

**SCHOOL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE PARENTAL
INVOLVEMENT: INSIGHTS FROM SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN
SOUTHERN TSHWANE PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

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DECLARATION

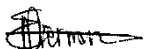
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Dr Paul Karel Triegaardt

Supervisor

30 May 2019

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ABSTRACT

Parental involvement plays a very important role in the development of a child's formal education. This study explored various management strategies that might serve as guidelines to improve parental involvement in primary schools. The conceptual framework that informed this study was factors that determine school effectiveness as well as Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres and her typology on parental involvement that served as the theoretical framework. A qualitative research approach was used for this study, as it allowed the researcher to conduct in-depth interviews with six principals in Southern Tshwane primary schools and examined relevant documents to collect data. The research indicates that most schools comprehend the importance of parental involvement, yet lack structured implementation frameworks for parental involvement. The study recommends that schools need to plan, manage and implement a parental involvement programme according to the unique circumstances of the school.

ISIFINYEZO

Ukubandakanyeka kwabazali kudlala indima ebalulekile kakhulu ekuthuthukiseni imfundo esemthethweni yengane. Lolucwaningo luhlola amasu ahluahlukene okuphatha angase asebenze njengemihlahlandlela yokuthuthukisa ukubandakanyeka kwabazali ezikoleni zamabanga aphansi ase Ningizimu neTshwane. Umhlahlandlela womqondo owazisa lolucwaningo yizici ezenza ukusebenza kahle ezikoleni kanye nenkolelo ka-Epstein yezinhlaka eziqhamukayo ekubandakanyeni kwabazali okwakungumhlahlandlela wemfundo. Indlela yokucwaninga eyasetshenziswa kulolucwaningo yenza ukuthi umcwaningi aqhube izingxoxo ezijulile nothishanhloko abayisithupha bezikole zamabanga aphansi ase Ningizimu neTshwane, futhi wahlola nemibhalo efanele ukuqoqa imininingwane. Ucwano lubonisa ukuthi izikole eziningi zinalo ulwazi lokubaluleka kokubandakanya abazali kodwa azinazo izinhlaka ezihlelekile zokwenza ukuthi abazali babandakanyeke. Ucwano lukhuthaza ukuthi izikole zidinga ukuhlela, ukuphatha nokusebenzisa uhlelo lokubandakanya abazali ngokuvumelana nezimo ezihlukile zesikole.

MANWELEDZO

U dzhenelela ha vhabebi ndi tshipida tsha ndeme tsha u aluwa ha pfunzo ya vhana. Tsedzuluso ino yo sedzulusa ndila dzo fhambanaho dza u langula dzine dza shumisiwa sa nyeletshedzo dza u khwinisa u dzhenelela ha vhabebi kha zwickolo zwa fhundzo dza fhasi Tshitirikini tsha Tshipembe ha Tshwane. Tsedzuluso ino yo di sendeka nga zwithu zwine zwa bveledza tshumelo ya maimo a ntho a zwickolo na pfunzo khulwane ya Epstein ya masia a no shumisana kha u dzhenelela ha vhabebi zwine zwa shumisiwa sa maga a kuhumbulele. Tsedzuluso ino yo shumisa maitete a u sedzulusa a qualitative, ngauri a tendela musedzulusi u vhudzisa mbudziso dzo dzudzanywaho na thoho dza tshikolo dza rathi dza zwickolo zwa fhasi Tshitirikini tsha Tshipembe ha Tshwane, na u sedzulusa manwalo o no yelana na tzedzuluso ino kuvhanganya ndivho. Tsedzuluso i sumbedza uri vhezvi ha zwickolo zwi dzhiela nzhele u dzhenelela ha vhabebi, fhedzi a zwina maitete o dzudzanywaho a u eletshedza u dzhenelela avhabebi. Tsedzuluso ino i themendela uri zwickolo zwi tea u dzudzanya, u langula na u shumisa maitete o themendelwaho a u katela u dzhenelela ha vhabebi uya nga u fhambana-fhambana ha nyimele dza zwickolo.

KEY TERMS

Barriers to parental involvement

Benefits of parental involvement

Educational development

Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence

Epstein's typology of parental involvement

Hornby and Lafaele's model

Management strategies

Parental involvement

School effectiveness

School management

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CAPS- Curriculum Assessment Policy

GDE – Gauteng Department of Education

HOD – Head of Department

SASA – South African Schools Act

SGB – School Governing Body

SMT – School Management Team

UNISA – University of South Africa

PI – Parental Involvement

REC – UNISA Research Ethics Committee

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The classrooms in South Africa are unique, as classes are filled with a variety of learners, coming from diverse backgrounds (Vandergrift & Greene, 1992:57). With 11 official languages and cultures, some flowing from Bantu Southern Africa, and some flowing from the West as well as a mixture of cultures, teachers in South Africa are therefore faced with unique challenges. It has long been established that parental involvement and parental styles play a paramount role in early-child development. In fact, parental involvement and different parenting styles can often serve as a primary trigger for a child's behaviour (Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2007:532). According to Roy and Giraldo-García (2018:29), both the school community and parents need to make a conscious and intentional effort to facilitate the development of emotional, social and academic skills in learners. School management teams need to ensure that teachers, parents and learners work in collaboration with one another to ensure effective teaching and learning. This could be a difficult task to accomplish as South Africa consists of diverse cultures and ethnic groups.

South Africa is often referred to as a 'rainbow nation'. This term represents the 'new' South Africa being constructed in the post-apartheid era where a multicultural society prevails (Baines, 1998:1). In a rainbow society, where diversity is celebrated, effective tailored education is often a lofty goal as opposed to reality. Parental involvement or the lack thereof can be considered as one of the main factors in education.

There is an increasing concern in South Africa that there is a lack of parental involvement in the development of a child. One of the biggest problems public schools currently face is the lack of parental involvement. The Department of Education in its publication *Rights and Responsibilities of Parents – A Guide to Public School Policy* emphasises the important "role that it sees for parents and guardians in supporting their children throughout their school-going years". This policy document opens with the following statement (Clarke, 2008:174),

The *South African Schools Act 84 of 1996* requires all children between the ages of 7 and 15 to attend school. All parents and guardians must make sure

that all learners of this age are registered to go to school. As a parent your relationship with the school starts on the day that you decide to register your child with a particular school. This relationship is defined by a set of rights and responsibilities towards the school.

This document contains advice to parents on a comprehensive range of issues. It is important that parents assist their children to the best of their ability with regard to the educational development of their child. Parental involvement is well-defined as those behaviours shown by the parents, both in home and school settings, meant to support the development of their children's social and emotional skills and facilitate their educational success (El Nokali, Bachman & Votruba-Drzal, 2010:988).

Parents can make an enormous contribution to the development of a child's education. Parental involvement is crucial in a learner's school career and it has a significant impact on the child's cognitive development (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). According to Roy and Giraldo-García (2018:31), parental involvement can effect a child's academic achievements as well as life experiences Teachers will agree that learners' performance can most of the time correlate directly with parental involvement at home and school. According to Gutman and Midgley (2000), it can clearly be seen that learners who have involved parents show higher grades and test scores, and rates for matriculation and graduation statistics from university are higher. The following section will discuss the justification and reason for conducting this study.

1.2 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Learners' social and emotional development as well as their academic performance can directly be linked to the level of effective parental involvement. This led to the rationale of this study as the researcher is employed at a school where there are little or no evident signs of parental involvement. There are many more South African schools that are in the same position as the above-mentioned school. According to Munje and Mncube (2018), despite the existence of various policies and acts (namely the South African School's Act, 84 of 1996) to improve and encourage relationships between the school and parents, there is still an ongoing low level of parental involvement in South African schools.

An analysis of the level of parental involvement in the South African culture is necessary in order to foster the education and early development of learners. This study might have contributed to the knowledge and skills that managers and teachers need to ensure that optimal learning takes place in a classroom. Parents also have to be part of this learning process as there should be a partnership between the school and the parent. Managers in the school organisation should be informed of the reasons for unsatisfactory parental involvement and should be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to manage these obstacles. Therefore, this study could also give supportive strategies to schools where a lack of parental involvement is evident.

Barriers such as cultural differences and parenting styles should be taken into consideration. It is very important for every teacher, within a South African context, to know and understand the cultural background of every learner, as well as the different parenting styles that accompany it. An exploration on effective management strategies is necessary to improve parental involvement. Active parental participation and involvement will lead to the development of a child's social, emotional and academic performance. According to Wong, Ho, Wong, Tung, Chao, Rao and Chan (2018), parental educational involvement is associated with the psychosocial wellbeing and language competency of a child. These associations are directly linked with parental engagement with their children's schoolwork as well as indirectly affecting the child's behaviour.

It is therefore crucial that school management be concerned with the welfare of all children at the school to make sure that optimal learning takes place. The relationship between the school and parents must be managed and controlled to ensure effective parental involvement (Horvat, Curci & Partlow, 2010:702-703). Unfortunately, there are various factors that prevent parents from becoming involved. This leads to the following section that will discuss the research problem at hand.

1.3 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Parental involvement is an essential facet of effective teaching and learning; yet, certain aspects hinder optimum involvement of parents. Managers at schools need to find effective strategies to improve parental involvement in the development of education at primary schools.

From the information in the sections above, the following main research question was formulated for this study:

HOW CAN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT IMPROVE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT BY USING VARIOUS STRATEGIES IN SOUTHERN TSHWANE PRIMARY SCHOOLS?

The problem statement and main research question indicated above was the foundation of the following sub-questions that were investigated:

- What are the characteristics of effective school management?
- Why is effective parental involvement important in primary schools?
- Which factors prevent parents from becoming involved in educational development at primary schools?
- What management strategies and approaches from selected school principals might serve as guidelines to improve parental involvement?

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective and aim:

TO DETERMINE VARIOUS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES THAT CAN BE IMPLEMENTED BY EFFECTIVE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TO IMPROVE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SOUTHERN TSHWANE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The following sub-aims and objectives served as the primary focus to identify management strategies that will improve the involvement of parents to ensure educational development at primary schools:

- To describe the characteristics of effective school management (to be addressed in Chapter 2)
- To discuss effective parental involvement and the importance thereof at schools (to be addressed in Chapter 2);

- To identify various factors that prevent parents from becoming involved in the educational development of their children at primary schools (to be addressed in Chapter 2); and
- To explain management strategies and approaches from selected school principals that might serve as guidelines to improve parental involvement (to be established by the empirical part of the study and to be discussed as the main outcome of this study).

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study could contribute significantly to the professional development of teachers and principals. School managers will gain knowledge and understanding of why parents are reluctant to be involved in school-based activities. Teachers will understand learners' backgrounds better, enabling them to consider this when planning lessons. The implications of parental involvement or the lack thereof could be addressed and communicated to parents. This will create an awareness on the importance of parents to be more involved.

School principals will be able to explore the characteristics of managing an effective school. In practice, this study will contribute towards helping schools to exchange ideas, resources and strategies to improve parental involvement. Other schools could benefit from using these strategies and approaches and use them as guidelines at their own schools to enhance parental involvement. Principals from other schools can benefit from the management expertise of the principals under study.

This study could encourage policy makers to keep parents in mind when policy is being adapted or drafted. For instance, policy on labour relations can take parents into consideration by not only giving them family responsibility leave, but also leave specifically allocated to school-based activities like parents' meetings, merit functions and important sports and cultural events.

1.6 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

Although parental involvement is seen as one of the key factors when it comes to school effectiveness, little has been written in South Africa specifically exploring this

field and the factors between home and school relationships that could enhance parental involvement (Wolfendale & Bastiani, 2000:1).

If schools want parents to be involved, they need to recognise the variety of home backgrounds and to work with many different non-traditional forms of the family. At present, it is exceptional for the average South African school to organise parental involvement to accommodate the various family types, living arrangements and diverse caregivers (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009:8). Considering this, one must understand that it is not always possible for a parent to be involved, although the parent(s) wish(es) to be involved.

According to Vandergrift and Greene (1992:57-59, in Botha 2014), “parental involvement means both parents’ support and are active participants in their children’s formal education. Supportive parents encourage, show sympathy, reassure and show understanding when it comes to their children’s formal education. Parents are active when they are involved in observable actions like supervising their children’s homework or attending activities at their school”. Learners need encouragement and support from their caregivers/parents, as this might lead to more successful outcomes in various aspects of their school careers.

Research has shown that if parents encourage education and learning at home and participate in school activities, learners will be more successful, regardless of the social class of the parents or their educational background (Van Wyk and Lemmer, 2009:14-15). Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:14-15), further states that the way in which learners have control over their environments and their attitudes about themselves, play a critical role in their achievements. These attitudes are formed at home where parents encourage their children. When parents are actively involved in their children’s schooling, the likelihood that learners will leave school without completing it is significantly reduced (Gutman and Midgley, 2000). The moment when parents are interested in their children’s schoolwork, learners are able to adjust better, they experience security and emotional stability, and they are able to deal with obstacles better (Lehmann, 2018:296).

Van Zyl (2013: 230-231) views the benefits of parental involvement mainly from a long term and holistic perspective. This becomes clear from the positive aspects resulting

from parental involvement, which he chose to substantiate the fact that parental involvement is significant. Apart from highlighting improved academic achievement by learners that could serve as a benefit of parental involvement, Van Zyl (2013) emphasises long-term benefits, namely the building of social capital, “the promotion of acceptable thought patterns and behaviour, the upliftment of communities” and the advancement of a society that is more content (Botha, 2014:140).

Most parents would want to do more, but unfortunately they may have difficulties in arranging the additional time. In single-parent homes, the time constraints are even worse. Some parents have difficulties with transport, even though they have the time to devote to the school (Mncube, 2009:83). When parents want to visit the school, they may need to make arrangements for the care of siblings. Parents may be reluctant to visit the school on other occasions if the only time when they are contacted by the school, is when there is bad news about the child. Parents may find it difficult to communicate effectively with teachers in cases where the language of teaching is a second or third language (Wherry, 2009:7). Parents from non-traditional families may dread being judged by the school. The high incidence of poverty and the concentration of poverty, violence and crime in certain neighbourhoods limits learner opportunities at home and after school (Van Wyk and Lemmer, 2009:17-18).

After extensive research, Dauber and Epstein (1993), two experts on parental involvement, concluded that, “regardless of parents’ education, family size, children’s ability or school level, parents are more likely to become involved in their children’s education if they perceive that the school has strong practices to involve parents at school and at home”. The school policy programmes and practice of parental involvement is the key to success. Teachers need to communicate with parents on a regular basis to inform them of their child’s academic progress as well as their social and emotional development.

A common complaint of teachers is that the parents they want to see mostly, seldom come to the school (Karther & Lowden, 1997:41). Low levels of parental involvement in schools can frequently be seen in underprivileged areas and those who take in a large number of children with special needs (Hornby, 2000:3).

The following statements are central to the importance of men as parents (Hennop, Olsen & Palm, 2008):

- Fathers and mothers are different – men and women tend to approach parenting with different goals, values and parenting styles. However, research shows that although fathers may approach parenting differently, they are responsive and can connect emotionally with children as well as being sensitive towards them when asked to take up these roles.
- Fathers are essential and not easily replaceable – Children deserve active fathers, who are involved in their everyday lives, from childhood to adolescence. Children can benefit from the investment and unique style of a father figure.
- Fathers and mothers often contribute different human, financial and social capital resources – Parents' provision of the quality and quantity of resources can be significantly correlated with the child's development. Human capital comprises knowledge, skills and traits that encourage achievement and is available directly through parents helping children with schoolwork or indirectly through parents' attitudes regarding parenting practices or educational expectations for their children. Fathers tend to contribute the most regarding financial capital. Relationships between people is seen as social capital resources, which includes family and community relations benefiting the social and cognitive development of children. The social capital of families can be built up when parents spend more time and effort with their children, when they are supportive of their children, when they are aware of their children's whereabouts and doings, and are able to present a unified authority structure.
- Differences between mothers and fathers should be reframed from deficits and strengths – The unique characteristics of men can be beneficial to the role of parenting. Children must be able to deal with the world outside of the mother-child bond and fathers tend to push children towards this direction. In other words, fathers are not less effective as parents, but merely different.

Ideally, parental involvement in its broadest interconnected sense should become part of the culture of a nation, which can be considered as a component of the macro-system. Optimum parental involvement would therefore represent a network or web of

interconnections and transcend the narrow traditional view with which it is still most often approached. There is a recommendation that all levels at school should be involved in promoting parental involvement and that schools should implement at least the minimum plan for parental involvement (Botha, 2014:142). This is a very important aspect as the focus of this study is to find strategies that might serve as guidelines to improve parental involvement. School managers should establish good relationships with teachers and work together as a team to enhance active parental involvement.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

1.7.1 Research paradigm

The research paradigm can be defined as a set of conceptual frameworks that explain a specific theory and influence the way knowledge is interpreted and studied (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). The researcher conducted this study by using the constructivist paradigm. This paradigm allowed the researcher to gain knowledge and an understanding of the practices experienced by principals, teachers and parents. This paradigm gave the researcher the opportunity to ask questions, explore strategies and find solutions to certain behaviours.

Constructivism is a paradigm that acquires knowledge through social interaction. The researcher influences the research at all stages, from collecting data and interpreting it, thus the researcher forms a crucial part of the study (Blair, 2016:51). Constructivists do not usually start with a theory, but rather develop a pattern of meanings or theory throughout the research process (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). The researcher developed a pattern of meanings through the gathering of information in the literature review, the conducting of interviews and finally the interpretation of these results.

1.7.2 Research approach

The aim of this study is to explore management strategies to improve parental involvement at primary schools.

This social phenomenon can be studied best by using a qualitative research approach. This type of research refers to an in-depth study using face-to-face or observation techniques to collect data in a natural setting that is sensitive to the people under study.

This study gave meaning to events perceived by participants as well as relationships between events (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:348).

Due to the qualitative nature of the study, the researcher made use of the phenomenological approach. Phenomenological research describes the meanings and perspectives of lived experiences with the phenomenon and is associated with humanistic methodologies (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:32). This approach allowed the researcher to be in the school environment, where the researcher was able to explore, understand and investigate strategies that the school management team uses to improve parental involvement. This approach enabled the researcher to interact with different school principals in order to gain insightful knowledge for this study.

An in-depth literature study had been conducted to gather information from various sources such as journal articles, books and policy documents to compare results and findings with other resources. The theoretical framework of a study is an important aspect for guiding the research (Snyder, 2018:251). A conceptual framework from Heneveld and Craig (1996) has been discussed to identify the characteristics of effective school management (cf. par. 2.4). In order to improve parental involvement, effective school management needs to be in place. This conceptual framework served as the foundation of this study to identify various schools where effective school management is evident in order to find strategies that could serve as guidelines to improve parental involvement.

1.7.3 Research design

Case study research design was the preferred roadmap for this study, which analyses and examines a single entity in detail (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:370). Case study can be defined as a phenomenon that has a bounded system creating a rich description of this phenomenon. Case study uses various sources of information to explore the phenomenon in context (Maree & Athanasou, 2012:83). This ensures that the study was explored through a variety of viewpoints, which allowed for multiple facets to be revealed and understood (Baxter & Jack, 2008:544).

A holistic representation of knowledge in practice is provided by a case study. With the connections the researcher makes between the different experiences of the case,

along with the analysis and interpretation of it, is powerful to inform everyday practice of teachers (Miles, 2015:309).

The researcher explored multiple management strategies to improve parental involvement in the development of education at primary schools within this single-entity phenomenon. The researcher made use of a variety of sources to collect the data.

1.7.4 Population and sampling

The researcher chose a group of principals who were interested in participating in this study. These individuals had knowledge and expertise in the field under study. Purposive sampling was used to select the primary schools to ensure that the schools have effective parental involvement strategies. This sampling technique allowed the researcher to select the most effective sample to answer the research question actively. This involved developing a framework of the factors that influenced an individual's contribution. According to Marshall (1996:523), "it is based on the researcher's practical knowledge of the research area, the available literature and evidence from the study itself".

The researcher selected six (6) effective schools where semi-structured interviews had been conducted with the principals of these schools. Therefore, the sample comprises six (6) participants. These principals were able to share information-rich knowledge on parental involvement and the management thereof. These six effective schools were a sample from the population of 2 606 schools in the Southern Tshwane area of the South African province of Gauteng.

The researcher got permission from the District Manager of Tshwane South to visit and conduct interviews with the principals of the selected schools. The principals of these schools were contacted to get permission and to make the necessary arrangements to conduct the interviews. These semi-structured interviews with the principals did not interfere with the teaching and learning process of the school.

1.7.5 Instrumentation and data collection techniques

The following methods were employed by the researcher to gather and analyse data for this study.

1.7.5.1 Literature review

Journals, articles and books were used to gather information on the characteristics of effective school management, as well as reasons why parents are reluctant to be involved and the implications of parental involvement or the lack thereof on a child's educational development.

1.7.5.2 Document analysis

The researcher examined relevant school documents, such as newsletters, school policies, correspondence between principals and the management team and teacher-parent interaction opportunities to explore effective parental involvement strategies.

1.7.5.3 Interviews

The researcher selected specific questions related to parental involvement. In-depth semi-structured interviews were held with the principals from the selected primary schools.

To obtain views across a range of social circumstances, principals from six different schools were selected to take part in an interview comprising a semi-structured interview. The interviews were based on the research at hand and to establish what could be the cause of unsatisfactory parental involvement, as well as exploring strategies that might improve parental involvement in the development of education at primary schools.

Semi-structured interviews comprised with planned, open-ended questions held with interviewees. In-depth interviews were held with individuals who had expertise, knowledge and experience on parental involvement that they were willing to share with the researcher (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:381). The researcher asked the same questions to each participant, but was flexible with regard to the order in which they were asked, since the interviewees may have different perspectives and approaches (Yin, 2016:141). There was room for deviation, as each individual had different viewpoints about the topic of the study at hand.

The interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed verbatim. The researcher asked permission from the participants to tape record the interviews. To illustrate the

participants' views and knowledge gained in the study, the researcher used direct quotations from the data collected. The interviews were conducted in the language of the participants' choice. The interviews took place in the natural setting of the phenomenon.

Written records and field notes were conducted to collect the data from the interviews. The use of a tape-recorder did not eliminate the need for taking notes. Taking field notes allowed the researcher to be attentive and to pace the interview (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:386). Field notes helped the researcher to go back and refresh her memory on the events and conversation that took place during the interview. The research question functioned as a guideline for collecting all the data. After the interviews, the data were collected and transcribed. The researcher asked the principals who were interviewed to read the transcribed data and notes to confirm whether the information was correct and whether they would like to add anything to the information that was given. This ensured credibility and accuracy of the data.

1.7.6 Data analysis and interpretation

After the data had been collected from literature, documents and interviews held with the individual participants, the process of analysing and interpreting the data commenced. The data collected during this study were analysed by using inductive analysis. Inductive analysis is the method through which qualitative researchers make sense from the data, starting with specific data and ending with categories and themes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:395).

Qualitative data analysis is a systematic search for meaning (Blair, 2016:91). The researcher selected existing coding methods to organise the data. The data collected from the interviews were categorised into different themes and topics. The codes were grouped into these different themes and topics, which acted as the key headings of the study. The researcher then made conclusions and recommendations, based on the relationships, themes and patterns that have emerged from the data that have been collected.

1.8 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF RESEARCH

To enhance the reliability and validity of the study, the following strategies compiled by McMillan and Schumacher (2014:355) were used:

- **Triangulation of methods:** Data collection from the literature ensures accurate information when similar themes and categories emerges from the study. In-depth interviews occurred in the natural setting of the participants to reflect lived experiences.
- **Mechanically recorded data:** All the interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. This ensured accurate and complete records of the interviews.
- **Verbatim accounts:** Direct quotations from the transcribed data were used to illustrate the individual viewpoints of the participants.
- **Participants' language:** The interviews were held in English, but participants was free to make use of their home language if necessary.
- **Field research:** The interviews were held in the natural setting of the participants.
- **Low-inference descriptors:** Concrete and precise descriptions from literature, documents and interviews were used in the research findings of this study.

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

A letter of consent was designed to ask permission from the participants to take part in the research study. There were no disadvantages to this study. Information obtained in this study remained completely confidential. Disclosure thereof only took place subsequent to obtaining permission from the participants. The information was however released to the Faculty of the University of South Africa that oversees this study. No participants were harmed in this study.

The researcher applied for ethical clearance with the Unisa Research Ethics Committee (REC) before data collection took place. Sound methodology and scientific validity have been ensured while going through this process.

1.10 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study used a small number of participants; thus, it cannot be generalised to a larger population group, which is a limitation of the study. The researcher only interviewed principals from privileged primary schools where effective parental management strategies take place, which means that the population group was only limited to these specific schools and not a variety of primary schools and high schools. The researcher only interviewed principals from primary schools, and did not include parents, teachers and learners.

1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.11.1 School management

The immediate managers of a school include the principal, teachers and the School Governing Body (SGB). Parents and employers also have a say in the management of a school. Each party in educational management has one main goal, and that is to ensure effective quality education (Owen, 2014:1). School management is an important concept for this study, as it will set the framework for managers to work as a team in order to accomplish main goals and objectives.

1.11.2 Management strategies

“Strategy is defined as action managers, which, in this context, includes both senior managers and oversight governing boards that take to attain a firm’s objectives.” (King & Munoz, 2016:2) Management strategies are influenced by factors such as problem perception, structure, level of control, communication and different leadership styles and approaches. Effective management strategies lead to operational efficiency (Sundaramurthy & Lewis, 2003). Different management strategies and approaches will be explored within this study to serve as guidelines to improve parental involvement. These strategies will be influenced by different leadership styles and management structures.

1.11.3 Parental involvement

Squelch and Lemmer (in Jansen, Kruger & Van Zyl, 2011:39) state that: “parental involvement is the active and willing participation of parents in a wide range of school-

based and home-based activities, which may be educational or non-educational. It extends from supporting and upholding the school ethos to supervising children's homework at home. Parental involvement implies cooperation, sharing and support”.

According to Vandergrift and Greene (1992:57-59), “parental involvement can take on the form of various degrees, based on their premise that ideal parental involvement implies parents who are supportive and parents who participate actively in their children's formal education by means of observable educational actions”. This concept is important, as it portrays different meanings to various stakeholders. For example, parents, teachers and school managers may have different viewpoints as to what exactly parental involvement entails.

1.11.4 Educational development

A child's educational development is influenced by various factors, such as developing his or her full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potential throughout the child's school years. A child's educational development is shaped by a variety of systems in his or her environment and is influenced by the relationships that these systems form (Akindele & Chinedu, 2017:2). This is an important concept for this study as the ultimate purpose and main outcome of the study is to ensure educational development.

1.11.5 School effectiveness

In order for a school to be effective means that the school accomplishes its objectives (Botha, 2010:606). The main objective of a school is to provide effective teaching and learning. The effectiveness of a school has an influence on a learner's formal education. This is an important concept for this study, as a school needs to be effective in order to enhance parental involvement which will automatically have a positive impact on the learner. This will lead to increased academic results and outcomes.

1.12 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1: Introduction and background to the study.

This chapter includes the problem statement arising from the introduction and background as well as the rationale for the study. The purpose, aims and objectives were discussed, followed by a brief summary of the research methodology and design,

ethics, limitations and delimitations of the study, as well as the definition of key concepts.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter outlines in-depth research of existing material on this topic to provide the context, background and insights into previous work. Detailed information on the conceptual framework guiding this study was also discussed.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

The major components of this chapter includes the research approach, as well as population and sampling procedures used in this study. Instrumentation and data collection techniques are described to indicate how the interviews were conducted.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation

The data that have been collected have been transcribed and analysed to form categories and themes that provided meaning to the information that was collected. Literature was also included in the findings and discussions.

Chapter 5: Summary, conclusion and recommendations

This chapter outlines the conclusion of this study, with a brief summary and recommendations for further research to this study.

1.13 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the research topic. Conceptual definitions were provided to give a clear understanding of the study. An introduction, background and rationale for the study were given, that led to the problem statement arising from the information provided. A short literature review provided insights into previous work done on this topic to integrate this study into a broader framework. A brief overview of the research design and methodology of this study was provided.

The next chapter will focus on literature to contextualise and give a framework of the study. The following findings in literature will be discussed: characteristics of effective school management (contextual framework) at primary schools; effective parental

involvement at schools and various factors that prevent parents from becoming involved in educational aspects.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an analysis of relevant literature and a conceptual framework on parental involvement and the management thereof. It commences with reviewing literature on effective school management. It is important to understand first that an organisation cannot survive without effective school management and therefore effective parent involvement cannot take place with ineffective and unsuccessful management. The relationship between management, leadership and parental involvement is discussed, followed by a conceptual framework on school effectiveness guiding this study. This brings us to an understanding of parental involvement and the facilitation of what effective parent involvement entails.

This literature review is followed by a section that describes the benefits of parental involvement. Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence and her typology of effective parent involvement form the foundation of this research. This chapter ends with factors constraining effective parent involvement and the challenges experienced by the lack of it.

2.2 EFFECTIVE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

It is very important for a school to apply an appropriate organisational structure to promote and maintain effective teaching and learning. The main aim of this study is to explore management approaches and strategies that might serve as guidelines to enhance parental involvement. Thus, without an effective organisational structure and operational school management, it would be very challenging to improve parent involvement. In order for effective school management to take place, the task of the principal is to understand the school as an organisation and to lead and manage this organisation in such a way that the educational aims can be reached (Jansen *et al.*, 2011:5). Kantor and Lowe (2004:6) define quality education as "a strong academic curriculum taught by engaged and well-educated teachers in schools committed to the promotion of intellectual development". However, according to Van Zyl (2013:227), parents are expected to take co-ownership of their children's education and the development of it.

The principal's leadership ability remains the key to the organisational attainment of goals (Botha, 2014:13). The main purpose of the school as an organisation is to provide quality learning and teaching to learners so that they can develop their full potential. According to Jansen *et al.* (2011:4), an education system consists of components such as education management and administrative structures, as well as education support services.

Education management is the process of working with key stakeholders such as teachers, learners, parents and the community to accomplish educational goals and objectives of the school to provide effective teaching and learning (Marishane & Botha, 2013:5). School managers need a strategic plan to be effective in a highly competitive world. Strategic plans provide teachers, parents and learners with the direction that the school as an organisation should go to accomplish its aims and goals (Botha, Kamper & Van Niekerk, 2009:18). In order for a school to achieve its aims and goals, the school principal needs to establish the relationship between management and leadership and comprehend how these factors will affect parental involvement. The following section will discuss these factors and their connections to each other in detail.

2.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Principals and school managers need to be aware of the different leadership abilities and to develop these abilities into adequate meta-skills in order to make a difference in the school organisation and broader community. According to Marishane and Botha (2011:3-4), it is necessary to equip leaders with the knowledge, skills and values to manage the school in a responsible way and to demonstrate visionary leadership, which will accompany staff members, parents and learners to work towards a successful school management structure.

2.3.1 The relationship between management and leadership

The main difference between management and leadership is that management is all about getting things done and carrying out plans, whereas leadership involves accomplishing goals and giving direction and inspiration (Marishane & Botha, 2013:9).

For effective school management to take place, the school principal should be both a leader and a manager.

A principal in a leadership position cannot be an effective leader if he or she is an incompetent manager (Botha, Kamper & Van Niekerk, 2009:2). If a school wants to achieve its objectives, strong educational leadership is crucial. In this regard, the school principal, together with the school governing body, parents and school management team, has an essential role to play in achieving effectiveness and efficiency at the school (Botha, Marishane, Van der Merwe, Van Zyl & Zengele, 2013:7).

According to Marishane and Botha (2011:5), effective and efficient school leaders require both leadership and management skills. In organisations such as schools, managers and leaders are the same people. As managers, they appeal to the authority of rules to apply standards of good practice for the benefit of people. As leaders of people, they give direction to people and assert influence. Their success depends on their ability to combine the two functions for the achievement of organisational goals.

The following figure illustrates the position of the school principal as a managerial leader:

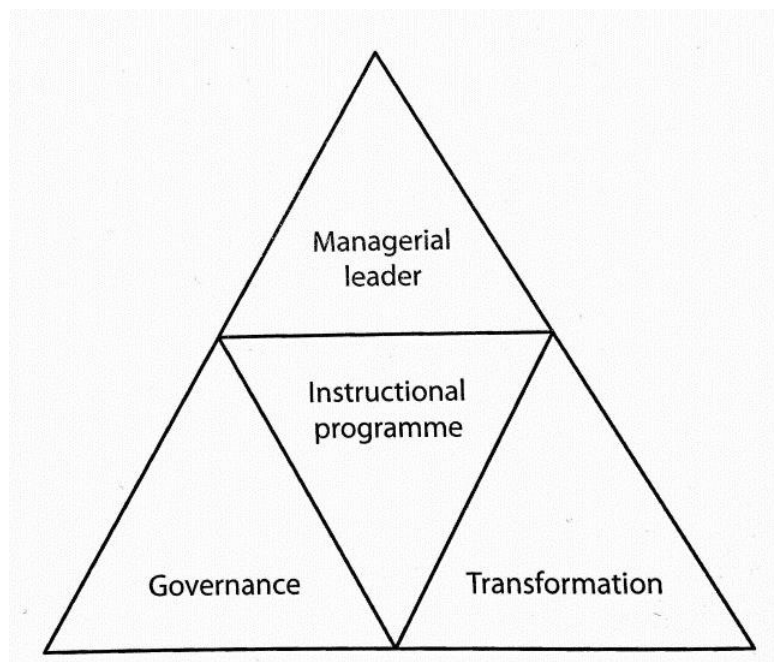


Figure 2.1: Managerial leadership of the school principal (Marishane & Botha, 2011:42)

Figure 2.1 indicates how the influence of a school leader affects other key areas of school governance, the instructional programme and the transformation of the school. According to Marishane and Botha (2011:42), the main function of school leaders is to manage the resources of the school and to be held accountable for it. The school principal's role as a managerial leader is no longer confined to managing allocated resources only, but goes beyond to get involved in managing various other important factors influencing effective learning like parental involvement.

2.3.2 The relationship between leadership and parental involvement

According to Arar, Abramovitz, Daod, Awad and Khalil (2016:134), an effective educational leader is:

considered to be a principal who has the ability to develop school capacity to enhance students' learning through the motivation of teachers, staff and students, and increasing parents' involvement with the whole process.

School principals need to learn skills and improve their knowledge to go beyond the basic management of a school to improve and facilitate parental involvement. Due to the lack of managerial skills, school principals often fail to facilitate parental involvement effectively (Charamba, 2016:50). According to Marishane and Botha (2011:64-67), the following managerial and/or leadership skills are required for school effectiveness:

- **Transforming schools as organisations**

The principal needs to transform the school organisation in such a way that he or she can sustain a balanced leadership without compromising teaching and learning. Principals need to distribute leadership among teachers by establishing functional task teams organised around specific objectives. The critical role of the school leader is to enhance effective communication to maintain the focus on a common vision.

- **Building the school's vision**

Establishing a realistic, context-specific vision is a core practice of a school leader. Such a vision should be linked to how learners are taught, what the learners learn and what the expected outcomes are in relation to learner

achievement. A school principal who shows interest and monitors the teaching and learning ensures that teachers, learners and parents stay focused and is likely to achieve success.

- Being visionary and seeing beyond the horizon

These leaders will constantly explore the future for possible opportunities to ensure that everyone benefits from these changes. Visionary leaders need to think beyond the context while still functioning within it if they want to succeed in meaningful, lasting and effective change.

2.3.3 Summary

School leaders need to realise the importance of parental involvement in order for learners to succeed and achieve academic excellence. It is crucial that schools train and guide parents towards the involvement in their children's formal education (Jeynes, 2018:149). Many different factors can influence school effectiveness, which will have an impact on the management of parental involvement if these factors are not directed successfully. The following conceptual framework outlines the factors that determine school effectiveness. As some principals fail to succeed in enhancing parental involvement, due to the lack of effective school management, this conceptual framework could be utilised as a guideline to develop and ensure school effectiveness.

2.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

The Africa Technical Department of the World Bank conducted a study on Managing Schools for Effectiveness. A conceptual framework of the main factors affecting the quality of a primary school was formed, based on a literature search on School Effectiveness and School Improvement. This conceptual framework that summarises research findings on the characteristics of effective schools was moulded by Ward Heneveld, who is a senior education advisor in the Africa Technical Department of the World Bank, and Helen Craig, who is a consultant to the World Bank (Heneveld & Craig, 1996).

According to Heneveld and Craig (1996), the government plays a pivotal role in the development of school effectiveness and the management thereof. According to them, governments need to change the manner in which they implement and plan

educational reform. They came up with recommendations that were framed in the analysis of their study, which include the following (Heneveld & Craig, 1996:11-12):

- Governments should define the expected outcomes for students and provide support to strengthen the conditions inside the school to make sure that these expected outcomes are being met.
- Governments should implement a monitoring system using indicators that derived from the expected outcomes mentioned above.
- Frequent visits to schools need to be executed to identify problems and to provide advice on how to solve these problems, rather than doing the planning.
- Governments should improve staff skills and knowledge with regard to in-school factors. This requires spending more time at schools looking at and listening to what is going on.

The government's role is to take initiative in determining what education's priorities, objectives and reform strategies should be (Heneveld & Craig, 1996:6). The South African education system makes provision for self-managing schools, which are led by School Governing Bodies (SGBs). Parents play a pivotal role, as they have to constitute the majority of SGB members. According to the *South African Schools Act 84 of 1996*, "the number of parent members must comprise one more than the combined total of other members of a governing body who have voting rights" (RSA 1996, section 23(9)). Thus, the school management team, together with its stakeholders, needs to make sure that effective school management takes place for the enhancement of quality education.

This conceptual framework has established the characteristics of effective school management, which was used as the foundation of this study to explore management approaches and strategies to enhance parental involvement (cf. par. 1.4.). Based on the review of the research literature done by The Africa Technical Department of the World Bank (Heneveld & Craig, 1996), the following conceptual framework has been developed:

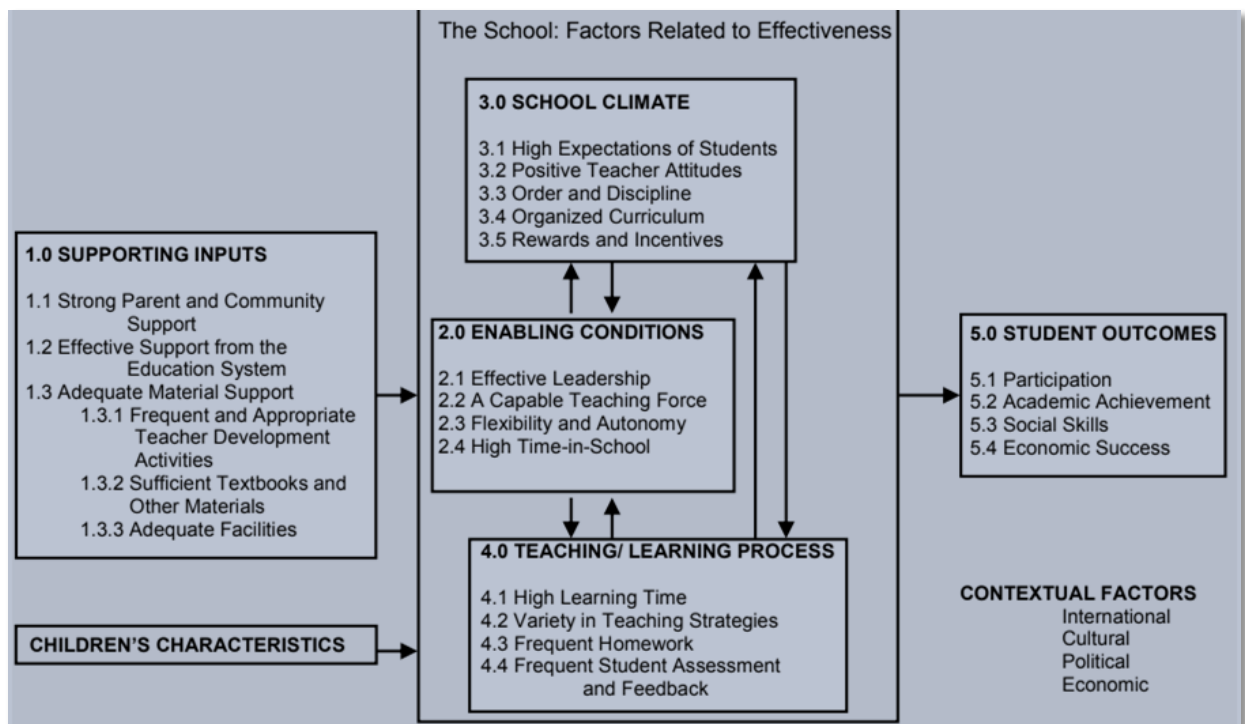


Figure 2.2: Factors that determine school effectiveness (Heneveld & Craig, 1996:16)

The factors that are related to school effectiveness have been divided into five main categories, namely supporting inputs from outside the school, enabling conditions, school climate, teaching and learning processes inside the school and student outcomes, which are the results of effective school management. Students are the centre of the educational process and the main reason for teachers, learners and parents to work in unison is to help learners succeed (Van Wyk, 2010:220). These factors are all influenced by the context surrounding the school as well as the direct influences on each other. The following supporting inputs play a pivotal role on school effectiveness as every school is dependent on support from outside the school. Whether it is support from the community, from the Department of Education or resources like textbooks and teacher development, it all has an influence on the effectiveness of the school.

2.4.1 Supporting inputs

2.4.1.1 Strong parent and community support

Community and parent support are effective when learners come to school in a healthy condition (mentally, emotionally and physically) and a willingness to learn (Heneveld &

Craig, 1996:67). According to Van Zyl (2013:227), improved learner performance, which is one of the main outcomes in education, is a result of effective parent involvement. The South African government wants parents to be active participants in the formal education of their children. Communication between the school, parents and community must be on a regular basis. The community and parents play an important role in the governance of the school and provides material and financial support to the school, which could be in the form of money, knowledge, skills, services or construction material (Heneveld & Craig, 1996:19). When effective parental involvement takes place, it effects learners in a positive way, which includes improved behaviour, improved attitudes towards their learning experience and decreasing the dropout rate (Van Wyk, 2010:200).

2.4.1.2 Effective support from the education system

By demonstrating its support, the education system needs to communicate expectations. If schools do not meet these requirements, the Department of Education has to

- exert pressure to ensure that optimal learning takes place;
 - provide schools with information and training to help them succeed;
 - protect them from political factors that can have an influence on the school;
 - evaluate and monitor academic performance of learners;
 - as well as monitoring principals as the instructional manager of the school.
- (Heneveld & Craig, 1996:19).

South Africa has invested a great amount of time, effort and money during the first years of our new democracy, but more intervention and support from the Department of Education are required to bring quality education to previous disadvantaged communities, especially in townships and rural areas (Brandt, 2010:144). The state's role is to make sure that democracy prevails within the school and that all stakeholders (teachers, parents, principals and the community) work in unison to accomplish this objective (Marishane & Botha, 2013:119).

2.4.1.3 Adequate material support

Material support is divided into three categories, namely

- ongoing teacher development and workshops are necessary to provide teachers with skills and strategies to be effective;
- schools must be provided with enough textbooks, as students with textbooks and other reading materials learn more than those learners who do not have access; and
- adequate facilities, which includes the maintenance of school buildings, comfortable classrooms with a reasonable size that can accommodate the number of learners, proper sanitation and a healthy school environment. (Heneveld & Craig, 1996:20).

2.4.1.4 Summary

Supporting inputs can be highly beneficial to the school, as parents and the community provide financial support to the school as well as their knowledge, skills and expertise. The Department of Education can ensure quality education by providing ongoing teacher development and workshops as well as providing adequate facilities and material. In order to manage these supporting inputs from parents, communities and the Department of Education, the school principal together with his management team needs to lead the school with effective leadership skills, encourage positive attitudes and behaviour amongst teachers, be flexible and ensure actual teaching and learning time. These factors will be discussed in in the following section: enabling conditions.

2.4.2 Enabling conditions

2.4.2.1 Enabling effective leadership

School principals, together with the teachers and school governing body, need to establish a vision and mission for the school and demonstrate an energetic commitment towards that vision and to do everything in their power to accomplish that goal (Heneveld & Craig, 1996:21). According to Zengele (2013:22), the school principal must make sure that communication between all stakeholders (parents, teachers, learners and the community) is managed well in order to achieve the educational goal,

which is quality teaching and learning; to motivate learners and teachers successfully; to be accessible and maintain high visibility; to have conflict resolution skills and manage the learning process.

2.4.2.2 *Enabling a capable teaching force*

Teachers' attitudes and behaviour play an important role with regard to being an effective educator (cf. par. 2.4.3.2). Teachers need to be highly trained in their subject and they must know the content matter they are supposed to teach. The amount of teaching experience will also be beneficial for the learners and the school (Heneveld & Craig, 1996:21).

2.4.2.3 *Enabling flexibility and autonomy*

Flexibility and autonomy in school management refer to decision-making processes, where resources and time are used to increase academic performance of learners (Heneveld & Craig, 1996:22). Decisions about timetables, extracurricular activities, delegation of specific duties and teacher development correlate with effective school management (Zengele, 2013:21).

2.4.2.4 *Enabling high time-in-school*

The total time spent at school is not what is important, but rather how that time is used within the school context (Heneveld & Craig, 1996:22). According to Gökce (2012:2556), when teachers spend more time at school, it gives them the opportunity to create and implement different strategies for the different learning styles of learners and improve their planning, which will lead to professional development. A distinction between the hours of the school day and the actual time spent on teaching and learning needs to be established (Heneveld & Craig, 1996:22). Often schools are busy with sport and cultural activities, which take up actual teaching and learning time.

2.4.2.5 *Summary*

It is important for schools to establish a vision and a mission. The school principal, together with the teachers and the school governing body needs to ensure that this goal is accomplished through effective leadership. Teachers need to have the necessary content knowledge of their subjects as well as a positive attitude. Resources

and the actual time spent on teaching and learning should be used to increase the academic performances of learners. The school climate plays an important role in order to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place in the classroom. The following section will discuss these factors.

2.4.3 School climate

2.4.3.1 High expectations of students

At effective schools, the message to be committed in learning is conveyed by the principal and teachers on a regular and ongoing basis and student performance and achievement are monitored frequently (Heneveld & Craig, 1996:22). Learners who take pride in their school and who speak highly of their school, teachers and fellow learners, are a characteristic of an effective school (Zengele, 2013:31). When the principal and teachers have high expectations of the learners, it will translate into greater self-reliance among peers as well as positive self-concepts (Heneveld & Craig, 1996:22). As soon as learners realise that the principal and teachers are invested in their lives, they will be able to excel in their learning activities, which will develop their higher-order skills (Botha *et al.* 2013:35).

2.4.3.2 Positive teacher attitudes

Schools are more effective when teachers care about their students and convey an appreciation for the subject they teach (Heneveld & Craig, 1996:23). Enthusiastic and friendly teachers who are always available to help and create a welcoming atmosphere are characterised by a healthy school climate. Teachers work harder in a healthy school environment, because their hard work is rewarded and acknowledged (Zengele, 2013:31). Positive teacher attitudes result in high levels of professionalism in resolving whole-school issues (Heneveld & Craig, 1996:23).

2.4.3.3 Order and discipline

It is evident that schools that provide safe and orderly environments have higher academic achievement results. Classrooms must be well organised and teachers must be equipped with the necessary skills to manage excellent learner behaviour in order to provide quality teaching and learning (Heneveld & Craig, 1996:23). Learners are

proud of their school and treat the school property as their own by helping school management to keep facilities in mint condition (Zengele 2013:31). According to Botha *et al.* (2013:35), when learners are exposed to a positive school climate, they will develop higher-order thinking skills in managing their learning experience. Thus, the need for constant supervision by teachers and parents will be reduced, as learners will take responsibility in the fact that they want to have a pleasing learning experience and a school to be proud of. By learners taking responsibility for their learning experience, will result in school order.

2.4.3.4 Organised curriculum

A well-organised curriculum emphasises the following: schools that are focused on the learners and teachers that adapt their teaching styles to accommodate the students; learning styles; and by defining learning objectives to ensure academic success by using a variety of materials and resources to integrate topics across the different subjects and grades (Heneveld & Craig, 1996:23). Teachers must make sure that they follow the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for learning and teaching all subjects in South African schools.

2.4.3.5 Rewards and incentives

When schools recognise and reward academic achievement as well as positive behaviour, learners and teachers will be encouraged to work hard. Learners' success (academic, cultural or sport) must be recognised in public with appropriate rewards and incentives for these achievements (Heneveld & Craig, 1996:24).

2.4.3.6 Summary

The school climate has a great influence on learner achievements and performances. The principal and teachers need to establish high, yet realistic expectations of the learners. Teachers need to be positive and enthusiastic as well as creating a warm welcoming atmosphere. Schools need to ensure safety by establishing order and discipline. A well-structured curriculum and the implementation of different teaching styles will ensure academic success. Teachers can encourage hard work and enhance the teaching and learning process inside the school by rewards and incentives. The

teaching and learning process and everything it entails will be discussed in the next section.

2.4.4 Teaching/learning process

2.4.4.1 High learning time

At effective schools, teachers apply the following strategies with regard to teaching and learning time: they use their allocated time efficiently and use resources and materials that are beneficial to the specific group of learners; their lessons are collaborative and make use of active learning strategies; and they provide constructive feedback as soon as possible (Heneveld & Craig, 1996:24). According to Siemon, Andendorff, Austin, Fransman, Hobden, Kaino, Luneta, Makonye, Van der walt, Van Putten, Beswick, Brady, Clark, Faragher and Warren (2013:57), effective teachers make connections; they challenge learners on different levels, they teach for conceptual understanding, set realistic expectations for learners to create positive attitudes that will result in learners being self-directed and they make use of purposeful discussions.

2.4.4.2 Variety in teaching strategies

Students have different ways in which they learn; thus, teachers need to use a variety of teaching methods and strategies to accommodate each learner. These teaching practices may include individual assignments, group work, class discussions, asking questions, drill and practice, presenting and explaining (Heneveld & Craig, 1996:24). When teachers use a variety of teaching practices, it will raise academic performance (Luneta *et al.* 2013:56).

2.4.4.3 Frequent homework

Independent learning is very important; thus, by giving homework to learners they are able to evaluate themselves by testing to see if they have understood the work (Heneveld & Craig, 1996:25). Homework assignments must be purposeful and relevant to the learning objectives that were taught in class. Learners must be able to manage their homework with extra-curricular activities; thus, it must be assigned in reasonable amounts according to the grade level of the learner (Ndebele, 2018:2).

2.4.4.4 Frequent student assessment and feedback

Factors that enhance student motivation and school effectiveness are the frequent monitoring of student progress by giving constructive feedback. Monitoring students' work helps teachers to diagnose any problems with regard to the specific content, which will give teachers the opportunity to see whether further instruction or teaching is needed (Heveveld & Craig, 1996:25).

2.4.4.5 Summary

Effective teachers use their allocated time efficiently to ensure that they use a variety of teaching strategies to accommodate each learner. Homework is a tool used to evaluate the level of understanding by learners and frequent assessments are used to monitor students' progress. Teachers need to give constructive feedback as soon as possible to ensure that optimal learning takes place. The outcomes of students' achievements are the results of school effectiveness. To ensure effective results, the following factors with regard to student outcomes need to be taken into consideration.

2.4.5 Student outcome

2.4.5.1 Participation

Learners become more involved in school activities as well as become active participants in class when effective management takes place (Botha *et al.* 2013:22). The management of school activities (whether curricular or extracurricular activities), should create opportunities for all different types of learners to be involved and to participate. These opportunities should involve a variety of activities considering the cultural backgrounds, developmental levels and interests of the learners; otherwise, they will not be willing to participate (Zengele, 2013:184).

2.4.5.2 Academic achievement

Effective school management will result in learners attaining higher test scores, better grades and improved attendance (Charamba, 2016:25). The ultimate goal over the course of a learner's educational development is considered as academic achievement, because it creates future opportunities with regard to employment and quality of life (Back *et al.*, 2016:401). Academic achievement is mostly done through

standardise tests, which means that school management needs to make sure that quality teaching and learning takes place (Eilers & Camacho, 2007:617).

2.4.5.3 Social skills

Learners will gain self-confidence and treat their peers, parents and teachers with respect. Learners' communication skills will improve as a result of improved academic achievement (Zengele 2013:31). Learners are able to form social networks and trust relationships between peers, parents and teachers (Van Wyk, 2010:204). Effective school management will set an example of how to communicate effectively with reference to the acknowledgement of both parties' (principal-teacher, teacher-learner, teacher-parent and learner-parent relationships) need to invest in one another to establish fulfilled expectations (Van Zyl, 2013:231).

2.4.5.4 Economic success

The main aim of education is to provide quality teaching and learning to equip students for economic independence where they will be able to represent themselves in the labour market and finally making a success of their career (Dijkstra & De la Motte, 2014:17). Effective school management programmes that are carefully designed and planned could uplift communities by cooperating with relevant community partners to create job opportunities and equip learners with the necessary skills (Van Zyl, 2013:232).

2.4.5.5 Summary

Learners need to be involved in extracurricular activities as well as being active participants within the classroom. Effective school management will result in higher attendance and test scores. Learners will gain social skills and self-confidence, which will equip them for economic independence. Consequently, communities will be uplifted and more job opportunities will be created. School effectiveness can be influenced by contextual factors, which are external factors and cannot be controlled by the school. The following section will discuss these various factor.

2.4.6 Contextual factors

The following contextual factors: international, cultural, political and economic factors, are all external factors to the school. These factors can influence the effectiveness of a school and its functioning (Heneveld & Craig, 1996:18). Unfortunately, schools cannot control these factors; they can do very little, if anything (Zengele, 2013:42).

2.4.6.1 International factors

The following international declarations have a great influence on the management of education and schools in South Africa:

- The *Charter of the United Nations* (1945), which states in article 73 of the Charter, the signatories' commitment to the well-being of individuals and educational advancement with just treatment and protection from abuse (Phasha, 2010:166).
- The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), which states in article 26 of this document, that everyone has a right to education and shall be directed to the full development of human personality and strengthen human rights and freedoms (Phasha, 2010:166).
- The *International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (1966), which states in article 13 of this document that everyone has the right to education, which will enable all individuals to participate effectively and all ethnic, racial and religious groups must be taken in consideration (Pasha, 2010:167).

2.4.6.2 Cultural factors

The culture of a school may be influenced significantly by the historical background of the community. If a school is located in a crime-infested area and is burgled by local criminals, the culture of lawlessness in that particular geographic area implicitly extends to the school. Consequently, the community often does not invest in the upkeep and care of the school buildings and its facilities (Zengele, 2013:42). Different cultural beliefs, rituals and teachings will have an impact on the school. For instance,

within a culture where circumcision is a tradition, the school will have to accommodate male learners as they could be away from school for a certain time (Zengele, 2013:43).

2.4.6.3 Political factors

Educational opportunity plays an important role where previously disadvantaged groups in society, especially in South Africa, need to be promoted with equity and justice in the distribution of career opportunities (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2010:6) with regard to the new democracy in South Africa in 1994.

2.4.6.4 Economic factors

Economic factors such as financial allocation towards different spheres in the country can have a significant effect on school management. In cases where the economy of a country does not allow sufficient funds towards education, it creates situations where schools do not have enough resources such as textbooks, learning material and general facilities to provide effective education to learners (Bansilal & Rosenberg, 2016:370).

2.4.6.5 Summary

Various contextual factors can have an influence on effective school management, however schools can do very little, if anything to control these factors. International factors such as several international declarations have a great influence on the management of schools and education. The culture of the school can be influenced by the historical background of the community, beliefs, rituals and teachings. Political influences play an important role where previously disadvantaged groups had a difficulty in providing effective teaching and learning. This needs to be resolved by allocating enough finances towards education, which falls under economic factors.

This contextual framework can be used as a guideline to establish effective school management. It is very challenging to improve parental involvement if effective school management is lacking. In order to improve parental involvement in primary schools, it is important to understand the meaning of this concept. The following section will provide a clear understanding of parental involvement.

2.5 UNDERSTANDING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

According to a study done by Hourani, Stringer and Baker (2012:134), the lack of mutual understanding of what parental involvement means to different stakeholders, namely parents, teachers and learners, is the greatest barrier to effective parental involvement.

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA) states that “parent” means: (a) the biological or adoptive parent or legal guardian of a learner; (b) the person legally entitled to custody of a learner; or (c) the person who undertakes to fulfil the obligations of a person referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b) towards the learner’s education at school.

Squelch and Lemmer (1994:93) state,

parent involvement is the active and willing participation of parents in a wide range of school-based and home-based activities, which may be educational or non-educational. It extends from supporting and upholding the school ethos to supervising children’s homework at home. Parent involvement implies cooperation, sharing and support.

According to Vandergrift and Greene (1992:57-59),

parental involvement can take on the form of various degrees based on their premise that ideal parent involvement implies parents who are supportive and parents who participate actively in their children’s formal education by means of observable educational actions.

Yulianti, Denessen and Droop (2018:17) indicate that parental involvement refers to

parent behaviours related to the child’s school or schooling that can be observed as manifestations of their commitment to their child’s educational affairs and includes dispositions such as the dedication of resources by the parent to the child within a given domain.

After comprehending what parental involvement means, it is important to explore and understand exactly what 'effective' parental involvement is. The following section will discuss various factors of what effective parental involvement entails.

2.6 EFFECTIVE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parent involvement is active participation of parents as partners of the school organisation. Parents should support their children at home as well as in the school system. Parents should be involved in decision making with regard to the future education of their children (Epstein, 2008:11).

The more engaged parents are in the educational development of their children, the more likely their children will achieve good academic results and become successful (Harris & Goodall, 2008:278). According to a study done by Harris and Robinson (2016:188), the following four major themes derived from the study as to what effective parental involvement entails:

- **Being supportive:** Parents are not only supportive of their children's formal education, but of their extra-curricular activities as well. Learners feel that their parents are not only concerned about their academic achievements and performance, but care about their overall success.
- **Skilfully navigate school choices:** Parents attempt to enrol their children at the best schools where they will receive quality education.
- **Effectively convey the importance of school:** When parents succeed in life and when they are successful, they convey a clear message to their children that academic success is the key to their advancement.
- **Labelling of being smart:** There is consistent praise and reinforcement that the child is bright and smart. Learners gain confidence in everything that they are involved with, because of continuous admiration and approval from their parents.

2.6.1 Benefits of effective parental involvement

Research on parent involvement indicates that it has a positive effect on school effectiveness and learner achievement (Van Wyk, 2010:200). Socio-economic

backgrounds of parents play an important role. The socio-economic status of parents can be measured by the educational level of parents, household income and occupational position (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002:371). According to Bojuwoye and Narain (2008:276), when parents are involved, learner achievement will improve despite the socio-economic backgrounds of the families or the educational level of the parents. Parents from a high socio-economic status tend to be more involved than parents coming from a low-income household are (Holloway, Yamamoto, Suzuki & Mindnich, 2008).

Parents can have a feeling of empowerment, especially in disadvantaged communities when they become involved and they have a better understanding of what is happening at school (Van Wyk, 2010:200). Improved attitudes of learners, self-esteem of learners, self-discipline and improved learner behaviour are all benefits for students when parents become involved (Van Zyl, 2013:232). According to Hango (2007:1371), when parents are involved in their children's education, it gives learners an indication that their parents care about their well-being and that they are valued, which will boost their self-esteem. Negative learner behaviour will improve once parents become more involved, as they volunteer to be part of school activities by attending school regularly and monitor their children's homework (Van Zyl, 2013:232).

The advantages of parent involvement according to Van Schalkwyk (1990:25-32), can also be classified in three different categories, namely the teacher, the learner and the school. Parental involvement for the teacher can result in a more positive spirit between the teacher and parent. Advantages of parental involvement for the learner includes improved learner behaviour. From the school's perspective, it implies financial support, amongst other things.

2.6.2 Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres and her typology of effective involvement

2.6.2.1 Epstein's *theory of overlapping spheres of influence*

This theory, developed by Dr Joyce Epstein in the 1980s, called the overlapping spheres of influence, is based on data collected from parents, teachers and learners.

This theory is based on the foundation that children learn and grow within collaboration between three different spheres, namely the family, school and community.

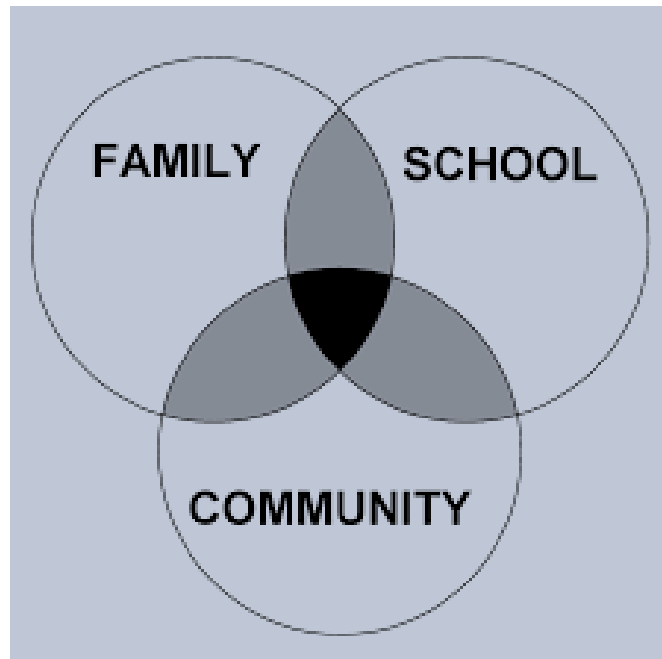


Figure 2.3: Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence (Epstein, 1997:72)

Effective schools and families have overlapping shared goals and missions concerning learners (Van Wyk, 2010:206). The model of overlapping spheres of influence illustrates that some practices of families, schools and communities are led independently, but to establish effective school management, these spheres should share responsibilities (Epstein, 1997:3). When teachers and parents practice separate responsibilities, the spheres of family and school could be pulled apart (Van Wyk, 2010:206).

The community, which is the third sphere of influence, can create opportunities for the school to develop their programmes that strengthen, recognise and reward learners' progress (Epstein, 1995:702). When teachers, parents and community members view one another as partners, development and success within the school is assured (Van Wyk, 2010:207).

2.6.2.2 Epstein's six approaches to effective parental involvement

Epstein identified the following six types of domains for the improvement of parental involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaboration with the community (Epstein, 1995:704).



Figure 2.4: Epstein's typology of parental involvement

The six types of involvement that schools can use as strategies to improve parental involvement are addressed below:

- **Type1: Parenting**

The school helps families to provide an appropriate and supportive learning environment for learners at home, and parents help schools to understand the family background, culture and educational goals (Epstein & Sanders, 2006:52). Schools should assist families with parenting skills and parenting activities (Epstein, 2008:11) to provide them with information to understand the child's adolescent development

(Epstein, 1997:8). This should be done by means of workshops and programmes where families can share their background, culture and educational goals with the school (Epstein, 1995:704; Epstein, 2008:11-12; Epstein & Sanders, 2006:52).

- **Type 2: Communicating**

Two-way communication between the school and parent is important (Epstein, 2008:11). This implies that the school needs to inform the parents through clear and recorded messages. According to Chavkin (1989:283), written communication should be written in more than one language depending on the location of the school. Information to parents should include learner progress, additional literature for specific subjects and requests concerning the school's needs (Epstein & Sanders, 2006:52).

This could include properly designed circulars concerning the child's academic performance as relevant information on specific subjects that could help the child (Brandt, 1989:25). Parent-teacher-student conferences could be held on key topics such as requirements for an effective pass rate as well as career planning (Epstein, 2008:11).

- **Type 3: Volunteering**

According to Epstein (1995:704), Schools should communicate with families about school programmes and learners' progress with school-to-home and home-to-school communication. The school needs parental involvement with regard to extra mural activities such as sport matches, cultural evenings and transport. The school needs parental volunteers to assist teachers, administrators and learners at the school (Epstein, 1997:9). Volunteering would include the designing of programmes that is aimed at parental recruitment and training to keep parents involved (Epstein, 2008:12). These activities could include training parents to become mentors and coaches as well as to involve parents in programmes that comprises talking to students about their talents and future careers (Epstein, 2008:12).

- **Type 4: Learning at home**

The school assists parents in developing their ability to support their children with their schoolwork (Brandt, 1989:25). The school also assists the parents with regard to the

school curriculum so that parents can take full responsibility for the education of their children (Epstein, 2008:12).

The school therefore should disseminate relevant information as well as curriculum-related learning activities parents could use at home to support their children (Epstein, 1995:704). Learning-at-home activities should be designed for students and families and should be in cohesion with the classwork as well as the school curriculum (Epstein, 2008:12). According to Chavkin (1989:282), guidelines should be given to parents to assist and support their children at home, especially when learners are failing and need extra assistance.

- **Type 5: Decision making**

Parents become involved in decision making at various levels at the school, which includes school committees and school governing bodies (Epstein, Coates, Salinas & Simon, 1997:9). According to Epstein (2008:12), decision-making activities should include parents' opinions and contribution towards the school's mission statement as well as designing, reviewing and improving school policies that effects learners, parents and teachers. Shatkin and Gershberg (2007:582) states that parents who are actively involved in decision-making processes at school, will lead to effective school improvement as well as to achieving goals and objectives within the school organisation.

- **Type 6: Collaborating with the community**

Schools should make use of other organisations such as universities, businesses and recourses of the community to improve the school's academic standards (Epstein *et al.*, 1997:10). The school can also make use of parents who have experience and knowledge with regard to certain topics. According to Epstein (2008:12), collaboration with the community will strengthen school programmes, family practices and learners' learning and development. She also states that staff members and parents should get involved in community projects. Epstein (1995:702) points out that the theory of overlapping spheres of influence between the school, family and community will create

better support for children. Thus, engaging with the community plays a crucial role in effective school management.

2.6.2.3 Summary

Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence indicates that the family, school and community should work within collaboration with each other to share responsibilities. These three different spheres have a direct effect on learners' progress. Epstein also identified six types of strategies that schools can use to improve parental involvement. Learners will become more successful and achieve higher academic results when parents are more involved in the educational development of their children. Unfortunately, there are factors that hinder parents from becoming involved. The following section will discuss the constraints of parental involvement.

2.7 FACTORS CONSTRAINING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Despite the fact that parental involvement entails many advantages for the learner, the teacher and the school (cf. par. 2.6.1), there are challenges that hinder parents from becoming involved. The severity of the lack of parental involvement in South Africa was illustrated by a study conducted by Van Zyl (2013:233) over a period of ten years. This study indicates that the majority of students at honours and master's level, who were teachers, experienced that most of the parents at their schools had not been involved in the formal education of their children at school or at home (Van Zyl, 2013:234). The majority of students taught at schools where the parents were previously disadvantaged due to South Africa's historical background.

The following factors are all constraints and challenges related to parental involvement:

2.7.1 Parents' socio-economic backgrounds

Parents with a higher income and formal education tend to be more involved than parents from low socio-economic neighbourhoods are (Van Wyk, 2010:217). Economically disadvantaged families are more likely to be less involved in their children's education (Wang, Deng & Yang, 2016:537). Some parents have a very low income and have to travel long distances to work every day. Most of these parents also

live in poor housing conditions, which all contribute to ineffective parental involvement (Mestry & Grobler, 2007:177).

2.7.2 Single parents

According to Stringer and Baker (2018:10), single parents have a lower income than that of a two-parent household. This creates a situation where single parents are more focused on their financial situation and prevents them from becoming more involved in their child's formal education. In situations where single parents have more than one child, it is sometimes impossible to attend school meetings, as they do not have someone to look after their children while they are at school (Trueger, 2008:26).

2.7.3 Educational level of parents

According to Wherry (2009:7), parents sometimes believe that they do not have the ability to help their children at school. Parents feel that they cannot get involved because they lack knowledge and skills; thus, feelings of inadequacy start to develop (Wang, Deng & Yang, 2016:539).

2.7.4 Schools that do not maintain a welcoming atmosphere

Teachers do not always have a welcoming attitude towards parents, which makes parents feel intimidated (Harris & Goodall, 2008:279). Some parents have a negative experience with the school or sometimes from when they were still at school; thus, parents become reluctant to be involved (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011:124).

2.7.5 Lack of communication between parents and school

Schools fail to alert parents as soon as children begin to have problems; thus, the parents get informed when it is already too late, leaving parents sour and reluctant to become involved (Wherry, 2009:7). The language of communication should be done in the preferred language of the parent in order to prevent parents from feeling intimidated (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011:46).

2.7.6 Hornby and Lafaele's model of barriers to parental involvement

Hornby and Lafaele (2011:39) outline four major barriers to parental involvement (PI) namely: individual parent and family factor, child factors, parent-teacher factors and

societal factors. This model was adapted from Epstein’s theory of overlapping spheres of influence (cf. par. 2.6.2).

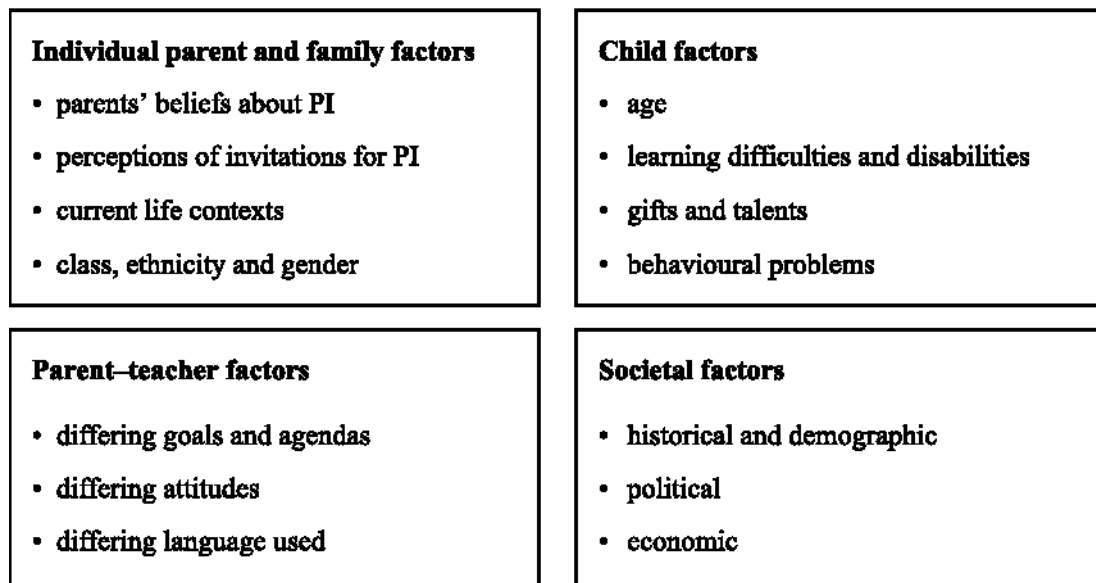


Figure 2.5: Model of factors acting as barriers to parental involvement (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011:39)

The first barrier, individual parent and family factors, indicates that parents’ different beliefs about various factors of parental involvement can act as an obstacle to effective parental involvement (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011:39). According to Epstein (2001), encouragement plays a pivotal role in parental involvement. When teachers encourage parents, their involvement will be more effective. The different levels of parents’ education could influence their thinking of whether they have adequate knowledge and skills to engage in parental activities (Green *et al.*, 2007:532).

The second barrier, child factors, points out that the age of learners could be a barrier to parental involvement, as parents become less involved in their child’s formal education the older, they become (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011:43). Parents are less likely to become involved when their children experience learning difficulties behaviour problems and disabilities than parents’ children who are doing well at school and displays many gifts and talents (Fan, Li & Sandoval, 2018:123).

According to Hornby and Lafaele (2011:44), the third barrier, parent-teacher factors, includes different agendas and goals set by teachers and parents. Schools and

teachers see parental involvement as a tool to improve academic achievement amongst students and for financial gain, whereas parents see parental involvement as a way to understand the school structure better (Hourani, Stringer, & Baker, 2012:133). Parents and teachers should find mutual grounds with regard to attitudes and the specific type of language that they use. For instance, teachers should view parents as professionals and partners who are able to contribute to the development of education (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011:47).

The fourth and last barrier to effective parental involvement, identified by Hornby and Lafaele (2011) is societal factors. These factors include historical and demographic, political and economic influences that play an important role in parental involvement. Sanders (2006:45) indicates that little or no money is allocated for the improvement of parental involvement. Resources, programmes and training do not take place in order to prepare teachers and schools to improve parental involvement at their schools.

2.7.7 Summary

From the section above, it is evident that parents experience various factors and challenges that prevent them from becoming involved. According to Van Wyk (2010:217), most barriers to parental involvement can be overcome by designing effective programmes, which offer a variety of ways in which parents can become involved, considering their backgrounds. Wherry (2009:7) believes that the answer to effective parental involvement is, “to stop treating parents like ‘clients’ and start treating them like ‘partners’ in helping children learn”.

2.8 CONCLUSION

In order to address the main research question of this study, which is aimed at how effective school management, can improve parental involvement at primary schools, the researcher conducted a literature review that entails various factors on parental involvement and the effective management of a school. The following three sub-questions have been addressed in this literature review:

- What are the characteristics of effective school management?
- Why must parents become actively involved in primary schools?

- Which factors prevent parents from becoming involved in educational development at primary schools?

A conceptual framework on effective school management indicates that principals and the management team of the school play a fundamental role in the enhancement of teaching and learning. The definition of parental involvement and the understanding of what effective parental involvement entails, could inspire parents and teachers in future decision-making. Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence and her typology on parental involvement indicates that parents, the school and the community should form a partnership to make sure that optimum learning takes place and that all learners benefit from this tripartite alliance.

The last section on factors constraining parental involvement is a clear indication that effective parental involvement has not yet been mastered at many schools; hence, a desired in-depth study on this topic. The researcher's main aim is to determine various management strategies that can be implemented by effective school management to improve parental involvement in primary schools.

The next chapter will focus on the research design and methodology, which will include the research approach, population and sampling procedures, instrumentation and data collection techniques, reliability and validity of the research, ethical considerations and to indicate how the interviews were conducted.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology of the study, which are the tools to collect and analyse data. This chapter will commence with an *aide memoire* of the aims and objectives of the research, followed by a detailed description of the research approach, paradigm and design of the study. The population and sampling procedures as well as the data collection techniques are discussed. Furthermore, the methods of data analysis are discussed, as this is an important aspect to establish the empirical part of the study. This chapter also discusses the measures to ensure trustworthiness and aspects pertaining to ethics that need to be taken into consideration when research is conducted. Lastly, the limitations of the study are acknowledged.

3.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

According to the findings presented in Chapter 2, it is evident that effective school management plays a crucial role in the enhancement of parental involvement. Without an appropriate and strong organisational structure, it would be very difficult to improve parental involvement. According to Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence (cf. par. 2.6.2.1), it is important to establish good relationships between the school, teachers, parents and learners. Different factors constrain parents from becoming involved. Barriers such as socio-economic background, single parenthood, the educational level of parents, schools that do not maintain a welcoming atmosphere and the lack of communication between schools and parents all influence effective parental involvement (cf. 2.7).

The purpose of this study was to answer the main research question: How can effective school management improve parental involvement by using various strategies in Southern Tshwane primary schools?

The following aims and objectives served as the primary focus to identify management strategies that will improve the involvement of parents to ensure educational development at primary schools:

- To describe the characteristics of effective school management;
- To discuss effective parental involvement and the importance thereof at schools;
- To identify various factors that prevent parents from becoming involved in educational development at primary schools; and
- To explain management strategies and approaches from selected school principals that might serve as guidelines to improve parental involvement.

In order to reach these set aims and objectives, the researcher conducted interviews with principals at schools where effective parental involvement is evident. The knowledge, experience and rich, insightful information gathered from these principals might serve as guidelines to establish management approaches and strategies to improve parental involvement at primary schools.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

A qualitative research approach was the method used for this study, as it is more concerned with understanding the social phenomenon from the participants' viewpoint of a specific situation as well as to derive meaning from it. According to Creswell (2007:37), a qualitative approach allows the researcher to collect data in the natural setting of the participants, which is sensitive to the people under study. The rationale for choosing a qualitative research approach was to gain insightful knowledge from the participants to explore and explain management approaches that might serve as guidelines to improve parental involvement.

Hays and Signs (2012:5) highlight the following key characteristics of qualitative research:

- Inductive and abductive analysis
- Naturalistic and experimental settings
- The importance of context
- The humanness of research
- Purposive sampling
- Thick description

- Interactive, flexible research design

A qualitative research approach is the process of collecting data and forming themes and patterns to answer research questions. Due to the qualitative nature of the study, the researcher made use of the phenomenological approach. It allows the researcher to integrate his or her subjectivity with skills to conduct research, which refers to the humane characteristic of the study (Hays & Singh, 2012:7). The researcher has direct contact and interaction with the participants and the setting. Therefore, it relates to the researcher's competence and impact to give a truthful interpretation of the information gathered in the study.

Phenomenological research interprets and describes experiences of the participants regarding a specific event in order to derive meaning from it (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:372). Phenomena is exploratory in nature, as researchers need to explain topics from a new angle or topics that have not been investigated thoroughly yet (Hays & Singh, 2012:4). The researcher interviewed principals to hear their accounts of the phenomenon, namely to identify and explore the management approaches they use and implement to enhance parental involvement. The participants were seen as the source of knowledge that produces information-rich data regarding the topic under study.

3.4 RESEARCH PARADIGM

A research paradigm is defined as a framework of values, beliefs and a universal viewpoint that explains a specific theory according to which research takes place (Mekonnen, 2017:98). This study was conducted by using the constructivist paradigm. This paradigm allowed the researcher to ask questions and explore various strategies that might serve as guidelines to improve parental involvement in primary schools. Within the constructivist paradigm, the researcher forms a crucial part of the study, as he or she is involved with all stages of the research (Blair, 2016:51).

The researcher develops patterns and meanings throughout the research process and does not start with a theory (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). The researcher developed themes and patterns through the gathering of information from conducting the interviews, analysing data as well as collecting data in the literature review.

3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

Case study research is an investigative approach to describe an important event or issue thoroughly in order to gain a deeper understanding of these phenomena (Riemer, 2012:243). Case study research uses various sources of information to explore the phenomenon in context (Maree & Athanasou, 2012:83). This ensures that the study is explored through a variety of viewpoints, which allows for multiple facets to be revealed and understood (Baxter & Jack, 2008:544). The researcher viewed the study through an *individual* case, focusing on one or a few informants, with the purpose of gaining insightful information about the phenomenon under study (Hays & Singh, 2012:108). A *setting* case was also one of the viewpoints through which this study was explored, as it attends to specific characteristics of a site (Hays & Singh 2012:108). In this case, the researcher was interested in and focused on management strategies implemented at particular primary schools (setting).

Case study designs begin by identifying a specific programme, followed by a selection of certain aspects to be studied. This design allows the researcher to define and specify certain elements (fundamentals) that will be investigated during the study (Riemer, 2012:245). In this study, the researcher conducted interviews with principals to determine management approaches and to explain and investigate management strategies to enhance parental involvement. Qualitative case study design examines existing manifestations using numerous sources in real-life settings (Mekonnen, 2017:102). A variety of sources was used by the researcher to collect and analyse data.

3.6 POPULATION

According to Salkind (2010:1053), the population is the entire collection or target group about which one seeks to draw inferences. The population for this study included primary schools from the Tshwane-South district in Gauteng. These schools were a sample from the population of 326 schools in in the Southern Tshwane area of the South African province of Gauteng.

3.7 SAMPLING AND PARTICIPANTS

Sampling is the process of selecting people from the population of interest to generalise the results and outcomes of the study back to the population that was chosen for the specific study (Singh, 2013:73). Purposive sampling was used in this study to select the primary schools and principals. This sampling technique requires that a specific criterion of selection be established to ensure information-rich cases of the phenomenon (Hays & Singh, 2012:164).

3.7.1 Selection of schools

The researcher selected six effective primary schools in the Tshwane-South district. The criteria used for the selection of these schools were based on the main research question: How can effective school management improve parental involvement by using various strategies in Southern Tshwane primary schools?

The selected schools have excellent management structures based on the conceptual framework of school effectiveness (c.f. par. 2.4.). These schools can be classified as 'effective' schools based on the fact that they view parental involvement as an important factor related to the emotional and academic development of the learner (c.f. par 4.6.2.2). According to Želvys (2019:5), principals play a crucial role in creating a school climate that fosters the success of the school as well as the social and emotional well-being of the teachers and learners in the school. Želvys (2019:7) further states that mindfulness practices of principals successfully lead to greater effectiveness of schools. It is evident that the selected principals in this study are mindful of the school climate (cf. par. 4.6.1.2) and the well-being of teachers and learners in the school to ensure quality and effective education.

3.7.2 Selection of principals (participants)

The researcher chose a group of principals who were willing to participate in this study. The principals are all employed at primary schools where effective parental involvement is evident. These principals have insightful knowledge and skills pertaining to the management of exceptional parental involvement.

3.8 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

More than one data collection technique was used in this study according to case study research design. In order to gather rich and in-depth information, the following data collection techniques were used for the purposes of this study.

3.8.1 Literature review

Articles, books and journals were used to gather information on various aspects of parental involvement as well as the characteristics of an effective school. It would be very difficult to implement effective parental involvement strategies without sound school management. The literature review included research on school leadership and management, including a conceptual framework of effective schools. The theoretical framework developed by Joyce Epstein: The theory of overlapping spheres of influence was also discussed in the literature review (c.f. par. 2.6.2). Other aspects, such as effective parental involvement and factors constraining parental involvement were also examined. The literature review allowed the researcher to compare themes and patterns derived from the interviews.

3.8.2 Document analysis

Relevant school documents were examined by the researcher while collecting the data. These documents included school policies, newsletters, teacher-parent interactive opportunities, as well correspondence between principals and the management team (HODs, grade heads, SGB and phase heads). Minutes of meetings and teacher training opportunities were also examined.

3.8.3 Interviews

Principals from six different schools were selected to take part in an interview to obtain different views across a range of social circumstances. The interviews were based on the research at hand to explore management strategies that might serve as guidelines to improve parental involvement at primary schools.

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were held with the prospective participants (principals). This type of interview uses a protocol that serves as a guide, allowing the researcher to have a say in the process and structure. The sequence and pace of the

interview can be changed and additional questions can be included (Hays & Singh, 2012:239). The researcher asked the same questions to each of the participants, but was flexible with regard to the order of the questions, since different approaches and perspectives could be conveyed by each participant. The researcher asked the same questions to all the participants in order to analyse and compare the information more accurately. This ensured the reliability and validity of the research to ensure accurate information when similar categories and themes emerge from the study. The interview schedule contained a set of questions related to the topic of the study and served as guidelines for the interviewer (Appendix D).

According to Miles and Gilbert (2005:65), the advantages of using a semi-structured interview is that it is flexible and the researcher can develop a much deeper understanding of the topic. This type of interview provides a more appropriate platform for asking and discussing topics that are more sensitive.

The semi-structured interview contains a set of questions related to the topic of the study in order to answer the various research questions. Open-ended questions were asked to give the participants the opportunity to express themselves and give their opinion about the topic at hand. The researcher used the interviews to obtain information and explore management strategies that are successful at the school where the participants fulfilled a managerial position.

According to Jacob and Furgerson (2012:2-6), the following key factors should be taken into consideration when an interview is being conducted:

- **Use open-ended questions.** This is to encourage full and meaningful answers to gain insightful knowledge on the management of parental involvement.
- **Begin with questions that are easy to answer and then move towards more difficult or controversial questions.** The researcher started by asking factual questions, such as whether the principal has attended any workshops on parental involvement, what his/her understanding is about parental involvement, etc. Then the researcher moved towards questions that are more difficult, such as problems that affect parental involvement negatively.

- **Use a recording device and only make brief notes to maintain eye contact.** The researcher made sure to pay full attention to the participant and not get distracted by only taking notes throughout the duration of the interview, but listened attentively.
- **Have genuine care, concern and interest for the person that you are interviewing.** During the interviews, the researcher made sure that the participants felt that they are important. The researcher had put them at ease by staying calm and neutral as well as paying special attention to facial expressions and body language to gain enough information as possible.
- **Keep the interview focused.** The researcher stayed focused on the topic of the study and if or when the participant wandered off the topic, the researcher led the participant back to the question at hand without making him/her feel uncomfortable.
- **Be gentle and pay attention to basic counselling skills to help your interviewees feel heard.**
- **Arrange to interview your respondent in a semi-private place to avoid interruptions.** In this study, the researcher asked the participant to conduct the interview in a classroom or in his/her office, as the interview could easily be interrupted by school children or other staff members.
- **Do not make any judgements and assumptions.** The researcher made sure to not make any judgements with regard to the managing styles and methods of the participants as well as not to draw any conclusions about the parents of the particular school.
- **Refer to earlier answers and be attentive by using listening skills.** The researcher linked previous answers with current answers to keep the flow of the interview.

The interviews were recorded by using a recording device. Permission from the principals were obtained (Appendix C) to conduct the interviews as well as their consent to record the interview. The participants received a brief overview of the purpose of the study, including the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity. The interviews took place in the natural setting of the participants where they felt

comfortable. The interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes, as the researcher did not want to take up too much of the participants' time. The data from the interview were transcribed verbatim. The researcher also asked the participants if they would like to add anything once the data have been transcribed.

Hardcopies of the researcher's answers were stored in a locked cupboard for future research or academic purposes for a period of five years; electronic information was stored on a password-protected computer. If applicable, in cases where the information had to be destroyed, hard copies were shredded and/or electronic copies were deleted permanently from the hard drive of the computer using a relevant software program, in line with Unisa Guidelines and Examples for CEDU REC Applications (2018:12).

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

According to Creswell (2007:37), qualitative analysis allows the researcher to establish themes or patterns that are inductive. The interpretation of the data includes the voices of participants and is a complex interpretation and description of the problem. Inductive analysis was used as the process for analysing data in this study. The researcher used inductive analysis to identify themes and categories by studying literature, analysing documents and conducting interviews. Inductive analysis relies on inductive reasoning, which refers to the themes and categories that emerged from the raw data collected. Qualitative researchers use inductive analysis to make meaning from the data, starting with specific themes and ending with patterns and categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:395).

The data collected from the interviews were organised into general themes and categories. The organised data were kept in separate folders in order to compare the information on a later stage. For easy interpretation, the data were then coded to group the different categories by using labels and by highlighting the data with different colours according to the different themes. To maximise trustworthiness, member checking was implemented to make sure that no information had been left out. After the data had been recorded, the researcher wrote a report on the findings of the study, which included extracts from the interviews.

3.10 MEASURES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS

The value of qualitative research involves theoretical as well as practical considerations. The methods employed to enhance trustworthiness of the study are discussed below:

3.10.1 Credibility

The credibility of any study has been described as the believability of the study; stated differently, the reliability of the data. In essence, it could be characterised as the internal validity of the data and, accordingly, the study as a whole (Hays & Singh, 2012:200). A point of consideration in this respect would be to determine whether the results of the data that were collected are credible and accordingly believable from the perspective of the participants. Singh (2013: 02) states that the “participants are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the results”.

3.10.2 Transferability

Transferability in research refers to the prospect of the findings being applicable to situations within similar situations or contexts (Major & Savin-Baden, 2010). The method by which the prospect of transferability can be enhanced during the course of the research is to describe the research context thoroughly (Singh, 2013:202). Hays and Singh (2012:200) suggest that the goal of transferability is for the researcher to provide enough detailed description of the research process. These would include the participants, in so far as it is possible and not limited by confidentiality and anonymity, settings, time frame, contextual background or any other relevant consideration, which would allow the reader to make a finding as to the applicability of the research to either an individual scenario or in general.

3.10.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the consistency of the study across researchers and over time (Hays & Singh, 2012:201). The dependability of the research is thus determined by whether the research conducted can withstand the test of time (Major & Savin-Baden, 2010). The researcher should document the context in which the research was

conducted thoroughly. Such documentation serves as a method that would enhance the dependability of the research.

3.10.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results of the study could be confirmed by others (Singh, 2013:202). Confirmability is a notion most synchronous with both objectivity and neutrality in qualitative research (Hays & Singh, 2012:201). Confirmability is thus mostly achieved when the researcher is neutral and objective in his/her analysis of the data and the interpretation of the results. Accordingly, the researcher should remove any bias or preconceived notions related to the subject matter from the analysis and interpretation of the study (Major & Savin-Baden, 2010).

3.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations, which include informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, the freedom to withdraw and the protection of human rights were of paramount importance to this study and accordingly implemented during every step of the data collection process, which included the interviews with principals and the observations drawn therefrom.

The ethical considerations implemented during the course of the study and the data collection phase are defined and discussed below.

3.11.1 Informed consent

Before considering and consequently opting into a data collection pool, prospective participants need to be informed of every facet of the study. De Vos (1998:2) describes the notion of informed consent as follows, “participants must be informed about the investigation, its goal and the procedures that will be followed to collect data before they decide to take part in the research”.

An important aspect of qualitative research lies in the identification of the target individuals and sites. Written permission was obtained from the Gauteng Department of Education (Appendix B) to conduct the research within the Tshwane South district (Appendix C). Various principals of primary schools within the geographic permissible area were approached. They were also sent permission letters requesting their

participation in the research (Appendix D). The purpose and rationale behind the study were set out in the consent forms, along with the procedures to be followed during the respective interviews.

Due to the nature of the research, there was no need to obtain consent from parents and learners within the ambit of the study. The questions posed during the interviews, did not disclose any personal information or identity of any one particular learner, principal or school. The purpose of conducting the interviews was to obtain open-ended data and draw deep understanding and meaning from it.

In addition to informing the participants of the nature and content of the study and the intended use of the data, a researcher needs to assure participants of the confidentiality and anonymity of the research, which are described below (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:363).

3.11.2 Confidentiality

The participants of the research under study are entitled to confidentiality, which forms part of any qualitative study. A credible research design involves not only selecting participants and informing them of necessary content of the study but also adhering to research ethics (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2014:362) The information disclosed by participants in a study should be handled with confidentiality at all times, even when the information disclosed enjoys no legal protection or privilege.

The participants of the study were assured both during the interviews as well as in the consent letter that their disclosures would only be used for research purposes and would not be revealed to anyone outside the study. The principle of confidentiality would be maintained throughout the process, because the violation thereof would, in addition to infringing the participant's right to privacy also be an infraction of research ethics.

3.11.3 Anonymity

The aim of the data collection process was to obtain the experience of the participants in relation to the subject matter. This included their perceptions, feelings and, in certain instances, their emotions in relation to their respective schools and the governance

thereof. Accordingly, it was important to assure the participants that the information obtained would be used exclusively for research purposes and would be devoid of any identifiable characteristics, which would impute certain findings to a particular participant. For this reason, no names of schools or participants or any other form of identification data would be made known in the report.

3.11.4 Freedom to withdraw

The participants were assured verbally and in writing that their participation was voluntary and their consent could be revoked at any time. They were further advised that their revocation, should they so choose, would be accepted without hesitation or protest as well as without the possibility of any penalty (Johnson & Christensen, 2004:119).

3.11.5 Protection of human rights

A researcher has a duty to respect not only the principles and codes of the specific community, but also to protect the integrity of his or her research. One of the methods of protecting the integrity of the research is by protecting the fundamental human rights conferred on participants at all times.

The guiding document that the researcher used in this manner is in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996*, particularly the Bill of Rights.

3.12 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher only interviewed principals from primary schools where effective management strategies with regard to parental involvement take place. The sample was only limited to primary schools and did not include secondary schools. The researcher interviewed principals only and did not involve teachers and parents. A small number of participants were used in this study; therefore, the study cannot be generalised to a larger study.

3.13 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the research design and methodology employed in this study. A qualitative research approach was used for the purposes of this study. Case-study

research design and the phenomenological approach were used. In-depth interviews were conducted to collect and analyse the data. Measures to ensure trustworthiness and ethical considerations were taken into consideration. Chapter 4 of this dissertation will focus on the data analysis and interpretation of the information that was gathered.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter outlined the research design and methodology of this study. The methods and the tools used to collect and analyse the data were discussed. This chapter will focus on the data analysis and interpretation of the findings collected from the semi-structured interviews with principals and any relevant documentation. The collected data are presented by using themes and sub-themes that derive from the data. From Chapter 2, it is noted that the school management team and the principal of a school play a crucial role in the enhancement of parental involvement.

The main aim of this study was to determine various management strategies that can be implemented by effective school management to improve parental involvement at primary schools. The questions asked in the interviews were intended to clarify what effective school management entails, as well as the importance of parental involvement. The interview questions also focused on factors that prevent parents from becoming involved and which management approaches are implemented to overcome these barriers. Finally, and most importantly, the questions asked were directed to find management strategies and approaches that could serve as guidelines to improve parental involvement. Therefore the following themes and sub-themes emerged from the data analysis:

Table 4.1: Themes in relation to parental involvement in Southern Tshwane primary schools

Themes	Sub-themes
Theme 1: Effective school management	Sub-theme 1: Quality education Sub-theme 2: Factors that determine school effectiveness Sub-theme 3: Communication Sub-theme 4: Parent organisations
Theme 2: Effective parental involvement	Sub-theme 1: Defining parental involvement Sub-theme 2: The importance of parental involvement
Theme 3: Factors that hinder parental involvement	Sub-theme 1: Parents' attitudes Sub-theme 2: Job dynamics Sub-theme 3: Family structure Sub-theme 4: Resources, programmes and training
Theme 4: Management approaches and strategies to improve parental involvement	Sub-theme 1: Professional development Sub-theme 2: Support to parents Sub-theme 3: Parents as part of the decision-making of the school Sub-theme 4: Strategies and guidelines to improve parental involvement

Each of the above-mentioned themes are discussed thoroughly under the respective headings. These themes include characteristics of effective school management, the importance of parental involvement, problems that affect parental involvement negatively, as well as strategies that might serve as guidelines to enhance parental involvement at primary schools.

The researcher used verbatim quotations to indicate direct responses and words from the participants and to ensure that the participants' voices were not altered. Credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were all methods used to ensure trustworthiness of this study (cf. par. 3.10.1, 3.10.2, 3.10.3 & 3.10.4). The discussions and findings of the interviews are also infused with literature. The next section will discuss the population of the study, which include primary schools from the Tshwane South District in Gauteng.

4.2 TSHWANE SOUTH EDUCATION DISTRICT AS A STUDY SETTING

The Gauteng Department of Education consists of 15 districts, of which Tshwane South is one. Tshwane South has 326 schools that fall under this district, of which 162 are primary schools and 45 are combined schools. The following table shows the sum of primary schools and combined schools in the Tshwane South District per circuit to give a representation of the entire study population:

Table 4.2: Primary schools and Combined schools in Tshwane South District

Circuit (C)	Primary Schools	Combined Schools
C1	41	18
C2	29	2
C3	34	19
C4	30	4
C5	28	2
TOTAL	162	45

This study populated in the Tshwane South District around circuit 1 and circuit 3. These circuits consist of diverse cultures and ethnic groups. The identified schools that form part of the study provide a holistic representation of the diverse cultures and racial makeup of the Tshwane South District.

The following section will outline the biographical data of the selected schools and principals. To adhere to the ethical considerations of this study, codes were used for the participating schools and principals. This is to ensure confidentiality and not to infringe on the participants' right to privacy (cf. par. 3.11.2).

4.3 A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED SCHOOLS AND PRINCIPALS

The principals of the selected schools have insightful knowledge and skills pertaining to the management of exceptional parental involvement. The schools that were involved in this study include five public schools and one private school. All the public schools consist of teachers appointed through the Department of Education; however, additional teachers are appointed by the school governing bodies, resulting in smaller classes, so that more individual attention could be given to each learner. The researcher gained valuable information from the participants through face-to-face interviews.

4.3.1 Selected schools

The selected schools that formed part of this study consisted of (3) Afrikaans, single-medium public schools, (2) English, single-medium public schools and (1) private parallel-medium school with multi-level teaching practices. It is evident that the identified schools represent the diverse cultures and the racial makeup of the Tshwane South District.

Although the medium of instruction at the (2) English, single-medium public schools are English, this is a second or, in some cases, a third language for the majority of learners in these school. The principals of these school have displayed ample knowledge and experience regarding the management of learners and parents coming from a variety of cultures and ethnic groups.

The respective schools varied from 360 to 1900 learners and 26 to 150 teachers.

4.3.2 Selected principals

4.3.2.1 Age

Ages of the principals varied between 51 and 59 years.

4.3.2.2 Gender

All six the selected school principals were males.

4.3.2.3 Teaching experience

All the selected principals have more than 24 years of teaching experience. These principals should have enough knowledge on the successful management of a school as well as parental involvement, based on the number of years' teaching experience. Most of the school principals (5) have more than 30 years of teaching experience, of which the highest number of years' teaching experience is 38 years.

4.3.2.4 Experience as a principal

The number of years' experienced as principals varied from 6 months to 27 years. The participant with only 6 months of experience as a principal, has recently been

appointed in the role; however, he has considerable experience as a deputy principal and has been part of the school management team for numerous years. One of the principals has also been a principal at a high school. Based on his extensive experience in the field of education, he has insightful knowledge of parental involvement and the management thereof.

4.3.2.5 Highest qualification

All the participants in this study have obtained post graduate degrees. The highest qualification of participants (2) have obtained a Masters in Educational Management and a Masters in Inclusive Education respectively. Half of the participants (3) have obtained an Honours Degree in Education. One (1) principal has a BA Degree. As these principals are all well qualified, they have insightful knowledge and expertise pertaining to the management of teachers, learners and parents.

During the process of data collection in qualitative research, there are steps and procedures that need to be taken into consideration to ensure credibility and trustworthiness (cf. par. 3.10). Subsequently, the data collection preparation process will be discussed in the following section.

4.4 THE DATA COLLECTION PREPARATION PROCESSES

For the success of this study, the researcher had to build trust with the principals in order to gain access to the study's targeted schools. According to Seidman (2013:44), the relationship between the interviewer and the participant can affect the interviewing process; therefore, the researcher should be equitable and respect the participants at all times. The researcher had sent an e-mail to all the selected participants (principals), providing them with a brief overview of the purpose of the study, including the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality. The principals could, at their own leisure, decide whether or not they would wish to participate in the study. Thus, the participants were not pressured in any way. This was done to establish a good relationship with the participants and a starting point of the relationship built on trust. After each principal had confirmed their participation in the study, the researcher negotiated convenient times and dates for the interviews at their school.

The researcher should take into consideration that each participant has his or her own perspective of the world and should be treated in a humanely manner (Karagiozis, 2018:23). Ethical considerations were of high importance to this study and were implemented during every step of the interview process. The researcher obtained consent from the participants to record the interviews. The consent forms also informed the participants of the nature and content of the study and the intended use of the data. The researcher treated the signed consent forms with the utmost discretion. On the same day of the interviews, the researcher analysed the following documents: newsletters, school policies, minutes of meetings and teacher-parent interaction policies. The following section will discuss the analysis of the documentation.

4.5 DATA COLLECTED THROUGH ANALYSIS OF DOCUMENTS

According to Triad (2016), documents can provide additional data and background information to the research under study; therefore, making document analysis beneficial, helpful and useful. The documents were interpreted and analysed by the researcher to give meaning to the topic under study and to answer the research problem.

4.5.1 Newsletters

All the participating schools in this study use newsletters as the main communication method to convey important general information to parents. The purpose of newsletters are to keep parents informed and to have them more involved in the education of their children. At all the schools, newsletter to parents are electronic, except for School F, where newsletters go out to parents as hard copies. Principal A stated,

To get effective management every communication is electronic. We don't ever send any hardcopies paper home. All letters that we have with the parents, everything is done electronically (Principal A).

Newsletters are sent out weekly at all the participating schools. All the schools have the following mutual information in their newsletters: the newsletters remind parents about important dates and events; the programme of the week with regard to sport,

culture and academics; to convey any achievements and goals; and to encourage parents to be more involved.

4.5.2 School policies (code of conduct)

At all the participating schools, the code of conduct was drawn up in accordance with the relevant provisions contained in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 108 of 1996*, and the *South African Schools Act 84 of 1996*. At all schools, the learner and his or her parents or guardians must familiarise themselves with the school's code of conduct and its provisions. As soon as a learner has been enrolled at the school, he or she is, by implication, committed to the code of conduct and must comply promptly. If a learner violates or disregards the code of conduct, action will be taken against him or her accordingly.

At all the schools, the code of conduct serves as a system to manage the discipline at the school. The aim of the code of conduct is to teach learners how to make the right choices and take responsibility for their behaviour. Both the learners and parents should take note of the code of conduct, which should be signed by the parents or guardians. The common main values at all the participating schools are general school rules, corrective action and responsibility.

School E is the only school that has a code of conduct specifically focused on parents (Parents' Code of Conduct). In this document it is clearly stated that schools can no longer be managed independently, they need a number of role players to ensure that a school is efficient and successful. According to this document, the most important role player is the parent. The following key aspects are discussed in this document:

- Parental attitudes to the school in particular and the education system in general will shape and influence the attitudes of their children.
- The level of respect that parents show towards educators and staff, the school rules and the code of conduct and policies will shape and influence the level of these qualities in the children.
- The degree to which parents cooperate and work with the school and the SGB will determine how cooperative the child will be and will ensure that the child's best interests will be served.

- The manner in which parents treat the staff as professional people will rub off on the lives of their own children.
- The school and parents are in partnership with one another and all have a role to play in educating their children.

In accordance with the previous school, the Code of Conduct of School F has specifically incorporated a section on the parental role of discipline. This section states that it is important for parents to understand that discipline begins at home and that the school can only build on the foundation that has been laid by the parents. It also states that the school cannot be the child's sole or primary disciplinarian.

This policy needs to be acknowledged and signed by every parent of every learner at the school. This is to state that the parent accepts and agrees to the principles of the Parents' Code of Conduct and will adhere to it at all times.

4.5.3 Minutes of meetings

Correspondence between the principal and the management team takes place on a regular basis at least once a week at all the participating schools. During these meetings, various subject matters on the management of the school are discussed. Some of these topics include goals and achievements; the school grounds; administration; curriculum; sport; culture; communication with parents; class management and discipline; parental involvement; interaction with the learners and learners' progress. Principal F stated,

In all meetings we will always talk about the way and how we speak to the parents (Principal F).

These meetings are of paramount importance to the successful management of a school as well as the management of parental involvement.

4.5.4 Teacher-parent interaction opportunities

All the participating schools allocate time for teacher-parent interaction opportunities, which are implemented in various ways. Principal A stated,

At least once a term at parents evening, but we encourage our teacher to talk to parents regularly (Principal A).

This is in the form of parents' evenings, once a term, or different social events that parents and children can attend together. School A and School B have a colour run once a year, which is attended by many parents and learners. Principal A and B stated,

On Valentine's Day we have a colour run where we invite all the children and all the parents (Principal A).

We have various social events where the parent and the child can attend like a colour run. Everyone enjoys it. Parents are looking forward to attend school meetings if they feel that they are well treated and that the child is well treated and that the child is healthy. We provide the facility for that (Principal B).

School C has a school festival that is mostly organised by the parents. School D has a welcoming braai at the beginning of the year to involve parents more. All these positive interactive opportunities between the school and parents are necessary for the successful development of the learner.

4.6 DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The data were collected by means of face-to-face interviews. The responses of participants in this study presented information on effective parental involvement as well as management strategies to improve parental involvement. The selected participants have insightful knowledge and skills pertaining to effective parental involvement. The data in this research analysis were based on the participants' voices and their own interpretations in their natural settings. The following main themes derived from the data during careful examination of transcriptions of interviews:

- Effective school management
- Effective parental involvement
- Factors that hinder parental involvement
- Management approaches and strategies to improve parental involvement

These themes are related to the main research question and sub-questions and will be discussed in detail by using direct quotations of the participants' voices as well as references to literature.

4.6.1 Effective school management

In order to facilitate parental involvement effectively, the school needs to have an effective organisational structure, administered by the principal and management team to ensure optimal teaching and learning. Therefore, it was considered important to gain information on the effective management of a school from the selected participants. The following sub-themes were developed from the collected information:

4.6.1.1 Quality education

Different views and interpretations were expressed by the participants when asked how they would define quality education. Both Principal B and Principal C emphasised that quality education encompassed qualified teachers.

The whole development of the child, the holistic development of the child equates to me as quality education. What is needed for quality education is a lot of stuff. There needs to be parental involvement, there needs to be committed and well qualified teachers who's calling it is to teach and I can happily say that most, in fact all of our educators are well qualified and they are willing and hardworking people (Principal B).

This view relates to one of the factors for school effectiveness identified in the conceptual framework by Heneveld and Craig (1996), enabling a capability teaching force (1996:21, cf. par. 2.4.2.2). Principal C agrees with Principal B,

Quality education is when there are prepared teachers in the classrooms who are qualified in their particular field of study or in their specific phase (Principal C).

According to Matakala (2018:39), to ensure quality education, teachers should be well-informed, competent and committed. They should be fully qualified to teach subjects according to the appropriate phases. Teachers are the curriculum implementers and should take responsibility for their own continuous professional development.

The findings also suggest that quality education is not only the delivery of the curriculum itself, but it is also developed by the factors surrounding it. This is evident from the views stated by Principal E and Principal B, who agree with one another.

It is the development of the learner as a whole through various structures which are: parental involvement, the involvement of teachers, educators, school management, psychologists, speech therapists and everyone that is working with that to ensure that the child gets the best opportunities that are possible, but also through extra-curricular activities which might be including sport and culture activities (Principal E).

Quality education to me is that the child gets a quality education in terms of academic performance, but not only that, but also through cultural activities and sport (Principal B).

This is in keeping with the view of Botha *et al.* (2013:22, cf. par. 2.4.5.1), which relates effective management to learners' active participation and involvement in various curricular and extra-curricular activities. Extra-curricular activities take place after school hours and are not related to the primary curricula. These activities, which are mostly organised and managed by the school, develop knowledge and different skills sets. Learners develop many cognitive, social and physical skills as well as gain experience on how to work in a team when they participate in extra-curricular activities (Metsäpelto & Pulkkinen, 2014:12).

Some participants had a different view on quality education, which is based on the long-term development of the child. Principal A stated,

Quality education according to me is whether you have success in preparing children to be responsible and quality adults. You can only judge whether it is quality education after they have finished school. Quality education means equipping children in primary school level with the skills to be successful and responsible adults (Principal A).

This is in accordance with the viewpoint of Principal D, who also perceived quality education as a result of future success.

Quality education, to sum it up, I believe in the 4; 40; 40 principle. Do you want the child to remember something for 40 minutes? For forty days? Or forty years? Quality education, according to me, is remembering something for 40 years (Principal D).

The 4; 40; 40 principle mentioned by Participant D, derives from the “40/40/40 rule”, which is a powerful way to think about the presentation of content in academics. According to Heick (2018), the essence of this rule is to identify the most important content within the curriculum and to ask the following questions:

What’s important that learners understand for the next 40 days?

What’s important that they understand for the next 40 months, and

What’s important that they understand for the next 40 years?

Heick (2018) states that this principle can be condensed to a depth-versus-breadth argument. Principal D explained this argument in a profound way.

Well I think quality education is firstly involving every child and what we call the ‘dig deep’ process. We have a curriculum that is very wide and not that deep. So, what I’m trying to imply is when you teach the frog, you should only teach the frog once in grade 1. And that child must never forget the frog (Principal D).

Teachers need to make sure that learners develop a depth of understanding and the emphasis should not be on covering a great number of different topics (breadth). According to Schwartz, Sadler, Sonnert and Thai (2008), mastering and focusing on more beneficial or significant contexts are a much more productive approach than covering many different topics. Teachers should cover fewer topics in greater depth, rather than focusing on a broad (breadth) curriculum.

4.6.1.2 Factors that determine school effectiveness

Various factors determine school effectiveness. The selected participants identified the following main factors: school-teacher-parent relationships, school climate, effective leadership, and the trust factor.

One of the factors that determine school effectiveness is the relationship between the school, parents and the learner. The following principals said,

School management is very important for the relationship between the educator, parent and child, in terms of there needs to be an academic or certain school culture, depending on the area where they are, but there needs to be a culture of learning and teaching at a school to be effective (Principal B).

Principal F, in agreement with Principal B, explained,

In any education system, the teachers and parents are partners. So both of them should play an equally important role (Principal F).

This is in keeping with Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence (1997:3, cf. par. 2.6.2.1), which states that in order for a school to be effective, there should be a good relationship between the family, school and community. According to Lemmer (2007:218), "excellent partnership between the community, school and family leads to improved social behaviour, school attendance, better self-esteem and learner achievement".

Principal B also referred to the school culture, an important factor that determines school effectiveness with regard to the school climate. This is in keeping with the conceptual framework of Heneveld and Craig, which states that schools need to maintain a healthy school environment (1996:20, cf. par. 2.4.1.3). According to Meyer (2019:17), a positive school climate can improve learner achievement, feelings of safety and influence the attitudes of parents, teachers and learners. The findings from the study suggest that schools need to create an environment that is pleasant and safe where parents and learners feel welcome. Principal E stated,

The first thing with regard to school climate starts off with how does your school look? And that creates an environment for the parents so that they feel comfortable and safe (Principal E).

This statement is in accordance with one of the factors related to school effectiveness: school climate, which was determined by Heneveld and Craig (1996:22, cf. par. 2.4.3).

One of the principals also mentioned that creating a calm school culture would maintain a positive school climate.

School climate relates to the culture of the school. There must be peace and calmness in the school. It should not be militaristic (Principal C).

Heneveld and Craig also identify positive teacher attitudes as a characteristic of a healthy school climate (1996:23, cf. par. 2.4.3.2). The majority of principals agreed with this.

The school climate is determined by peoples' attitudes (Principal A).

Principal C, in agreement with Principal A said,

If you want an effective school, then one must have effective teachers and positive teachers, because if you have positive teachers, it will reflect down to the children (Principal C).

The study reveals that teachers who are friendly, open towards parents and always willing to help contribute to the effectiveness of the school. A positive attitude from the teacher affects learners' attitude towards schoolwork as well as their motivation towards the subject and self-confidence (Uluga, Ozdenb & Eryilmazc, 2011:739).

Effective leadership is considered another important factor that determines school effectiveness. One of the principals said that leadership should not be a driving force that puts one in control of other peoples' lives, it should rather be seen as a privilege to guide and direct people in accomplishing set goals. This is in accordance with the view of Jansen *et al.* (2011:5, cf. par. 2.2), stating that the task of the principal is to manage and lead the school in order to reach educational aims. Principal D stated,

The whole thing about leadership is a privilege, it's not a factor of you deserve leadership. Leadership doesn't put me in control of peoples' lives. I want teachers to want to work for one another. Instead of being forced to do something (Principal E).

Principal A, in agreement with Principal E, said,

If there is no effective leadership, the school won't succeed. Effective leadership sets the ball rolling and gets people to give momentum to this whole thing (Principal A).

According to Marishane and Botha (2013:3), effective leadership is required to guide, direct and lead a school towards success. Effective leadership has a great influence on teaching and learning and the improvement thereof (Graham 2018:23).

Another important aspect to ensure school effectiveness is the trust factor. The findings show that trust creates unity within a school organisation. Principal D stated,

I think that the trust factor is a very important thing in schools. And I think a lot of schools do too little with regards to how to obtain trust. It's one thing saying you trust somebody, but really trusting each other creates unity (Principal D).

In order for a school to achieve its goals, effective management is necessary to create reliable and trustworthy relationships between the different stakeholders (cf. par. 2.2). School organisations need to establish a network between the management team, teachers and parents that is based on trust in order for the school to be effective. Teachers will put in more effort and energy into their work, once an environment of trust is established (Erdem & Aytac 2019:77).

4.6.1.3 Communication

The study revealed that schools use various strategies to communicate with parents. Both verbal and non-verbal communication strategies are used to convey important information to parents. Verbal communication strategies include teacher-parent conversations during parents' evenings or during scheduled or unscheduled appointments. Non-verbal communication strategies encompass written communication such as flyers, letters sent with learners to their parents, weekly newsletters, and communication regarding positive and negative behaviour at school (disciplinary report).

Almost all the participating schools make use of the d6 School Communicator, which is an electronic application designed to simplify communication between the school and parents. The School Communicator can be installed on any computer or mobile

phone. It keeps parents up to date on the latest news and any other information related to the school. It is used on a daily basis by thousands of people worldwide and it is safe and secure (d6 Education, n.d.). Principal A stated,

To get effective management every communication with parents are electronic. We don't ever send any hardcopies paper home. All the letters that we send to the parents, everything is done electronically (Principal A).

School F is the only school that still uses of hard copy newsletters; however, they also communicate with parents electronically through SMSs.

We have a newsletter that goes out weekly and we also use a SMS system for the parents. In the foundation phase, we also makes use of a communication book/message book (Principal F).

According to Principal D, a school should make use of electronic communication as well as hard copy, which is the traditional way of communication.

We have the communicator. There is still place for the traditional way of sending out letters. But ja, we use the d6 communicator as our main source (Principal D).

Principal B stated that an electronic way of communication was very effective as parents have constant access to all the important information as well as the progress and performance of their own child.

We try to use all methods to communicate with parents. Our primarily method of communication is the d6 communicator. It's all electronic, they can get the marks and behaviour reports on there. The parent can constantly monitor the performance or the well-being of the child if they want to. It is very effective (Principal B).

The findings show that parents are not involved enough to go through their children's bags; therefore, parents can easily miss important information related to their child's academic performance, their behaviour at school and any other general information. This is in keeping with Epstein's typology of parental involvement: Type 1 parent involvement (Parenting), which explains that the school should assist families in

supporting their children and to be involved parents (2008:11 cf. par. 2.6.2.2). There should also be effective communication between school-to-home and home-to school, which is in line with Type 2 parent involvement (Communication) (cf. par. 2.6.2.2). Principal A stated,

Parents are not involved enough to look into their children's bags. So we send them an SMS or we send them a ClassDojo, that is a system which we use for discipline. We also have a very good usage of the d6 Communicator. And because we tell the parents that everything is on there, they actually check it every day. (Principal A).

Principal A also mentioned using a ClassDojo, which is a free online tool that teachers use to communicate and interact with parents on a daily basis. All of the teachers at School A uses this system. If a child had not done his or her homework or anything related to his/her behaviour, the parent was notified immediately and within seconds the parent was aware of it. This system is used for positive and negative behaviour and provides parents with real-time feedback. According to a study done by Dillon, Radley, Tingstrom, Dart and Barry (2019: 24), using and implementing the ClassDojo tool have decreased disruptive behaviour and increased learners' academically engaged behaviour. Dillon *et al.* (2019:20), further state that even in cases where teachers only track the positive behaviours of children, disruptive behaviour decreases automatically. Principal A further stated that positive reinforcement had a great influence on the child's behaviour,

If you give positive feedback to parents about their children the children tend to act better in the future, because they like that. Positive reinforcement works a lot better to current discipline than having harsh punishments. There is a thing called peer pressure, change it to positive peer pressure (Principal A).

This is in keeping with the view of Heneveld and Craig (1996:24, cf. par. 2.4.3.5), who state that rewards and incentives will encourage learners to work harder.

At all the schools, teachers also make use of e-mails to communicate to the parents. Once again, this is in keeping with Epstein's six types of parental involvement: Type 2 parent involvement (Communication), which states that there should be two-way

communication between the parent and the school and communication should be clear and recorded (2008:11, cf. par. 2.6.2.2). Principal B and Principal D stated in agreement,

Each teacher has their own email address and the parent can send an email to the educator. The educator has a certain time frame in which they need to respond to the parent. If need be a phone call will happen via the school. Teachers don't use their private cell phones for that. We discourage that to protect the teacher's privacy (Principal B).

Every teacher has their own email address and we have a 24-hour policy, actually it's a same day reply. We communicate on a regular basis with the parents and they are welcome to come to the school (Principal D).

All the schools use verbal communication through parents' evenings and any other teacher-parent interaction opportunities. Both Principal B and Principal C said that effective communication with parents was a very important aspect for school effectiveness.

We involve the parents with our disciplinary system especially. It's integral that we have a good communication system with the parents (Principal B).

I believe in good communication with parents, but it must be structured in order to manage it effectively (Principal C).

The views of these principals can be linked to one of Epstein's six types of parent involvement, namely: Type 2 parent involvement (Communication) (2008:11, cf. par. 2.6.2.2). This type of parent involvement entails that there should be good school-to-home and home-to-school communication with regard to the child's progress (Lemmer, 2007:221).

4.6.1.4 Parent organisations

All the public schools have a School Governing Body (SGB), of which parents should form the majority. School D has a Board, as it is a private school. School A, B and D have class representatives, who liaise between the parents and the school.

We have a system which is actually encouraged by the school governing body. We have a grade representative as well as for each class and they report to the SGB and the SGB will discuss it at the SGB meetings. So we do hear the parents' voices through this system. It is voluntary to be a representative and parents vote for each representative per class. It is done democratically (Principal B).

Principal A, in agreement with Principal B stated,

We have a class representative in every class. We have a grade representative in every grade. So if we want any kind of communication to go to all our parents it can be done within 5 minutes and everyone has the message. I communicate with the grade representatives of the parents committee. They communicate with the class representatives. The class representatives communicate with the parents individually. The parents choose the representatives (Principal A).

The process of choosing the class representatives is entirely voluntary. This is in accordance with Type 3 parent involvement (Volunteering) and Type 5 parent involvement (Decision making) of Epstein's theoretical model of parental involvement (2008:12, cf. par. 2.6.2.2). Schools should include parents as part of the decision-making of the school and parents should volunteer to become involved in extra-curricular activities as well as academic and social school programmes.

However, although the other schools do not have class representatives, they do have parent committees that are involved with the management of social events as well as extra-curricular activities.

4.6.2 Effective parental involvement

It was considered important to gain information from the participants regarding what effective parental involvement is as well as the importance of parental involvement. In order to enhance parental involvement in schools, one must first understand the meaning of this concept. Two categories in terms of effective parental involvement will be discussed as sub-themes in this study, namely: defining parental involvement and the importance of parental involvement.

4.6.2.1 Defining parental involvement

Many different viewpoints were obtained from the participants when asked how they would define parental involvement. The following definitions of parental involvement derived from the interviews,

Walk every step with your child, not in front of them, behind them. Supporting them, guiding them, Being there. That's parental involvement. No more, no less (Principal A).

This is in accordance with Harris and Robinson (2008:278, cf. par. 2.6), who state that parents should support their children not only in their academic success, but also in their overall achievements.

Parental involvement is very important and it's part of the culture in our school that we see the parents as partners. The child needs to be happy and then the parent will also be happy, and for that there needs to be good communication between the parents and the educators (Principal B).

This is in keeping with Epstein's typology of parental involvement: Type 2 parent involvement (Communication) (2008:11, cf. par. 2.6.2.2). It is important that teachers have knowledge on how to communicate positively to parents to create a good relationship between them (Taylor, Carthon & Brown 2014:45).

Parental involvement is the involvement in their children's school activities. This allows them to attend school activities and attend parents' evenings, but also if there are fundraisers, as well as sports events (Principal C).

This is in keeping with Type 3 parent involvement (Volunteering), which describes that parents can be more involved by assisting teachers in extra-mural activities, cultural events and fund raisers (1997:9, cf. par. 2.6.2.2.).

There is a big difference between parent involvement and parent interference. Involvement is being involved in the whole ethos of the school. Being involved in suggesting, coming with suggestions with regards to ideas that can make the school an even better place. But I think to sum it up, parent involvement must not be interference because we are the professionals (Principal D).

This is in keeping with Type 5 parent involvement (Decision-making), which explains that parents can be involved at various levels regarding decision-making at the school (Epstein, *et al.* 1997:9, cf. par. 2.6.2.2.).

Effective parental involvement is the total involvement of the parent into his child and the management of his child to become what he wants to become one day (Principal E).

What we are trying to do is, when we are talking to parents as partners, their first role and responsibilities are to make sure that their children come to school on time, dressed properly and correctly, with what is needed for that day and to be ready (Principal F).

Parents need to take full responsibility for the education of their children (cf. par. 2.6.2.2.). This is in keeping with Type 4 parent involvement (Learning at home), which states that schools need to assist parents in managing their children's schoolwork and becoming successful in life.

According to the Code of Conduct of School F,

Parental involvement encourages a child to apply him/herself academically and socially, and allows the child to develop into a well-adjusted and responsible member of the family and community.

4.6.2.2 The importance of parental involvement

As mentioned in section 2.6.1, parental involvement is very important for the improvement of learner achievement. According to Van Wyk (2010:200), parents have a sense of empowerment when they become involved in the education of their children. Learners' self-confidence will be boosted and their behaviour will improve when they feel that their parents care about them.

The findings suggest that parental involvement is important to ensure that learners do not take chances and that they behave in a respectful manner. If parents are not involved, it results in various discipline problems at home and at school. Principal E stated,

Every child wants to feel that they belong to something/someone and if a child feels that he/she does not belong or if the parent is not fully involved, they take chances. You can immediately see if the parents are not involved, it results in different types of discipline problems (Principal E).

Principal F shared the same sentiments by saying,

You will see those learners where the parents are involved usually perform better than the others as well as with regards to their behaviour in class (Principal F).

Parental involvement is very important for the full development of the child. Parents and teachers need to work together and share their responsibilities to produce successful learners (Lemmer, 2007:220). Principal C shares this view.

Parental involvement is very important, because there is that partnership between the school and parent. Parents in the school is very important for the development of the child (Principal C).

Principal D agrees with Principal C, as he compares education to a table with four legs, where all the stakeholders, namely the parents, teachers, the church and the community need to work in collaboration with one another to ensure effective education.

I always compare education to a table with four legs. The top of the table is the child. One leg is the teacher. One leg the community, one leg the church and the other leg the parents. That's how I'll describe the importance of parental involvement (Principal D).

Their views therefore relate to Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres (1997:72, cf. par. 2.6.2.1), which is based on the foundation that learners develop within different spheres, namely the family, school and community to ensure success. On the contrary, Principal A believes that only the parents would determine whether the learner would become successful or not and not the school. Principal A stated,

Without parental involvement that child will lose his way and he will end up on the street corner. It's not the school who determines whether the child is successful or not it's the parent (Principal A).

However, Principal A said further on in the interview,

Teachers and parents are colleagues in raising this child. It takes a village to raise a child and we must all work together and be partners.

4.6.3 Factors that hinder parental involvement

Although there are many great advantages of parental involvement for the learner, as seen in the section above, some factors restrain parents from becoming involved in the educational aspects of their children. The following barriers to parental involvement emerged from the data collected in this study.

4.6.3.1 Parents' attitudes

The findings suggest that some parents believe that it is the job of the teacher to discipline their child. This creates conflict between the parent and the school. Principal D said the following,

A few years ago when we had an audit questionnaire. One of the questions was: Who is primarily responsible for educating the child or teaching them about the word of God? 65% of the parents said it was the school's responsibility. This shows you ... That's crazy.

Principal B shared the same sentiment,

Sometimes the parent say it's the job of the educator to discipline my child. We can't keep to good manners if there's a separate set of values at home and school. Then you get the conflict and that's why you need the parent as well to get common ground on that. Some of the parents don't always realise that we need to close the gates a certain time, because they perceive it culturally in a different way. But you need to find common ground on that and tell them that we respect your cultural beliefs and stuff, but we need to have the children at the school at a certain time to have an effective day (Principal B).

Principal B also referred to cultural differences that could have an impact on the parents' views. Principal A stated that the parents' attitude was one of the problems that affected parental involvement negatively. Principal A stated,

One of the biggest problems is apathy. Parents just don't care. Or they are too busy or they think it's not their place. Or it's not important enough. Or alcohol or too much money or too little money. Depends on their attitude. Everything is determined by their attitude (Principal A).

This is in keeping with Hornby and Lafaele's model of barriers to parental involvement (2011:39, cf. par. 2.7.6), which states that teachers and parents should find mutual ground with regard to their attitudes and their role as parents. According to Taylor, Carthon & Brown (2014:45), as a result of parents refraining from taking responsibility in their children's formal education, teachers need to assume many roles within the classroom. This makes it very difficult to ensure school effectiveness if parents and teachers do not work together.

4.6.3.2 Job dynamics

According to the participants, some parents do not have time to be fully involved in the formal education of their children. One of the biggest problems according to the findings of the study is work-related issues. Parents have to work late or they are shift workers and they do not have time. Principal F and Principal B stated,

Some of the parents work shifts so they don't see their children or they work far away and only come back during the weekend (Principal F).

Principal B share these sentiments,

The most obvious thing is their working hours. Some of the parents work late or they are shift workers and they can't always or hardly attend meetings because their work schedule are as such that they can't attend meetings on a regular basis (Principal B).

Low-paying jobs also limit prevent parents from attending meetings as they do not always have transport or enough money to travel to the school and back home again. Principal B further states,

Transport is a problem for some of our parents and learners and it is difficult for them to get here in the evenings.

Likewise, low-paying jobs make it difficult for parents to provide learners with the necessary resources (Anderson & Minke, 2007). This is in keeping with Van Wyk (2010:217, cf. par. 2.7.1), who states that parents with a higher socio-economic background tend to be more involved than parents from low socio-economic backgrounds.

4.6.3.3 Family structure

The findings show that some learners live with extended family members like grandparents, aunts and uncles. As the child is not their own, these family members tend not to be fully invested in the education of the children. Principal E said,

And then we also found that there are some children that's staying with aunties and grannies and the grannies don't really have the energy for these children, and that creates a huge problem. Or where they stay with family members, coming from other areas, might be parents that have passes on and the family are taking care of them now. You find that these family members are not so involved in the children, because they are not their own children (Principal E).

Principal F identified the same barrier to parental involvement,

There might be some factors like child-headed families, where there is no adult. Children who might stay with their grandparents and the grandparents may not have the know-how or the ability to discipline the learners as they should or they are not able to help them (Principal F).

As seen from the statement above, these extended family members do not always have the ability to assist the children with regard to homework, or they are incapable of disciplining the learners. According to Munje and Mncube (2018:85), learner performance is greatly affected by these family dynamics. A large number of learners are raised by extended family or grandparents, which makes "parental involvement next to impossible for these learners" (Taylor *et al.* 2014:45).

4.6.3.4 Resources, programmes and training

Most of the schools reported that the Department of Education (DoE) offered very few training opportunities (if any) to support schools with parental involvement.

The DoE does not provide anything. They don't have the manpower, don't have the knowledge. If a school doesn't decide to do it, it won't happen (Principal A).

Principal E agreed with Principal A, saying that the school had to make their own provision for programmes and training with regard to parental involvement.

There is, from time to time, such involvement from the DoE, but not so much, they tend to leave us out, because they think things are going well. I think the demand is too heavy for them to provide this to all parents, I think it must be through training from the principals or HODs, and they must communicate and cascade it down to the parents (Principal E).

All the participating schools have their own programmes and training that they provide within the school itself, or they use their own finances to send teachers for training. As seen in section 2.4.2.2, teachers need to be highly trained, especially with regard to parental involvement, to ensure school effectiveness. This could be a great barrier to effective parental involvement if the DoE provides little or no training. One of the responsibilities of the DoE is to ensure quality education for all learners. Governments should spend more attention to schools to identify the needs of the school, which should include strategies to improve parental involvement (cf. par. 2.4).

4.6.4 Management approaches and strategies to improve parental involvement

Better home-school relationships can be established by removing barriers to parental involvement. As an effective school organisation, the role of the school management team is to determine and establish ways in which these barriers to parental involvement could be overcome. The following sub-themes derived from the data collected during the interviews that could serve as guidelines to improve parental involvement at primary schools.

4.6.4.1 Professional development

The study has determined that professional development is a strategy that will lead to the improvement of parental involvement. Lemmer (2007:227) believes that schools need to provide training to teachers in order for them to understand the wide varieties of different families in our modern world. Principal B and Principal C, in agreement, stated the following,

Every teacher is a manager in his/her class as well. And that needs to be enhanced via giving them in-service training and providing them with opportunities for growth (Principal B).

With regard to teacher development, teachers need to be empowered. The school should provide teachers with many opportunities for which they can provide the financial support (Principal C).

According to Grobler, Bisschoff and Moloï (2002:54), teachers who are well qualified have a direct impact on the quality of instruction in the classroom and lead learners to perform at a higher level. Principal A said,

School effectiveness is definitely determined by the quality of teachers that they have.

Schools can also make use of their own experienced and knowledgeable teachers and members of the management team to train teachers and provide workshops to parents. Principal B stated,

When a new teacher comes into our school we make use of in-service training for instance on how you deal with a parent and we provide training especially to the starter educator. Especially how to relate to the parent. We train the teachers and encourage them. We mostly do the training ourselves, because we've got the know-how and the knowledge. In our management team we've got a lot of specialists on that team. There is always someone that is knowledgeable. And we've got a school support team (Principal B).

The study has also found that it is very important that teachers get training on how to communicate effectively with parents. Teachers need to develop tactful skills,

appropriate attitudes and knowledge to improve parental involvement (Lemmer, 2007:227). Principal F shared the same sentiments by saying,

In all meetings we will always talk about the way in which we speak to the parents. You must remember you don't get problem children, you get problem parents, mostly. In our meetings what we are trying to do is, is to supervise or lead the teachers in such a way that they will not look at the behaviour that the child exhibits but the cause of it, so that we can address it with the parents (Principal F).

At School D, teacher development and teacher training are seen as highly important, as the school is a training centre itself. Teachers also get a lot of training to work in partnership with parents.

This school is a training centre by itself. So, I can honestly say that the teachers here really get a lot of training, academically and then with regards to parent involvement. We had a session the other day 'what do you do at parent evening? You expect teachers just to pitch up and then they don't know what to do. We have all sorts of workshops and we do a lot with regards to that (Principal D).

Principal A agreed with Principal A saying,

We identify according to the school improvement plan and every persons IQMS checklist to identify what kind of courses we can present to empower the teachers. We have appointed a company and the company comes and presents 12 courses per year. We expect from the teachers to attend 4 of them. It costs them nothing. We pay for it and they have to put down their names. It is brilliant (Principal A).

Lemmer (2007:227) further states that parental involvement should be a core module in educational programmes and institutions. This is in keeping with Heneveld and Craig (1996:21, cf. par. 2.4.2.2) who state that schools need to develop a capable teaching force that provides highly trained and qualified teachers.

4.6.4.2 Support to parents

The study further suggests that schools need to support parents to enable them to become fully involved in the formal education of their children. Various strategies are implemented at the selected schools to support parents and will subsequently be discussed.

The researcher believes that in order to have an effective school, one must have good parental involvement; therefore, schools should really put in a lot of effort to support and accommodate parents so that they become more involved (cf. par. 2.2). Principal B stated,

You have to out of your why to try and accommodate parents. There's always a way, because you need to have parental involvement. If you want to have effective education, you need to have effective parental involvement. It's a partnership. It's not only the teachers alone, it's not only the parent alone. It's a partnership (Principal B).

The findings show that parents need guidance on how to raise their children. Schools can offer workshops to parents on various subjects to provide them with the skills and knowledge to assist their children at home and at school. Principal A stated,

We have parent guidance workshops, once every month. We have to understand that these parents don't know how to raise a child and it's not because they are stupid, it's because they don't know, so we have to try to help. It's a help programme. It's a discussion, we answer questions, and we try to give some advice. We try to put certain scenarios there and we try to talk according to that. It's because we care (Principal A).

Principal E agreed with Principal A,

We have a social worker at school and with that we have the psychologist that comes here once or twice a week to guide these families- This is to get family guidance to the parents. We have interviews with parents to give them strategies on how to check the schoolwork, how to deal with the work, children

in the evening, sitting around the table discussing and listening to their children. We do have success on that (Principal E).

This is in keeping with Epstein's six types of involvement that schools can implement to improve parental involvement by supporting parents accordingly (1995:704, cf. par. 2.6.2.2). Schools can implement Type 1 parent involvement (Parenting) to help families provide a supportive learning environment at home. In addition, it is important for families to share their beliefs and cultural background with the school during programmes and workshops initiated by the school (Epstein, 1995:704; Epstein, 2008:11-12; Epstein & Sanders, 2006:52, cf. par. 2.6.2.2). Pertaining to Type 4 parent involvement (Learning at home), schools can assist parents in developing skills to support their children with homework and the school curriculum (Brandt, 1989:25, cf. par. 2.6.2.2).

Parents tend to provide children with cell phones and tablets to keep them busy and learners therefore do not get the correct guidance from their parents. Principal A further stated that,

Quality time with your children is nonsense, parents should spend quantity time with their children. This can be done by reading the paper while they are busy with homework. Build relationships, parents don't know how to do that anymore (Principal A).

Parents can also be supported financially in terms of subsidies and food schemes at school for children who do not have food to eat. Principal C stated,

If there are parents who have financial problems, then we have our subsidies in place. We have sandwiches at the tuck shop for children who do not have food and the school pays the bill (Principal C).

The finding indicates that appointing specialists at schools can provide professional support and guidelines to parents. This is a very successful strategy, as the participating schools received very good feedback about this. Principal E and Principal B stated in agreement,

We as a school involve psychologist and therapists to assist and support the parents and learners (Principal E).

We have small workshops which are run by specialists. It is run by a professional person who is not a teacher. She is an educational psychologist. We try a couple of times a year to have these workshops and we got very good feedback on that. During those courses that we give to the parents we tell them how to help the child, because some of the ignorant parents are not trained how to help the child. The psychologist arrange meetings with parents to give them training in the afternoon or even in the evenings (Principal B).

4.6.4.3 Parents as part of the decision-making of the school

In order for parents to be more involved, they need to feel that they have co-ownership of the school. The school needs to see the parents as partners. Principal B agreed with this.

The parent needs to have co-ownership of the school. They need to feel that this is their school. They mustn't feel like outsiders and feel that they are only visiting the school (Principal B).

Parents must have the opportunity to provide their input; however, it should be structured and well managed. School D has a very effective system in place to ensure that the parents' voices are heard.

Once or twice a year, we send out questionnaires to the parents to ask them: What are the aspects that you like? Where can we improve? Then we make a summary of it and it guides us towards the next year (Principal D).

Parents can be part of the decision-making of the school through the SGB and class representatives. This is in keeping with Type 5 parent involvement (Decision-making), one of Epstein's six types of domains for the improvement of parental involvement (1995:704, cf. par. 2.6.2.2). Parents should be included in the decision-making of the school through various committees and parent organisations.

Principal E shared this view.

The SGB is selected by parents and we have meetings with the parents where we give feedback to them. We involve them and ask them to become more involved. If we have projects at school we advertise it at the SGB meetings to get them involved (Principal E).

4.6.4.4 An effective programme to enhance parental involvement

The findings show that none of the participating schools has an actual programme in place to enhance parental involvement, although the selected schools were identified as schools where effective parental involvement is evident. These schools implement excellent management strategies, yet they do not have a programme or policy concerning parental involvement.

All the participating schools implement various strategies to enhance parental involvement, but none of them has it written down to serve as a programme or as a policy document. Principal A said the following when asked if the school had an effective programme in place to enhance parental involvement:

I think so. Everything we have talked about. It's not a specific programme, it's an attitude. It's a system of thought and a way of life (Principal A).

Principal D said the following when he was asked the same question,

I think all school are guilty of not doing enough with regard to this question of yours. I think it's one of your most important questions. It's having an effective programme in place to enhance parent involvement (Principal D).

4.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented an analysis of the data collected from the interviews. The data generated from the interviews were presented by themes and sub-themes. The selected participants shared their experiences and gave insightful information that might serve as guidelines to establish management strategies and approaches to improve parental involvement in primary schools.

The following four main themes derived from this study are:

Theme 1: Effective school management

Sub-theme 1: Quality education

Sub-theme 2: Factors that determine school effectiveness

Sub-theme 3: Communication

Sub-theme 4: Parent organisations

Theme 2: Effective parental involvement

Sub-theme 1: Defining parental involvement

Sub-theme 2: The importance of parental involvement

Theme 3: Factors that hinder parental involvement

Sub-theme 1: Parents' attitudes

Sub-theme 2: Job dynamics

Sub-theme 3: Family structure

Sub-theme 4: Resources, programmes and training

Theme 4: Management approaches and strategies to improve parental involvement

Sub-theme 1: Professional development

Sub-theme 2: Support to parents

Sub-theme 3: Parents as part of the decision-making of the school

Sub-theme 4: Strategies and guidelines to improve parental involvement

The above themes were discussed in detail to find meaningful strategies to improve parental involvement. All the participants contributed significantly to identify effective management approaches in order to enhance parental involvement, although none of the schools had a specific programme in place. The unique circumstances of each school should determine how parental involvement must be managed, planned and implemented at the school.

The following chapter will discuss a minimum plan for parental involvement. This will be addressed in the final chapter of this dissertation and will consolidate and synthesise the findings of the study. This chapter will focus on a summary of the study, drawing conclusions and making recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The final chapter of this study presents a summary of the study, findings and recommendations. The findings and recommendations are based on the sub-research questions and objectives of the study. The main aim of this study was to determine various management strategies that can be implemented by effective school management to improve parental involvement at Southern Tshwane primary schools. The sub-research questions which directed the study were:

- What are the characteristics of effective school management?
- Why is effective parental involvement important at primary schools?
- Which factors prevent parents from becoming involved in educational development at primary schools?
- What management strategies and approaches from selected school principals might serve as guidelines to improve parental involvement?

Furthermore, this chapter acknowledges the limitations of the study and provides avenues for further research.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This section outlines the fundamental aspects discussed in Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4, which addressed the introduction and background of the study, a literature review that included a conceptual framework which served as the foundation of this study, the research design and methodology, and a data analysis and discussion of the findings from the collected data.

5.2.1 Fundamental aspects pertaining to the introduction and background of the study

Chapter 1 sets out the introduction and background to the study. This chapter established that the lack of parental involvement is still problematic and an increasing concern in South Africa (cf. par. 1.1). As the researcher believed that this is also the

case at many Southern Tshwane primary schools, the researcher conducted this study to find management strategies and approaches that might serve as guidelines to enhance parental involvement. This formed the basis of the rationale for the study (cf. par. 1.2), as the researcher is employed at a school where little parental involvement prevails. From the information provided by the background of the study as well as the research problem, the following main research question was phrased (cf. par. 1.3): How can effective school management improve parental involvement by using various strategies at Southern Tshwane primary schools?

The significance of the study indicated contributory factors such as professional teacher development, gaining more insightful knowledge on parental involvement, understanding learners' backgrounds and the reasons for the lack of parental involvement, and the characteristics of managing an effective school, which will result in improved parental involvement as well as encouraging policy makers (cf. par. 1.5).

A preliminary literature review outlined the importance of parental involvement (cf. par. 1.6) and although the research methodology and design were discussed thoroughly in Chapter 3, this chapter provides a brief overview of the research paradigm (cf. par. 1.7.1), research approach (cf. par. 1.7.2), research design (cf. par. 1.7.3), population and sampling (cf. par. 1.7.4), instrumentation and data collection techniques (cf. par. 1.7.5), and the data analysis and interpretation (cf. par. 1.7.6). Furthermore, this chapter discussed the reliability and validity of the study (cf. par. 1.8) as well as ethical considerations (cf. par. 1.9).

5.2.2 Literature review

Chapter 2 provided a literature review, which formed the foundation of this study, and informed the research questions outlined in the interview schedule. In this chapter, the important aspects of the effective management of a school were discussed (cf. par. 2.2) as well as the relationship between leadership and parental involvement (cf. par. 2.3.2). A conceptual framework moulded by Heneveld and Craig (cf. par. 2.4) outlined the characteristics of an effective school, forming the basis of this study to explore management approaches and strategies to improve parental involvement.

This chapter also discussed the benefits of parental involvement (cf. par. 2.6.1) by studying Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres (cf. par. 2.6.2.1) and her typology of effective parental involvement (cf. par. 2.6.2.2). Furthermore, this chapter focused on factors constraining parental involvement (cf. par. 2.7) by looking into Hornby and Lafaele's model of barriers to parental involvement (cf. par 2.7.6).

5.2.3 Research design and methodology

Chapter 3 provided the research design and methodology of the study. A qualitative research approach (cf. par. 3.3) was the pathway for this study, since it allowed the researcher to gain insightful knowledge from the participants in their natural setting. This study was conducted by using the constructivist paradigm (cf. par. 3.4) and case study research design (cf. par. 3.5). The population of this study included six primary schools from Tshwane South (cf. par. 3.6). Purposeful sampling was used to identify six schools where effective parental involvement is evident (cf. par. 3.7). These selected schools have superb management structures based on the conceptual framework (cf. par. 2.4).

The data collection techniques used in this study included a literature review (cf. par. 3.8.1), document analysis (3.8.2), and face-to-face semi-structured interviews (cf. par. 3.8.3). The chapter further discussed the analysis and interpretation process of the data that were collected (cf. par. 3.9). Furthermore, measurements to ensure trustworthiness were discussed (cf. par. 3.10), which included credibility (cf. par. 3.10.1), transferability (cf. par. 3.10.2), dependability (cf. par. 3.10.3) and confirmability (cf. par. 3.10.4). Ethical considerations (cf. par. 3.11), which were of paramount importance to this study were also discussed. This included informed consent (cf. par. 3.11.1), confidentiality (cf. par. 3.11.2), anonymity (cf. par. 3.11.3), freedom to withdraw (cf. par. 3.11.4) and the protection of human rights (cf. par. 3.11.5).

5.2.4 Data analysis and discussion of findings

Chapter 4 presented the findings from the data collected by means of face-to-face interviews and documents. This chapter firstly outlined the Tshwane South education district as a study setting (cf. par. 4.2), followed by a brief description of the selected schools and principals (cf. par. 4.3). The findings from the data collected through the

analysis of documents (cf. par. 4.5), which included newsletters (cf. par. 4.5.1), school policies (cf. par. 4.5.2), minutes of meetings (cf. par. 4.5.3) and teacher-parent interaction opportunities (cf. par. 4.5.4) were discussed. Four main themes and sub-themes were discussed in detail (cf. par. 4.6), based on the data collected during the face-to-face interviews. These findings presented key aspects based on the views of the participants pertaining to parental involvement. Throughout the discussion of the themes, literature was infused to conform to the empirical findings.

5.3 FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

The findings of this study will subsequently be discussed according to the four sub-research questions stated above (cf. par. 1.3). The findings of the study are related to the views and perceptions of the participants concerning parental involvement.

5.3.1 Findings pertaining to sub-research question one

What are the characteristics of effective school management?

From the responses that emanated from the interviews, it was evident that the participants considered quality education as an important aspect of school effectiveness (cf. par. 4.6.1.1). The definitions of quality education were expressed from different views; however, the participants agreed that quality education encompasses qualified teachers. The findings also suggest that quality education involves not only the deliverance of the curriculum itself with regard to academics, but also the management of extra-curricular activities. Schools need to provide many opportunities for learners to develop additional skills and knowledge pertaining to teamwork, social skills and physical skills (cf. par. 4.6.1.1). Quality education also means equipping children with the necessary skills and knowledge for future success. From the findings it transpired that schools need to 'dig deep' into the curriculum, rather than just covering a wide variety of topics (cf. par. 4.6.1.1).

Important characteristics of effective school management are strong school-teacher-parent relationships, school climate, effective leadership, and a sense of trust that needs to prevail throughout the school (cf. par. 4.6.1.2). All the participants agreed that teachers and parents need to work in partnership in order to provide effective teaching and learning. From the findings it is evident that an effective partnership between the

school, parents and teachers will lead to improved learners' achievement as well as their behaviour. Another key factor that determines school effectiveness is culture and climate of the school. A healthy school environment needs to be maintained by the management team of the school and parents need to feel welcome at the school. From the findings it is clear that a school climate is determined by its teachers' attitudes (cf. par. 2.4.3.2). Positive teachers will contribute to the effectiveness of the school, as it will be passed on to the learners and their parents. In order for a school management team to be effective, it requires influential and powerful leadership skills. The principal should lead the school and direct the teachers and learners towards success. For the school to be successful, trust needs to be manifested amongst all the school's different stakeholders.

Another key characteristic of effective school management is communication (cf. par. 4.6.1.3). The findings suggest that there should be regular communication with parents, whether by means of a newsletter, in most cases electronic, or by means of face-to-face meetings and interviews. The findings show that positive feedback is more effective and it encourages learners to work harder (cf. par. 2.4.3.5). Parents need to be involved in the disciplinary process of the school to ensure effective and successful school management.

Creating parent organisations and involving parents are additional characteristics of effective school management (cf. par. 4.6.1.4). Class representative and parent committees can liaise between parents and the school to improve communication and ensure effective teaching and learning. The findings show that schools should provide many opportunities for parents to be involved in various activities at the school.

5.3.2 Findings pertaining to sub-research question two

Why is effective parental involvement important in primary schools?

It was considered important to uncover definitions of parental involvement from the participants in order to determine what effective parental involvement entails (cf. par. 4.6.2.1). It was evident that all the participants in the study had insightful knowledge and a good understanding of what parental involvement is. According to the findings of the study, effective parental involvement is very important for the success of the

school. The participants defined parental involvement as supporting their children and guiding them with regard to their academic development as well as their overall achievements. Parental involvement means that regular communication prevails between the parent and the school. It also comprises active participation in school-based and home-based activities, as well as taking part in the decision-making of the school. Parental involvement means that parents need to take full responsibility for the formal education of their children and provide them with the necessary resources.

The findings from the study suggest that parental involvement is very important for children to achieve success in the formal education of their lives (cf. par. 4.6.2.2). Parental involvement ensures that learners behave in a respectful manner, which decreases disciplinary problems. Learners perform better when their parents are fully involved, as learners feel that their parents care about them and that they take an interest in their children's activities. Parental involvement is important for the full development of the child and all the stakeholders (parents, teachers and the school management team) need to work together to achieve common goals.

5.3.3 Findings pertaining to sub-research question three

Which factors prevent parents from becoming involved in educational development at primary schools?

The study reveals that there are many great advantages for a child when its parents are involved. However, many factors hinder parents from becoming involved (cf. par. 4.6.1). The study revealed that some parents believe that it is the responsibility of the teacher to discipline their children. Parents' attitudes can have a negative influence on parental involvement, especially when the school and the parents have different sets of values, beliefs and viewpoints (cf. par. 4.6.3.1).

According to all the participants, one of the biggest factors that prevent parents from becoming involved is their job dynamics (cf. par. 4.6.3.2). Some parents have to work late or they work shifts, which prevents them from attending meetings. Other parents are working far away and they only come home over weekends. Another factor that prevents parents from being involved and attending meetings on a regular basis is their low socio-economic backgrounds. Parents with low-paid jobs do not always have

money for transport to travel to the school, or provide their children with the necessary resources cf. 4.6.3.2).

The findings from the study revealed that the family structure could also have a great influence on the involvement of parents, guardians or caretakers. Some children live with extended family members or grandparents. The findings show that these family members are not always fully invested in the education of the children, as they are not their own children (cf. par. 4.6.3.3). Grandparents may not always have the energy, know how or the ability to discipline the children or to help them with school-related work.

The study found that the Department of Education offers very little (if any) training and programmes to support schools with parental involvement and the lack thereof (cf. par. 4.6.3.4). All the participating schools have to conduct their own programmes and provide training to teachers regarding parental involvement. Teachers that are not knowledgeable about their subjects is a great barrier towards effective parental involvement for schools.

5.3.4 Findings pertaining to sub-research question four

What management strategies and approaches from selected school principals might serve as guidelines to improve parental involvement?

It is the responsibility of the school management team to ensure that barriers to parental involvement are overcome (cf. par. 4.6.4). The main purpose of this study was to establish strategies and approaches that might serve as guidelines to improve parental involvement. The findings from the study suggest that the professional development of teachers is an important aspect in the improvement of parental involvement. Teachers need to gain knowledge and broaden their understanding of all the different types of familial structures within South Africa (cf. par. 4.6.4.1). Teachers need in-service training, which provides many opportunities for growth and empowerment. The study revealed that learners achieve higher levels of performance when teachers are well qualified (cf. par. 4.6.4.1). Schools can conduct their own training by using their own knowledgeable and experienced teachers. The study also found that teachers need training on how to communicate effectively with parents during one-on-one interactive sessions as well as during parents' evenings. Teachers

need to develop tactful skills by being considerate and thoughtful when interacting with parents.

The findings of the study show that schools need to support parents in order to facilitate effective parental involvement (cf. par. 4.6.4.2). The school should go out of its way to accommodate parents so that they can become more involved. Most of the schools provide parent guidance workshops on a regular basis (Schools A, B, C, D and E). This is done in small groups or in individual interviews with the parents. The schools also provide services such as therapists and social workers that can assist learners and families in their entirety. Parents are also supported financially in terms of food schemes for the children at school as well as subsidies regarding school fees.

The findings suggest that parents need to become part of the decision-making of the school as this gives them a sense of empowerment and they feel that they have co-ownership of the school (cf. par. 4.6.4.3). All the participating schools have various parents' committees and organisations. Parents also serve on the school governing body, which allows them to give their input in a well-structured way. The study revealed that none of the participating schools has a specific programme or school policy in place regarding the management of parental involvement.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The main objective of this study was to determine various management strategies that can be implemented by effective school management to improve parental involvement in Southern Tshwane primary schools. The recommendations of this study are based on both the empirical part of this study as well as the literature study. The findings from this study may assist in focusing on the future development and improvement of parental involvement as well as the strategies that primary school management teams can implement to improve parental involvement.

5.4.1 Recommendations pertaining to research objective one

Research objective one was to describe the characteristics of effective school management. The study revealed that in order for a school to have effective parental involvement, the school needs to have an effective school management team. Schools need to provide quality education by means of well-qualified teachers. To ensure

school effectiveness, teachers need to attend workshops to expand their knowledge on the subject that they teach, as well as gain insights into various cultural backgrounds and beliefs, as this can have a major influence on the teaching and learning of the subject (cf. 4.6.1.1). Schools need to provide a healthy school climate where learners and teachers should feel safe. Schools should create a positive, calm environment, with teachers with a positive attitude towards the learners and their subject (cf. par. 4.6.1.2). The school needs to ensure and promote effective communication between the school and its parents. Information should be easily accessible and convenient for the parent in order to respond swiftly. This can be done by using electronic devices, e.g. e-mails and the ClassDojo application. The school can send out special invitations to the parents to invite them to become part of various parent organisations and committees. The school should convey the importance of parents to being fully involved in the formal education of their children (cf. par. 2.4.1.1. & par. 2.6.2.2).

5.4.2 Recommendations pertaining to research objective two

Research objective two was to discuss effective parental involvement and the importance thereof at primary schools. The study indicated that parental involvement is very important for the full development of the child. Schools need to encourage parents to become more involved by providing opportunities for parents to take part in various school activities. New parental activities could include the planning of a school excursion, organising extra-mural activities not yet offered by the school, volunteering to share their expertise during career days and being a judge at cultural events and science expos. Involving parents in these activities might contribute to the overall effectiveness of the school as it sends the learners a positive message that school is an important aspect of their lives. The study revealed that parents have a sense of empowerment when they become involved (cf. par. 4.6.2.2). To address the importance of parental involvement, the school management team should conduct parent workshops on a regular basis. The newsletter of the school could include encouraging messages to promote parental involvement. The school should initiate pleasant activities that will encourage parents to attend these events.

5.4.3 Recommendations pertaining to research objective three

Research objective three was to identify various factors that prevent parents from becoming involved in the educational development of their children at primary schools. One of the factors that hinder parental involvement is parents' attitudes. Teachers and parents should find mutual ground with regard to their responsibilities and their role as teachers and parents, respectively. To ensure school effectiveness, teachers and parents need to work together towards the success of the learner. The study showed that parents struggle to be involved due to their job dynamics (cf. par. 4.6.3.2). The school should go out of their way to accommodate parents, scheduling meetings with parents at convenient times, as some of the parents work late or they are shift workers. In the case of a parent not being able to attend a meeting, the school should make an alternative arrangement by means of a telephonic interview or by communicating with the parent through electronic messages (e-mails).

The study found that the family structure is another barrier to effective parental involvement (cf. par. 4.6.3.3). The school needs to provide workshops for parents on discipline, how to assist their children with homework and to remind and inform extended family members of their role towards the education of the learner. The findings revealed that the Department of Education (DoE) does very little (if any) to improve parental involvement (cf. par. 4.6.3.4). The DoE needs to provide workshops to principals about the management of effective parental involvement. It should allocate supervisors to identify schools where a lack of parental involvement is prevalent. These supervisors should assist schools in the management of parental involvement, especially with regard to training teachers in this field. The DoE should compile a policy on the management of parental involvement as, according to the empirical study as well as the literature review, South African schools are in need of this.

5.4.4 Recommendations pertaining to research objective four

Research objective four was to explain management strategies and approaches from selected school principals that might serve as guidelines to improve parental involvement. The study found that one of the management approaches to improve parental involvement is to promote the professional development of teachers (cf. par.

4.6.4.1). The school management team should conduct workshops for parents, as the findings indicated that many parents need guidance on how to raise their children. Schools should provide many opportunities for parents to be involved in the decision-making of the school. This can be done through the establishment of various parents' committees such as class representatives, cultural and social events committees, and sports committees.

Another important initiative is the establishment of a parent development committee, which includes knowledgeable parents on specific topics who can present guidance workshops to other parents. The school can also compile a survey once a term where parents are provided with the opportunity to give their input on various factors related to the school. The data can be analysed by the school management team to improve the school development plan. The feedback from parents will be used to enhance and develop effective teaching and learning at the school. The school management team should compile an effective parental involvement programme to guide and manage the school towards the enhancement of parental involvement.

The following section will briefly discuss the parental involvement programme as the main outcome of the study.

5.5 CONTRIBUTION AND MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY

All the participants contributed significantly towards identifying effective management approaches to enhance parental involvement, although none of the schools had a specific programme in place. The unique circumstances of each school should determine how parental involvement must be planned, managed and implemented. Next, the planning, management and implementation of a parental involvement programme for primary schools, which will contribute to the development of theory and practice at schools, will be discussed in brief.

5.5.1 Planning

School management teams plan for effective teaching and learning as well as managing the implementation of the curriculum; therefore, it should be equally important to plan for the successful outcome of effective parental involvement. The school management team, together with teachers and parents should devise a

practical strategy for improving parent involvement. The school should arrange a planning meeting where various departmental documents can be used, in particular with regard to circulars and regulations to identify areas where parents can become involved (Jansen *et al.* 2011:43).

According to *SASA No.48 of 1996*, all public schools should have an SGB consisting of democratically elected members. The role of the SGB is to support the principal, teachers and learners at the school to ensure that the school functions smoothly and that optimal learning takes place. As parental involvement is an important aspect regarding the effectiveness of a school, the first planning meeting should take place as soon as the committee representatives have been elected. Thereafter, a meeting should take place once a term to establish the identified needs for the upcoming term.

5.5.2 Management

Depending on the specific needs of the school, a committee consisting of teachers and parents can be established for all the identified areas at the school. Jansen *et al.* (2011:43), suggest that the school should form a coordinating committee on which one representative from the various committees serve. These representatives will act as liaison between the school, committees and parents. The school, together with the committees should formulate and draw up a policy for parental involvement. It is important that the school develop an annual programme regarding contact opportunities, meetings, dates and all activities to manage parental involvement effectively.

The SGB should work in collaboration with the principal and teachers to encourage parents to become fully involved in the education of their children. As the majority of the SGB members comprise parents, their role is to stand in for other parents of the school and to perform their duties and responsibilities according to the duties stipulated in the *SASA No.48 1996*. A cohesive school structure is integral to the effective management of schools. A healthy structure should involve active management of the SGB. In such a structure the individual committee member report to the SGB, who would have the responsibility of executing the parental involvement plan.

5.5.3 Implementation

The annual parental involvement programme and the policy for parental involvement should be conveyed and discussed with teachers and parents to establish common grounds in order to achieve the main outcome of this plan, which is the enhancement of parental involvement. According to Compton (2016:25), an inviting school climate is critical for the implementation of a parental involvement plan. Knowledgeable parents and teachers can conduct workshops for parents and teachers, covering various topics based on the needs of the particular school (Jansen *et al.* 2011:44).

The implementation of the parental involvement plan, which is managed by the SGB, should be ongoing and continual. The parental involvement plan should cater for interaction between parents and the school throughout the academic year. Parental empowerment by means of participatory decision making plays an important role in an effective parental involvement plan. Empowering parents, fosters participation, buy-in and the promotion of a common goal: the best interests of the child.

5.5.4 Review

After the implementation of the parental involvement plan, it is considered important to get feedback from parents and teachers pertaining to the success of the implemented plan. The parental involvement programme should be revised annually according to the unique circumstances of the school (Jansen *et al.*, 2011:45).

Feedback from parents can be received through a variety of forums. An effective and seamless method is conducting an online survey. For schools that do not have online facilities, paper-based questionnaires would meet the same outcome. An analysis of the data would then be done by the SGB. The outcome of the findings would then determine the needs of the developmental programme for the upcoming year.

5.6 AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- An avenue for consideration in the furtherance of this study may be the development of a comprehensive parental involvement and parental education plan. This aim can be achieved by further qualitative study, with the parent as the focal point, as opposed to the child. Parents play an immeasurable and

primary role in the education of children. However, this study has indicated that many parents are ill-equipped and fail to grasp the importance of their role in their child's development. The development of a needs-based parental education and development plan may aid in the development of the child.

- Further studies are needed to investigate the role of the Department of Education regarding the management of parental involvement at schools.
- Another avenue for further research is to determine the development of parental involvement at tertiary institutions. Further studies are necessary to establish parental involvement as a core module at tertiary institutions and in educational programmes. Pre-service teachers ought to gain skills and knowledge pertaining to parental involvement before they enter the teaching force. These teachers should be well prepared to deal with various family structures in order to enhance parental involvement and, ultimately, to ensure effective teaching and learning.
- The focus of this study was to determine management strategies and approaches to improve parental involvement at primary schools; therefore, a much larger study is needed, which includes secondary schools to establish the long-lasting effect of parental involvement.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The main aim of this study was to determine various management strategies that can be implemented by effective school management to improve parental involvement at Southern Tshwane primary schools. This study demonstrated the potential outcome of implementing effective management strategies regarding positive parental involvement towards the benefit of the learner. It is evident from the empirical findings of this study that all the participating principals have insightful knowledge and skills regarding the enhancement of parental involvement. However, there is still much that needs to be accomplished in terms of establishing effective parental involvement in all primary schools in the Southern Tshwane district as well as in the whole of South Africa.

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APPENDIX A: LETTER OF REGISTRATION



1551

VAN DIERMEN E MRS
P O BOX 7660
CENTURION
0046

STUDENT NUMBER : 5609-539-2

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

2019-01-03

Dear Student

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

Proposed Qualification: MED (EDUC MANAGEMENT) (98420)

CODE	PAPER	S NAME OF STUDY UNIT	NQF crdts	LANG.	PROVISIONAL EXAMINATION	
					EXAM.DATE	CENTRE(PLACE)
DLEDM95		MED - Education Management (Option 2)	60	E		

Study units registered without formal exams:

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

Your attention is drawn to University rules and regulations (www.unisa.ac.za/register). Please note the new requirements for reregistration and the number of credits per year which state that students registered for the first time from 2013, must complete 36 NQF credits in the first year of study, and thereafter must complete 48 NQF credits per year. Students registered for the MBA, MBL and DBL degrees must visit the SBL's ESONline for study material and other important information.

Readmission rules for Honours: Note that in terms of the Unisa Admission Policy academic activity must be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the University during each year of study. If you fail to meet this requirement in the first year of study, you will be admitted to another year of study. After a second year of not demonstrating academic activity to the satisfaction of the University, you will not be re-admitted, except with the express approval of the Executive Dean of the College in which you are registered. Note too, that this study programme must be completed within three years. Non-compliance will result in your academic exclusion, and you will therefore not be allowed to re-register for a qualification at the same level on the National Qualifications Framework in the same College for a period of five years after such exclusion, after which you will have to re-apply for admission to any such qualification.

Readmission rules for M&D: Note that in terms of the Unisa Admission Policy, a candidate must complete a Master's qualification within three years. Under exceptional circumstances and on recommendation of the Executive Dean, a candidate may be allowed an extra (fourth) year to complete the qualification. For a Doctoral degree, a candidate must complete the study programme within six years. Under exceptional circumstances, and on recommendation by the Executive Dean, a candidate may be allowed an extra (seventh) year to complete the qualification.

RECEIPT NUMBER: 20190103-5334-000
CASH: 8000.00
CHEQUE:
CARD: 8000.00 (Straight)
POSTAL ORDER:
MONEY ORDER:
FOREIGN:
STUDY FEES: 8000.00
BALANCE ON STUDY ACCOUNT: 0.00

Yours faithfully,

Dr F Goolam
Registrar

0108 0 00 0



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APPENDIX B: LETTER TO THE GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Mrs E van Diermen
103 Amkor Road
Lyttelton
Centurion
0157

Mobile No.: 0844879143

E-mail address: eltheahuman@gmail.com

February 2019

Mr E Mosuwe
Head of Department
Gauteng Department of Education
111 Commissioner Street
Johannesburg
2001

Permission to conduct research: Gauteng Department of Education

Dear Sir

I hereby apply for permission to conduct research in the Gauteng Department of Education towards the completion of my Master's degree in Education at the University of South Africa. I am under supervision of Dr Paul Triegaardt, a supervisor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management.



The topic of my dissertation is *School management strategies to improve parental involvement: insights from school principals in Southern Tshwane Primary schools.*

The aims and objectives of the study are:

- To describe the characteristics of effective school management;
- To discuss effective parental involvement and the importance thereof at schools;
- To identify various factors that prevent parents from becoming involved in educational development at primary schools; and
- To explain management strategies and approaches from selected school principals that might serve as guidelines to improve parental involvement.
- The research will involve in-depth, semi-structured interviews with principals at six different primary schools in the Tshwane South District. The participants (principals) will be given consent forms and will be made aware that their participation will be voluntary. Participants have the right to withdraw at any time during the research without any possibility of penalty. A full report will be available after completion of the research, should it be requested.
- Kindly awaiting your approval.
- Thank you for your support.

E van Diermen

MEd student

Dr PK Triegaardt

Supervisor



**APPENDIX C: LETTER TO THE CIRCUIT MANAGER REQUESTING
PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE TSHWANE SOUTH
DISTRICT**

Mrs. E van Diermen
103 Amkor Road
Lyttelton
Centurion
0157

Mobile No.: 0844879143

E-mail address: eltheahuman@gmail.com

February 2019

Ms H Kekana
Circuit Manager
Tshwane South District
265 Pretorius Street
Pretoria
0002

**Permission to conduct research at primary schools in the Tshwane South
Distric**

Dear Madam

I hereby apply for permission to conduct research in the Tshwane South District
towards the completion of my Master's degree in Education at the University of



South Africa. I am under supervision of Dr Paul Triegaardt, a supervisor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management.

The topic of my dissertation is *School management strategies to improve parental involvement: insights from school principals in Southern Tshwane primary schools.*

The aims and objectives of the study are:

- To describe the characteristics of effective school management;
- To discuss effective parental involvement and the importance thereof at schools;
- To identify various factors that prevent parents from becoming involved in educational development at primary schools; and
- To explain management strategies and approaches from selected school principals that might serve as guidelines to improve parental involvement.
- The research will involve interviews with principals at six different primary schools. The interviews will be conducted after school hours at a time most convenient for the participants. This will ensure that optimal teaching and learning can still take place with no interruptions.
- The primary schools and principals will not be identifiable in any way, as each participant will be assigned an alphanumeric pseudonym. This will ensure confidentiality and anonymity. The participants (principals) will be given consent forms and will be made aware that their participation will be voluntary. Participants have the right to withdraw at any time during the research without any possibility of penalty. A full report will be available after completion of the research, should it be requested.

This study will contribute significantly to the professional development of teachers and principals. School managers will gain knowledge and



understanding of why parents are reluctant to be involved in school-based activities. Teachers will understand learners' backgrounds better, enabling them to consider this when planning lessons. The implications of parental involvement or the lack thereof could be addressed and communicated to parents. This will create an awareness on the importance of parents to be more involved.

School principals will be able to explore the characteristics of managing an effective school. In practice, this study will contribute towards helping schools to exchange ideas, resources and strategies to improve parental involvement. Other schools could benefit from using these strategies and approaches and use them as guidelines at their own schools to enhance parental involvement. Principals from other schools can benefit from the management expertise of the principals under study.

Kindly awaiting your approval.

Thank you for your support.

E van Diermen

MEd student

Dr PK Triegaardt

Supervisor



APPENDIX D: LETTER TO THE PRINCIPALS

Mrs. E van Diermen
103 Amkor Road
Lyttelton
Centurion
0157

Mobile No.: 0844879143

E-mail address: eltheahuman@gmail.com

February 2019

Request for permission to conduct research at your school

Dear Principal

My name is Elthea van Diermen. I am a Masters student at the University of South Africa under the supervision of Dr Paul Triegaardt, a supervisor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management. I am required to write a dissertation and your school has been selected to participate in this research study.

The topic of my dissertation is: *School management strategies to improve parental involvement: insights from school principals in Southern Tshwane primary schools.*

The aims and objectives of the study are:

- To describe the characteristics of effective school management;
- To discuss effective parental involvement and the importance thereof at schools;
- To identify various factors that prevent parents from becoming involved in educational development at primary schools; and
- To explain management strategies and approaches from selected school principals that might serve as guidelines to improve parental involvement.



In order to meet the above-mentioned aims and objectives, I have to conduct research at schools where effective parental involvement is evident. I believe that you, as the principal of the selected school, have insightful knowledge and skills pertaining to the management of exceptional parental involvement. If you are willing, I would like to conduct a face-to-face interview with you in order to gain information regarding the management of effective parental involvement. I will develop concepts and arrive at conclusions based on the relationships, patterns and themes that will be identified in the collected data from individual interviews.

- Participation is purely voluntary and participants may withdraw at any given time during the study. The interviews will be approximately 30 minutes and will be conducted after school hours at a time most convenient for the participants. This will ensure that optimal teaching and learning can still take place with no interruptions. The interviews will be recorded, if consent has been given.
- The interviews will be confidential and anonymous. Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one apart from me will be able to connect you to this study. To ensure anonymity, your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym. You will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. While the interviews will be recorded, the files will be deleted once they have been typed up.
- Hardcopies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer. The typed interviews will NOT contain any mention of your school or name, and any identifying information from the interview will be removed. The typed interviews will also be kept in a password-protected format and all information will be destroyed after five years.

There is no anticipated risk or discomfort in this research. This study will contribute towards helping schools to exchange ideas, resources and



strategies to improve parental involvement. By participating in this study, other schools could benefit from using these strategies and approaches, and use them as guidelines at their own schools to enhance parental involvement. Principals from other schools can benefit from the management expertise of the principals under study.

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. You can have a copy of the approval letter from me, should you wish to.

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, or should you require any further information, or want to contact me about any aspect of this study, please contact Elthea van Diermen on mobile number 084 487 9143 or via email eltheahuman@gmail.com.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact my supervisor, Dr P.K. Triegaardt on his mobile number +971 50 935 8073 or via e-mail paul.triegaardt@gmail.com.

Kindly awaiting your approval.

Thank you for your support.

E van Diermen

MEd student

Dr PK Triegaardt

Supervisor



APPENDIX E: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY (return slip)

I, _____ (participant name), confirm to take part in this research and that the person asking my consent has told me about the procedure, nature, anticipated inconvenience as well as the potential benefit of participating in this study.

The content of the study has been explained to me and I have familiarised myself with the information sheet. The interviewer has given me sufficient notice and opportunity to pose questions. I have further confirmed my willingness, free from any inducement, to participate in the study. I further understand that I am free to withdraw from participation in the study at any point and that such withdrawal is unqualified without any imposition of punitive or any other action.

I understand that my participation in this study will result in the processing of findings into a research report, research paper, presentation or any other academic publication. I further understand that my participation will be treated with the utmost confidentiality, unless otherwise elected by myself. I agree to the recoding of the interview and the usage of any and all information conveyed by myself to the interviewer. I further confirm that I have receive a copy of the consent to participate form.

_____	_____	_____
Participant Name & Surname (Please print)	Participant Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Elthea van Diermen Researcher's name and surname (Please print)	Researcher's signature	Date



APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The main research question is:

HOW CAN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT IMPROVE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT BY USING VARIOUS STRATEGIES IN SOUTHERN TSHWANE PRIMARY SCHOOLS?

The main research question is divided into the following sub-questions:

- What are the characteristics of effective school management?
 - How would you define quality education?
 - How important is school management and an effective organisational structure with regard to parental involvement?
 - What, according to you, are the factors that determine school effectiveness? (For instance, the school climate, effective leadership, teacher development, etc.)
 - Have you attended any workshops on the management of parental involvement?
 - What form of communication are used with parents?
 - How often do teachers communicate with parents?
 - Are there any parent organisations or committees present at the school?
- Why is effective parental involvement important in primary schools?
 - What is your understanding of parental involvement?
 - Do you think parental involvement is necessary? Why?
 - How can parents communicate with the school in order to monitor their child's academic performance as well as their behaviour?



- Do parents enquire about homework and feedback on tests and formal assessments?
- Which factors prevent parents from becoming involved in educational development at primary schools?
 - What are the problems that affect parental involvement negatively?
 - Which effective strategies do you have in place to overcome these barriers?
 - Are there enough resources, programmes and training provided by the Department of Education to support schools, teachers and parents with regard to parental involvement?
- What management approaches do schools apply to improve parental involvement?
 - How do you promote professional development with your teachers?
 - Did teachers get training on ways to encourage partnership between school and home?
 - What type of support is provided to parents?
- What management strategies might serve as guidelines to improve parental involvement?
 - How do schools create a friendly environment to encourage parents to be fully involved?
 - How do you encourage parents to be more involved?
 - How does the school provide opportunities for parents to be a part of the decision-making of the school?
 - Do you have an effective programme in place to enhance parental involvement?



APPENDIX G: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS CHECK LIST

Documents	Record		Comments
	Yes	NO	
Policy on parental involvement			
Newsletters to parents			
Teacher-parent interactive opportunities			
Minutes of correspondence between the principal and management team			
Teacher training opportunities			
Parent workshops			
Any other form of interaction with parents			



APPENDIX H: DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

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4 June 2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Herewith I, Cornelia Geldenhuys (ID 521114 0083 088) declare that I am a qualified, accredited language practitioner and that I have edited the following master's dissertation:

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN IMPROVING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN TSHWANE SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOLS

by

ELTHEA VAN DIERMEN
(Student number 56095392)

All changes were indicated by track changes and comments for the student to verify and finalise.

The undersigned takes no responsibility for any changes to the document done by the student after submission of this certificate.



.....
C GELDENHUYS
MA (LIN – cum laude), MA (Mus), HED, Postgraduate Dipl, Library Science, UTLM

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Full Member of/Volle Lid van PEG (The Professional Editors Guild)