should always try to balance the role of parents, school, teachers, and the community in enhancing the students' academic performance. This may be done by encouraging parents to support their children in doing homework; improving communication between home and school on the child's education; and encouraging community members to volunteer their services at school (Epstein, 1995: 706). The parents' role, school activities, and community overlap and share a similar mission and goals. Accordingly, Shumane (2009:32) expands this perspective when asserting that "parents can make a consequential contribution to school activities, especially in those activities that fall outside the teachers' expertise and where such a parent is an expert. For example, in school subjects such as life skills or life orientation, creative arts, music, graphic design, woodwork and technology".

2.5 INTERNATIONAL VIEW ON THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Some international literature reveals that the involvement of parents and families in children's schooling is an imperative facet to enhance students' academic performance. In the United Kingdom (UK), Henderson (1981; 1987) and Henderson and Beria (1994) as cited in Baksh, Hache and Singh (2000:336), 125 studies carried out between 1966 and 1993 were reviewed. These studies examined evidence regarding the effects of parental involvement on

students' academic achievement and performance of schools. Findings confirmed that the benefits of parental involvement were students' higher grades and test scores, better class attendance, positive attitude and behaviour and higher graduation rates in Grade 12 (Baksh, Hache & Singh, 2000: 336). Parent involvement has surfaced during recent years as an important influence on a child's schooling (Patrikakou, Weisberg & Rubenstein, 2002:185). Antara and Mertens (2008:58) state that parent involvement in education is a top priority in order to improve students' academic performance. For instance, federal and state policies in the United States of America (USA) have elevated parent involvement in schools to a national priority. This is partly due to the large number of failing schools, and an increased achievement gap between White, African American and other ethnic minority students (Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey & Sanders, 2011: 411). In addition, the interest in Latino parents' involvement in their children's education in the USA has been spurred by reports of alarming differences in educational achievement between Latino students and students from other ethnic backgrounds (Walker *et al.*, 2011:411).

In agreement with the above view, Anfara and Merten (2008:58) present two examples: firstly, in 1994, the United States Congress enacted Goals 2000 which requires the promotion of partnerships, increase of parent involvement and participation in every school to promote the social, emotional, and academic growth of children. Secondly, since 2001, the No Child Left-Behind Act improved the quality of education in the USA (Anfara & Merten, 2008:60). However, Cheng (2005:457) has a different view on the role of parents in academic performance when stating that 'in Asia-Pacific region, the home-school collaboration has been strongly emphasised in current educational reforms and the traditional approach to home-school cooperation is often based on a division of labour between home and school. The school in Asia is mainly responsible for the child's cognitive development, whereas, home is responsible for satisfying children's material and emotional needs (Cheng, 2005:457). On the contrary, this is not the case in South Africa where parents are expected to serve as teachers at home by developing children's cognitive development and provide assistance at school in governance matters regarding the child's cognitive development.

The international view on the role of parents in education reveals that focusing on building trust, mutual relationships among teachers, families, and community members are the three

key practices in school-community efforts to enhance student teaching (Henderson & Mapp 2002, cited in Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005:164). Schoolteachers and school governing bodies should act in such a way that can strengthen trust, mutual relationship among teachers, parents, or families, and the community. There is a need for the school governing body to design school programmes that will sustain parental interest in the education of their children. The participating schools should have student-performance awards ceremonies on a quarterly basis to acknowledge and motivate students who perform best in their studies with certificates in the presence of their parents. Schoolteachers and school governing bodies need to empower parents to give enough support to teachers and their children in educational matters. The mutual trust between teachers, learners, and parents can improve the quality of education.

Deslandes and Bertrand (2005:165) correctly state that parent involvement in education is the parent's role of educating their children at home and in their school. Walker *et al.* (2011:411) state that "Parental involvement is an enactment of a wide range of cognitive and effective activities practised by parents at home, school, and in the community in which the students inhabit." For example, a retired parent can volunteer in a project to support teachers by utilising a community hall to help students in their homework, or open reading clubs to improve children's reading skills. Cheng (2005:457) has a different view on the role of parents in academic performance when stating that 'In Asia-Pacific region, the home-school collaboration has been strongly emphasised in current educational reforms and the traditional approach to home-school cooperation is often based on division of labour between the home and school. Cheng (2005:457) further states that "Asian Schools are mainly responsible for children's cognitive development, whereas the home is responsible for satisfying children's material and emotional needs." However, this is not the case with South African parents; they are expected to serve as teachers both at home by developing children's cognitive development and at school by assisting in governance matters.

Hence, there is a strong academic consensus and adequate evidence on the perception that 'at home and in school, parents are imperative in stimulating students learning to achieve expected academic results'. Furthermore, this view on the role of parents in education reveals that those children with parents who play a crucial role at home and in school

involvement regarding their education acquire good academic results at the end of the year. In this study, home involvement means playing a role such as listening to children, sharing own aspirations with the children, guiding a child on choosing a right career and participating in home learning. School involvement is when parents engage in roles such as maintaining the school building, managing school resources, fund-raising and managing school finances, serving in the School Governing Body (SGB) as governors, disciplining learners, and many more.

2.6 SOUTH AFRICAN VIEW ON THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN EDUCATION

The south African White Paper 2 in 1996 on the organisation, governance, and funding of South African schools was aimed at fostering democratic institutional management. A school governance structure that involves all persons with interest in education was introduced in the 1996 education system (Department of Education, White Paper 2, 1996). This was done to promote an active and responsible role, enhance tolerance, rational discussion, and collective decision-making in school matters (Department of Education, White Paper 2, 1996). Hence, the autocratic management and governance in schools was abolished in 1996 where education law involved all stakeholders. The co-ownership in governance and management in South African public schools was introduced with the aim of improving the quality of teaching and learning, thus improving the lives of the community. Parent's role in their children's education is promoted in the White Paper 2 of 1996. In the latter, the White paper 6 became the law of education named the South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996. This Act mandates all public schools to have democratically elected school governing bodies, consisting of parents of learners in the school, teachers, non-teaching staff and learners in school doing grade eight and higher [SASA, Section 16(1)].

However, there are some challenges in school governance. In spite of this, the lack of positive working partnerships between school personnel and parents of learners in South African schools is still reported by latest research. In support of the above, Mncube (2009:84) claims that, "at some schools in South Africa, parents are not yet playing their full role as governors mandated by legislation", that is the South African Schools Act No. 84 of

1996. This clearly shows a great need to address the lack of effective parents' role in education, especially with parents who are serving in the school governing bodies as mandated by the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996.

In this context, parents are supporting teachers in school activities for the benefit of students' academic achievement and school effectiveness. Parents are the first teachers, monitors, supporters, caregivers, and motivators of students in learning at home and in school; when sharing with teachers the same vision and mission of acquiring top academic results. Therefore, school personnel should improve parental involvement in children's education by working in collaboration with parent-governors to attract the involvement of all parents in education.

2.7 PARENTS' ROLE PERSPECTIVE IN EDUCATION TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The discussion in the sections above led to the identification of the parents' role perspectives in education to enhance students' academic performance. These parents' role perspective in their children's education is the legal role perspective of parents in enhancing academic performance, the management-perspective role of parents in enhancing academic performance and the educator perspective role of parents in enhancing academic performance.

2.7.1 The legal role perspective of parents in enhancing academic performance

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 mandates parents to be involved in the governance of schools (Department of Education, 1996). According to Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004:259), the legislation reform in schooling, in the democratic South African education system has focused attention on the rights and responsibilities of parents as empowered stakeholders in education. In agreement, Coetzee (2009:195) supports Lemmer and Van Wyk's (2004:259), and states, "in South Africa the legal rights of parents are based on legislation and common law. Furthermore, in the South African education policy it is clearly stated:

- Parents have an imperative role to play in the education of their children.

- They have the right to be consulted by the State authorities on the kind of education that should be offered to their children and to be involved in education-decision making and control in their school.

- Parents have an unchallengeable right to choose the form of education that is best for their children, particularly in the primary schooling age whether provided by the state or not, subject to reasonable safeguards which law may require.

- The parents' right to choose includes choice of language, culture or religious basis of the child's education with due regard to the rights of others and the right of choice of the growing child (Coetzee, 2009:195).

In this context, parents or legal guardians have the primary responsibility for the education of their children, and have the right to be consulted by the state authorities with respect to the form that education should take and to take part in its governance. "Parents have the inalienable right to choose the form of education which is best for their children, particularly from the early years of schooling up to university level whether provided by the state or not, subject to reasonable safeguards which law may require" (Department of Education, 1996).

 The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, Section 6 (2) states, "the governing body of a public school may determine the language policy of the school subject to the constitution, this Act, and any applicable provincial law" (Department of Education, 1996). This expresses that the education law in South Africa gives parents the right to choose the language, culture, or religion in the education of their children (Department of Education, 1996). Furthermore, parents at home have an obligation by law to provide children's living and learning necessities. In addition, parents play the role of being providers, protectors, responsible parents, participants, and monitors.

Parents are duty bound to protect their children's right to quality education by ensuring that their children attend school in every school day to learn (Act 108 & Act 84 of 1996). At home, parents are obligated by law to provide children's living and learning necessities. For example, they are expected to provide shelter, food, and protection from harm, school

uniform and study materials, provision of a lunch box and a water bottle (Maslow's physiological needs; Republic of South Africa, 1996). As highlighted in chapter one, parents have an important role to play in their children's education.

2.7.1.1 Parents as governors

South African parents have a democratic right to take a leading role in the school governing body, as they invest more powers with the majority vote in school governance. This means according to the SASA Act 84 of 1996, the parents' role in enhancing student's performance is in two ways: (1) by giving more powers to parents in the school governing body. To be precise, SASA Act No. 84 of 1996, Section 23 (9) states that the number of elected parent members should comprise one more than the total of other members in the governing body (50% plus 1), who have voting rights regardless of the size of the school. (2) This Act invested all the school-governance functions to its school governing body. To be precise, Section 16 (1), Act 84 of 1996 states that subject to this Act, the governance of every public school is vested in its governing body. This means parent governors should be trustworthy in their actions in school decisions.

Hence, Section 16 (2) states that school governors stand in the position of trust towards the school (Department of Education, 1996). This means that since parent- governors are the majority in the school governing body structure, it is expected that any decision taken by the SGB is what they want and therefore it is good for the education of their children. Moreover, as parents they are expected to put the educational interests of their children first in whatever decision they make. For example, all other stakeholders with interest in education, including parents, teachers, non-teaching staff, students, government officials, and the public give their trust to parent governors in decision-making and in schools governance matters.

For instance, Coetzee (2009:195) states that a parent can lodge an objection against any governance decision or action as flows:

● Against an educator, the complaint or objection should be directed to the school principal.

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- Against the school principal, parents should lodge a complaint or objection to the Head of Department (HOD).

- Against the representative council of learners or members, parents should lodge the complaint or objection directly to the SGB.

- Against the school, the governing body or member parents should lodge the complaint or objection to the members of the executive council (MEC) or head of education HOD (Department of Education, 2000, cited in Coetzee, 2009:195).

According to Coetzee (2009:195), it is clear that nobody is above the law in the South African education system. Moreover, the South African justice system and education law welcome parents to voice their complaints and feelings on unpleasant actions and decisions taken by the school governing bodies and school personnel against their children's interests. This means if they want to summon the principal, teachers, and non-teaching staff members and the school governing body to a court of law, they should claim or sue them against their wrongdoing. Hence, Coetzee (2009:195) implies that parents should stand for what is right for their children's education. Furthermore, parents are seen as potential partners in education (Lemmer, 2012:93). Parents are also expected to play the role of being caregivers; nurturing their children at home. This shows that parents should not be reluctant to pay a visit to the school principal regarding a child's problem, progress, or concerning a teacher who does not teach their children well.

Parents have the legal responsibility to take care of their children at home by teaching them social responsibilities, social values, norms and standards, the importance of education and many more. According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, parents or guardians have to fulfil the obligation of sending their children to school. In this Act, Section 29, (1) (a), states that everyone has the right to basic education, including adult basic education; (b) and further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible (Republic of South Africa, 1996). According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 and in SASA [S 3(1)] ; (Coetzee, 2009:195) children have a right to basic education; parents are obliged to send their children to school or devise some means for their children's basic education. It is

the duty of parents to make appropriate decisions in school policies such as language policy, students' code of conduct, school fees, and budgets, recommending suitable candidates (teachers and non-teaching staff) for appointment purposes and lodging a complaint where necessary.

2.7.1.2 Parents as promoters of quality education

According to SASA, Section20 (1) (a) the governing body of a public school must promote the best interest of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school (Department of Education,1996). This means that parents at school can enhance quality education through selecting good teachers to teach their children during the shortlisting and interviewing process by the SGB. Additionally, parents can support teachers by serving on a voluntary basis at school to improve quality teaching and learning. This is in agreement with SASA, Section 20 (1) (h), where it states that "the school governing body of a public school must encourage parents, learners, and other staff at the school to render voluntary services to the school" (Department of Education,1996).

Furthermore, the South African education law, Act 84 of 1996, Section 20 (1) (e), states that the governing body of a public school must support the school principal, educators and other staff in the performance of their professional functions (Department of Education,1996). This could be done by selecting a suitable language policy for their school. Adopting a good code of conduct for educators, non-teaching staff, and students at school is the best way to improve quality education. Effectively managing school finances and other school resources and monitoring students' late coming can be a challenging task for school principals without the assistance of parents.

SASA, Section 8 (1) states, "subject to any applicable provincial law; a governing body of a public school must adopt a code of conduct for the learners after consultation with the learners, parents, and educators of the school" (Department of Education, 1996). The parent-school partnership can improve school academic results through developing and implementing a code of conduct for students with the aim of establishing a disciplined teaching and learning environment to enhance the quality of learning. Hence, producing good

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quality education is one of the primary functions of the school. However, Mncube (2009:84) claims that "parents are reluctant in participating in the school governing body, and do not want to speak openly particularly in decision-making matters because of the fear of victimisation of their children by the schoolteachers". In this case, it means the South African democracy is not adhered to in school governance. This can mean for instance that parent governors recommend unsuitable teachers to teach their children because of the dominant influence of teachers and the school principal in the selection panel. Moreover, it is difficult for parent governors to control school finances if they have this fear, according to Mncube's (2009:89) research findings.

2.7.1.3 Parents' freedom of choice

According to the South African School's Act No. 84 of 1996, Section 6 (2), the governing body of a public school may determine the language policy of the school subject to the Constitution, this Act and any applicable provincial law (Department of Education, 1996). This shows that South African parents have a freedom to choose the right school, style, and language of learning for their children. However, some new parents do not investigate the language policy of a school before sending their children to that school. In this view, Coetzee (2009:197) clarifies that although parents can exercise a choice over the type of school they wish their children to attend, there are limitations. For instance some of these limitations are the financial status of a parent, admission policy of the school, locality of the school (feeder zone of the school), the school infrastructure, culture, and religion.

2.7.2 The management-perspective role of parents in enhancing academic performance

Parents were previously perceived as clients and did not have any say in school management and governance (Mncube, 2009:86). The school personnel used to regard parents as learner, money (school fund) and volunteering services suppliers in the schools. Accordingly, parents were reluctant to visit schools in connection with their children's school and home challenges. In a democratic education system, parents are supposedly welcomed into schools. In the school, management activities are activities that schools and families conduct separately. However, the schoolchildren and family can conduct other practices as in a

partnership (Epstein, 2001:177). Furthermore, in the South African education system after 1994, parents are supposedly partners in education.

Moreover, parents are potential partners in education (Lemmer, 2012:85). In order for the schools to improve their academic performance, assignments and national examinations; it is a great endeavour to involve parents in activities such as homework and creating the home as an enabling environment for learning. Parents can manage (as governors) the school policies and programmes (Lemmer, 2012:85) and this management of policies by parents can successfully promote the mutual interest of parents and schools. Furthermore, parents have a responsibility to work with the schoolteachers in enriching the school curriculum so that their children can obtain holistic development.

Lemmer (2012:85) expresses that:

- Parents play a role of communicating with the school personnel concerning the progress of their children at home and school.

- Parents attend scheduled meetings as required by the schools concerning their children's progress and behaviour. They should respect the school vision and mission and the needs of their children should be of paramount interest.

- They should serve as policy makers and partners with schoolteachers.

- They are responsible for protecting their children at school, by being aware of the conditions under which their children live and should have a good knowledge of school policies, and serve in school sub-committees on a volunteer basis for example in the school governing body, fundraising committee, safety committee and disciplinary committee.

- They have a responsibility to support and motivate children in their educational needs.

Parents play a crucial role of communicating with the schoolteachers concerning the progress of their children at home and school. They should attend the scheduled meetings as required by the schools concerning their children's progress and behaviour. Parents should respect the

school vision and mission and the needs of children should be of paramount importance. Moreover, parents serve as policy makers and partners.

2.7.3 The educator perspective role of parents in enhancing academic performance

Parents could be the best teachers at home; this could be possible when they solve problems concerning their children's behaviour in school matters. Furthermore, schoolteachers expect parents to serve as teacher-aids and volunteers in the classroom; good teachers should always regard parents as the first teachers at home. Hill and Tyson (2009:741) emphasise the parents' important role in education, when stating that, "early adolescence is often marked by changes in school context, family relationships, and developmental processes, and therefore parents have a responsibility to monitor students' progress at home and school." Parents have a great obligation to organise extra-learning material to use at home, and to organise a private tutor to supplement their children's learning. Parents have a responsibility of encouraging students' success by motivating them to perform by setting high standards and goals. They also have a responsibility of organising career guidance programmes so that their children make informed career choices concerning tertiary education.

Mmotlane *et al.* (2009:529), is congruous with Isa (2007:343) when evoking that "To increase participation of parents, more direct impact programs and interventions aimed at enhancing relationship between parents, students and teachers, are needed". In *précis*, the outcome of these programmes is the excellent academic performance in secondary school education. Hill and Tyson (2009:741) emphasise the important role of parents in education when stating, "Early adolescents are often marked by changes in school context, family relationships, and developmental processes, and therefore parents have a responsibility to monitor students' progress at home and school. In the context of these changes, academic performance often declines, while at the same time the long-term implications of academic performance increase (Hill & Tyson, 2009:742). In promoting achievement across elementary and secondary school levels, the significant role of families, family-school relations, and parental involvement in education has been highlighted (*ibid*).

2.8 BENEFITS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLING

Parents play a significant role in the academic achievement of primary and secondary students (van Deventer & Kruger, 2009:9). According to Van Deventer and Kruger (*ibid*), the enhancement in school academic performance, reduced dropout rates, a decrease in delinquency, and a more positive attitude towards the school are the benefits of parental role in education. Van Deventer and Kruger (*ibid*) state that, "the 'phenomenon' parental involvement has a significant effect on the quality of learners' experience of teaching and learning in the school, and on their (academic) results." Parental involvement in education has consistently been associated with school success in a multitude of areas, such as better achievement and behaviour, lower absenteeism, and positive attitudes towards school (Hayes, 2012:570). The students perform better in school socially and academically when schools reach out to parents and communities. Additionally, effective parental involvement makes a school to get a more positive image in the community, and a better relationship with the community (St John, Griffith & Allan-Haynes, 1997:17).

Furthermore, parents are financial donors who help raise school funds and serve as classroom volunteers. Parents could develop a 'neighbourhood watch' committee for the schoolchildren who walk to and from school. Parents may champion school special events; work on projects such as helping Grade 12's revision in high impact subjects such as English, Mathematics, and so forth (St John *et al.*, 1997:17). The formation of parents' clubs could be beneficial to the school. Clubs such as 'Dad's clubs' for renovating or repairing the school's physical environment; and 'Mom's clubs' for painting the school to create a suitable teaching and learning environment for their children (*ibid*). When school personnel work to overcome barriers that might hinder achievement of the benefits mentioned above, they can make the school provide a balanced curriculum that may improve the culture of teaching and learning. As a result, the acknowledgement of the parents' role at school may result in the increase in students' academic achievement. Studies by Paulson (2004) and Trust (1999), as cited in Hayes (2012: 570) provide some valuable insight into the potential forms of parental involvement with high school adolescents.

2.9   BARRIERS ON PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

In this study, academic performance is part of the main theme. The barriers affecting the student's academic performance expressed are based on a global academic perspective. A developing child undergoes social, cognitive, and an emotional dimension.   Parents' behaviour could influence learner's performance. Bronfenbrenner (1986:724) states that parents' conduct at home could influence children's academic performance at school. Hence, the assumption in this study is that involving parents in schooling will improve the children's academic performance. The demographic, cognitive, and emotional barriers have a negative impact on parent involvement in their children's education. Some of the barriers to parent involvement are the family organisation, family income status, and ethnic background, quality of housing and social class. Parents should prepare a learning environment where the home and school are suitable for a child's learning (Epstein, 1995:705).

2.9.1 Demographic barriers

The present study regards demographic barriers as including social barriers (marital status of parents, availability of parents, gender and age child), environmental barriers (parents' level of education), and economic barriers (family income, parents' work status and availability of time to be involved) (Hayes, 2012:568).   These barriers play a greater role on the performance of a child at school (Bronfenbrenner, 1986:723). For example, children growing under poverty, a lack of learning environment and proper care at home are more likely to perform badly at school. Furthermore, children who do not get safety on the way to school and back possibly will bring their stress into the classroom and their stress can affect their performance and the performance of other learners. According to Delgado-Gaitan, Macbeth, Walker, and Colvin and Ramsey, cited in Smit and Liebenberg (2003:1-4), it is imperative for schoolteachers and parents to provide students with safety, security and social support for children to perform better at school.

2.9.1.1 The parents' state of health and availability of parents at home

The parents' state of health and availability or unavailability can serve as a barrier in involvement at school. Some parents do not attend school meetings owing to their state of

health, time of the school meetings, and distance from the school to home and the unavailability of transport fare to attend the school meetings. Globally, there are families that are led by children owing to the dearth of their parents. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2007:301) support this point of view in their study, when stating, "HIV/AIDS orphans, and vulnerability of students are often observed as a barrier on parental involvement in the education of their children."

2.9.1.2 Ethnic background and socio-economic status of parents

According to Harris and Goodall (2008:277) the level of parent's involvement in their children's education is mostly influenced by the ethnic background and socio-economic status. Harris and Goodall (2008:278) state, "Engaging all parents in children's learning improves both parental engagement and students' achievement." Bower and Griffin (2011: 77) claim that schools continue to struggle with increasing parental involvement with learners of 'colour' and students of low socio-economic status. This is also common in former Model-C schools whereby the 'African' parent governors serving in the school governing bodies show reluctance in playing their full role as mandated by legislation (Mncube, 2009: 83). This view points that some researchers claim that parents of poor socio-economic status do not enthusiastically participate in their children's education.

In agreement, Henderson and Mapp (2002) as cited in Bower and Griffin (2011:77) state that, "regardless of parents' ethnic background or socio-economic status parents can be involved in the education of their children, and students with involved parents are more likely to perform well academically, attend school regularly, and advance to post-secondary education". Moreover, Bower and Griffin (*ibid*) support this discussion; "families from lower socio-economic backgrounds expend considerable efforts, including more informal conversations and unscheduled visits to demonstrate their involvement with teachers and the school at large". However, Freeman, Bower and Griffin (2011:79) regard this less structured visit by schools and teachers as obtrusive. In conclusion, amongst the non-school factors of school achievement such as socio-economic background, parents' educational attainment, family structure ,ethnicity and parental engagement, it is the latter which is the most strongly connected to achievement and attainment (Harris & Goodall, 2008:279).

2.9.1.3 Parents' work commitment and matrimonial status

According to Harris and Goodall (2008:280), the parents' work commitment is one of the most cited reasons for them not being involved in their children's schooling. "Lack of time and child-nurturing difficulties seems to be significant factors, predominantly for parents who work full-time" Harris and Goodall (2008:285). Bower and Griffin (2011:77), sustain this view in their case study that assessed the effectiveness of Epstein's model of parent involvement in high-poverty, and high minority elementary schools. The type of work done by parents affects their availability in school activities, therefore the school should set time and dates that suit parents. Furthermore, it might not be easy for a single parent, especially women, to attend school meetings in the evening while they are supposed to cook for their children and monitor their homework at the same time.

2.9.2 Cognitive barriers

By cognitive barriers, this study refers to the level of academic support a child gets at home, in the family and in the community; the relationship between the child and family concerning school work. Children who do not get enough school resources from home are more likely to underperform at school. Parent involvement in organising resources for learning motivates the children's performance at school.

2.9.2.1   Parent linguistic and cultural background

 Mncube (2009:83) states that parents with linguistic and cultural backgrounds different from those of the host culture are likely to be less actively involved in school activities compared to their 'mainstream' counterparts. Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (2011:411) are of the view that the English language is a barrier for parents to be involved in schooling. Limited parental education, poverty, discrimination, and residential instability are also contributors to the lack of parent's motivation for involvement in their children's schooling (Walker *et al.* 2011:411). Moreover, Mncube (2009:83) in his study on the role played by African parents in former model-C schools in decision- making initiatives in the school governing bodies, reveals that language barriers affect parents in playing their role as mandated by legislation.

2. 9.2 .2   *Parents' level of education*

Mncube (2009:98) states that the level of education of parents in general, and the lack of parental knowledge on parent involvement in school activities were the major barriers presented in his study on parent involvement in school governing bodies. Walker *et al*. 2011: 411), substantiate Mncube's view when stating that "language barriers, limited parental education, poverty, discrimination, and residential instability are the cause of poor parental involvement". This clearly informs the school personnel to screen and recruit parents according to their readiness and capabilities before assigning duties in school activities and serving in the school governing body.

2.9.2.3   *Curriculum difficulties*

The older students' school subjects that may be unfamiliar to parents or that exceed their comfort levels or expertise (Elish-Piper, 2008:59) can serve as a barrier to parental involvement. However, students may disregard their parents in school matters because of the lack of academic support from them. Eventually the parent's inability to help their children may cause them to be lenient in controlling them regarding school affairs.

2.9.3 Emotional barriers

Emotional barriers   relate to the parents' consistency in the procedures used with the child and the parents' expectations on their child's academic outcome. The parent's tendency of not meeting the child's school needs is the cause of poor performance in school; for instance not providing books, uniform, school fees and not visiting the school regarding the child's academic performance and social challenges.   In some homes, parents are unable to communicate about their children's school life. For example, by not asking how the school was on each day can serve as a barrier in a child's interest towards their education. The habit of not asking questions such, as "how was your day at school today? What did you learn today? Alternatively, do you have any homework today? This type of involvement creates the child's emotional security at school and home regarding their schoolwork. Children who have support at home are more likely to perform better in school.

2.9.3.1 Fear of academic victimisation of their children.

According to Mncube (2009: 83), there is a lack of enthusiasm of parent involvement and parents are reluctant to participate in the school governing body activities, particularly in decision-making processes because of the fear of victimisation of their children by the schoolteachers. Parents do not want to speak openly at school on school governance and management matters.   It is assumed that parents do not want to give pressure to schoolteachers by questioning matters in the running of the school in a bid to protect their children.

2.9.4 Parents and teachers' perceptions on parental involvement

2.9.4.1 Parents' perceptions on the role of parent involvement in education

The examination of parental ratings to evaluate the influence of parental involvement on adolescent outcomes has been utilised in previous research (Hayes, 2012:568). For instance, Paulson (2004) cited in Hayes (2012:568) examined parental perceptions of a multidimensional measure of parental involvement that consisted of values towards achievement, interest in schoolwork, and involvement in school functions. Achievement values refer to parents' values and attitudes about the importance of effects and academic success. Interest in schoolwork refers to parent's involvement in their children's academic performance, such as making sure children do their homework and knowing how their children are doing in school.

Involvement in school functions refers to parent's involvement in school activities such as attending parent-teacher conferences and doing volunteer work at school (Hayes, 2012:572). Furthermore, the study by Hayes (2012:572) reveals that "an achievement value is the most salient parental involvement factor, although all three-involvement measures predicted higher grades for adolescents, values towards achievement consistently predicted the greatest proportion of variance in adolescent achievement outcomes." Furthermore, a study by Trust (1999), cited in Hayes (2012:569) reveals four factors of parental involvement; parent-reported home-based, student-reported home-based, parent- reported school- organization, and student-reported school- based.

Home-based involvement refers to the frequency within which parents discuss schoolwork, school activities, and school-organisations with their children. Parents at home also engage in activities such as giving parental support on the children's studies, discussing future careers with their children, giving guidance on social life, and choosing the best universities for their children. Furthermore, parental styles at home continue to have a greater impact on the child's academic achievement even in late adolescence. Patrikakou, Weissberg, and Rubernstein (2002:184) also support this view.

School-based involvement refers to the frequency in which parents participate in school events and communicate with school personnel (Hayes, 2012:569). Accordingly, Trust (1999), in Hayes (2012:569) states that parent communication with students and support of student's educational endeavours are more important in long-term educational development, than parents' direct school involvement. Hence, Hayes (2012:569) is coherent with Trust's (1999) point of view, when stating that, "home-based involvement has the strongest effect on adolescents' educational expectations."

2.9.4.2 Teachers' perceptions on parental involvement

According to Souto-Manning and Swick (2006:187), "chasm that often develops to create unhealthy dissonance between teachers and parents is greatly influenced by teacher beliefs." Souto-Manning and Swick (*ibid*) define teacher beliefs as many hidden assumptions and generalisations that influenced teachers by often-isolate experiences and factors. De Quan and Dolmage (2006:95) present the succeeding four core points about the perceptions of teachers on parent involvement as:

- The teachers value parent involvement in the education of their children.

- They believe that parental involvement will have a positive impact on student success.
- Teachers believe that parental involvement is a more positive effect on their children's emotional or social development.
- Teachers believe that the level of parent involvement has little influence on the teachers' authority to educate or their responsibility for educating the students (De Quan & Dolmage, 2006:96).

According to Souto-Manning and Swick (2006:187), teachers' beliefs about parents and families are heavily influenced by current and past contextual and cultural elements. They further declare that education practitioners' experiences influence the schemes they develop on parent's involvement in education. There is a lack of experience where parents are in leadership roles. The history of using a teacher-dominant family involvement paradigm is always in the decision-making role; instant of creating a partnerships approach (*ibid*, 2006:188).

Patrikakou *et al.* (2002:183) have a view that "Due to the mounting of evidence that emphasises the important role that parents can play in their child's academic, emotional, and social development, as well as their impact on the effects of school interventions, researchers and educators alike have been calling for systematic efforts to increase parental involvement in children's education."

2.10 CONCLUSION

The primary essence of Bronfenbrenner's theory is that school, home, and community play a major role in the success or failure of students at school. The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 gives the school personnel the task of managing teachers, non-teaching staff, parents, and learners. An effective school-parent partnership could be achieved if the schoolteachers embark on these tasks: policy making, organising, personal management, and administration including training of teachers and parents, promoting, motivation, leadership, procedure determination and controlling; communication and planning. These tasks are essential if effective parental involvement is to be established or improved in the Western Cape's Metro-Central Education District schools. In this study, the reviewed literature on the perspective roles of parents in their children's education was discussed in detail (c.f 2.9 & 2.10). Lastly, the benefits and barriers to parental involvement in their children's education were explored and explained in-depth (c.f, 2.11& 2.12).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Creswell and Piano-Clark (2007:4) the process of research is a procedure that involves introducing a problem, narrowing the research problem into a purpose statement, research questions, and hypothesis; using a writing structure that fits the problem and the methodology. In addition to that, research is a process of steps to collect and analyse information to increase the understanding of a topic or issue (Creswell, 2012:3). Therefore, in this study the researcher focused on research methods that are imperative and pertinent in this case study to furnish the enlightenment on the research problem.

A case study is a systematic and in-depth study of one particular case in its context (Rule & John, 2011:4; Bertram & Christiansen, 2013:42). Hence, this study on the role of parents in enhancing their children's academic performance was conducted in two secondary schools in the Metro-Central Education District, Western Cape Province. These participating schools are referred to as case studies on the bases of Rule and John's (2011) definition of a case study, whose view is echoed by Bertram and Christiansen (2013:42). In this regard, Bertram and Christiansen (*ibid*) state that, "a case may be a person (such as a teacher, a learner, a principal, or a parent), a group of people (such as a family or a class of learners), a school, a community, or an organisation."

This research, therefore, is a case study because it studied a school in-depth to understand and investigate a research problem, as cited in the above definitions by international researchers. Specifically, two secondary schools were comprehensively studied to understand perceptions of school personnel on the role of parents in enhancing the students' academic performance (c.f., 1.10; 1.10.1&1.10.2) so as to improve their results in internal and external examinations. Researchers when conducting case studies in social and human sciences may use a combination of quantitative and qualitative data (Bertram & Christiansen, 2013:42). Hence, the researcher in this study investigated quantitative and qualitative research designs to make an informed decision on the appropriate research design for this case study. International

literature has proved that the accomplishment of a research project depends on the suitability of the chosen research design and methodology in the entire research process. The goal of a sound research design is to provide credible results (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:117).

Meijer, Verloop and Beijaard (2002:406) state that "in more than two decades authors embarked on proposing the paradigm shift on the notion of using a single method of investigation when investigating a research problem to substantiate the study validity or trustworthiness." This study is based on the paradigm of triangulation methods of collecting and analysing data, within the same research design (Meijer *et al.*, 2002:148). In other words, this study used triangulation or multiple methods of gathering data within the same research design. The triangulation by data sources or multiple sources of data (two secondary schools), were utilised during the data collection process. All collected and analysed data had qualitative characteristics in nature. These methods were individual interviewing, artefacts construing, and site observation. In conclusion, data in this study were triangulated during collection and phases analysed within the domain of qualitative research design.

Qualitative case study research design and procedures were used to collect and analyse data. Methods of collecting data were naturalistic observation, and face to face interviewing. Furthermore, triangulation approach was utilised to collect and analyse data so as to attract the research credibility. This is the first study on parental involvement to be conducted in the targeted Langa secondary schools under, circuit 4 in the Metro-Central Education District. Hence this study will add value to the school personnel's knowledge; and is expected to improve their practice and inform policy makers.

Qualitative research yields detailed data reported in participants' voices and contextualised in the settings in which they provide experiences and meanings of their experiences (Creswell & Garrett, 2008:322). This study intended to understand and close the gap on the parental involvement challenges experienced by school personnel and parents. Hence, the prime purpose of this research was to elucidate and understand the research problem by listening to voices of school personnel concerning the role of parents in education.

Literature reveals further that more than a decade since the inception of the South African democratic government, school principals and teachers are still facing many challenges in

their school management functions, and there are many debates in education on these challenges. Some of the challenges are: safety in schools; learner and educator full or partial absenteeism and late coming; lack of awareness on parental role in education, and vandalism of school property by members of the community; lack of discipline in schools; maladministration of school finances, and lack of proper instructional leadership; less effectual management of community and parent and family involvement. The function of researchers is to make clear some of these problems and understand them through teachers' voices and perceptions. Creswell (2012:4) states that "research has a major function of adding value to our knowledge, improving practice and informing policy debates."

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is the complete strategy of attack on the central research problem (Leedy & Ormord, 2001:91), in addition to the plan of action that links the philosophical assumptions to specific methods (Creswell & Piano-Clark, 2007:4). Research design is a plan for selecting subjects, research sites, and data collection procedures to answer a research question (Creswell, 2009:54). Furthermore, research design is a flexible strategic plan to be followed by researchers when conducting their research. It serves as a guide on the procedures and processes to follow when selecting sites and data collection methods.

3.2.1 Conceptualisation of research design

Leedy and Ormord (2001:91) state that "When designing research design, it is extremely important for the researcher not only to choose a viable research problem but also to consider the kinds of data an investigation of the problem will require and feasible means of collecting and interpreting data." According to Creswell (2009:54), a qualitative research is "an investigative process where the researcher gradually makes sense of a social phenomenon by constructing, comparing, replicating, cataloguing, and classifying the objective of the study."

The previous chapter (two) dealt with an in-depth literature review that constituted the basis for Creswell's (2009:54) argument and it extensively dealt with the role of parents in enhancing their children's academic performance in secondary schools. The theoretical

framework on the family-school and community partnership in education and the role of parents in enhancing the learners' academic performance in secondary schools were conducted in detail. Maxwell (2013:2) states that in a qualitative study, the research design is a reflexive process operating through every stage of a project. The activities of collecting and analysing information, developing and modifying theory, elaborating or refocusing the research question and identifying and addressing validity threats are usually all going on more or less simultaneously each influencing all of the others (Maxwell, 2013:2).

3.2.2 Triangulation in a case study research design

The term 'triangulation' stands for the procedure that entails carrying out three measurements to determine the exact position of a point in a landscape (Meijer *et al.*, 2002:406). Triangulation is a technique that seeks convergence of findings, cross-validation among different sources and methods of data collection (McMillan, 2012:303). On the other hand, Meijer *et al.* (2002:410) state that triangulation in social sciences research refers to a process by which a researcher wants to verify a finding by showing that its independent measures agree or at least do not contradict it.

In addition, this view still upholds according to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:374) that "Triangulation is the cross-validation among data sources, data collection strategies, periods, and theoretical schemes." Furthermore, in social science research the concept triangulation is used metaphorically; it has various meanings and involves many corresponding procedures. Meijer *et al.* (2002:410) state the five kinds of triangulation in qualitative research:

- Triangulation by data sources (data collected from different persons, or at different times, or different places),

- Triangulation by method (observation, interviews, documents, etc.),

- Triangulation by the researcher (comparable to interpreter reliability in qualitative methods),

- Triangulation by theory is the use of different theories to explain results, and

- Triangulation by data type (for example combining quantitative and qualitative data.

However, the type of triangulation chosen depends on the purpose of a study; more than one type of triangulation can be used in one study (Meijer *et al.* 2002:407). Hence**,** the researcher collected triangulated data with four different data collection instruments (c.f., 3.1).

In this study, the concept 'triangulation' is perceived as the use of different methods of collecting data in one topic at the same period, then later organised, analysed, and presented as a single case. Hence, this study utilised more than one method of data collection, and therefore the collected data was triangulated to attain the credibility of the findings.

3.2.3 Description and validation of a qualitative research design in this case study

This research used qualitative case study enquiry to get answers to the research problem. A qualitative enquiry was chosen because data were first collected in face-to-face interviews and there were direct document-observations through interacting with purposefully selected information rich participants in their natural settings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:315). Creswell and Garrett (2008:322) claim that qualitative research yields detailed information reported in voices of participants and contextualised in the settings in which they provide experiences and meanings of their experiences. Creswell and Garrett *(ibid)* and Maxwell (2013:5), define a qualitative study as "to be a genuine qualitative research, a study must take into account the theories and perspectives of those ones studied, rather than relying on established theoretical views or the researcher's perspective. However, the researcher in this study is not of the opinion that research participants' perspectives are necessarily beyond criticism, nor are they true with all due respect.

 In this study, Maxwell's statement in the above section (c.f., 3**.**2.1) emphasizes the fact that qualitative researchers base their findings on data collected from participants and report qualitatively. In addition, Maxwell's statement points to the attention of the qualitative researcher to regard the participants' perspectives more seriously. In other words, the researcher's perspectives may not dominate the findings from collection, data analysis, and reporting. In order for a qualitative study to attain validity, the gathered qualitative data should be sufficient. "Case studies typically combine data collection methods such as archives, interviews, questionnaires, and observation, and the evidence may be qualitative (in words) or quantitative (in numbers), or both" (Huberman & Miles, 2002:9). In line with

Huberman and Mile (*ibid*) and McMillan (2012:271), to attain data sufficiency the researcher gathered data in four ways:

- Global literature on the topic;

- Site observation, and document analysis;

- Face to face, interview schedule for the purposefully selected participants.

Accordingly, there was triangulation within the collected data and analysis. Huberman and Mile (2002:9) outline specific techniques for analysing qualitative data. Their ideas include a variety of devices such as tabular displays and graphs to manage and present qualitative data, without destroying the meaning of the data through intensive coding. The present study analysed some of its data by using tabular displays to manage and present qualitative data.

3.2.4 Qualitative case study as a research design of choice

According to Liamputtong (2013:203) these authors, Verschuren (2003); Flyvbjerg (2006; 2011); Gerning (2007); Platt (2007); Van Wynoberghe and Khan (2007) are correct when asserting that "In literature, case study definition is contentious and with much confusion and misunderstandings about it." However, some scholars contradict Liamputtong's (2013:203) point of view by giving definitions of a case study, which is viewed as:

Firstly, McBride (2013:60) identifies a case study as research design that involves intensive study of particular individuals (in this case the schools, parents and families) and their behaviour. Secondly, Huberman and Miles (2002:8) define case study as a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within a single setting. Thirdly, Yin (1989:23) defines a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (in this case, management of parent or family involvement) within its real life context (school and home setting); when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are used."

This is in line with the definition given by Schumacher and McMillan (2006:26) who consider a case study as qualitative research that examines a bounded system over time in detail; employing multiple sources of data found within settings. On the bases of McBride

(2013:57), the present study is referred to as a case study since an extensive investigation on one issue (role of parents in enhancing student success) or research problem was investigated in two secondary schools. Rooted in McBride (2013:57); Schumacher and McMillan (2006:26) and Yin (1989:23), the numerous approaches distinguish a case study design from other non-experimental research designs. Some of the approaches in case study design are to:

- Investigate a single case for a long time or within a short time but comprehensively.

- Study one important issue in more than one case for a long time or within a short time but comprehensively.

Based on the views above, studying one phenomenon (parent involvement in schooling) in two secondary schools for a single study is a case study research. Furthermore, case studies therefore, can also be conducted from a group of individuals such as an agency or institution (McBride 2013:57). Typically, a case study involves intensive observation of an individual's naturalistic behaviour or set of behaviours. To add more, case studies are often exploratory studies, wherein a researcher can learn about behaviour when little is known about it. Stake (1995; 2005; 2008),cited in Liamputtong (2013:203) regards a case study as having three types or groups; the intrinsic case study, the single or instructional case study, and the collective or multiple case study.

3.2.4.1 The intrinsic case study

The intrinsic case study is defined as the unusual case and when the case itself has an interest (Creswell, 2008:466; Liamputtong, 2013:203). Hence, this view can probably apply when a researcher conducts an investigation simply because they have an intrinsic interest to get a good understanding on a particular issue.

3.2.4.2 The single or instrumental case study

A precise definition of the single or instrumental case study is that of Creswell (2008:466), "to study an issue or a theme that provides insight into an issue or theme." One may argue that a study is instrumental if it provides an illustration of a specific issue.

3.2.4.3 The collective or multiple case studies

The collective or multiple case studies are referred to as studies of a single issue in more than one case to get an insight into an issue or theme. Creswell (2008:465) also supports this view. Moreover, Creswell (2008:465) further claims that a case study may also include many cases in which description and comparison are to provide an insight into an issue.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a philosophical framework and the fundamental assumptions of research (Creswell & Piano-Clark, 2007:4). It can be understood as the reasoning that informs particular ways of doing research or can be understood as the principles that inform the organisation of research activity (Kandumba, 2005:30). Methodology can be defined as a framework that relates to the entire process of research (Creswell & Piano-Clark, 2007:4). In addition, methodology refers to the metatheoretical narratives such as positivism, interpretivism, critical theory (Kandumba, 2005:30), and post-positivism theory that frame a research. These metatheoretical narratives are discussed below focusing on ontology, epistemology, and methodology:

- Ontology refers to a branch of philosophy concerned with articulating the nature and structure of the world (Wand & Weber, 1993:220). In this study, ontology is regarded as a philosophy which specifies the nature of reality to be studied or the knowledge about the educational problem (c.f.1.8).

- Epistemology refers to a person's beliefs about knowledge (such as 'what can be known?'); also it is the sub discipline in philosophy in which researchers study the nature of knowledge (Kuper, Reeves & Levinson, 2008:405).

- Methodology refers to the practical way/s in which the researcher goes about doing the research (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006:5).

The four research paradigms or metatheoretical narratives (positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and interpretivism) are presented in this study:

3.3.1 Positivist theory

The *ontology* in positivists' point of view is on naïve realism, assuming an objective external reality upon which inquiry can converge (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:111). In this study, ontology in educational research can be referred to as the unbiased investigation of reality of a problem between the school, learners, and parents which is out there to be observed. Furthermore, positive educational theorists' views are objective truths in nature whereas the epistemological point of view is dualist, objectivist assumption that enables the investigator to determine "how things really are" and "how things really work" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994: 111).

The methodology in positivist approach is seen as experimental or manipulative in nature and it (methodology) focuses on verification of hypothesis (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:111). According to Laws *et al.* (2013:23), most researchers associate a quantitative approach to positivist view. In other words, they (positivists) prove existing theories statistically. It can be concluded that positivist or quantitative researchers are number-centred, rather than presenting enormous words of the research participants or detailed personal explanations about truths on the phenomenon.

3.3.2 Post-positivist theory

Post-positivism theory (postempirism) is a paradigm (metatheoretical) stance that 'critiques' and amends the positivism view in education. While positivists believe that the researcher and the researched person (schoolteachers) are independent of each other, postpositivists accept that theories, background, knowledge and values of the researcher can influence what is observed (Colin, 2002: 624). However, like positivists, postpositivists pursue objectivity by recognizing the possible effects of biases (Colin, 2002:624).

The ontological point of view of post-positivism is that they (post-positivists) believe that a reality exists, as positivists do, though they hold that knowledge can be known only imperfectly and probabilistically (Colin, 2002:624). This is in line with Guba and Lincoln (1994: 111), who state that post-positivism is about critical realism, still assumes an objective reality yet grants that it apprehended only imperfectly and probabilistically.

In this paradigm, the epistemological point of view is that reality (knowledge) is modified, dualist, and there is an objective assumption that it is possible to approximate (but never fully know) reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994: 111). Accordingly, Colin (2002:624) further states that post-positivists believe that human knowledge is based not on unchangeable, rock-solid foundations, but rather upon human *conjectures* (Colin, 2002:624). In this study, conjecture means a conclusion or proposition based on incomplete information for which no proof has been found (Schwartz, 1995:93). As human knowledge is unavoidably conjectural the assertion of these conjectures are warranted, or more specifically justified by a set of warrants which are modified or withdrawn in the light of further investigation (Colin, 2002:624). In post-positivism paradigm, the research methodology is modified, experimental and manipulative, knowledge is investigated in critical multiplism, and focuses on the falsification of hypotheses (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:111).

3.3.3 Critical theory

Max Horkheimer (1972), one of the founders of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, described critical theory as a form of theorizing motivated by deep concern to overcome social injustice and the establishment of more just social conditions for all people (Reason & Bradbury, 2011:125). Critical theory is a way to develop knowledge that is free, undistorted, and unconstrained (Speziale & Carpenter, 2003:11). On the other hand, Hornby (2005:349) defines critical theory as a way of thinking about and examining culture and literature by considering the social, historical and ideological forces that affect it and make it the way it is. Culture means the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group. Accordingly, Kuper, Reeves and Levinson (2008:405) regard critical theory as a theoretical framework that assumes an oppressive relationship between the powerful and the powerless; critical theorists try to use their explanations of oppression to eliminate current inequalities of power.

3.3.4 Interpretivist theory

Interpretivist theories rely on created reality that is based on people's subjective experiences of their internal world. It is primarily qualitative in nature. They are also based on ontological belief of multiple realities and that fact that there is no direct access to the real

world (Carson *et al*. 2001:6). Laws *et al.* (2013:137), who state that in the context of research there is no one right answer out there waiting to be identified are also in support of this view.

This paradigm treats people as though they are the origin of their thought and feelings. In other words, when researchers conduct their research they allow feelings and reason to govern actions (Carson *et al.,* 2001:6). These truths derived from people's subjective experiences are real and to be taken seriously. In addition, Terre Blanche *et al.* (2006:9) state that the subjective reasons and meanings that lie behind behaviour are explained. In short, reality is constructed in the minds of individuals (*ibid*). This implies that there is always a different way of seeing things and a range of interpretations about reality in the academic world.

In this study, the above view was applied when the researcher visited the targeted institutions to use multiple methods of information gathering, which were face-to-face interviewing, document analysis, and observation. Laws *et al.* (2013:22), withstand this point of view by writing in their book, "…researcher might instead spend time in the camp, getting to know the people and observing the situation." In this way, the researcher might be conducting an ethnographic research or a case study research (*ibid*). This is the case in this study, since the researcher spent some few months visiting participating schools to collect data in their natural setting, and using face-to-face interviews. When revisiting the aim (c.f 1.8.2) in the present study, it is important to get the subjective meanings (participants' experiences) on the role of parents and how schoolteachers involve them in their children's education. The aim is to understand the experience of the schoolteachers on the parents' role from the participants' point of view; an interpretive paradigm was therefore chosen. The case study research was chosen as the epistemology on the study. This epistemology falls under interpretive paradigm and uses qualitative methodology.

3.4 STUDY POPULATION AND SAMPLING

3.4 .1   Study population

According to Bertram and Christiansen (2013:59) in academic research, the word 'population' means the total number of people, groups, or organisations that could be included in a study. In other words, the study population is a group of people, institutions or organisations from which data can be collected. In this case, parents, teachers, Head of Departments (HODs), deputy principals and school principals of the sixty-one (61) secondary schools (c.f., Table 4.1, in paragraph 4.3) in the Metro-Central Education District (MCED), Western Cape Province formed the population.

3.4 .2   Sampling

A sample is a group of subjects from which data is collected and it is often a representative of a specific population (McMillan & Schumacher 2006: 476). Hence, school principals, deputy principals, departmental heads, teachers serving in school governing body were the sample in this case study. There was one school principal, two deputy principals, two departmental head (HODs) in each secondary school (N=14). The next section consists of some of the characteristics of participating secondary schools.

- A research sample of two participating schools was drawn from ten (10) secondary schools in Circuit 4 under the Metro Central Education District (MCED) with a population of sixty-one (61) secondary schools (c.f., Table 4.1, in paragraph 4.3). The targeted schools are situated in the same geographical area, share the same socio-economic status, yet had different academic achievements in Grade 12 in the 2008 National Examinations.

3.5 METHODS OF COLLECTING DATA

The data collection processes were qualitative in nature to acquire answers for the study's research problem. These data collection processes were global literature on the topic, site observation, document analysis, and face-to-face interviews (McMillan, 2012:271). Data

collection processes were qualitative in nature to acquire the answers for this study's research problem. These qualitative case study's data collection processes are detailed below:

3.5.1   Literature review

According to Gay (1992:593) literature review is the systematic identification, location, and analysis of documents containing information related to a research problem. A literature review for a proposal or research study means locating and summarising studies related to the topic (Creswell, 2003:34). In addition to that, McMillan and Schumacher (2006:74) regard a review of literature as serving several purposes in research. This means that the literature review enables the researcher to define and limit the problem; place the study in a historical perspective; avoid unintentional and unnecessary replication; and select promising methods and measures to answer the research question. The knowledge gained in literature aids in stating the significance of the problem, developing the research design, and relating the results of the present study to prior knowledge (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:75). Furthermore, it aids in relating the findings to previous knowledge, supporting further research, and developing a research hypotheses (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:76).

In this study, the researcher reviewed literature to know what other researchers had reported on the topic and to identify the niche area on the topic (Creswell, 2003:30). Hence, the researcher consulted primary and secondary resources such as academic articles, research papers, newspapers, online studies, academic journals, books, government documents, unpublished and published dissertations, theses and electronic data resources as cited and acknowledged in the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:75). Hence, as a point of departure, the researcher noted that there is a lack of research on parental involvement in secondary schools, especially in South African townships and rural schools. According to Creswell (2003:34), the researcher has to follow certain steps when conducting a literature review, even though there is no single way to conduct it. In line with Creswell's (2003:34) view, the researcher:

- Begun by identifying new words to be used to locate study materials from the University of South Africa's library.

- Key words were used to search journals and books related to the topic in the library catalogue. Some books were purchased from a bookstore.

- Several research reports in articles and books related to the research topic were located.

- When reviewing articles, the researcher made photocopies of those topics that were central to this topic and were seen as making a contribution to the researcher's understanding of the literature.

- After summarising and assembling the literature, it was then thematically structured. Therefore, relevant literature on the topic was consulted. The conceptual articles, thought pieces that provide frameworks for thinking about the topic were included (Creswell, 2003:34).

3.5.1.2 Field notes

During the site-visit, detailed field notes about, but not only, the school infrastructure, parents' economic status, culture, languages, religion of learners and teachers were collected. In addition, notes were recorded during interviews. Additionally, during the face-to-face interviews, notes were taken. The researcher was able to pose some questions to the school staff solely to establish the role played by parents in maintaining the school buildings, grounds and fencing. Some of the questions were posed to establish the perceptions of school staff on the role of parents in their school.

3.5.1.3 Site observations

This study applied observation as one of the data collection methods from each secondary school. Robson (2002) as cited in Mncube (2009: 85) asserts that observation makes it possible for a researcher to experience what happens in the real world. In this study, to observe means watching what school personnel and parents do and listening to what they say and sometimes asking them to clarify questions (Gillham, 2000:45). Hence, the researcher observed one parent–teacher conference and one formal meeting of the school governing body in each selected school. During site visits, the researcher focused on, among others,

how the school welcomed parents; how they accepted the school governing body's responsibility in their school; and how the school applied their school-parent involvement plan.

In this study to observe means watching what school personnel, learners, and parents do, listening to what they say, and sometimes asking them to clarify responses (Gillham, 2000:45). Therefore, the researcher embarked on non-participating observation of the school governing body and parent-teacher meetings in each participating school. This observation process was successful, since there was an observation guide that was approved by the Department of Education and the University of South Africa's Ethical Clearance Committee as meeting their standards of academic research tools for gathering information. Furthermore, the researcher negotiated with or disclosed to use the observation guide to the participating schools before the investigation took place. During site visits, the researcher focused on, but not only, how the school welcomed visiting parents, how they accepted the school governing body's responsibility in their school, and how the school applied their school-parent involvement policy.

3.5.1.4 Official school documents

The researcher scrutinised schools documents to gather data how and what these schools were doing to involve parents. These school documents are the agendas and minutes of School Governing Body (SGB) meetings, letters to parents, and annual reports to parents, disciplinary records, qualifications of teachers and parents in the SGB, external school results for nine and twelve-graders for the past three years, school improvement plan, school policies in particular parent involvement policy and homework policy.

3.5.1.5 The face-to-face interview schedule

In-depth face-to-face interviews using twelve (12) open-ended questions about the role of and management of parents in these schools were conducted within the school management team (school principals, deputy, and departmental heads). The open-ended questions examined were:

 (1) The understanding of the role of parents in academic achievement.

(2) The management programmes used by the school personnel to involve parents in their children's schooling.

(3) Barriers experienced by the school when attempting to involve parents in the education of their children.

Teachers serving on the school governing body were interviewed using these twelve questions to maintain data credibility. The management programmes used by the school personnel to involve parents in schooling were also explored. Barriers experienced by the school when attempting to involve parents in the education of their children were established.

The individual interview questions were in English, since the school principals confirmed that parents serving in the school governing body conducted meetings in English. Thus, they have a good understanding of the language. Therefore, interviews ran smoothly, participants were comfortable working with the researcher. This could be because of the fact that participants knew the researcher since he is a teacher in a neighbouring school; they knew him well and this acquaintanceship made it easier for the researcher to conduct this research.

The fact that the school principals were familiar with academic research ethics and the full disclosure of the essence and purpose of this research by the researcher before conducting the investigation, made them very comfortable to participate in the study. However, participants were uncomfortable with the use of a tape recorder. As a result, the researcher did not use a recording device to maintain the participants' calm and trust.

3.6 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSING METHODS

Data analysis is the process during which the researcher identifies themes as they are suggested by the collected data and where an endeavour is made to demonstrate support to those themes (Lemmer, 2012:87). Data analysis is one of the most important steps in the qualitative research (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007 in Ngulube, 2015:131). This is because it assists researchers to make sense of their qualitative data (Ngulube, *ibid*). In addition, qualitative data analysis is the process during which the researcher formally identifies themes

as they are suggested by the collected data and an endeavour made to demonstrate support to those themes (Lemmer, 2012:89). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:364), qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organising data into categories, and identifying patterns among the categories. In view of that, "qualitative data analysis is concerned with transforming raw data by searching, evaluating, recognising, coding, mapping, exploring, and describing patterns, trends, themes, and categories in the raw data, in order to interpret them and provide their underlying meanings" (Ngulube, 2015:131).

Huberman and Miles (2001:309) also support this point of view by stating that "Qualitative data analysis is essentially about detection, and the tasks of defining, categorising, theorising, explaining, exploring, and mapping the analysis role. Moreover, the methods used for qualitative data analysis therefore need to facilitate such detection, and to be a form that allows certain functions to be performed (Huberman & Miles, 2001:309). Saldana (2011:89) gives the purpose and outcomes of data analysis as to reveal to others through fresh insights what the human condition observed and discovered is. Saldana *(ibid)* has a concurrent view with Huberman and Miles (2001:309); McMillan and Schumacher (2006:364); "one approach to understanding the social world is to discern its patterns and to construct human meanings that seem to capture life's essences and essentials."

According to Maree (2010:101), data analysis can be conducted by using different data analysis procedures. These are (1) content analysis that identifies and summarises message content, (2) conversation analysis (the study of talk in interaction), (3) discourse analysis that focuses on the meaning of spoken and written words, and lastly (4) narrative analysis that refers to procedures for interpreting narratives generated in research. Overall, data obtained from in-depth interviews and observation were analysed by means of qualitative case study procedures as suggested by Leedy and Ormrod (2001:160). These are the organisation of details about the case, categorisation of data, interpretation of single instances, identification of patterns, synthesis, and generalisation. In this study conversation analysis, narrative analysis and discourse analysis are all perceived as content analysis.

3.6.1 Content analysis

After repeatedly reading his collected data, the researcher familiarised himself with its content, and therefore it was easier to organise data into themes or patterns on tables. Transcriptions were organised into categories to form data patterns using tables on themes that emerged from participants' responses, with reference to data collected in literature review. The use of tables allowed the researcher to get a clear overall picture. Hence, the researcher organised detailed data from both secondary schools; and analysed its content concurrently, from the start up to the end of the data collection process.

3.6.2 Conversation analysis

Participants' responses were analysed to understand their opinions, practices, and beliefs on the parental role in their children's education. The researcher transcribed, coded, and grouped all interview responses according to questions posed. Then an interpretation of single instances was done, and data were divided into smaller and more meaningful units or themes to make meaningful data analysis, then sub-themes and patterns were identified. The data patterns informed the researcher of the synthesis and generalizability or applicability of the data findings. This generalizability or applicability of data findings was further explained in Chapter 4. However, the study will not be generalised to all Langa Township secondary schools. Therefore, generalisation from one institution to another in the same area will not be possible since school circumstances, management styles vary from school to school, and too many elements might be unique to each institution. The outcomes of data synthesis and generalisation are detailed in Chapter 4.

3.7 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSING PROCEDURES

3.7.1 Trustworthiness

Participants observed and read a project-permission letter before this research was conducted, for ethical and trust purposes. The verifiability of qualitative research is assessed in terms of its reliability and validity, qualitative research is more accurately assessed in terms of its

trustworthiness (Kimu, 2012:116). In this study, Lincoln and Guba's model Truth-Value, Applicability, Consistency, and Neutrality was employed to ensure the trustworthiness of qualitative data:

- **Truth-value**

Truth-value demonstrates how the research is conducted and how accurately the phenomenon under study is described (UNISA 2003:79, cited in Kimu, 2012:116).

- **Applicability**

Applicability refers to the extent to which the findings apply to other context settings and groups (Kimu, 2012:116). In qualitative research, the purpose is not to generalise findings to a larger population but rather to describe a phenomenon or experience (Kimu, 2012:116).

- **Consistency**

Consistency, which is the alternative to reliability, refers to the extent to which the findings would be consistent if the study were to be repeated in similar contexts or with the same subjects (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:207).

- **Neutrality**

Neutrality is the degree to which the findings are a function only of the participants and conditions of the research and not of other biases, motivations and perspectives (Kimu, 2012:116. In other words, neutrality can be the way of nonconformity from bias in research procedures, results and whether the findings would be consistent if the inquiry was to be replicated with the same participants or in a similar context.

3.7.2 Data credibility

Credibility is defined as the extent to which the data, data analysis and conclusion are accurate and trustworthy (McMillan, 2012:302). In this study, the credibility of the findings were verified using member checking processes, triangulating data sources and applying a data auditing technique (Creswell, 2009: 326).

- Firstly, the researcher maintained the credibility of data by using the same data collecting tools and collecting data using more than one tool (triangulation).

- Secondly, data were transcribed as soon as it were collected and the researcher was able to recall them well.

- Thirdly, participants' responses, and not the ideas of the researcher when recording and analysing data, were paramount in this study.

- Lastly, after the transcription of interview responses the researcher e-mailed the transcription to participants to confirm if he had quoted them well. In the email, participants were given liberty to change or modify their quotes for clarity if they felt the need to do so.

3.7.3 Generalizability or Transferability

In this qualitative case study, generalizability was regarded as the transferability of data findings to a similar context. Transferability refers to the appropriateness of applying the results to other contexts and settings (McMillan, 2012:304). It is expected that the findings and recommendations in this study could be applicable to every public school in Langa Township, since the schools in the area share the same learner and parent characteristics with similar socio-economic status, religion and culture, community or environment.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The University of South Africa requires that every student who wishes to conduct research or collect data apply for an ethical clearance certificate before conducting the research. Research permission letters from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), consent letters from participating schools allowing questions and observation schedules were submitted to UNISA's Ethical Clearance Committee, in the College of Education via the research supervisor for the application of an academic research ethical clearance certificate. The researcher employed ethical considerations as recommended in Henning *et al.* (2004:73). Precisely, these were informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and right to privacy.

3.8.1 Permission and Consent

The researcher directed permission letters to the Research Office in the Department of Education and District Office. A telephonic appointment was set with each selected secondary school principal. The researcher visited the school with a copy of the approval letter. The researcher gained trust from the school principals, and interviewing and observation times were negotiated. Then the researcher issued and interpreted the permission letters from the DoE to participants before the study was conducted for purposes of trustworthiness. Participants gave their consent in writing during the face-to-face interviews. Each participant signed a consent letter concerning ethical issues before the interviews commenced. The copies of transcribed data were issued to the participants (school principals, deputy principals, departmental heads, and teachers) for authentication of their responses before submission and publication of the research report.

3.8.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

The researcher ensured confidentiality and anonymity by using pseudonyms for the schools (i.e. School A & School B), to remove all identifiable remarks from the data. Each participant had a specific code, instead of a real name. In this regard, the researcher transcribed participants' responses, filed them in the computer, and locked original responses in a cabinet in the researcher's office for future use, confidentiality, and anonymity. In this study, participating schools and staff names remained confidential. That means the real names were not utilised and there was no easily recognizable information about the participating schools. There was a removal of all identifiable remarks from data, and specific codes on each participant were used to protect their right to privacy and confidentiality. The informants were assured that since this study was conducted for a degree requirement, therefore nobody would have access to their responses for whatever reasons. Moreover, as soon as the data was collected, it was transcribed at once and the raw data was kept in a locked cabinet to promote confidentiality and anonymity.

3.8.3 Privacy and sensitivity

The researcher explained to participants that they were voluntarily participating in this project and were free to stop at any point if they so wished. They were informed that their names and names of their schools were not going to be mentioned. Furthermore, the researcher and participants always negotiated a convenient time and place for the face-to-face interviews. The participants' right to not answer questions they felt sensitive or infringing on their privacy and voluntary participation was clearly explained to them plus the right to withdraw without penalty at any time they so wished. In addition, the researcher enlightened the participants about their right to skip questions they felt were sensitive or affected their privacy.

3.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher achieved the critical aim of exploring existing global literature on the 'phenomena' of research designs and research methodologies applied in social and human sciences, to furnish the enlightenment to the study's research problem. Moreover, this chapter presented, in detail, the research methodology (cf. Sections 3.3 & 3.3.1); research design (cf. 3.2; 3.2.1 & 3.2.2), and overview of research design theories (cf. 3.2.3.1 & 3.2.3.2) utilised. Furthermore, it investigated and presented the reviewed literature's point of view on the meaning of 'case study', research design (cf. 3.2.5; 3.2.5.1; 3.2.5.2; 3.2.5.3) the characteristics of and dissimilarities between quantitative and qualitative research methodologies (c.f.,.3.2.2; 3.2.2.1 & 3.2.2.2) to enable the researcher to make informed choices on the appropriate research methodology and design to execute when collecting data. Qualitative data analysing procedures, ethical considerations, population and procedures utilised when recruiting participants were presented.

CHAPTER 4

THE EMPIRICAL DATA FINDINGS AND SUMMARIES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter explored and described the research design and methodology applied in social and human sciences to collect data for the purpose of furnishing the enlightenment to the research problem, (cf.,3.2; 3.2.1 & 3.2.2), (3.2.3.1 & 3.2.3.2), and (3.3 & 3.3.1). The empirical and comprehensive collected data were analysed based on participants' words and gestures (cf., 3.3.1.5), which were obtained by the use of some qualitative data collecting methods. These methods were global literature review, school document readings, site observations, and face-to-face interviews (c.f., 3.3.1).

Participants' direct responses were indicated by using inverted comas to show that their direct words in a discussion were not altered. Participants' statements were quoted as primary source of information, meaning that the researcher's experiences and opinions did not influence the credibility of the findings. Qualitative data analysis methods were used to analyse the intensive data that was collected from participants on a voluntary basis in their natural setting. Content analysis, conversation analysis, and qualitative data analysis procedures were utilised. On the other hand, data credibility and member checking were utilised as the major qualitative data analysis procedures and the issue of data generalizability or transferability, as detailed in the previous chapter (c.f., 3.3.2&3.3.3), were dealt with comprehensively.

The process of data presentation commenced on the researcher's preparations for gaining access into the research site up to the reception gained by the researcher during his visits, while preparing to get participants in each school. Data collection procedures, findings, content and conversation analyses were detailed. The empirical data were collected during the school artefacts readings, observation, and individual interviewing. This chapter has presented the researcher's analytically triangulated empirical data, which were obtained from two purposefully selected participating secondary schools in the Metro Central Education District, Western Cape. Throughout the data analysis phase, the researcher transcribed,

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summarised, and presented the data collected from different sources as a single entity to enhance the study's data credibility and trustworthiness.

Lastly, presentation of the study population, sampling and ethical consideration on the process of the site access preparations are presented in detail in the next section. The coded names of the participating schools utilised throughout the study to maintain the academic ethical requirements on the issue of confidentiality and the right to privacy of the purposefully selected schools, were detailed in the previous chapter, in sections (3.4; 3.4.1 & 3.4.3).

4.2 METRO-CENTRAL EDUCATION DISTRICT AS A STUDY SETTING

Table 4.1 below shows the sum of secondary, primary, and special schools in Metro-Central Education District as per circuit to give a picture of the study population. This education district has six circuits.

Table 4.1 Metro-Central Education District Schools

Circuit (C)	Secondary schools	Primary schools	Special schools
C1	14	19	6
C2	15	29	3
C3	8	28	3
C4	10	26	2
C5	8	22	3
C6	6	27	1
TOTAL	61	151	18

Discussion:

The Metro-Central Education District is a mega education district in the Western Cape Province with mixed races, culture, and religion; consisting of 230 schools, wherein 26.5% are secondary schools, 65.7% are primary schools, and 7.8% are special schools. This study populated within the Metro-Central Education District, around Circuit 4, in Langa Township. The Metro-Central Education District consists of diverse cultures, ethnic groups (White, Coloureds, African, and Indians), produces good quality teaching and learning, although there are different academic pass rates in its secondary schools. Circuit 4 and Langa Township have ten (10) secondary schools. Therefore, two secondary schools from Langa Township were selected in sampling.

4.3 LANGA TOWNSHIPS AS A STUDY SITE

Langa Township is one of the oldest townships in South Africa (Coetzee, 2009:1). It is situated about 11 Kilometres (Km) from the City of Cape Town, on the Cape Flats railway line and adjacent to the city's main sewerage works; it is bordered by Jan Smuts drive to the West, the N2 to the South, and M7 to the East (Coetzee, 2009:1).

The name 'Langa' means 'sun' and it is derived from the name "Langalibalele", a Hlubi chief and rebel imprisoned in Cape Town after rebelling against the then Natal government. Langalibalele was imprisoned in 1873 on Robben Island, in Cape Town (Coetzee, 2009:4). After his release from Robben Island, he was kept in a place called Pinelands about 10 Km from Cape Town city under the supervision of the police (Coetzee, 2009:02). He spent the rest of his life with middle class residents in Pinelands. At that time, most of Chief Langalibalele's People (Langa residents) where residing in a place called Ndabeni about 5 Km from the City of Cape Town, closer to the middle class residents in Pinelands (Coetzee, 2009:02) .

In the then Cape Town, Blacks and Coloureds were overcrowded in an area called Ndabeni near the town centre. In 1923, the Urban Area's Act was passed forcing Blacks and Coloured people to live in the locations (Field, 2007:23). The apartheid laws of the time moved them

forcefully to District 6 and the Cape Flats. Moreover, the middle class residents (White people) in Pinelands were keen to see Ndabeni moved. Eventually, a new location called Langa Township was established in 1927 as a model or garden location (Musemwa, 1996; Musemwa, 2007:138; Field, 2007:23). It was like other older townships such as Lamontville in the South of Durban, McNamee Township in Port Elizabeth, and Dube Township in Soweto, which offered a clearly class-differentiated form of housing for a specific segment of the African community (Musemwa, 2007:139).

Langa Township Primary schools were set up in the early 1930s. However, the authorities initially refused to provide secondary schools as requested by Langa residents. According to Musemwa (2007:139) and Field (2007:23) it was not until 1937 that permission was granted for secondary schools after pressure from a clergy and parents who encouraged pupils to aspire to become nurses, teachers, and ministers. At present, Langa has ten public schools (four secondary schools and six primary schools), and all are public schools.

This study's focus was on the schools in the Metro-Central Education District that consists of two hundred and thirty (230) schools, where two Langa township schools in circuit-4 are the focus in the study. The study population was the group of people wherein the data was collected. To be precise, all the people having the responsibility to serve as parents at school (school principals, deputy principals, departmental heads, teacher, and parent serving in school governing body) were this study's accessible population. Langa Township has eleven schools, one independent adult school, four public secondary schools with grade 8 to 12, and six public primary schools, offering grade R to grade seven.

The Langa community is varied in terms of income groups. There are people who earn a middle income. This middle-income group dwell in a special area called Settlers, not far from the targeted schools. However, Langa residents mostly live under extreme conditions of poverty because of the legacy of the apartheid laws. In Langa Township, there is a higher rate of unemployment, less education, and poor housing conditions. In spite of this, education in Langa Township was very important in the past, and is still very important even to this day. This is evidenced by the quality of school buildings and the number of schools in this area.

Table 4.2 Characteristics of participating schools

School	Principals' tenure (years)	Location	Economic status	Feeder area	School fees /voluntary contribution	Languages
A	25	Suburb (township)	Middle and low income	Immediate neighbourhood ,buses, trains and taxis from townships	R400	Xhosa, English and Afrikaans
B	21	Suburb (township)	Middle and low income	Immediate neighbourhood ,buses, trains and taxis from townships	R450	Xhosa, English and Afrikaans

Discussion: School A and School B are located in an area adjoining the industrial businesses of the Cape Flats in the City of Cape Town; this place has many business firms. On the other hand, there is a clinic, schools, community library, community museum, police station, and a railway station in the area and most of Langa residents work as professionals and general workers. One third ($\frac{11}{33}$) of students come from surrounding neighbourhood of flats, hostels and houses, and the rest two- thirds ($\frac{22}{33}$) of students use buses , trains, taxes and some walk to school coming from different areas outside Langa Township. These schools are categorised as in quintile three (meaning they are in the not so poor community category), because of this community's socio-economic status. However, Langa residents mostly live

under extreme poverty conditions because of the legacy of the apartheid laws. Even though this area is surrounded by many industries, the unemployment rate is high, residents are not well educated, and most students live in poor housing conditions. In spite of this, education in Langa Township is very important. This was observed by the researcher when looking at the quality of school buildings and the number of schools and churches in this area. Most of Langa schools were built during the missionary education era in South Africa.

The indicated school fees are a voluntary contribution paid by each student per year and exclude stationary and books. Although there are three languages spoken in the school, the language of teaching and learning is English (First Additional Language). Xhosa is the first home language and Afrikaans is the third language in both schools.

Table 4.3 Data in participating schools

Area observed	School A	School B
Buildings	Solid first brick	Solid first brick
Security	Proper fencing and solid gates	Proper fencing and remote gates
Grounds	Clean paving, green grass, well cared for sports field and beautiful flowers	Clean paving, green grass, well cared for sports field and beautiful flowers
School teachers	Proper dress code, showing professionalism	Proper dress code, showing professionalism
Learners	Neat in prescribed school uniform	Neat in prescribed school uniform
Number of classrooms	35	46
Computer laboratory	2	2
Science laboratory	4	3
School Library	1	1
Number of teachers	28	37
Number of non-teaching staff	6	7
Total number of learners	866	1360

Discussion:

These schools have an environment that is favourable for learning and teaching. This was observed by looking at school buildings (solid first brick), proper fencing for students' security, non-teaching staff and teachers, and solid gates. Furthermore, both schools excel in learning and teaching. However, working with the community can boost the schools performance in internal and external assessments.

4.4 THE DATA COLLECTION PREPARATION PROCESSES

4.4.1 Building trust and gaining access at targeted schools

The researcher knew that building trust to participating schools was very important for this study to be successful. According to Creswell (2005:63), the researcher's ability to gain access to people and sites can help to determine if the researcher can research the issue. Hence, in trying to gain access to sites, the researcher phoned school principals, explained briefly what this research project was about, the purpose of the visit, and negotiated convenient times and dates for the meeting at their schools. In addition, 'this access often requires multiple levels of approval from schools, such as district administrators, principals, teachers, parents, and students (Creswell, 2005:63).

Both school principals were eager to meet the researcher. In this way, the researcher became familiar with them and the face-to-face conversation between them built an element of trust. Thereafter different dates and times were set for the meetings. The first school to set a date was School A, which was on the 30th of March 2014, at 15h30, in the principal's office. The agreed upon date at School B was on the 5th of April 2014 at 15h00. All negotiated meetings were after school contact time, as per the department of education terms and conditions of granting the study permission [refer to appendix (c)]. This made it easy for the researcher to honour his appointments with the participants without interrupting the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, the researcher became familiar with the school principals and the face-to-face conversation between them built an element of trust.

4.4.2 The delivering of permission letters

To research a problem, investigators need to gain permission to enter the sites and to involve people at the location of the study (Creswell, 2005:63). Therefore, all the necessary documents were delivered to the targeted secondary schools by the researcher. Thus, permission letters to conduct the study from the Western Cape Government Education (WCGE) and confirmation from University of South Africa (UNISA) were delivered. As well as individual interview protocol and consent forms, and observation schedules for parent meetings, school governing body meetings and the previous year minutes books (refer to Appendix A & Appendix B) were presented as an attempt for this study's full disclosure. The researcher also gave copies of the research proposal to the school principals, so that they could be familiar with and understand the structure of the projected study. Then the site gates became open for the researcher to collect data.

The school principals in the participating schools kept all negotiated dates mentioned in section 4.2.1. In the first meeting, the principal in School A was supportive regarding this research project. They accepted it very easily, even giving words of encouragement to the researcher by saying, "Do not be worried, we will support you well, we support academic researchers in our school." These words made the researcher to be relieved and motivated to proceed with conducting this research. The principal in School A was able to set convenient dates and times for conducting interviews, without hesitating and promised to organise teachers on the agreed dates and time to be at school, ready for the face-to-face interviews. The principal issued the signed consent letter to the researcher, as this was an ethical requirement. Then separate dates for observations and document readings were to follow. At once, the researcher sensed a positive relationship between the school principal, teachers, and parents serving in the school governing body in this school. This showed the strong element of trust between the school principal, staff, and school governing body chairperson. However, this supposed positive relationship was still to be proved during the parent-teacher meetings, school governing body meetings and minutes' book.

The principal in School B did not accept the project very easily and without asking many questions. However, since the researcher was motivated by the principal in school A and had

conducted an extensive literature review, he was able to answer the principal's questions in a professional manner. Eventually, the principal in School B was comfortable and promised the researcher to meet with staff on the 25th of May to get their views on this project, thereafter informing the researcher about the outcome. However, the principal did not get back to the researcher as promised whereas the researcher's contact numbers were on the research proposal's cover page that was left during the first meeting on the 5th of April 2014, at 15h00. After a month without a response regarding consent to conduct the study at School B, the researcher revisited the principal. During this visit, the principal apologised to the researcher for the delay. Then dates were set to collect data.

4.5 DATA COLLECTED THROUGH ANALYSIS OF DOCUMENTS

The researcher analysed school policies as alternative sources of data to answer the research problem (c.f., 3.3.31). Bertram and Christiansen (2014:97) state that, "A researcher can use various existing documents as their source of data. Some of the examples are: examination papers, teachers' daily journals, learners' work books and school policy documents". Bertram and Christiansen (*ibid*) further elaborate "when the researcher is using documents, he or she is not creating new data (through interviews or questionnaires) from scratch but using documents as a source of data, and this method is called document analysis.

The main source of artefacts read in this case were the agendas and minutes of school governing body meetings, letters to parents, and annual reports to parents, school improvement plan, school policies, in particular parent involvement and homework policy in each participating school. The researcher was able to read school policies, content in the school governing body minutes' book and parent-teacher meetings in each school.

4.5.1 School A, documents

4.5.1.1 School A policies

The following school policies were submitted for analysis in both schools:

- Code of conduct for students,
- Student admission policy,

- Code of conduct for educators,

- Riso, photocopier and class register policy,

- Progressive disciplinary procedures,

- School assessment irregularities committee policy,

- Finance policy,

- Hiring of school premises policy,

- Safety and security policy,

- HIV& Aids policy, and

- School governing body constitution

Discussion:

The researcher observed that School A had most of the school policies as required in the South African Schools' Act No. 84 of 1996. The chairperson and secretary of the school governing body signed and dated all submitted policies in 2013. The signature of the school principal, as the departmental official, also appeared on the school policies (Department of Education, 1996). This was an indication that the current School Governing Body (SGB) reviewed the school policies in 2013. However, it was noticed that the parental involvement policy and homework policy were not submitted for analysis in School A. When the researcher requested the parental involvement and homework policy from the school principal, he was told that they do not have such policies in their school.

However, it was noticed that personnel in School A were planning to develop a homework policy including the homework timetable. This is the content in their School Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2014 (SIP documents in School A). The consequences of not having this very important policy were evident in this school. It was stated that most of parents were not actively involved in student homework. That they do not organise extra-learning resources at home nor help their children in homework tasks. Although some teachers give homework to students, there were no strong strategies to enforce students to do their homework because the majority of learners come to school without having done their homework. Furthermore, most parents did not monitor the students' homework.

"The school's intervention regarding the problem of learners who always come to school without having done their homework because of home duties was to create or organise extra-time after school for students to do their homework" (Deputy Principal, in School A).

Although there was no homework policy in School A, it was mentioned in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2014. Their vision and mission statement contains a clause on parental involvement, particularly on learners' home work. It states that the school should encourage the involvement of parents, as they are the important stakeholders in their children's education. This shows that parental involvement is acknowledged in School A.

4.5.1.2 Reading minutes book in School A

The content in the school governing body minutes book

The school governing body meeting, dated 29th April 2013 stated that the school governing body would review all the existing school policies and adopt them after consultation with all stakeholders in the school. On that note, the meeting agreed that the school principal should bring all the department of education policies, minute and circulars that are necessary in the development of the school policies. In addition to that, the South African Constitution Act 108 of 1996 was requested from the school principal in order to be used when reviewing the school policies. The agreed upon date to review school policies was the 20th June 2013 at10 am in the staffroom. It was evident in their minutes book that the school governing body in School A had reviewed the school policies on 20th June 2013, and adopted them in a parent-teacher meeting which was held on the 30th June 2013 at the school hall at 6:30pm. The school governing chairperson and school principal signed the school policies in the parent-teacher meeting.

The school principal reported the academic performance in Grade 9's Annual National Assessment (ANA) and Grade 12 trial papers for 2012 in a meeting on the 23 August 2013. Based on the minutes, the principal's report was unacceptable to the school governing body members because parents were complaining about the poor performance in the Grade 9 results. The researcher noticed that it was reported that at least 75 % of learners failed Mathematics and 65% of learners failed English as a first additional language. It was

concluded in the meeting that the school principal should present the School Improvement Plan (SIP) to the school governing body before the end of that year. Lastly, in a meeting on 15th November 2013, the school finance committee presented the school budget to the school governing body.

4.5.1.3 The content in the minutes book of the parent–teacher meetings in School A

The researcher noticed that the first meeting was orienting learners and parents about the school subjects offered. The teachers were introduced to parents. The different sporting activities were held, uniform and school fees amounts (voluntary contribution) were presented in the meeting. Then after the first meeting, all other meetings were held at the end of each school term. The purpose of these meetings is to report about what is happening at school and to issue learners' reports. It was noticed that the chairperson and secretary signed and dated all the minutes in the parent-teacher meetings. Furthermore, the minutes book states that it was agreed upon to have one parent-teacher meeting in each school. Most of the items in the agenda were in the form of reports from the school governing body chairperson and principal.

4.5.2 School B, documents

4.5.2.1 School B, policies

The submitted school policies were:

- IQMS internal moderation policy,
- Code of conduct for students,
- Student admission policy,
- Code of conduct for educators,
- Photocopier and class register policy,
- Language policy,
- Progressive disciplinary procedures,
- School assessment irregularities committee policy,
- Finance policy,
- Hiring of school premises policy,

- Homework policy
- Safety and security policy,
- HIV& Aids policy, and
- School governing body constitution.

Discussion:

The researcher noticed that School B had most of the school policies as required in the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996. In addition, policies in School B were signed and dated 2012 by the school principal, chairperson, and secretary of the school governing body. This gave an impression to the researcher that the school governing body, parents, teachers, and learners were aware of the content in those policies. To note is that there was no parental involvement policy in the school.

4.5.2.2 Reading minutes book in School B

The content in the school governing body minutes book

According to the minutes book on the 10th May 2012, the current school governing body in School B adopted all the school policies. On the 18 th June 2013, it was recorded that the school governing body discussed the need to renovate one school block of five classrooms which had been dilapidated. The meeting delegated the school principal and secretary of the school governing body to write a letter to the education officer dealing with school infrastructure requesting funds to renovate the block. Another important issue mentioned was the roof of the classrooms, which needed to be cleaned. The meeting decided to use parents as volunteers. Therefore a parents meeting for this purpose was called on the 29th July 2013. According to the following minutes meeting, the parents agreed to clean the school.

On the 21th October 2013, it was recorded on the minutes book that the school governing body discussed the need to employ a substitute teacher to fill the post of a retired teacher. In addition, it was observed that in the previous meeting (20th June 2013), the school governing

body had interviewed a general worker in the school. It was also noticed that in a meeting dated 22nd November 2013, the school principal reported the academic performance in Grade 8 and 9 Annual National Assessment (ANA) and Grade 10 and 11 internal assessments, including Grade 12 trial papers for 2013. Based on the minutes, the principal's report was accepted without questions.

The content in the minutes book of the parent–teacher meetings in School B

It was observed that all the minutes in the parent –teacher meetings were signed and dated by the chairperson and secretary. The minutes' book states that the parents and teachers agreed to have their meetings at the end of each term but there would be grade meetings whereby parents, teachers, and learners of each grade would meet on Sunday morning at ten o'clock in each term. It was noted that School B had a special parent meeting to request parents to volunteer on cleaning the school roof. Another important issue discussed in the agenda was the late coming of learners. The school principal encouraged parents to make sure that learners come to school early. This means that learners must be inside the school premises before eight o'clock in the morning. Furthermore, learners should wear the appropriate school uniform as it was presented in the meeting.

Discussion:

The reading of the contents in the parent-teacher minutes books revealed that school personnel and school governing body members involve parents by informing them of what is happening at school. Firstly, teachers at times consult their school governing body on school matters but not always. Secondly, parent-teacher meeting minutes are signed by school governing body chairperson. This shows that the school governing body conducts the parent-teacher meetings. Thirdly, it was noticed that there were no planned dates for parent-teachers meetings given to parents and teachers in advanced so that they could reserve the dates in their diaries. The school governing body minutes revealed that the school policies, vision, and mission were reviewed. The school governing body in School A contained the discussion on the employment of a teacher, this shows that they were involved with the staff establishment. Furthermore, the school improvement plan was presented to the school governing body. The minutes contained the report on external examination. For example, the Grade 9 Annual

National Results and Grade 12 trial examinations in 2013 were presented to the school governing body in each school (c.f., 4.5.2, & 4.5.3). In School B, the school finance committee presented the school budget in a governing body meeting (c.f., 4.5.3).

4.6 DATA COLLECTED THROUGH OBSERVATION

In this study, observation (c.f., 3.3.1.3) was chosen to authenticate the collected data from interviews, with the intention of observing some of the things that participants might not talk about and some of those they spoke about in the interviews. Accordingly, Bertram and Christiansen (2014:84-5) state that observation means that the researcher goes to the site of the study, which may be a school, a classroom, a staff room or a community meeting space, and observes what is actually taking place there. During the observation of the meetings, the researcher was able to get first hand data (*ibid*). Therefore, to get more trustworthy data, the researcher read the parent-teacher and school governing body meeting minutes, school policies, and visited parent-teacher and school governing body meetings to minimise the possibility of the misrepresentation of the truth by the participants about their school conduct and practices. Below is the report on both schools.

4.6.1   School governing body meeting

The researcher utilised the prepared meeting observation guide to control the focus and to gather as much information as possible related to the research problem as closely as he could. The meeting revealed that parents in the SGB spoke freely during their meeting. Furthermore, an observation into the partnership between the schoolteachers and parents serving in school governing body was that it was good, particularly in school policy matters. The meeting agendas contained new issues to be discussed. Learners in the SGB were equally able to voice their views on the matter at table just as other members. Lastly, the school governing body chairpersons were in a position to be in control of the meetings.

4.6.2   Parent-teacher meeting

The researcher observed that the number of parents in the meeting formed a quorum. It was observed in the meeting that parents in both schools were allowed to speak up on their views

on a tabled matter. However, it was established that some parents were reluctant to speak out their views in the agenda, instead they would relay their thoughts to another parent sitting next to them, and then that "brave" parent would raise their hand as a signal that they wanted to speak. This researcher's observation of parent reluctance in speaking out in the meeting is found in Mncube (2009:84) findings that reveal "parents in South African public schools are still experiencing 'client' treatment at some schools, rather than partners in children's education". Most parents attended, although more than half of the parents in the meeting had to leave before the end of the meeting to catch trains, buses and taxis since they stay outside the school area. This is what some parents reported to the researcher.

In conclusion, the researcher observed the need for schools to reconsider the meeting times and venues. For instance, the meetings should be held on Sundays because most people do not work on Sundays. The schoolteachers and school governing body members should use meeting venues nearer to parents to avoid travelling expenses.

4.7 DATA COLLECTED THROUGH FACE TO FACE INTERVIEWS

Participants' responses in this study presented extensive data on the techniques utilised by participating schools to involve parents in improving the students' academic performance. In this research analysis and report chapter, data was based on the observation and voices of participants in their natural setting. After reading the entire transcribed data more than once, the researcher realised that five major themes with their sub-major themes emerged:

- Teachers are convinced that parent-teacher meetings are significant to encourage parental participation in their children's education.
- Teachers involve parents or families in student's homework.
- Teachers provide a welcoming school climate for the community to uplift their school performance.
- School personnel offered a limited parent's role in decision-making in the schools.
- Parental education, school culture and socio-economic status hinder participation in student learning.

4.7.1 Theme 1: Parent-Teacher meetings are significant to encourage parental participation in their children's education.

The Parent-Teacher partnership and parents' participation in the day-to-day professional functions of their school was encouraged in various ways in School B. The most popular way was through parent-teacher meetings. The principal in School B confirmed their ways to encourage parents was, "Our school encourages parental participation in their children's education through parent-teacher meetings, grade meetings, and individual parent meetings. On top, the school management informs parents about anything happening at school". They believe in informing parents about everything at school through parent-teacher meetings or conferences, grade meetings (Grade 12, 11&10 and 9 & 8) and individual learner parent-teacher meetings, and parent-teacher discussions on student performance.

It was reported that when parents are called to a meeting, their children (learners) are also welcomed in that meeting (HOD, in School B). "This is the best strategy for schools to enhance good parent-teacher attendance, since each student would persuade his or her parent to be amongst other parents in the school meeting" (HOD in School B). According to the Principal in School B, "this strategy of calling parents and students to the meeting with teachers does work because the attendance in the meetings improved since it was stated".

So far, the researcher realised that the school personnel had a communal notion that when giving information to parents on what is happening at school through parent–teacher meetings, they are efficiently encouraging participation of parents in their children's education. Van Dixhon (2012:32) is in line with school personnel's views when stating that, "what school staff considers as day-to-day business is often new information to parents" who feel appreciated and needed if they are informed by the schools. Hence, this was communal in both schools. The principal in School B explained that they encourage parental participation through parent-teacher meetings at the beginning of the year. The Deputy Principal in School A, reported that their school organises meetings at the beginning of the year according to the different grades and individual-parent teacher meetings when necessary to map out the school programme or year plan, assessment (tests) programme and learner pass requirements. The principal in School B also supported this view.

The parental interests in these schools are provoked by introducing teachers to parents in each subject and grade at the beginning of each year. "Parents are given time to interact with teachers during portfolio day, where each parent would come to the school to observe his or her child's work for the whole year" (Deputy Principal, in School B). The portfolio day makes parents feel welcomed and that schoolteachers appreciate the work they do at home. Furthermore, parents feel welcomed on issues concerning their children's education. The Deputy Principal, in school B further elaborated that the school organises departmental officials to workshop parents on their role in their children's education:

"We inform parents on the school's expectations from their role as parents of students in the school expected in the learning of their children at home and school. Also, we even invite the members of department of education to address parents on their role" *(*Deputy Principal in School B). This workshop gives parents a sense of belonging in their schools as educators and managers of their children's education.

However, the researcher noticed that the parent-teacher meetings were mostly characterised by client orientation in both schools. This shows that there was a deficiency of parent-teacher partnerships in school matters in the sense that school personnel inform parents about everything happening at the school including learner progress, progression and promotion requirements, school projects and many more. Parents passively listen to the professionals in the field since their area of expertise is being parents at home. The researcher is also in line with Lemmer's (2012:83) findings in her research on parental involvement in their children's education when stating that, "Parent-teacher conferences are characterised by client orientation to parents, rather than partnership orientation to home-school relation" (c.f., 1.7). "This practice of informing parents on school matters was confirmed in the interviews that the parent-teacher meetings and conferences in these schools are teacher-centred rather than parent-teacher centred" (Teacher 2 serving SGB, in School A). This is common because "parents are reluctant to speak out" on their views (HOD 1, in School A).

Discussion:

The researcher observed that these schools communicate well with their parents. According to collected data, the schoolteachers in School A and B involve parents in their children's

education by inviting them to school meetings. It was evident that these schools use grade meetings to attract more parents, and this allows teachers to have a manageable number of parents during school meetings. The manageable number in their meetings may allow the school personnel to listen to the voices of parents in the meetings. However, the school personnel should keep parents informed about students' progress. Regular and on-going communication via electronic mail, phone, in person, and letters could help to avoid surprises and would involve parents throughout the school year in monitoring students' work; rather than relying on the report card to communicate how a student is progressing in the school. This finding is related to Kruger and van Zyl's (2006:241).

Some authors, for example Glanz (2006:16); Lemmer (2012:84); Kruger and van Zyl (2006:241), highlight the provision of on-going communication between the school and home. This on-going communication promotes the effective co-operation between parents, teachers, and students; in turn it makes students perform at their best in schoolwork. The schools should design effective forms of communication from school to home and home to school on school programmes and students' academic progress, which is two-way communication (Lemmer, 2012:83). However, the participating schools are unable to use modern means of communication to all parents because of their socio economic status. In this instance, school principals can accomplish this on-going communication by working in collaboration with parents serving in the SGB. They can also plan their meetings in advance so that during students' registrations, parents are given the dates of the meetings. Furthermore, broadcasting on local radio stations can also be utilised by schools as a means of communicating with parents because most families have radios in their homes. In conclusion, the school personnel should see to it that they foster adequate communication to get good parental support.

4.7.2 Theme 2: Teachers involve parents or families in students' homework or tasks

Learners' good homework habits and support of parents and families at home is encouraged, particularly in School B. It was observed that the governing body in School B adopted a clear and well-communicated homework policy to parents and learners. This policy promotes parental support and in turn, a good quality of teaching and learning in these schools is

accomplished. Teacher 1 in School B, cited this: "If a student did not do his or her homework at home, we (schoolteachers) call parent in (we need co-operation on their part) to make sure that such student's home work is done in good time". "This kind of intervention makes parents to look at their children's books every day, because they are aware of the content in the school homework policy" (Deputy Principal, in School B).

School B's homework policy states that, "a parent must be called to school to sign on behalf of his or her child's misbehaviour of not doing homework and if this bad behaviour perseveres in one student for more than three times per term, such a student should be referred to the school disciplinary committee for corrective purposes. Then if this matter goes beyond the hands of the school disciplinary committee, they must be referred to the governing body that is the highest constitutional and disciplinary structure in the school."

On the other hand, the researcher noticed that there is a lack of homework policy on the list of policies submitted for analysis during the documentation reading in School A. In spite of this, one teacher in School B reported that some teachers in the school involve parents in student homework and parents are asked to sign the students' books. However, some students bring unsigned work from home. A teacher in School B elaborated: "the homework books have a space where a parent should put his or her signature and I usually encourage my students to give their books to parents to sign after finishing writing their homework, but some parents do not sign" (Teacher 2, in School B). It was reported that only literate parents are actively involved in their children's homework.

However, the principal in School B had a different view with regard to the illiterate parents in their school. The principal reported that "the illiterate groups of parents in my school are very active in their children's schooling matters; they even organise somebody to help with homework".

"The lack of homework policy in School A, leads parents to be ignorant towards school homework and inspecting the children's books" (Teacher 2, in School A). It was realised that involving parents in homework does not seem to be encouraged by all teachers in School A because of the perception that parents are illiterate and do not know anything about schoolwork.

This observation was sustained by Teacher 1 in School A, when arguing, "Most parents are illiterate in our school, students are struggling at home, and there is no parental support at all in their homework." In this point by Teacher 1, in School A, it could be realised that social problems prevail and form barriers to parental participation. Furthermore, the researcher noticed that in School A, the school personnel did not support their parents to be able to support their children at home, as recommended by Epstein (1995:704). It seems as if the teachers believed that there is no way that they can improve this lack of parental involvement in homework. This was established from the words of the Deputy Principal in School A, who stated that "in some homes, there are no parents to take care of children owing to parental dearth and urbanisation; some students stay with their relatives or siblings."

Moreover, Teacher 2 in school A, confirmed this view on the lack of parental support at home "The school have a strategy to deal with this lack of parental support in home works by forming extra-classes after school." The HOD in School A also cited the after school homework programme during face-to-face interviews; "Students take one hour after school to do the work they were supposed to do as homework because of unfavourable conditions for learning at home. However, some parents look after their children's homework every day although the school have no strong policy on homework." This was also supported by the words of the Deputy Principal in School A below:

"Parents are allowed to come to school when they are not satisfied by the quality of work provided by teachers to their children. I remember last year (2013) in the first school term, one parent visited the school to complain about a grade 11 teacher who do not sign learner homework books". In another case there were learners who always came from school with no schoolwork when the parents checked their books. The class teacher was called for questioning and then the questioning revealed that although the students were always present in the class register, they did not attend class. Furthermore, the students' classmates confirmed this habit of bunking classes in some of the other teacher's periods. Apparently, these students had a tendency of squatting inside the students' toilets during the teacher's periods for about two weeks. Their parents were very disappointed to hear that their children were absconding from classes. "The most awful part was this bad and unacceptable behaviour of forging schoolwork to submit at home, as they knew that their parents wanted to see the

schoolbooks on a daily basis" (Deputy Principal, in School A). These parents' intervention helped a lot because schoolteachers were able to deal with this students' behaviour in collaboration with the learners' parents for the best interests of the learners.

Discussion:

The school principal can pay home visits to revive parents and families' interests in their children's education matters. Glanz (2006:16) states that "if schools reach out to parents and communities, students perform better in school on the range of social and academic indicators". Kruger and van Zyl (2006:241) state that "Today co-operation between parents and teachers is vital for effective teaching and learning at school, but parent involvement does not happen automatically." They (*ibid*) regard the improvement of parental involvement in the education of their children as the most challenging task facing teachers nowadays. Kruger and van Zyl (*ibid*) sustain the above point of view; "effective management is a precondition for parent involvement." This could be possible with student's portfolios and student's report cards. Schools may possibly communicate with the learner's home by using school newsletters, electronic mail, and websites because students keep the school letters in their school bags without giving them to parents.

4.7.3 Theme 3: Teachers provide a welcoming school climate to their community to uplift school performance

The researcher's observations revealed that there is a strong culture of parent or family-friendliness in both schools. The school personnel in these schools have a warm welcoming ambiance to community members and parents when visiting these schools. Furthermore, according to the words of the principal, deputy principal, and teachers in School A, this parent-friendly policy promotes a positive interest for parents towards the school.

The welcoming atmosphere in these schools allows parents and teachers to work together in improving the quality of teaching and learning. For instance, the Principal in School B reported that, "At our school we encourage parents to check their children's books regularly. Regular book checking of children by parents motivates learners in their schoolwork. At the

same time, it promotes the link between parents and teachers on the students work at home and school". The Principal in School B further elaborated that:

"At our school we have a friendly welcoming policy to parents and community. I always tell 'my staff' to try by all means to make parents feel welcomed when visiting the school, at least by giving a warm greeting even if the person is not going to help a parent when the school receptionist is not on her desk".

The school personnel in school B created a welcoming atmosphere for parents in their school activities in various ways; they conveyed warmth and sincerity to make parents feel welcomed and comfortable when they visit the school (Principal in School B; Deputy Principal in School B). Kruger and van Zyl (2006:241) also support this technique of managing parents at school. Parents in School B "respond positively towards the teacher-invitations on school activities" (Principal, in School B).

This was observed when parents were organising a farewell function for a teacher who was leaving school B (Teacher 2 in School B). This school welcomes parents on school activities. However, in School A it was reported that it is only those parents who serve in the school governing body who are active (Deputy Principal, in School A). It was observed during the reading of school documents that parents are not members of the school sub-committees. The Deputy Principal in School A supported this view; "parents are very reluctant to join school committees because of the low self-esteem."

Likewise, the Principal in School B reported, "the school personnel encourage parental involvement in children's learning at home by supporting and checking children's books regularly". In relation to literature, van Deventer and Kruger (2009:09) argue that the phenomenon 'parental involvement' has a significant effect on the quality of students' experiences of teaching and learning in their school, and in their results (c.f 1.7).

The school should recruit and organise parents' help and support in the classroom. Furthermore, the schools should provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and curriculum–related activities, decisions and planning (Epstein, 1995:703). Parents have an important role to play at school, for instance assisting

educators in the classroom, maintaining learner's discipline, organising fundraising projects for the school and helping the school in sporting activities**.**

- **Schools utilise community resources for the benefit of teaching and learning**

The researcher noticed that these schools work in collaboration with the community around them. Students use the community library. "The school has a good relationship with the community members and Love Life (a child health promoting non-profit organization), social workers, school nurses, education psychologists, big companies donate funds since the school is a no fee and community police"; reported Deputy Principal, in School B.

 "We are using community library, Gugastebe (the name of their community cultural project), community hall, social workers, nurses, musicians from community in our music programmes and police" (Deputy Principal, in School A).   When the community responsibility ends, the school responsibility commences and vice versa. Hence, paying cautious attention to building bridges between school and community is a great effort in promoting the school-community partnership. Furthermore, seeking opportunities to engage community members in school activities and involving students and teachers to administrate in community functions outside school is the best way of enhancing academic performance in secondary schools.

The school personnel in these schools believe in effective communication between school and home. According to Lemmer (2012:84), the most common form of direct communication between parents and teachers in schools worldwide is parent-teacher conferences. Lemmer (2012:83) further states, "Purposeful parent–teacher conferences afford the teacher and parent the opportunity to address a particular topic related to the child, such as academic progress and behaviour". Likewise, the deputy principal in school A stated that, "the school informs parents about anything happening at school with the use of school letters, parent-teacher discussions on the performance of their children and school newsletter quarterly" (Deputy Principal, in School A).

From this view, it is established that in these schools parent-teacher meetings are the pillars of communication between parents and teachers. However, most of the teachers in both interviews had an opinion that the use of school letters when communicating with parents or

families is ineffective because there are students who do not give school letters to parents nor verbally convey the message to their parents. In this case, the school should communicate directly with parents through Short Messages System (SMS) or the telephone. The HOD in School B suggested this: "We are communicating with parents in the form of school letters and telephone; however, this communication strategy needs to be improved because some students do not give invitation letters to parents".

However, the Deputy Principal in School B stated that the communication with parents through school letters was not sufficiently reflected in their school. She cited a report of one parent in a school-parent meeting as follows: "I remember one parent who reported to me in the meeting that she was not aware of the meeting until another parent informed her but not from the letter of the school, which was supposed to be given by her child to her". However, in this regard the Deputy Principal in School B suggested a plan to improve the home-school communication: "I think the school needs to utilize short messages system (SMS) to communicate with parents, since our school has enough resources in this regard".

These teachers elaborate that their schools communicate with parents in the form of school letters and quarterly newsletters. However, this communication strategy needs to be improved. This view was also supported by the HOD in school A, when remarking that their school should use other effective means of communication: "I think the school principal has to buy data bundles for teachers to communicate with parents, because we (teachers) use our airtime to phone parents regarding their children's educational matters". However, this might not be easy since the principal in School A reported that some parents do not have enough communication facilities such as cellular phones, emails, and even landline telephones at home owing to their poor socio-economic status.

Discussion:

The empirical data collected revealed that in these schools there is a culture of parent-teacher and community relationships (c.f., 4.4.2.2). By creating a welcoming and accessible environment, the school begins to build partnerships with parents rather than create adversaries (Dixhon, 2012:32). 'Parents and teachers need to share with, and learn from each other during regular, open, two-way communication in the interests of the child' (Lemmer,

2012:84). Communication between the school and home is encouraged in these schools. The most common means of communication used are the school newsletters on a quarterly basis, student report cards on their academic performance and participation consent forms when the schools needs parental decisions for students in extra-curricular activities. (Schoolteachers in School A and B). This practice is in line with Michael, Dittus and Epstein (2007:578), who state, "One of the strongest predictors of family and community involvement is what the schools do to it.

   However, in order for the schoolteachers to sustain the schools' welcoming ambiance, they should convey warmth and sincerity so that parents feel welcomed and comfortable when they visit the school (Kruger & van Zyl, 2006:241). The schools should welcome parents at every opportunity; signs and posters should reflect welcoming messages to parents and the community. Furthermore, schoolteachers should clearly communicate what is expected of the parents by the school in the education of their children.

Although the parent management techniques vary from school to school, in both schools there were no observable welcoming signs and posters; except a written notice in the reception, which prevented parents from intruding the school principal's office by making spontaneous visits. 'Nobody should get into the school principal's office without making prior appointment with the reception'. This prohibiting note was observed in School B in front of the principals' door adjacent to the receptionist's office. In contrast, schoolteachers should invite parents to join in school committees such as curriculum and fundraising committees. Regular communication via email and letters is a contributing factor to a welcoming school climate:

- Correct conduct on the part of staff,
- Positive attitude on the part of staff,
- A neat reception room for parents,
- A neat principals' office that is functionally arranged and that gives parents an impression of professionalism (Kruger & van Zyl, 2006:242).

Before South Africa's democratic era, the notices would read, "No parent beyond this point" (without appointment) (Vincent, 1996:01). These kinds of prohibiting notices were found in School B. They were common in South African schools before 1994. Vincent (1996:01) supports this point of view by maintaining that such signs were popular in schools around the country. "Such notices symbolise the clear divisions between home and school. Furthermore, these notices reflect attempts by educators to preserve schools as islands of professional expertise, calm, order and learning, situated apart from their teeming, disorganised, unknowing surroundings" (Vincent, 1996:01). In addition, Michael *et al.* (2007: 578) state, "principals must be engaged in partnership efforts, and they must develop strong support for partnerships among families, teachers, and community members." These views convey a strong massage for school managers to strive to develop a welcoming school environment to enhance parental involvement in their teaching and learning culture.

4.7.4 Theme 4: Schoolteachers offered a limited parents' role in decision-making in the schools.

Almost every participant in this study responded confidently on the question of parental involvement in school decision matters. Their responses were on the basis that parents are represented in the School Governing Body (SGB) and they are in the majority. Therefore, any decision taken in the SGB is according to their majority vote and is for the best interest of their children's education. This idea is in line with SASA, yet this involvement is limited to school reports during the parent-teacher meetings. These finding are related to Lemmer and van Wyk (2004: 261) who state that "in general, educators feel that parent's role in decision-making on school matters should be limited to voting for, or serving in the school governing body".

Hence, the Principal in School A stated that parents of learners in their school are involved in decision-making in the form of school governing body meetings, general parent-teacher meetings where they get reports of everything that is happening in the school. This view means that parents and families are not pro-active in decision-making on school matters. For instance, the Deputy Principal in School A reported that when the school has projects, teachers make consultations with the school governing body. In that way, they believe that

they are involving parents in decision-making in the education matters of their children. Echoing these sentiments were the principal and a teacher serving in the school governing body in School A. Another teacher in school A reported that, "it is only parents serving in the school governing body who are active in school matters concerning parents."

The Principal in School B reported that parents are fully represented in decision making, in the form of school governing body meetings and general parent-teacher meetings. The HOD, in School B supported this view by stating that, "When we have school projects, we do consultations with school governing body". In spite of this, the rest of parents do not honour the school invitations, but only come when they are called for their children's misbehaviour in the school. The HOD in School B, continued "We are calling parents in parent-teacher meetings, but parents do not come, their cited reason is that they are not teachers, so they should not be bothered on the running of the school, as it is the responsibility of teachers, since they are not employed to do such that".

- **Parents serving in the school governing body play a less academic role in the schools**

It was reported that parents serving on the School Governing Body (SGB) support the smooth running of teaching and learning in school A by protecting school resources against vandalism and burglary, (Deputy principal, in School A). "This improves the quality of education produced by teachers in our school," reported (Deputy Principal, in School A). A teacher in School A stated that the SGB deals with school finances and general parent meetings. The Principal in School B was echoed by the Deputy Principal in School B when stating that "The parent component in our school governing body serves as a back-up for teachers in the school in the teaching and learning". Whilst in School A it was reported that, "It is only the parents who are serving in school governing body who are active in academic and non-academic activities to uplift the good quality in student learning and social life in the school" (Deputy Principal, in School A). Furthermore, "the school governing body parents are responsible in our school to control or deal with school finances" (Teacher 2, in School A). Another participant further elaborated that, "School governing body members are

responsible for checking and discussing financial statements, financial report, and handling general parent meetings regarding school finances" (Deputy Principal, in School A).

Additionally, it was noticed that in both schools parents are assigned to some special important duties. For instance "The school governing body members form part of the selecting panel during the filling of advertised posts by making their recommendations for teaching and non-teaching staff candidature" (Principal, in School B). This evidence was also observed in the school governing body minute book. According to section 4.5 in the Constitution of the School Governing Body in School B, parents serving in school governing body have a responsibility of encouraging other parents in the school to provide support to the school principal, teachers, and other staff members in improving the culture of teaching and learning in the school.

Lastly, the sampled schools acknowledged that there is a fundamental need to encourage parental participation in their day-to-day professional functions. The researcher observed that both schools have a school governing body constitution as required by the South African School Act No. 84 of 1996. The school governing bodies are properly constituted and have complete membership according to the South African School Act (SASA), and parent members are in the majority. A few of the key school policies listed in the school Act such as language, admission, religion, code of conduct for students, were submitted by the school principals.

- **The teachers perceive the parents as having a less academic role on their children's education**

The collected data acknowledged the excellent role of parents in non-academic activities in both secondary schools. However, there is no strategic plan on programmes to attract all parents in the school activities. Both school principals stated that their schools had no focus plan on the parents. "However, there are parents with sound academic backgrounds who give enough support to teachers in the school" (Principal, in School B). These parents support teachers by invigilating during the internal and external examination period.

On the other hand, the HOD in School A said, "parents are not interested to participate on academic matters in the school on a volunteer basis." This could be noticed by the response of Teacher 1, in School A who reported to the researcher that "If the teacher in our school request a parent to invigilate or be on guard for his or her classroom, while busy doing something else….maybe marking, the parent will demand paying for undertaking the job from the teacher".

However, this does not occur in School B. Parents work on a volunteering basis when the school personnel invite them to do so without expecting payment or rewards. The principal and deputy principal in School B supported their view when stating that parents were actively organising a farewell for a teacher who was leaving the school at the end of the following term. "Parents started on fund-raising for this farewell function without asking for the school's money and it was successful" (Principal; Deputy Principal, in School B).

Discussion:

The South African School Act of 1996 mandates parents to support teachers in their daily - teaching and learning. To be precise, Section 20 (1)(e) states that "the school governing bodies of public schools must support the principal, educators, and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions" (Department of Education,1996). To the same extent, Mmotlane *et al.* (2009:529) puts emphasis on the need to increase parental participation in children's education for better school results (cf., 1.7).

The comprehensive parent involvement is a prerequisite for improving the culture of teaching and learning in schools (Lemmer & van Wyk, 2004:261-3; Mncube,2009:84), Hence, the acquired data revealed a strong co-operation between the parents serving in School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in School A and School B. However, there was significant evidence that school personnel in participating secondary schools were encouraging parental participation in their professional functions, as per the requirements in the South African School Act No. 84 of 1996. This Act puts emphasis on parents as the dominating constituent in the school governing bodies and assigns them the crucial task of supporting school personnel in their professional functions. Firstly, it was observed that the structure of school

governing bodies was formed according to the stipulated membership in the South African School Act No. 84 of 1996.

It was noticed that during the school documentation readings, both schools have school governing body constitutions as per the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 mandate. This states that every school must have a governing body with its own constitution. The number of parents in the school governing body was according to the Act. However, the SGB constitution in School B had not been reviewed since it was dated and signed by the previous school governing body's chairperson and secretary. However, this was not the case in School A, the chairperson and secretary of the school governing body signed the incumbent SGB constitution. Furthermore, the researcher observed that in some of the SGB minutes there was indication of training that took place in the previous school term (April–June), on the role and responsibilities of school governing bodies in their schools. This was a good sign for developing SGB's because fully capacitated school boards are able to steer the school and give strategic direction.

4.7.5 Theme 5: Teachers' experienced factors that hinder parental participation in student learning.

The researcher observed that the schools experienced some factors that hinder full parent participation in their children's education. Some of these factors were caused by the schools. For instance, the lack of parent involvement policy and homework policy and the meeting times were generated by the school management practices. On the other hand, the parents' level of education, unavailability of a real parent at home, parents working constraints, distance from home to school and poverty are barriers that are not caused by the school personnel.

- **Lack of school-parent involvement policy in the schools**

The researcher's observation was that effectual management of parents in their children's education is still a challenge in the participating schools. During the artefacts construing on the school policies, the researcher could not find a parent involvement policy amongst those provided by the school principal in school A. The school personnel also disclosed during the

face-to-face interviews that parental involvement as a component of the school culture of teaching and learning was not their focus management area. Hence, the Principal in School A confidently stated, "We do not have such a policy in our school". Furthermore, this was the common case in School B. Lack of parent involvement policy was also evident in School B. School B submitted their policies but amongst those submitted, there was no policy-addressing parents in the school. The school principal also confirmed this researcher's observation during interviews:

"At our school, we do not have a parent involvement programme yet." The Principal in School B, further confirmed that there was a lack of parent involvement policy in their school; "We have no focus plan for parents." This clearly shows that the school personnel in these schools are not aware of or take lightly the role of parents in students' academic performance.

- **Teachers believe that the parents' level of education impedes participation at these schools**

According Mncube's (2009:85) study on parent involvement in the school governing body, parents are reluctant to say their views to teachers, since they underestimate their knowledge on educational matters. Parents give higher respect to teachers. Another factor in this regard is that parents come to school with a variety of previous school experiences; some positive and some negative. In school A, the deputy principal revealed that the majority of their parents are illiterate and do not take any care for the education of their children:

"Most parents are illiterate, students are struggling at home, and there is no parental support at all in their home works" (Deputy Principal, in School A). In support of this view, the Deputy Principal in school B, reported; "there is no parent participation, except parents meetings. Nevertheless, not all of them (parents) attend meetings". "Parents serving in school governing body are actively participating in learner discipline, fighting drugs, learner (teenage) pregnancy. However, there are parents with sound academic acumen amongst our parents and those parents support the schoolteachers" (Principal in, School B).

- **Unavailability of real parents at home**

Societal social problems prevail. In some homes, there are no parents to care for children (learners) owing to parental dearth and urbanisation; some learners stay with their relatives or siblings (Deputy principal, school A). Furthermore, it was reported by teachers in both schools that most of their students stay with their grandparents, and that they are too sick and old to attend school meetings. Teacher 1 in school A elaborated that; "Some students stay with relatives, their parents are in the Eastern Cape, at other homes learners are also acting the parental role to their young siblings' schooling".

Work constraints

The majority of parents work far away from their homes. Therefore, it is not easy for them to attend school meetings after work. Some parents in the parent-teacher meetings, which the researcher observed, reported this. In this regard, one parent reported to the school principal that it was her first meeting to attend this year because she uses a train to and from work and as a result she arrives at home very late to prepare supper for her children, and there was no time to attend school meetings (Parent, in School B).

Some parents in the school meeting defended their habit of not attending school meetings. One parent stated; "Our employers do not issue us early time off from work because of the school–meetings. They do not care about school-meetings, they need production". Another parent stated that he does not have time to look at his children's books because he gets home from work very tired. Most parents in the meeting were in chorus with the speaker, passing their excuses of not attending meetings because of work, let alone the school functions and activities. This is related to the literature which states that "parents whose employment is relatively demanding and inflexible tend to be less involved than parents whose jobs or like circumstances are more flexible (Garcia-Coll *et al.,* 2002; Weiss *et al.,* 2003 in Green *et al.,*2007:534). Furthermore, parents with multiple child-care or extended family responsibilities may also be less involved, particularly in school-based activities" (Hoover-Dempsey *et al.,* 2005 in Green *et al*., 2007:534).

"I think teachers should do their work which is to teach our children, and leave us as parents alone because we know nothing about schoolwork" (Parent in the meeting, in School A). The meeting murmured in support of the speaker about their lack of time to be teachers at home.

Discussion:

The researcher noticed that schools experience some factors that hinder full parent participation in their children's education. Some of these factors are caused by the schools. For instance, the lack of parent involvement policy and homework policy and meeting times are generated by the school management practices. On the other hand, the parental level of education, unavailability of a real parent at home, parent working constraints, and distance from home to school and poverty are barriers that are not caused by the school personnel in any way.

4.8 CONCLUSION

Teachers' voices concerning the role-played and barriers they experience when trying to involve parents in their children's education were presented in this chapter. In other words, this chapter presented the level of schoolteachers' awareness on parental role in their children's education and including its recognition. The perceptions of schoolteachers on parental role in education to improve school results, parental involvement management techniques and the school personnel's experienced barriers when they try to involve parents in school governance matters were heard and presented in the present chapter. Recommendations for the above are addressed in Chapter 5 below.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to sum up the entire study and make recommendations on the findings, focusing on how school personnel can improve parents' involvement strategies to enhance students' academic performance. The present study answered the following questions from the literature review, site observations and participants' voices during the face to face interviews (cf., 4.5; 4.6 & 4.7):

5.1.1 Main research question was:

How can school personnel involve parents to enhance the students' academic performance in secondary schools in the Metro-Central Education District, Western Cape?

The researcher addressed the main question by conducting a thorough literature review of past studies, which are related to the study topic. On the other hand, the relevance of the topic to the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 was investigated. The school documents were scrutinised to investigate the extent to which the schoolteachers involve parents in their schools. The purpose of listening to participants and making observations was to get fresh information so that the researcher could make informed recommendations. It was expected that the participating schools and other readers would benefit from this study.

5.1.2 Sub-questions: What is the role of parents in enhancing their children's academic performance?

This research sub-question was addressed by using information from literature and participants. Furthermore, parent-teacher perceptions on the role of parents in their schools were investigated. The evidence on the areas where parents play their role in these schools was scrutinised with the reading of parent-teacher meeting minutes, and school governing body meetings minutes. The researcher attended and visited parent-teacher meetings in order to get a real picture of what was happening in these schools regarding the phenomena of parental involvement.

1. **How do the school personnel manage parents in their schools?**

This question was addressed by reviewing literature on how other researchers recommend ways of managing parents in their schools. The research participants' views were taken into consideration in this regard. The school documents gave the researcher an idea of how the school personnel, in participating schools, manage parents in their school; which is crucial for producing quality education.

2. **What are the barriers to parent involvement in the selected schools?**

The researcher addressed this question by using the face-to-face interview schedule, wherein each participant was asked the same questions. As stated in the above question, parents, teachers and school governing body meetings were attended; the researcher was able to observe the same level of unmentioned barriers during the interview sessions.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE WHOLE STUDY

This study comprises five chapters: Chapter 1 focused on the introductory background, problem formulation, and aims of the study. Chapter 2 was divided into two parts. Part one covered the theoretical framework on parental involvement in schooling, and part two covered the main themes on the research problem. Chapter 3 was on the research methodology and design. Chapter 4 dealt with findings, processes of data analysis and interpretation. Lastly, Chapter 5 was on the research recommendations, limitations and conclusions.

5.2.1 Chapter 1

This is the study's introductory chapter; it explains the research background, research problem, key concepts used in the study and proposed study methodology.

5.2.2 Chapter 2

This chapter forms the core of the study. International literature was utilised since the importance of parental role in education is universally acknowledged. This chapter helped the

researcher not to investigate what other researchers have already investigated. Additionally, it was realised that this is the first study conducted on this topic in the participating schools in Metro- Central Education District, Western Cape.

5.2.3 Chapter 3

This chapter focused on the research design and methodology to shape the existing study. With the choice of methodology, the researcher was able get to the core of the study, as it is stated in literature that the success or failure of a research project depends on the type of research methodology chosen by the researcher/s (Creswell, 2005:61).

5.2.4 Chapter 4

This chapter serves as a link between literature review findings on how the school personnel can improve parent involvement in their schools to enhance their students' academic performance. The following categories were developed after data were transcribed:

- The inspirational ways of encouraging parental participation in their children's education,
- The academic and non-academic role played by parents in schools,
- The use of community resources for the benefit of teaching and learning,
- The schools' means of communication with the learner's home or family,
- The ways used by participating secondary schools to attract parents to work on a volunteering basis,
- The functions of school governing bodies in participating schools,
- The strategies utilised by schools to support parents in creating a conducive learning environment at home,
- The involvement of parents in school decision-making processes,
- The lack of parental participation on school activities, and
- Ways to overcome experienced barriers to parent involvement.

However, after reading and analysing the above categories the five study themes below emerged (c.f., 4.3):

- Teachers are convinced that parent-teacher meetings are significant to encourage parental participation in their children's education.
- Teachers involve parents or families in student's homework,
- Teachers provide a welcoming school climate to the community to uplift their school performance,
- School personnel offered a limited parent's role in decision-making in the schools,
- Parental education, school culture and socio-economic status hinder participation in student learning.

This chapter also showed the areas for development in school professional management of parents and families for the benefit of their children's education. For instance:

- Lack of developed strategies for parents or families to support their children in school work at home need to be improved in both schools,
- Lack of parent involvement policy in both schools needs to be addressed,
- Involvement of parents in school decision making is also lacking in both schools,
- Lastly, there is a need to improve the encouragement of parents to work on a volunteer basis at school to save its money and to boost the interest of students and parents or families in their schools.

5.3 STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE FINDINGS

5.3.1 Recommendation 1: Designing strategies to attract parents to render voluntary services at school

The schools should attract parents to render volunteering services at school for the benefit of children and to save school finances. This could be done by:

- The schools should conduct a small investigation on the skills of their parents and ask for volunteering at school; for example on school maintenance.

- Organising workshops to develop skills of parents who are unemployed so that those parents can help the school as and when needed.

- Organising parent clubs to work at school as and when needed.

- Asking interested parents to participate in school trips, visits, fieldwork etc. There should be a system which records the parents' feedback and opinions.

5.3.2 Recommendation 2: Designing strategies to support parents at home

The schools should support parents at home in creating a conducive learning environment. This could be done by:

- Connecting with families during home visits and assigning homework that requires family participation.

- Visiting parents' homes to check the student's home environment and situation.

- Organising parent workshops for parents to learn how to support the students' homework.

- Planning events and workshops that bring families into the school.

- Organising parent workshops on the content of the school syllabus namely; Maths Clubs after school hours to develop parent knowledge on the school content.

- Showcasing what students are learning and accomplishing.

- Having a functional Alumni Association to stay connected with the school.

- Communicating with parents is very important; schools must keep the parents informed of their children's progress.

The need to create a cohesive environment where management and parents can work together for the betterment of the school is important. For this, the role of the school management committees through parents' involvement should strengthen; hence open the doors for parents. Some other initiatives may include:

- Being clear about what's needed and create a structure that supports those needs.

- Establishing a cumulative list of volunteer activities and paying attention to the number of hours and time of day required to complete an activity; this could help the school management.

Lastly, schools should encourage parents to motivate students' performance and give support on students' homework. This could be done by educating parents on the expected practices adopted from a self-determination theoretical perspective:

Developing parents to know and support students' learning interests;

- Parents should work with children to establish personal learning goals,

- Parents should explain why learning a task can be valuable to the child,

- Parents should give a child a reward either in the form of money for getting an A or Code 7 (meaning Outstanding Achievement of 80-100%) in the assessment,

- Parents should explain how failing to meet expectations at school would embarrass the family (Garn, Matthews & Jolly, 2012: 657).

5.3.3 Recommendation 3: Designing strategies to improve home-school communication

The schools should improve home-school communication. The most important strategy schoolteachers can use in general to improve parental involvement in schools involves developing good working relationships with the parents of the relevant children and keeping them informed of all relevant and appropriate issues in a timely fashion. This necessitates excellent communication skills and trust-building processes, such as a genuine and deep understanding of the parent's needs as well as the child's needs. Nevertheless, developing a mind-set favourable to parent and family partnership, as opposed to mere involvement is essential. In other words developing proactive, two-way communication practices helps and developing mutual trust is central to all of this.

- The school should issue school programmes in the beginning of the year. For example, dates of the meetings, times and venues.

The school should ask for parents' contact numbers and keep them in each class list. This will help when a teacher wants to inform a parent about parent-teacher meetings. Teachers can phone or use a Short Message System (SMS) to inform a parent about the progress of a child at school since some students do not give parents their school letters.

- The schools should work closely with parents. For example, this is done in School B; teachers identify underperforming students and call their parents to school. This kind of intervention should be done in School A as well.

- Communicating often about the need for and importance of parental involvement.

- Schoolteachers should constantly contact parents and keep them informed about the progress of the school and their children in the school.

- The communication with parents should not only be on the negative side but should also stress on the positive things the child is doing in the school.

- Parents could be invited once every month for a chat with their children's teachers and school management team on the progress of the school. Parents should be provided with refreshments during these meetings.

- Also establishing a strong Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) to supplement the school governing body. This parent-teacher association should meet monthly with refreshments served to boost parental involvement in schools.

5.3.4 Recommendation 4: Training of parents serving on the school governing body

The schoolteachers should capacitate parents serving in the school governing bodies to be able to make a contribution to the strategic direction in the school. This could be done by:

- Organising workshops on the roles and responsibilities of the school governing body.

- The school principal should provide the school governing body members with departmental circulars and minutes on their expected role at school.

5.3.5 Recommendation 5: Development of parent involvement policy

The schools need to adopt their parent involvement policy and communicate it to all stakeholders in the school. The South African constitution and other legal imperatives on education in South Africa and the school context should be consulted when designing this

policy. For instance, the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 and international literature on parent involvement plan.

5.3.6 Recommendation 6: Development of homework policy

The schools should develop a homework policy in reference to the format of the Western Cape Education Homework Policy. After the school governing body has adopted it, they should present it to parents and learners. This policy should clearly state the role of parents in students' homework. The sanctions for non-compliance should also be clearly stated in the policy and make it known to every stakeholder in the school. Furthermore, schoolteachers should develop documents that list activities that parents could do with the children outside of the school; for example visiting a technological museum, which could improve student engagement in the school. A side effect of this could be a better parent-child communication compared to the command and control structure that results when students do homework under parental supervision.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

According to Simon (2011: 02), study limitations are potential weaknesses or characteristics that are out of the researcher's control. Hence, like any other study there were limitations in this present study:

- The first limitation was the time given to collect data in these schools. It was very limited and it was a busy period for participants. Therefore, it was not easy to get participants during the interviews. As a result, the researcher could not conduct investigations on the parent-teacher meetings, as it was one of the intended data sources.

- The second limitation was financial constraints and safety. The researcher could not prolong the data collection process. Therefore, this study was limited because the researcher had to avoid huge travelling expenses; for security and time saving purposes.

- The last limitation was the volume of collected data. This is an intensive study with massive data sources; it became difficult to summarise all the collected data into a single study. Furthermore, the researcher at proposal stage intended to employ focus group interviews of five parents from each school but when data collection commenced, he realised that the data would be too much for him to summarise into a single study. This then led to the withdrawal of using focus groups as a data collecting method.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In future, the researcher may investigate a topic to explore and discuss perceptions of parents on their expected roles as stipulated in the South African Schools Act, No 84 of 1996, using only parents as participants.

5.6 CONCLUSION

There is substantial evidence to suggest that participants in this study want to involve parents in their children's education. However, participants did not know the appropriate ways to use when trying to involve parents at school. Therefore, parent involvement strategies are lacking; although each school has its unique way of doing things. These schools manage parents in various and unique ways. The popular areas where parents are involved in are: participating in school governing bodies, parent governors, playing some of their functions as stipulated in the South African Schools Act no. 84 of 1996 (Section 16.(s. 2). Parents in these schools play the academic and non-academic role on school activities. Some of the parental involvement techniques utilised by the school are: Inviting parents to school meetings, inviting parents to portfolio day where they come to school to observe the work done by their children, attending school meetings, contributing to school funding on a volunteer basis, and forming part of the school sub-committees. For example in the school fundraising committee, the events organising committee and selection panel during

recruitment processes of additional staff. Moreover, some parents in school B monitored students' homework.

The parent-school partnerships awareness in participating schools raised the role of parents in their children's education as emphasised in this study, parental involvement techniques or management programmes utilised by school personnel when attempting to involve parents, and the community in schooling were acknowledged, including recommendations on the areas for development on school personnel. Likewise, the voices of teachers were heard about their observation and their suggestions on the solution to the existing problem of the lack of parent involvement strategies and effective ways to communicating students' homework policy were acknowledged. This study focused on the parental role perspective in education: legal, management and parent as the educator role perspective in education could add value on the existing knowledge and in how the school environment and home or parents affect the performance of students at school. The researcher noticed that most parental involvement studies focus on the importance and barriers of parent involvement in education. Therefore, the researcher regards this study as adding value to existing literature on the role of parents in their children's education. In inclusion, the researcher as serving in a deputy principalship post attained vast knowledge by conducting this study. Therefore, conducting this study was also for the researcher's personal information enriching journey on how the school personnel can deal with parents in their schools to improve their academic results. This study served as a revelation to the researcher on the importance of parents in education, parent-teacher partnership in education and school-community collaboration in education. The researcher is now able to make and manage change in school management for the purposes of improving the school curriculum outcome.

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5.8   APPENDICES

<u>**Appendix A**</u>

<u>**Permission letter to Western Cape Education Department**</u>

9 Gongo Street

, W 296, Site B,

Khayelitsha, 7784

Western Cape Government Education

Metro Central Education District (CIRCUIT-4)

Cape Town, 8000

Dear Sir/Madam

<u>**Re: Research work**</u>

I am Mxhasi Gwija, a Master of Education Degree in education management student, no.36689254 at the University of South Africa (Unisa). I am hereby requesting permission to conduct this study and involve all stakeholders in two Langa secondary schools**,** under circuit 4 in Metro Central Education District. The title of the research project **is 'The role of parents in enhancing academic performance in secondary schools in the Metro-Central education district, Western Cape'.**

 This research is conducted under the supervision of Dr., P.R. Machaisa, 012 429 4560 (*Office*).

When conducting this research the following conditions will prevail:

- All collected information will be treated in confidentiality.

- There will be no disturbance to the school tuition process.

- School names will not be reflected anywhere.

- Participants names will not be reflected anywhere.

- All interviews will be recorded and transcribed as soon as possible to enhance accuracy in summarizing and analysing information.

I would like to observe one parent meeting, and one SGB meeting. In addition, I would like to read the 2013 agendas and minutes of their meetings and the school-parent involvement policy.

I hope that my request will be at best consideration

...

M GWIJA -**2014-04-02**

The deputy principal at Mokone Primary School, circuit 4, in Metro Central Education District.

 (Persal no: 53319044). Telephone: 0216940201 (office)

Response from WCED

REFERENCE: 20140409-27990
ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Mr Mxhasi Gwija
9 Gongo Street
W 296, Site B
Khayelitsha
7784

Dear Mr Mxhasi Gwija

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN ENHANCING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LANGA METRO CENTRAL DISTRICT, WESTERN CAPE

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:
1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **10 April 2014 till 30 September 2014**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:
    The Director: Research Services
    Western Cape Education Department
    Private Bag X9114
    CAPE TOWN
    8000

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.
Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard
Directorate: Research
DATE: 10 April 2014

Consent letter to School A

Enquiries to: Mxhasi Gwija,

0216940201 (office), 0731240295 (mobile)

Mokone primary school,

Langa, 7455, Cape Town

12/04/2014

The school principal and school governing body chairperson

XYZ secondary school

Langa, 7455

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Research work

I am Mxhasi Gwija, a Master of Education Degree, in education management, student no.36689254 at the University of South Africa. I am hereby requesting consent to conduct this study and involve school principals, deputy principals, departmental heads, teachers and parents serving in the school governing body in your school under circuit 4 in Metro-Central Education District. The title of the research project **is 'The role of parents in enhancing academic performance in secondary schools in the Metro-Central Education District, Western Cape'.**

This research is conducted under the supervision of Dr., P.R. Machaisa, and her contacts: 012 429 4560 (*Office*).

When conducting this research the following conditions will prevail:

- All collected information will be treated in confidentiality.

- There will be no disturbance to the school tuition process.

- School names will not be reflected anywhere.

- Participants names will not be reflected anywhere.

- Participation is voluntary and the ethical right to withdrawal will be respected.

- All interviews will be recorded and transcribed as soon as possible to enhance accuracy in summarizing and analysing information.

I would like to observe one parent meeting, and one SGB meeting. In addition, I would like to observe the 2013 agendas and minutes of their meetings and read school policies.

I hope that my request will be at best consideration

...

M GWIJA -**2014-04-2**

The deputy principal at Mokone Primary School, circuit 4, in Metro-Central Education District.

Consent letter to School B

Enquiries to: Mxhasi Gwija,

0216940201 (office), 0731240295 (mobile)

Mokone primary school,

Langa, 7455, Cape Town

12/04/2014

The school principal and school governing body chairperson

ADC secondary school

Langa, 7455

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Research work

I am Mxhasi Gwija, a Master of Education Degree, in education management, student no.36689254 at the University of South Africa. I am hereby requesting consent to conduct this study and involve your school principal, deputy principal, departmental head, two teachers and parents serving in the school governing body in your school, under circuit 4 in Metro-Central Education District. The title of the research project is **'The role of parents in enhancing academic performance in secondary schools in the Metro-Central education district, Western Cape'.**

This research is conducted under the supervision of Dr., P.R. Machaisa, and her contacts: 012 429 4560 (*Office*), 073 519 4485 (*Mobile*).

When conducting this research the following conditions will prevail:

- All collected information will be treated in confidentiality.

- There will be no disturbance to the school tuition process.

- School names will not be reflected anywhere.

- Participants names will not be reflected anywhere.

- The participation is voluntary; therefore the ethical right to draw will be respected.

- All interviews will be recorded and transcribed as soon as possible to enhance accuracy in summarizing and analysing information.

I would like to observe one parent meeting, and one SGB meeting. In addition, I would like to observe the 2013 agendas and minutes of their meetings and the school-parent involvement policy.

I hope that my request will be at best consideration

...

M GWIJA -**2014-04-2**

The deputy principal at Mokone Primary School, circuit 4, in Metro-Central Education District.

 (Persal no: 53319044). Telephone: 0216940201 (office), 0731240295 (mobile)

Response from school A &B

…………………………………………………………

Appendix B:

Letters from two participating schools

Please note that some information on the school names erased for ethical purposes.

24 April 2014

ATTENTION : Mr. M. Gwija

Deputy Principal

Mokone Primary School

Sir

PERMISSION LETTER

I, Mr. P. Murugan, in my capacity as the Principal of Langa High School do hereby give permission to you, to conduct research towards your Masters qualification, that would be completed at the University of South Africa (UNISA).

Yours sincerely

P. MURUGAN

UDE B.COM. B.ED. M. PUB. ADMIN

PRINCIPAL: P MURUGAN

Principal.

Appendix C

Consent form: Face to face interviews (SMT)

Dear SMT Member

A qualitative case study investigation with school principals, deputy principals and departmental heads (SMT) in the Metro-Central education district, circuit-4 on '**The role of parents in enhancing academic performance in secondary schools in the Metro-Central education district, Western Cape'.**

This study is conducted for fully requirement of the degree of Master of education at the University of South Africa. The aim of this study is to:

- Enhance the students' academic performance in Metro-Central Education district, Circuit-4.

- Make parental role and involvement awareness in democratic education system, in South Africa.

The anonymity of the participants will be upheld and information will be kept strictly confidential. Your names or any identifying details will therefore not be recorded at all.

You do need to sign this communiqué to give permission to conduct the interview. You may refuse to answer any of the questions and you may stop participating at any time during the investigation. However, your participation is highly appreciated, but it is voluntary.

If there is anything you would like to ask about your participation in this investigation, you are free ask from me or these are the contact details of my UNISA supervisor: Dr P.R., Machaisa 012 4294560 (office) ,0735194485 (mobile)

I………………….,,………………………………………….hereby consent to participate in this investigation.

Interviewer	Interviewee	Date

Consent form: Individual interviews (teachers)

Dear teacher

You are requested to participate on this qualitative case study investigation on '**The role of parents in enhancing academic performance in secondary schools in the Metro-Central education district, Western Cape',** as you are a teacher-governor in your school in the Metro-Central education district, Circuit-4. This study respects the **anonymity** of all participates and the keeping of what transcribed in the interview as strictly **confidential**. No information on discussions in this focus group interview may be shared outside the room as that may infringe on the **confidentiality** of this study and of what participants shared. Furthermore, your ethical right to withdraw your participation is respected, as you participate voluntary on the project. This study is conducted for fully requirement of the degree of Master of education at the University of South Africa. The aim of this study is to:

- Enhance the students' academic performance in Metro-Central Education district, Circuit-4.

- Make parental role and involvement awareness in democratic education system, in South Africa.

The anonymity of the participants will be upheld and information will be kept strictly confidential. Your names or any identifying details will therefore not be recorded at all. You do need to sign this communiqué to give permission to conduct the interview. You may refuse to answer any of the questions and you may stop participating at any time during the investigation. However, your participation is highly appreciated, but it is voluntary.

If there is anything you would like to ask about your participation in this investigation, you are free ask from me or these are the contact details of my UNISA supervisor: Dr P.R., Machaisa 012 4294560 (office) ,0735194485 (mobile)

I…………………….,,………………………………………….hereby consent to participate in this investigation.

Interviewer	Interviewee	Date

Appendix D

Data collecting tools

Open-ended individual interview schedule (SMT)
Interviews with school principals, deputy principals, Departmental heads.

A. Demographic questions:
   i.   What is your post level?
   ii.   . What is your teaching experience?
   iii. What is your academic qualification?
   iv.   What is your age range: between 0-30; 31-40; 41-50; 60-70; 71 and above?
   v.   What is your gender?
   vi.   What is your ethnic group?
   vii. How many learners at your school
   viii. How many teachers and non-teaching staff at your school?
   ix.   How many classrooms?

B. The main questions

1. How do you encourage the participation of parents on children's education in your school?

2. What academic role do parents play to improve students' performance in your school?

3. What activities (academic/non-academic) do parents participates in your school?

4. What means of communication, does your school utilize when communicating with parents of learners?

5. How does your school utilise community resources for the benefit of teaching and learning?

6. In what way/s does your school attract parents to work as volunteers for the benefits of their school?

7. What are the actual functions of the school governing bodies in which parent participate in your school?

8. How do you support parents in creating their homes for learning environment?

9. In what way/s do parents are involved in decision making in your school?

       10. What are the causes of lack of parental participation on school activities?

11. How do   overcome barriers to parental participation on your school activities?

Interviews with school teachers

    A. Demographic questions:

        i.   What is your post level?
        ii.   What is your teaching experience?
        iii.   What is your academic qualification?
        iv.   What is your age range: between 0-30; 31-40; 41-50; 60-70; 71 and above?
        v.   What is your gender?
        vi.   What is your ethnic group?

B. The main questions

1. How do you motivate the participation of parents on children's education in your school?

2. What academic role do parents play to improve students' performance in your school?

3. What activities do parents participates in your school?

4. What kind of academic support do you get from the parents of your students?

5. What means of communication, does your school utilize when communicating with parents of learners?

5. How does your school utilise community resources for the benefit of teaching and learning?

6. How do you attract parents to work as volunteers for the benefits of their school?

7. What are the actual functions of the school governing bodies in which parent participate in your school?

8. How do you support parents on their children's homework?

9. In what way/s do parents are involved in decision making in your school?

10. What are the causes of lack of parental participation on school activities?

11. How do   overcome barriers to parental participation on your school activities?

A. Document observation guide:

1. The following things will be checked on school-parent involvement policy:

- Does the school-parent involvement policy state clear roles of parents in the school governance?
- Do parents form part of school subcommittees?
- Does this policy give parents a liberty to visit principal and teachers concerning their children's educational matters?
- Is this policy in line with the South African constitutional?

2. The following things will be checked on homework policy:

- Did the SGB chairperson signed homework policy?
- Does the homework policy state clear roles of parents
- Does it state clear what will be done if a student did not do homework?

3. The following things will be checked on minutes of parent meetings

- Does SGB chairperson signs the minutes?
- The frequency of their meetings
- Does the relationship between chairperson and school principals good?

4. The following things will be checked on minutes of school governing body

- Do the minutes cover school vision and mission, and review of all school policies?
- Do the minutes cover the issues on school improvement plan?
- Do the minutes cover school staff establishment?
- Do the minutes cover analysis of students' academic performance in internal and external examinations?
- Do the minutes cover school finance matters?

B. SGB meeting observation guide

- Does SGB chairperson speaks freely and is she/he in control of the meeting?
- Does the SGB discuss issues or it is just reports form the school principal and teacher-governors?
- How the SGB chairperson and school principal relate to each other during the SGB meeting?
- Who is doing most of the talking in the meeting, is the SGB chairperson or school principal?
- To what extent is the SGB functional in terms of implementing decisions?

C. Parent meeting observation guide

- Do the parents speak freely in the meeting, as partners in education?
- Do parent views are part of agenda or it is just report and instructions form the principal?
- Is the time of the meeting favourable for parents to attend?
- Is the attendance good in the meeting?
- Is the relationship between parents and teachers good?

<u>**Appendix E**</u>

Sample of data collecting tools

RE: participant's responses on face-to-face interviews between the researcher and one of the targeted schools deputy principals on the 25/09/2014 @3H00
DATA PRESENTATION FOR SCHOOL B

A. **Demographic responses:**

Code: DPB1	
Post level	Deputy principal
Gander	Female
Teaching experience	24 years-11years as DP
Academic qualifications	BA, HDE,HONS (BMA),MBA and ACE (educational leadership and management)
Age group	41-50 years range
Ethnic group	African

1. **RESEARCHER -- How do you encourage the participation of parents on children's education in your school?**

DPB1 *'Er...* we encourage parental participation through parent meetings at the beginning of the year, different grade meetings (12, 11 and 10 & 9 graders) and individual-parent teacher meetings when necessary…….map up school program /school year plan, assessment (tests) program and pass requirements to parents at the beginning of the year. We inform parents on the school expectations from them /the role as parents of learners in the school are expected to play on the learning of their children at home and school. Additionally, we even invite the members of department of education to address parents on their role. Furthermore, we inform parents that the school will invite them to the portfolio day, to see the progress of learners. The school also encourage parents by introduces teachers, teaching their children in each subject and grade.'

2. RESEARCHER   -- What academic role do parents play to improve students' performance in you school?

DPB1 "Er... we encourage parents to check their children's books regularly. Furthermore they are free to come to school concerning the progress of their children.

3. RESEARCHER -- What activities do parents participates in your school?

DPB1 'The school identifies non- performing learners and invite their parents to school, then investigate home circumstances with the purpose of advising the parent on what can be done at home to improve learner academic performance. For example, in some cases parents give more home-chores to children at home, and this serves as a barrier on child's school work. However, on such cases we encourage parents to reduce home chores and playing time **(TV time)** on the child to increase the study time. Furthermore if learner did not do his/her homework we call parent in (**we need cooperation on their part**) to make sure that such work is done in good manner.

4. RESEARCHER-- What means of communication does your school utilize when communicating with parents of learners?

DPB1' we are communicating with parents in the form of school letters to parents, telephone; however, this communication strategy needs to be improved because some learners do not give invitation letters to parents. I remember one parent who reported that he/her only heard about the meeting from another parent, but not from the letter of the school, which was supposed to be given by his/her child to him/her (parent) concerning the date and time of the meeting. I think the school needs to utilize **short massage system** (**SMS)** to communicate with parents, since our school has enough **resources** in this regard.

5. RESEARCHER -- How does your school utilise community resources for the benefit of teaching and learners?

DPB1 'Learners use community library. The school has a good relationship with the community members and organization. Such as, Universities in cape town, Love Life (a child's health promoting non-profit community organization) to support learners, social

workers, school nurses, psychologists, big companies donate finds, since the school is a no fee and community police.'

6. RESEARCHER -- In what way/s does your school attract parents to work as volunteers for the benefits of their school?

DPB1''There is no focus plan on parent volunteers in the school, yet, because of **poverty** (all the time parents demand payment or reward in order to participate on school activities).''

7. RESEARCHER -- What are the actual functions of the school governing bodies in which parents participate in your school?

DPB1 'They are dealing with **school finances,** drawing **budget**. For instance, SGB members are responsible for checking and discussing financial statements, financial report, and handling general parent meetings regarding on school finances. Furthermore, the SGB members form part of the selecting **panel** during the filling of advertised post by making their **recommendations** for teaching and non-teaching staff candidature, **adopting** school policies.''

8. RESEARCHER -- How do you support parents in creating their homes for learning environment?

DPB1 ''we always encourage parents to check their children's work at home regularly.''

9. RESEARCHER-- In what way/s do parents involved in decision making in your school?

DPB1 ---'They are involved in the form of **SGB meetings**, **general parents meeting** to report everything happening in their school. For instance, when we have school projects, we do **consultation** with school governing body'. Furthermore, we communicate with parents through the letters on our school programs. For example, if the school will end early, about holiday classes, and after school study periods.''

10. RESEARCHER -- What are the causes of lack of parental participation on school activities?

DPB1-- 'Ineffective method of communication with parents (letters), **Parental Work conditions, time constraints** (after school 6pm does not work), **distance between home and school** (some parents leave a bit far from school, they public **transpor**t to school).''

11. RESEARCHER -- How do overcome barriers to parental participation on school activities?

DPB1 ''**Improve** communication means. For **example (SMS)**, **changing time** and **date** for the **meeting**s''