

The role of parents in supporting learning during COVID-19 at a primary school in Gauteng

by

CHANE DE JAGER

submitted in accordance with the requirements  
for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

in the subject

EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: DR P K TRIEGAARDT

JANUARY 2022

## DECLARATION

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Exact wording of the title of the dissertation as appearing on the electronic copy submitted for examination:

THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN SUPPORTING LEARNING DURING COVID-19 AT A PRIMARY SCHOOL IN GAUTENG

I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

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# ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



## UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2021/07/07

Ref: 2021/07/07/61669520/20/AM

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Dear Ms C de Jager

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### Title of research:

**The role of parents in supporting learning during COVID-19 at a primary school in Gauteng.**

**Qualification:** MEd Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2021/07/07 to 2024/07/07.

*The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2021/07/07 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

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7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2024/07/07**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

*Note:*

The reference number **2021/07/07/61669520/20/AM** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,



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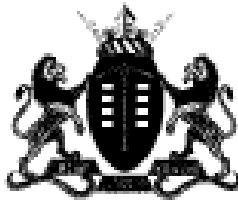


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# LETTER OF APPROVAL BY GAUTENG EDUCATION DEPARTMENT



## GAUTENG PROVINCE

Department: Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

### GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	24 August 2021
Validity of Research Approval:	08 February 2021 – 30 September 2021 2021/234
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Research Topic:	The Role of Parents in Support Learning During COVID-19 at a Primary School in Gauteng
Type of qualification	Masters
Number and type of schools:	01 Primary School
District/s/HO	Johannesburg West

### **Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research**

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

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

1. Letter that would indicate that the said researcher's has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.

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2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
3. Because of COVID 19 pandemic researchers can ONLY collect data online, telephonically or may make arrangements for Zoom with the school Principal. Requests for such arrangements should be submitted to the GDE Education Research and Knowledge Management directorate. The approval letter will then indicate the type of arrangements that have been made with the school.
4. The Researchers are advised to make arrangements with the schools via Fax, email or telephonically with the Principal.
5. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
6. A letter / document that outline the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
7. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
8. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
9. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
10. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
11. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
12. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, fares and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
13. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.
14. On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.
15. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
16. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

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

Kind Regards



Mr Gumani Mukatuni

Acting CES: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 25/08/2021

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# DECLARATION BY EDITOR

CORNELIA GELDENHUYS

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5 January 2022

## 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 of Education dissertation:

### THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN SUPPORTING LEARNING DURING COVID-19 AT A PRIMARY SCHOOL IN GAUTENG

by

CHANE DE JAGER

All changes were indicated by track changes and comments for the author/student to verify, clarify aspects that are unclear, make the necessary adjustments and finalise. The editor takes no responsibility in the instance of this not being done. The document remains the final responsibility of the student.



.....  
C GELDENHUYS  
MA (Lin) cum laude, MA (Mus), HOD, HDL, UOLM

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European Association of Scientific Editors (EASE: Membership 3323)

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- To the Department of Basic Education for the financial support they offered me.
- To my editor, Corrie Geldenhuys, for her effortless proofreading and editing of the dissertation.
- The Gauteng Department of Education for granting permission to conduct the study in its school.
- Last but not the least, I would like to thank my parents, Mr L.P. and Mrs U.D. de Jager, and my partner Mr J.C. Koen, thank you for your patience. Without you none of this would indeed be possible.



## **ABSTRACT**

The study investigated how the school management of a primary school in the D12 district in Gauteng can support parents to ensure academic success during COVID-19. A quantitative approach was used in this study. A random sampling method was used to select respondents for this study. The respondents were limited to parents of Grade 3-7 learners from a selected school in Johannesburg in the D-12 district. Data were collected using an item-format combined questionnaire. The findings revealed that parents need support to support their children and help them achieve academic success. It is recommended that schools implement the OPEN supportive model to help parents be supportive towards their children's academics and help them succeed in their learning. These findings confirmed that these recommendations would ensure academic success during and after COVID-19.

**Title of thesis:** The role of parents in supporting learning during COVID-19 at a primary school in Gauteng.

### **Key terms**

- Pandemic; COVID-19; school management; management strategies; parental involvement; educational development

## **ABSTRACT IN TSHIVENDA**

Thodisiso iyi yo vha yo sedza uri ndi nga ndila de hune vhulanguli ha zwikolo zwa phuraimari kha tshitiriki tsha D12 Gauteng vhu nga tikedza vhabebi kha u bvelela kha zwa akhademi musi hu na dwadze la COVID-19. Ngona dza khwanthithethivi dzo do shumiswa khathodisiso iyi. Ho do vha na vhathu vho nanguludzwaho u dzhenelela kha iyi thodisiso. Ndi vhabebi fhedzi vhane vha vha na vhana kha Grade 3–7 vho dzhenelelaho kha zwikolo zwo nanguludzwaho Johannesburg kha tshitiriki tsha D-12. Mafhungo o do wanala nga u shumisa bammbiri la mbudziso lo dzudzanywaho. Mawanwa a thodisiso o do sumbedza uri vhabebi vha fanela u tikedza vhana vhavho zwine zwa do thusa vhana uri vha kone u bvelela. Ho do themendelwa vho na uri zwikolo zwi fanela u ita modele wo vuleaho wa u tikedza u itela u thusa vhabebi uri vha kone vho u tikedza vhana kha zwa akhademi zwine zwa do thusa vhana uri vha bvelele kha u guda ha vho. Mawanwa a thodisiso o khwathisedza uri themendelo idzi dzi nga ita uri hu kone u vha na u bvelela kha zwa akhademi musi hu na COVID-19 na nga murahu ha yo.

## ABSTRACT IN SETSWANA

Tlhotlhomiso e, e batlisisitse ka mo botsamaisi jwa sekolo-potlana se se mo kgaolong ya D-12 mo Gauteng bo ka tshegetsang batsadi ka gona, go netefatsa go fitlhelela katlego mo mererong ya thuto ka nako ya COVID-19. Tlhotlhomiso e dirisitse molebo wa khwaletatifi. Go dirisitswe mokgwatlhopho o o sa totobadiwang go tlhopha baikarabedi go tsaya karolo mo tlhotlhomisong e. Baikarabedi ba ne ba lekanyeditswe go batsadi ba barutwana ba mephato ya 3-7 go tswa mo sekolong se se tlhophilweng mo Gauteng mo kgaolong ya D-12. Go kokoantswe *Data* ka go dirisa thulaganyo ya ntlha-ka-ntlha e e kopantsweng le dipotsolotso. Diphitlhelelo di senotse fa batsadi ba tlhoka tshegetso gore le bona ba tle ba kgone go tshegetsa bana ba bona le go ba thusa gore ba atlege mo mererong ya thuto. Ka jalo, go atlenegisiwa gore dikolo di diragatse mmotlolo wa tshegetso e e BULEGILENG go thusa batsadi gore ba nne le tshegetso mo mererong ya thuto ya bana ba bona le go ba thusa gore ba fitlhelele katlego mo dithutong tsa bona. Diphitlhelelo tse, di tlhomamisitse fa dikatlenegiso tse di tlaa netefatsa katlego mo thutong ka nako ya COVID-19 le morago ga yona.

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# **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

Parents must be involved in the education process of their child and reinforce learning at home. Reinforcement is critical for a primary school learner and provides opportunities for developing problem-solving, deductive and inductive reasoning, creative thinking, and communication, which all form part of the learner's educational building blocks. Mathematics is essential in everyday life and supports learning across the curriculum. Haylock and Manning (2018) argue that it is critical to teach learners Mathematics at the primary level as it introduces children to concepts such as finding solutions to problematic situations, skills and thinking strategies that can help them make sense of numbers, patterns and shapes they see in the world around them. In order for the teaching of mathematical skills and the ability to do Mathematics, a child needs reinforcement that takes place within the school context as well as out of school. This is where Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence becomes very important. Epstein's (2006) theory of overlapping spheres of influence describes how the school, parent and community have to work together to assure the child's development and effective learning. To ensure the school, parents and community work together to provide effective education, the school management needs to provide all parties with effective measures to achieve this common goal. According to Lepole (2020), the learner and their parents should be at the centre of the plan that is rolled out in order to assess any changes in the system that might affect them and to know if they are capable of assisting their children with the task at hand. Parents and learners should be at the centre of the plan, as parents are sometimes very hesitant to become involved in the schooling environment, because they are unsure of their role. This behaviour makes schools believe that parents are unwilling to participate in their children's education. This communication barrier can be overcome by improving communication and teaching both parents and teachers to work towards the child's successful development and detect learning difficulties early in the educational process (The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2020).

To date, several studies have investigated the risk of young children getting caught up in a negative cycle of learning problems, antisocial behaviour, and withdrawal from the

school environment as a result of experiencing learning difficulties during their early schooling years. Hojnosi and Missall's study done in 2006 has found that children who experience learning difficulties from a young age is the most likely to experience these learning difficulties throughout their schooling career if not addressed. Therefore, we need parents to be actively involved in their child's education to help teachers identify learning difficulties and the child's ability to do the work. Parents are influential individuals in their children's lives. Meador (2020) explains that a parent who is involved and provides the child with a good foundation for education will have a child that is educated successfully. This involvement and assistance become critical in mathematics because if the child loses the basics of mathematics, he will always struggle with the subject, and it happens when the learner falls behind in a unit or moves on to the next before understanding the content. Data from the study of Grade Power Learning (2018) suggest that a learner who does not understand a concept properly and moves on to the next concept is left with no foundation to understand the work that will follow; therefore it is critical for a parent to be informed by the school on what is expected of the child as well as the parent. This is supported by Epstein's (2006) theory of overlapping spheres of influence. All spheres – the school, the parent and the community – should work together to ensure that the child receives an effective education.

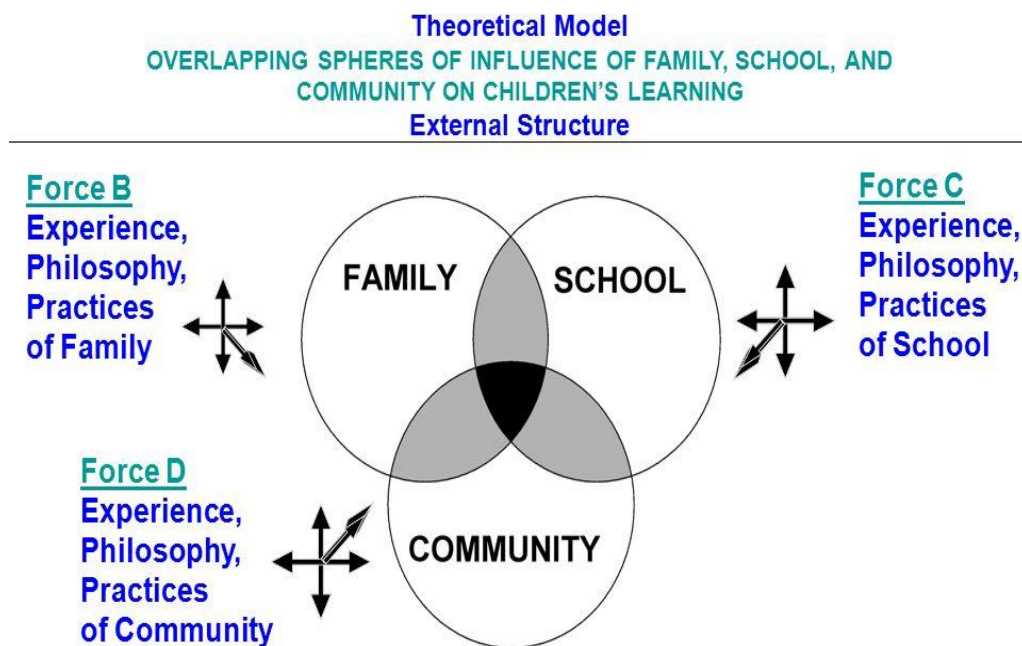


Figure 1.1: Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence (Epstein, 2006)

During the COVID-19 pandemic many learners had to continue their schooling from home, which meant that learners missed out on interactive school days and had no contact time with their teachers. It therefore became critical for the school, parents and community to work together in order to ensure that effective learning still takes place at home as learners need to bridge the gap in their education caused by the national lockdown implemented. It is vital that all three the spheres interact and work together, as parents have to know what the school expects of them. The school had to know what the parents find challenging; their children's progression had to be communicated; and the community had to help were needed, as many parents still work fulltime and have no time during the day to devote to their children's education. Therefore, parents often rely on community members to help with their children's education. The success of the three spheres working together will have an impact on the success of the child's education.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, where an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-Cov-2) as described by the World Health Organization (2019), caused schools to be closed down and led to more than 1,5 billion children worldwide being at home (Strauss, 2020). Deacon (2020) reveals that 2 million South African children are at home, not having any traditional contact time with their teacher. Educational institutions rely on parents to take on the role of teacher, Vegas and Winthrop (2020) point out that there is now an increase in public support due to the online learning process that is taking place. Parents have to home-school their children, and it soon became evident that all parents could not do this. Working parents are panicking as they struggle to juggle remote learning as well as their fulltime jobs (Leonhardt, 2020). This is not the only contributing factor that results in parents not being able to help their children with their education. According to the census results (*News 24*, 2012), only 28,4% of the South African population completed Grade 12. Furthermore, the results show that 8,6% of the population had no schooling at all. Therefore, parents find it very difficult to help their children with their education as they have no education. The results point out that there is a great difference between families, as some have received education of world-class quality, where others have not received any education at all, and this will affect their ability to help their children with the process of learning. Therefore, parents face two factors that can increase the inequalities of our children's education, namely the amount of

time parents have to devote to their children's learning process taking place at home. Another contributing factor is the uneducated parents that cannot help their children as they themselves do not understand the learning material.

Jumatt (2020) correctly identifies that the South African CAPS curriculum is already overloaded; even under normal circumstances teachers battle to cover all the work. He therefore suggests that parents have to be actively involved in their children's education. Parents have to assist learners at home, reinforce the teacher's work to see whether the child understands the concept, and make sure that the learner understands the fundamental building blocks. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, children were sent home and told to isolate, thinking that this is a short-term problem. However, it has become evident that this is a problem that we would be dealing with for much longer than we have anticipated. Therefore, it is critical that parents have to be actively involved in their child's education, especially during the pandemic, to ensure that their children develop as they would when they attend school under normal circumstances. A study conducted by Carlsson, Dahl, Öckert, and Rooth (2015) in Sweden investigated what impact ten days of extra schooling had on a learner's standard deviation. The study showed that just ten days of extra schooling could significantly raise 1% of a standard deviation if tested on the content instructed. Schools were closed during this pandemic; therefore, teaching did not take place. Some learners attempted online learning, but others did not have any access to these platforms. This means that for every 60 days of schooling lost, it implies a loss of 6% of a standard deviation (Carlsson et al., 2005). Jansen (2020c) argues that the 2020 school year will be left with only 50 days of effective teaching as disruptions of routines, teacher absenteeism, non-teaching days even when teachers are present, and just the general lethargy in most public schools take place. Table 1.1 demonstrates the school days lost in 2020 in more detail.

Table 1.1: Amended 2020 School Calendar (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2020)

<b>GRADE</b>	<b>ACTUAL NO OF SCHOOL DAYS</b>
Grade 7	127
Grade 6	108
Grade 5	75
Grade 4	85

The prediction Jansen made was not far wrong, as many schools could not welcome back all its learners due to the COVID-19 regulations and left the schools with learners attending school on an alternating basis. This means that some grades lost more than 100 days of schooling by the end of the 2020 school year. For every 100 days of schooling lost, there is a loss of 10% of the standard deviation. Lavy's (2015) findings show that a loss of perhaps 3 to 4 hours per week teaching mathematics for 12 weeks may be similar in magnitude to the loss of an hour per week for 30 weeks. Therefore, one might end up with an estimated loss of around 6% of a standard deviation. This emphasizes the need for parents to be actively involved and help their children with the learning process when traditional face-to-face teaching cannot occur.

The closing of schools and educational institutions not only affected teaching, but also the assessment period. Internal assessments, as well as the June examination, were cancelled, as it would take up even more teaching days. Teachers were not able to give parents any feedback on their children's progression. When not conducting an assessment like the June examination, the learners miss out on the opportunity to conduct an assessment where they are required to recall and convey information that they encountered. Learners therefore do not have the ability to retrieve and retain information and become very reluctant to do so. In Denmark, Anderson and Nielsen (2019) looked at the consequences of major information technology (IT) crash in the testing system. As a result of this crash, some children could not take the test. They found that participants who had taken the test two years before had an increased 9% standard deviation on their reading scores. Anderson and Nielsen (2019) found a similar affect in the mathematics test that was not taken. It was also found that the children from disadvantaged backgrounds were affected the most. Ferguson, Bovaird

and Muller (2007) point out that children from a low-income family already start their schooling career with a setback and if the child has another setback in their schooling, they are likely never to recover from it, as they do not have the resources to do so. Therefore, these learners already start their educational career with a setback. Learners from low-income families do not have the resources or contact with supportive adults to ensure that effective learning takes place. The closing of schools limited resources available to learners and parents and some children now have no support from adults (OECD, 2020). It is found by Stahl, Schober and Spiess (2018) that children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are less likely to get the benefit of early childhood education and care and are therefore already disadvantaged. Stahl et al. (2018) further argue that children from low-income families never close the educational gaps, leading to further disadvantages. The children from lower-income families face a number of risks such as high family stress and an absence of contact with supportive adults. The children have to face a number of reduced protective factors, as they no longer enjoy the security from school or teachers. Therefore, children from a lower income experience setbacks in their education as well as their daily lives due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our South African education system was not prepared for a pandemic like COVID-19. Jansen (2020d) explains that COVID-19 will be with us for a long time, and scientists predict that other pandemics will follow. Therefore, teachers as well as stakeholders in the education system need to prepare themselves and our education system to sustain itself through these times so that effective learning can occur. One can never be fully prepared for a pandemic, but we need a basic frame of reference to work from, as the decisions we make today in the context of COVID-19 will have long-term consequences for the future of education, as described by the Futures of Education (2020).

Before closing the schools in South Africa in 2020 due to COVID-19, teaching took place face-to-face using the talk-and-chalk teaching style as described by Professor Olivier (2020), which is used in many areas across South Africa. Buys (2020) correctly identifies that only the prestigious schools in South Africa are equipped with technology in the classroom and an online platform for learners to access. Jansen (2020a) further argues that most South African children come from working-class and low-income families, and these children go to school for two main reasons: learning



and eating. According to Saavedra (2020), we are already experiencing a global crisis where children do not learn the fundamentals at school with traditional teaching methods. 53% of 10-year-old learners cannot read with comprehension. If a learner cannot read, how will he be able to learn on his own? A study conducted by Rutherford and Vanderwood (2009), shows that this would similarly affect mathematics, especially when one looks at word problems and number combinations when the learner cannot read with understanding. This number will increase now that learners are at home and do not receive any formal learning, as many learners come from middle-class and low-income families where parents work as essential workers. Jansen (2020a) explains that this is the result of nobody being at home to care for these children.

Due to COVID-19 and the national lockdown where children were not attending school, traditional schooling has been moved to the side, and we were moving to online teaching. Learners no longer got homework, they but were expected to work from home. Saavedra (2020) describes how challenged learners are during the COVID-19 pandemic as many children do not even have a desk, internet connectivity, a laptop, or supportive parents. The Department of Basic Education is putting together learner support programmes to distribute through allocated television and radio time slots (South African Government, 2020). As teachers, we use social media tools to maintain the relationship between learners and teachers and keep learners motivated, as revealed by Strauss (2020). However, even then, there are still children that are not reached by any of these measures put in place due to poverty.

## **1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

During the pandemic, the Department of Basic Education put measures in place to reach out to learners and provide them with learner support materials, but teachers did not know if all their learners had access to these materials (Saavedra, 2020). Teachers were not able to see which concepts learners struggled with. With the learning process now being online it I find it very difficult to help learners understand some concepts, as learning is often about learning together and interacting with the teacher, as described by Blackall (2021).

Furthermore, teachers have no definite set of outlined rules or measures put in place on how to reach their learners. Teachers are left to their own devices and have to find

creative ways to reach their learners. This creates confusion and distress among parents, as there is work available for one subject but no work for another subject. Parents are looking for something definite and structures that are consistent across the board. As every parent wants the best for his/her child, parents want their children to receive the best possible education, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic and its uncertain future. Therefore, we need a definite plan to work from. School managements need to provide teachers with a basic frame of reference to work from. School managements should provide teachers with a specific set of rules and indications of what schoolwork to provide parents with that would bring some structure and consistency in the schooling process taking place at home. All grades and subjects should follow the same policy.

During Covid-19 and the national lockdown, we have set traditional teaching aside and now focus on online teaching. Parents have taken over the role of the primary teacher. One needs to determine if parents can be the primary teacher and whether support from management can help parents succeed in providing their child with effective learning at home.

To resolve this issue, we need to provide parents with strategies to support their children for effective learning to ensure our children do not fall behind any further. It is now established from various studies that parent involvement plays a very important role in academic development. Henderson and Mapp (2002) also suggest that children of involved parents are more likely to gain in reading and mathematics than children with less parental involvement. This view is also supported by Bryk (2010), Novianti and Garzia (2020), who point out that children whose parents are concerned about their school activities are expected to accomplish well. Children whose parents do not participate in their educational process are not expected to reach their full potential. This finding has bearing on all income and educational levels. Therefore, if Epstein's spheres – the school, parent, and community – work together, one can achieve so much more than in relation with only one active sphere. One therefore has to work together to ensure one's learners' development and academic success.

### 1.3 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

Given the overwhelming evidence of research articles over the last 40 years, it is clear that there is a strong relationship between parental involvement and the academic achievement of a child, regardless of socioeconomic status (Epstein, 1995; Garbacz et al., 2017; Elliot, 2018; Garcia, 2019). This strong relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement needs reinforcement during a pandemic to ensure that effective learning occurs.

It is suggested by Henderson and Mapp (2002) that the more involved parents are, and the more they support their children's learning and educational progress, the more their children tend to do well academically. However, for parents to support their children's education, teachers and parents need to set a clear common goal. School management should support parents to contribute to the academic success of the child. Parents are very unsure of their children's future, and they will need some guidance on establishing a school day and academic schedule. Gallagher and Egger (2020) explain that this can be done with some assistance from the school. The main issue investigated by this study is the role of South African primary school parents and their role in supporting their children to ensure that effective learning takes place during a pandemic.

This situation described above raises the main research question for the study:

*How can school management support parents to ensure academic success for the learner during COVID-19?*

To help provide an answer to this question, the following secondary research question or sub-questions was developed:

- How can school managements support parents with the learning process taking place at home?
- Which problems at home hinder academic success for the learner during COVID-19?
- How can relationships between senior management, teachers and parents improve academic success for the learner during COVID-19?

- What strategies can school managements implement to support parents during and after COVID-19

#### **1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main aim or purpose of this study was to investigate how the school management of a primary school in the D12 district in Gauteng can support parents to ensure academic success during COVID-19 by taking the parents perspective of how the school dealt with the online learning process and learning from their mistakes. The study focused on a primary school in the D12 district in Gauteng and how its parents experienced the online learning process.

The research aimed to determine how relationships between senior management, teachers and parents can improve academic success for learners during COVID-19. The research should shed light on the areas which parents need support in order to help their children achieve academically. This should help put forth recommendations on guidelines that could be implemented by the school management in order to help support parents with online learning during COVID-19.

The research conducted would in turn help the school management team to implement support measures to parents to ensure academic success for the learner during COVID-19. To do this one has to consider the perception of the parents and the impact that online learning had on them and their children. The research would evaluate how parents experienced the online learning process and how it was conducted by the school and its management team. In order to determine where the school was not providing enough support to the parents and to determine how the school could provide their parents with support they feel that they need. As a result, the research would evaluate if there is a need for supporting parents and how parents would like to be supported.

To achieve this aim, the following research sub-aims were formulated to guide this study and its investigation on how the school management of a primary school in the D12 district in Gauteng can support parents to ensure academic success during COVID-19:

- To determine the how the school management could provide parents with support in order to ensure effective learning (to be addressed in Chapter 2).
- To explore the problems at home which hinder academic success for the learner during COVID-19 (to be addressed in Chapter 2).
- To measure how relationships between the senior management, teachers and parents can improve parental engagement to ensure academic success for the learner during COVID-19 (to be addressed in the empirical investigation).
- To provide recommendations on strategies that the school management could implement to support parents during and after COVID-19 (to be addressed as the final outcome).

## **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

According to Jansen (2020d) and epidemiologists, COVID-19 will be with us for a long time, and they predict that other pandemics will follow. Therefore, we need to prepare ourselves and our education system to sustain itself through these times so that effective learning can occur. However, this study should provide school management with support strategies to help them support their parents and teachers during another pandemic to ensure that effective learning occurs and that our generation of children does not fall behind on their education.

## **1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

Leavy (2017) explains that a research methodology is like a plan for an unbuilt house, and if one follows the plan, one can build the house. Therefore, a good research methodology explains the procedure that a researcher must follow to conduct the study in great detail and clarity. The research methodology, therefore, refers to the way of doing the research. In this next section, the components related to the research methodology will be discussed.

### **1.6.1 Research paradigm**

A research paradigm represents the researcher's perspective of the world. It represents how the researcher will derive meaning from the research data collected.

The post positivist paradigm is grounded in the scientific method of investigation. The hypothesis should be tested, and this is done when searching for cause and effect. As described by Popper (1963), post positivist paradigm concludes that human knowledge is not based on unchallengeable, rock solid foundations, but rather upon a human's conclusion on the basis of incomplete information. Therefore, the scientific method involves the process of experimentation to explore observations and answer the question. The data gathered and analysed will be quantitative. In terms of what is mentioned above, this paradigm allowed me to collect data by conducting survey research methodology (Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaires). This research methodology is suited to a post positivist paradigm. This statistical analysis examined the connection between the independent and dependent variables in the large group, as Panke suggests (2018). The Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaire provided me with a lot of data to measure many variables and test several hypotheses regarding the support management provide to parents to ensure academic success at primary school level. Therefore the real event of COVID-19 and its impact on the education process now taking place at home can be observed and logically explained by the Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaire.

### **1.6.2 Research approach**

My study consists of a theoretical background that was provided by the literature study that was conducted. The literature study of books, journals, newspaper articles, research done by institutions and other media provided me with more insight. The literature review gathered information on how and if parents can assist their children with the learning process at home during the pandemic. This enabled me to gather information regarding how school management can support parents in assisting their children with their educational needs for academic achievement. This provided me with a basis to develop questions asked in the Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaire. This questionnaire was used to determine where parents and teachers need support from school managements to assist learners in the learning process taking place at home. The Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaire provided me with the opportunity to ask a large group of people the same question, to which they had to provide a written response that I could record. The information recorded provided me with data that I could use to make a conclusion on strategies

that school management can implement in order to help assist parents with the online learning process taking place, to ensure that effective learning takes place.

The Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaire formed part of a survey research methodology, which formed part of a quantitative methodology, as claimed by Kivunja and Kuyini (2017). Leavy (2017) argues that a quantitative study measures variables and tests the relationships between the variables to reveal patterns and correlations. This then determines whether or not the null hypothesis would be rejected (Panke, 2018). Therefore, in this study, I had to determine whether there would be a significant association between the support that school managements provide parents with and the effective learning learners experience during a pandemic.

### **1.6.3 Research design**

Leavy (2017) explains how a good research design explains in great detail and clarity the procedure that the researcher will follow in order to conduct a study. Dikk (2016) further suggests that a good research design should provide the researcher with effective ways of collecting the data needed to answer the research question. A quantitative design aims to prove, disprove, or lead to some acceptance of a theory that already exists. Therefore, Leavy (2017) points out that this type of study would measure variables and test relationships between variables to reveal patterns and correlations. Joubert, Hartell and Lombard (2016) correctly identify that those questionnaires provide respondents with the opportunity to write down their responses to a print question. This method of collecting data is very common in qualitative research.

Panke (2018) states that epistemology is the theory of knowledge. When one looks at epistemology, one looks at what is already known in terms of epistemology post positivists' beliefs that to make a prediction, one should measure reality on facts and personal experiences. Therefore, I had to assume a non-interactive position because of positivism. As positivism is an approach to the study of the society that relies specifically on scientific evidence, such as experiments and statistics, to reveal a true nature of how society operates, as described by Serva (2020). Therefore, when I interacted with the participants, I could influence the outcome of the study. In this study I wanted to prove that school managements' support to parents during a pandemic

can contribute to learners' academic achievement and my opinion might influence the study. I therefore have to assume a non-interactive position.

#### **1.6.4 Population and sampling**

McMillan and Schumacher (2014) conclude that the population would be the entire group to which the results can be generalised. My study population consisted of the school management and the parents of a primary school in Johannesburg in the Gauteng Province. This was chosen as the population, as at primary school, our children's educational building blocks are formed, and it is during this phase where parent involvement is critical. I also had experience in working with this age group.

McMillan and Schumacher (2014) suggest that the sample is the group of individuals from whom the data will be collected. The sample selected should provide purposeful data that could be used to gain insights and reach conclusions. For my study, only parents of intermediate phase learners were selected to take part in this study. They were chosen as the sample because of parent availability, time and resources. Furthermore, it allowed me to ask a large group (600 parents from a selected primary school in Gauteng all differing regarding gender, race and culture) about their beliefs and feelings regarding the impact the school management had on supporting parents during the pandemic to assist learners with academic success. I made use of the nonprobability sampling technique. This technique does not include any type of random selection from the population. I used subjects that represent certain types of characteristics, namely the parents of the intermediate phase learners.

In order to conduct the study, I had to ask permission from the school. Once permission had been granted, I had to contact the parents selected to ask them for their cooperation and willingness to participate in the study. When the school and parents had given permission, the parents of the sample selected through the nonprobability technique had to complete a Likert-scale and format-item combined questionnaire. The item-format combined questionnaire was used to determine where parents needed support from the school management to assist learners in the at-home learning process during a pandemic. The Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaire all the parents of the intermediate phase had to complete focus on



school effectiveness, parental involvement, and management strategies in case of a pandemic.

I created the actual draft of the Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaire in order to conduct a pilot study. The pilot study was conducted to determine if the questionnaire measured what it was supposed to measure and ensure that it collected data relevant to the study, as McMillan and Schumacher (2014) conclude. The questionnaire was distributed amongst a small number of individuals (20 parents) from the same population for my study.

The pilot test respondents were allowed to write comments on questions to help me understand if the questions were applicable and whether the time given to complete the questionnaire was sufficient and helped me make the necessary changes and correct mistakes, if needed, before sending the questionnaire to respondents in my study.

### **1.6.5 Instrumentation and data collection techniques**

In my study, I used a literature review and an item-format combined questionnaire as a quantitative technique to collect my data. This questionnaire was completed by the intermediate phase learners (500 parents) from a primary school in Johannesburg in the Gauteng Province.

#### *1.6.5.1 Literature review*

During the COVID-19 pandemic, parents were faced with the challenge of online teaching to ensure their child's academic success. However, this was not as easy as it seemed, as this presented many challenges to parents due to the South African education system's inequality. Reiersgord (2020) argues that many schools could not teach online, as they did not have the infrastructure.

South Africa's mobile data costs are among the world's most expensive. Therefore it becomes very difficult for learners to access online material, as poverty plays a big role. Jansen (2020b) points out that only 20% of children have access to online education, as only 20% of South Africans have internet connectivity in their homes.

Face-to-face teaching could no longer occur, as it became very difficult for a teacher to engage with many learners. In 2019, the average teacher-to-learner ratio was

roughly 1:30 (Reiersgord, 2020). Providing 30 learners on average with sufficient instruction, attention and feedback online becomes impossible. In my personal experience, this amounts to 240 learners.

During this pandemic, parents found it very difficult to assist their children, but they had to step in and help (Jansen, 2020e). Although most parents were also at home, but they were not always able to assist their children, as they were working from home, and it became very difficult to explain a concept that one does not know oneself.

#### *1.6.5.2 Research instruments*

Research questionnaires are one of the primary methods for conducting quantitative research. Harland (2020) explains that questionnaires consist of questions that provide specific, usually numerical, answers that can be analysed. In my study, I used an item-format combined questionnaire to gather data for the study. My questionnaire enabled me to ask a large number of people the same question and record their responses.

The purpose of the item-format combined questionnaire was to determine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. In my study, the dependent variable was how principals could support primary school parents during a pandemic, while the independent variable was the challenges parents faced providing their children with effective education.

The information gathered from the literature review guided me to develop the item-format combined questionnaire. The item-format combined questionnaire was distributed to my study's respondents, namely the intermediate phase learners (600 parents) from a primary school in Johannesburg in the Gauteng Province.

#### *1.6.5.3 Data collection*

McMillan and Schumacher (2014) reveal that quantitative data are defined as the value of numerical form data. In order to test the hypothesis of how a principle might support parents during a pandemic at a primary school to achieve academic success, the parents of the intermediate phase learners had to complete the Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaire. This questionnaire comprised questions the respondents responded, on a scale from 1-6, which provided me with numerical data.

The item-format combined questionnaire determined the challenges parents, teachers, and management face during a pandemic and helped me to set guidelines on how management can provide support during a pandemic to the relevant stakeholders in order to achieve academic success.

#### **1.6.6 Data analysis and interpretation**

Quantitative data are basic information and have to be presented in a meaningful matter using analytical methods. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) explain that quantitative data need to be analysed to find evidential data to help the study. In order to achieve this, the data from the questionnaire had to be captured in a Microsoft Excel document. Therefore, the data became numerical, and I was able to use it in SPSS. The SPSS will be used to do statistical data analysis on the data collected in order to draw a conclusion as to how school management can provide parents with assistance during a pandemic in order to ensure that effective learning takes place at home.

I used Cronbach's alpha coefficient to measure the internal consistency of reliability, as this method is best suited to the questionnaire and enabled me to identify the best-suited strategies that school managements can use to assist parents during a pandemic in order to achieve academic success. The data collected were analysed and divided into categories where different sources that correlate were identified.

I used a frequency distribution table; it displayed the frequency of various outcomes in a sample (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014) and was used to draw up tables to establish which strategies school managements can use to assist parents to ensure that effective learning takes place during a pandemic. The theoretical framework, literature review, and quantitative data combined were compared to determine findings and make recommendations.

### **1.7 RESEARCH ETHICS**

Participants needed to consent to participate in my study; however, they had to be fully informed of what would be expected of them. They had to be informed of my study's purpose and the role they would play in my study. They had to be informed of all the study producers and how the study would be conducted. They had also been informed that all participants would be treated confidentially. Participants participated

voluntarily in the study and were free to withdraw their participation at any point, should they felt uncomfortable or no longer wished to participate. They could withdraw at any point without being penalized. All participants were treated fairly and equally and with the utmost respect. Furthermore, their human rights and welfare were protected at all times.

Formal consent was needed from the school and all the participants before the study was conducted. Consent from the Department of Education in Gauteng (the Circuit manager) was also needed to conduct the study. The Research Ethics Committee of the University of South Africa also cleared the study.

Participants had the right to privacy; therefore, all the data collected remained confidential to the extent possible. In the study the school's name was withheld in order to respect confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were informed that their data would be kept private; their views and opinions would be respected and would not be discussed with anyone or used for any purpose other than the study. In order to reassure the participants that their names were not revealed, a number system was used.

The study did not cause physical or mental discomfort, harm, or injury to the participants. This includes revealing information that may result in embarrassment or information that may cause any danger to home life, school performance, or friendships.

To ensure that my personal views did not influence the study, relationships with participants were strictly professional, and participants were treated with respect. The respondents' view was respected; therefore, I did not influence any respondent with my point of view. The relationship with participants was to be study orientated only.

## **1.8 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

My study's potential weakness would be that the study only consists of one school's learners and parents. Although they all come from different socioeconomic backgrounds, it was still limited to one school only. The study also did not lend itself to a rural community, and therefore one will not get a full view of the South African education system during a pandemic. There is a missing component of the impact that

parents in a rural community have on their children's education and their ability to assist them, as the study will not focus on the rural community. Therefore, there is some room for more research on the way in which rural communities can assist their children during a pandemic. There is no clear indication of how people in the lowest social and economic classes influence their children's education during a pandemic. The study does not focus on the low socioeconomic class. There are, however, a few individuals who participated in the study that represents the low socioeconomic class.

Some parents were not willing to take part in the study, as they felt uncomfortable. Some parents were not literate at all, and therefore they could not read or write. They felt embarrassed by this and therefore declined to take part in the study. Taking these factors into consideration, the researcher lost some participants.

The school management, teachers, and parents provided me with responses they think I was searching for and therefore were not truthful. Therefore, it was critically important that I assumed a non-interactive position.

## **1.9 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

### **1.9.1 Pandemic**

A pandemic refers to an outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide geographic area and affects a high population (Kelly, 2011). It is the worldwide spread of a new disease (Surico & Galeotti,2020). This pandemic has affected schooling globally, forcing teachers to think out of the box to continue engaging with their learners. This has affected parents as they had to educate their children at home and had little to no assistance from school management.

### **1.9.2 COVID-19**

A coronavirus causes the COVID-19 disease. This new virus is linked to the same family of viruses as the Server Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and some common types of colds (Bender, 2020). COVID-19 has changed the way schools operate and affect teachers. Face-to-face teaching is a thing of the past, and teachers are no longer able to ensure that effective learning occurs.

### **1.9.3 School management**

School managements in general, according to Everard, Morris and Wilson (2004), plan how progress will be made or how a goal will be achieved, by setting the direction, aims and objectives. It is the organisation of resources so that a goal can be achieved in the way planned. Managers need to control the process, and they need to continue to set improving standards. According to Nishimura (2017), school managements' three essential aspects are autonomy, assessment and accountability for improving learning. School managements need to provide support to parents, setting a common goal to improve learning when learners do not receive face-to-face teaching but are taught at home by parents. It becomes a school management's responsibility to provide support and structure to ensure academic success.

#### **1.9.4 Management strategies**

Management strategies are techniques used to direct and control an organisation in order to achieve its set goals (Spacey, 2016). In a schooling situation, different techniques can be used to ensure the desired goal is achieved. Management should work with parents to ensure that this and the development of learning take place at home during a pandemic.

#### **1.9.5 Parental involvement**

According to Boonk et al. (2018), parental involvement can be divided into two categories:

- Home-based involvement: This is what the parent does at home to promote a child's learning. This can be conversations with their children about school-related issues, monitoring school progress, or guidance with homework and learning activities.
- School-based involvement: This is where parents participate in school activities like parent-teacher conferences and school events. This is also where the parent can participate in volunteering in the classroom or school-related activities.

School-based involvement will not necessarily contribute to the child's academic success, but home-based involvement will impact the child's development and academic success. A parent must be involved in the learning process taking place at

home during a pandemic as the child cannot learn on his/her own. The parent becomes the teacher and has to invest in his/her child's academic future.

### **1.9.6 Educational development**

Educational development is the development of the educational practice to enhance the academic performance of the institution. When educational development occurs, one looks at creating conditions that support teaching and learning, according to Bernhagen and Gravett (2017); therefore, finding teaching and learning strategies that would contribute to academic success. Thus educational development becomes very important as education has changed during this pandemic, and teachers had to find alternatives to ensure effective learning occurs. These changes need support from school management to ensure that parents are supported and capable of assisting with their child's effective learning.

## **1.10 CHAPTER DIVISION**

Chapter 1: Introduction and background to the study

This chapter included the problem statement from the introduction, background, and the rationale for the study. The purpose, aims, and objectives of the study were discussed. This was followed by a summary of the research methodology and design. In this chapter, the ethics, limitations, and delimitations of the study and the definition of key concepts were discussed.

Chapter 2: Literature review

In Chapter 2, the relevant literature is reviewed and studied. Literature was consulted on how parents and children were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and how school managements can use management strategies to assist parents and support them during a pandemic.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

Chapter 3 consists of a detailed description of the research design, data collection, and research methods. Data collection methods and data analysis techniques are also explained in this chapter.

## Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation

In this chapter, an empirical investigation provides information on how the school management of a primary school in Gauteng can provide parents with support during a pandemic. The data collected by an item-format combined questionnaire and findings are also discussed in this chapter.

## Chapter 5: Summary, conclusion, and recommendations

Chapter 5 will consist of a conclusion and recommendations of future research, while it focuses on the research objectives and how they were addressed.

### **1.11 CONCLUSION**

In order for a school to be effective and to ensure the academic success of its learners, a school needs effective staff. Staff can only be effective if they receive support. If a school's management supports a teacher, a teacher can provide parents with the necessary support to help their child achieve academic success. These three spheres overlap and support one another to ensure that the child receives a good education and is well enough prepared to be accepted in society as an educated adult.

According to epidemiologists, COVID-19 is the first of many pandemics. However, the education sector has to prepare itself for the future. Education has changed, and the need for new strategies for teaching effectively will have to evolve. For this to happen, school managements will need strategies and a basic frame of reference to work from to provide teachers and parents with support to ensure that effective learning takes place during a pandemic. If effective teaching does not occur, our children will lose fundamental building blocks that will affect their education in the future.

In Chapter 2, I report my overview of the literature I consulted on how parents and children were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. I also looked at South African primary school managements' role in the support they give parents during a pandemic to ensure effective learning takes place at home.





## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

During the COVID-19 pandemic, children were sent home with the idea that they should continue the learning process at home, hoping not to miss out too much on schoolwork. The education system was forced to change its ways during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers had to think outside the box; they had to find alternative ways to reach their children and present lessons. Teaching is moving online on an untested and unprecedented scale. Burgess and Sievertsen (2020) suggest that this severe short-term disruption impacts families, as homeschooling is a massive shock to parents' productivity and the children's social life and learning.

The schooling situation is a lot of trial and error, and uncertainty is turning high for everyone. Schools were never prepared to deal with a pandemic or any of the circumstances it has to deal with right now. However, it becomes vital that school management is provided with strategies to help support parents during a pandemic. This short-term disruption will not lead to only short term issues but will have a long term effect on our education system. d'Orville (2020) explains that extended school closures may not only cause a loss of learning in the short term, but it could also decile human capital and economic opportunities for children and youth over the long term. The COVID-19 disruption left as many as 40 million children losing out on their early childhood education in their critical preschool year. With these disruptions, children have missed out on a stimulating and enriching environment, learning opportunities, social interaction, and adequate nutrition. However, this will affect their long-term healthy development, especially children from a more disadvantaged background (United Nations, 2020).

Parents want the education system to be a two-way process. They want to contribute to their child's development, but Cuevas (2018) suggests that many factors get in the way. The current global expansion in homeschooling might be seen positively and liked to be effective, but the school's role determines the effectiveness that they play. However, it becomes the school's responsibility to be more proactive in informing parents about available resources and other ways they can become more involved in their children's education (Cuevas, 2018). The school management needs to ensure

that parents are equipped with strategies to help their children with the home's educational process. These strategies will help school management to ensure that they can deal with another pandemic in the future. United Nations (2020) points out that these strategies will prevent a learning crisis from becoming a generational catastrophe because if the education system collapse, peace, prosperous and productive societies cannot be sustained. This, however, requires planning and action from school management.

However, Chapter 2 is a literature review of how COVID-19 has impacted children and their families. Therefore, one should review the different views on parental involvement during a pandemic on a global scale and the views of South Africans. It is important to explore the parental involvement and academic performance of learners during a pandemic. One should also review the barriers that prevent parental involvement. By reviewing this, this chapter will provide the insight needed to determine how management can assist parents with providing strategies to help support parents with the learning process taking place at home during a pandemic. For a child to be academically successful, there has to be a close relationship between the school, the parent, and the community. All of these stakeholders should be actively involved with the child and the learning process. In the next section the theoretical framework the study is based on will be discussed.

## **2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.2.1 Introduction**

My research study was based on two main theoretical frameworks: Epstein's six parental involvement typologies and the Cognitive Consistency Theory. Epstein's (2006) parental typologies will be used to assess what types of involvement teachers deem very important and their view of actual parental involvement during a pandemic. The Cognitive Consistency Theory (CCT) was used to explain the contradictions between teachers' beliefs and the benefits of parental involvement and the actions teachers adopt to promote and encourage parental involvement during a pandemic. According to CCT, teachers should display a balance of beliefs and actions concerning parental involvement. The next section will discuss Epstein's six parental involvement typologies and how this relates to a child's academic success.

## 2.2.2 Epstein's six parental involvement typologies

There must be a partnership between the child, parent, school, and community. Epstein's theory places emphasis on the overlapping spheres and the influence of school, family, and community, which are necessary for effective collaboration, one of Epstein's seven principles (2006), known as the Social Learning Theory. Learners are best supported when the school and families strive towards a common goal.

Based on research conducted by Joyce Epstein (1995) and her colleagues at the Centre on School, Family and Community Partnership at Johns Hopkins University developed a framework of six types of involvement: Type 1 – Parenting, Type 2 – Communication, Type 3 – Volunteering, Type 4 – Learning at home, Type 5 – Decision making, and Type 6 – Collaborating with the community. These six categories of the partnership will support learner development and academic success. Below is a figure to show how the six parental involvement typologies interact with each other to assure the child's academic success.

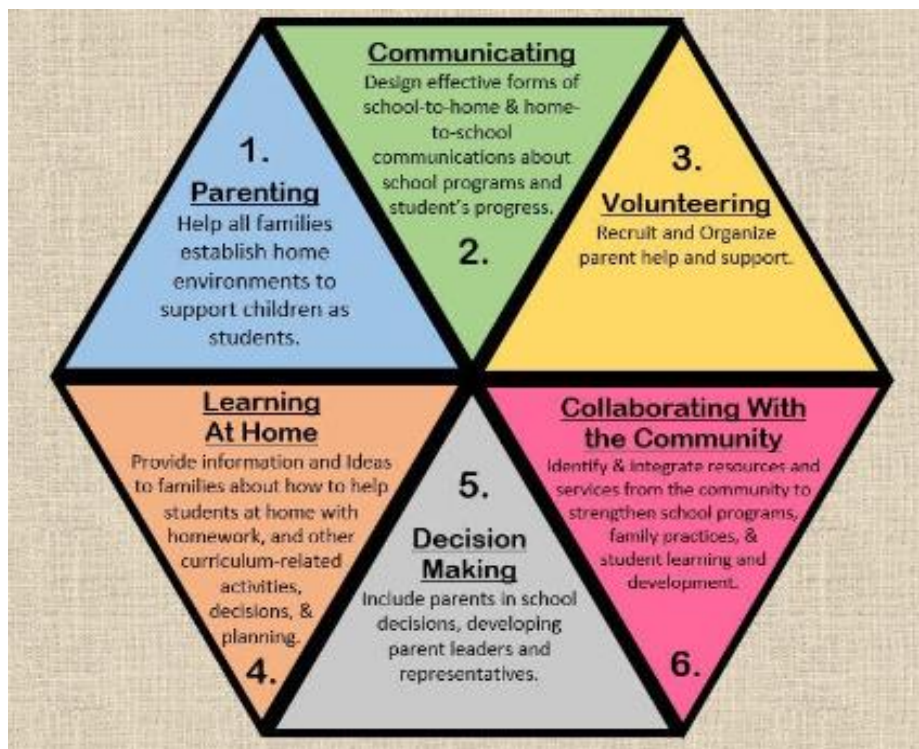


Figure 2.1: Epstein's six parental involvement typologies (Keany, 2019)

Next, the six categories of partnership by Simon and Epstein are explained (2001).

### Type 1 – Parenting

Parenting is when the school provides the parents with parenting skills. Parenting is the basic responsibility a family has. The school provides the family with basic parenting guidance through workshops to support children's learning.

### Type 2 – Communication

Effective education should take place from school-to-home and from home-to-school to school programmes and student progression. It is the school's responsibility to communicate learner progression and behaviour to the parents. There should however be an open channel for communication.

### Type 3 – Volunteering

There should be opportunities for volunteering at various locations and at various times. Parents should be able to be actively involved; they could provide direct assistance to teachers and staff, or they can volunteer as an audience member to support learners' activities and achievements.

### Type 4 – Learning at home

Learning at home occurs when parents are involved in the learning process at home, utilizing homework and other related curriculum activities. Teachers should inform parents about homework and the policies involved in monitoring and discussing schoolwork at home.

### Type 5 – Decision-making

Parents should be active participants in decision-making and development. There should be parent leaders and representatives to ensure that parents are actively involved in decisions and set academic development goals.

### Type 6 – Collaborating with the community

The community should be involved in providing support to the school and parents. When we look at these partnerships' categories, we can see that they become critical during this COVID-19 pandemic. The first and most important relationship would be communication. It is important to make sure that communication channels are always

open and that parents use communication channels. The key to managing parent involvement is continuous communication. Parents need to know what is of them as parents, but parents must be informed. In order for a parent to be informed the teacher has to be informed and it is the school management's responsibility to make sure that teachers are informed. Therefore, communication between teachers and the school management is very important, and management must state what is expected.

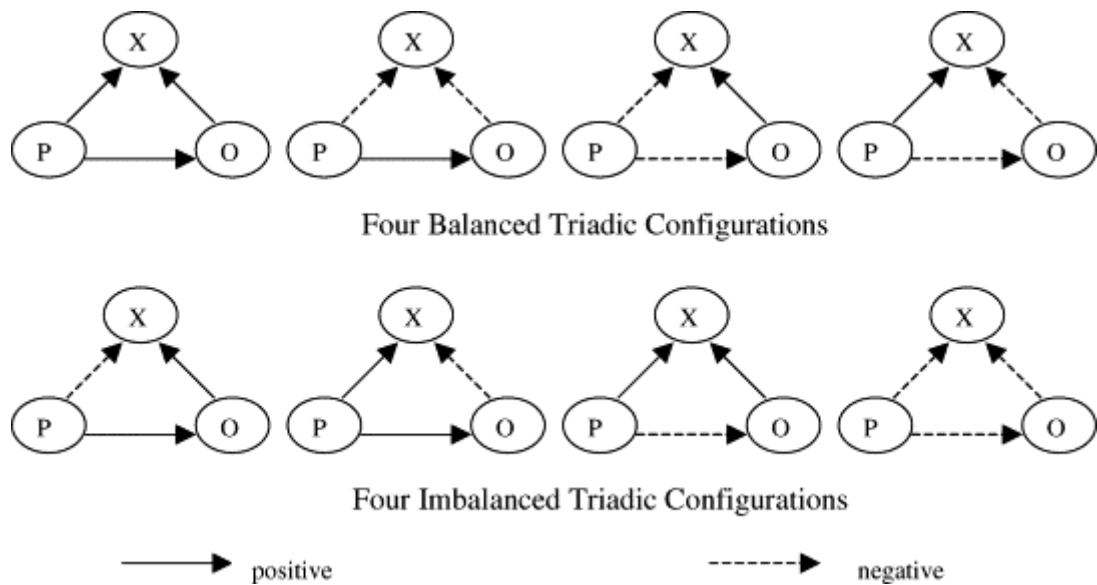
We need parents to assist with the learning taking place at home. However, this no longer involves homework only; they now have to assist with the entire learning process. Parents must be involved to ensure that learners do not fall behind and become disadvantaged because their peers have already mastered the concepts. If we empower parents with specific things they can do to support student achievement, this will improve their success.

### **2.2.3 Cognitive Consistency Theory**

Cognitive Consistency theories assume that people are motivated to seek consistency in thoughts, beliefs, values, behaviours, and feelings (Cherry, 2020). If these are inconsistencies, they will produce a tension state. The state of tension will then motivate the individual to reduce this tension, according to consistency theories, by making their relevant cognitions consistent.

Heider's balance theory suggests that an individual is concerned with the perceptions and the relationships between himself and two other elements in a triadic structure. In Heider's formulation, the other elements are often another person and another object. The goal of assessing a triad's structure is to determine whether the relationship between the actor and the other elements is balanced or consistent (Heider, 1946).

According to Heider (1946), a balanced triad occurs when all the relationships are positive, or two are negative, and one is positive. The elements in the triad fit together without any stress. Imbalance, however, occurs when these outcomes are not achieved. Balance states are rewarding, and people prefer balance states as this does not cause tension as imbalanced states do.



*Figure 2.2: Balanced and Imbalanced states, according to Heider's definition of Balance (Humman & Doreian, 2003)*

The figure above shows four possibilities of balanced triads and four possibilities of imbalanced triads. It represents two people and the communication between them, this is represented by labels P and O and the label X represents the object of their attitudes. People strive towards balance as this creates less tension. Therefore, if P and O disagree about X, the amount of tension will depend on P's attitude towards X and P's attraction to O or the inverse.

Heider's balance theory becomes important to the study as parents and teachers should have a positive view on parental involvement. Parents and teachers should share the same outlook and attitude towards parental involvement and the assistance of the learning taking place at home. This means that the teacher (P) and the parent (O) should agree on parental involvement (X) in order to avoid tension. It therefore becomes vital to have positive relationships between parents and teachers (American Federation of Teachers, 2020).

### 2.2.4 Summary

These theories become critical in the process of developing strategies to support parents to provide them with assistance in the task of reinforcing learning at home. Parents need to clearly understand what is expected of them and how schools would like parents to be involved. Parents should be aware that an teacher is not the only individual responsible for their child's academic success. Parents should be actively

involved in their children's education. They should understand the three spheres that overlap, and these stakeholders, the school, the parent, and the community, have to work together to ensure academic success. It is also very important that one should keep Heider's balanced theory in mind as the triad's Balance is very important to avoid tension. Therefore, to ensure a balance, parents and teachers should have a positive outlook towards parental involvement to ensure a tension-free situation. If the situation is tension-free, it is more likely that parents and teachers can work together to assure the child's academic success.

## **2.3 DIFFERENT VIEWS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT GLOBALLY DURING COVID-19**

### **2.3.1 Introduction**

The COVID-19 pandemic raised awareness of lots of inequalities that existed before the global crisis. Teachers have moved mountains to ensure that students are still engaged in distance learning. Seale (2020) points out that the challenges involved in meaningful and equitability involving parents in their children's academic success is a huge issue that is still not necessarily a priority for school systems. Seale (2020) further suggests that family's needs to be equipped to support learning at home in order to prevent COVID-19 from deepening inequality for an entire generation of children.

Parents are experts when it comes to their children; a parent knows his child inside out. A teacher should ask parents about their children and listen to what is shared by the parent. Maroney (2020) describes how parents possess a great deal of information that teachers do not have, and their insights can be useful in building educational programmes. The primary role of a teacher is to deliver classroom instruction that helps learners learn. To accomplish this, Cox (2020) correctly identifies that a teacher must prepare effective lessons, grade learners' work, and provide feedback. Therefore, a teacher is an expert on instruction. Still, it becomes very difficult to reach each child individually when not having any contact time or educating them through online teaching. Therefore, teachers and parents have a complementary skill set and a common purpose: to help the child learn and be successful. For a child to be successful academically, a parent and a teacher should work together as this is a two-way process. Bokas (2016) suggests that a parent should be more intentional in



providing feedback to a teacher and a teacher should become more open to seeing parents as colleagues in educating their children.

### **2.3.2 China**

In China, Dong, Cao and Li (2020) used a survey to assess the online learning experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. 92,7% of parents participating in a study reported that their children had an online learning experience during the pandemic. In general, parents had negative beliefs about online learning's values and beliefs and preferred traditional face-to-face learning in early childhood development. Dong et al. (2020) found that Chinese parents rejected online learning because of online learning shortcomings. They have found that young children are not able to regulate themselves without the intervention of external bodies. Thus, a parent has to help the child with the learning process taking place, and their time is limited as they have to still focus on their job to ensure an income. Parents feel that they lack time and professional knowledge to support online learning. Dong et al. (2020) suggest that Chinese parents were neither trained nor ready to embrace online learning.

Chinese parents perceived children's online learning as inconvenient, challenging, and time-consuming. Parents who are private business owners and freelancers had more positive beliefs about online learning. They can accommodate their children's online learning from parents working in public organisations and enterprises. In a study investigating parent's feelings about online learning and the online learning process. Dong et al. (2020) report that parents feel that they were forced to follow online programme requirements and instructions that did not align with online learning's aim and flexibility.

Parents in China believe that online learning is less effective than traditional learning in early childhood educational environments. In a study conducted by Dong et al, (2020) it was shown that parents in China believe that online learning will result in poor learning outcomes as online education lacks a learning atmosphere and social interaction to engage young children. Parents have found that their children are uninterested, inactive, and unfocused during online learning.

A study done by the Home-school Cooperation Committee of the Education Department in Hong Kong (Duan, Guan & Bu, 2018) found that Chinese parents did

not like getting involved in school activities and the learning process. Teachers did not like parents getting involved in school either. It was, however, found that home-based involvement increased adolescents' academic achievement.

### **2.3.3 Denmark**

The Worklife Hub conducted a survey in which 900 families took part. The survey showed that 71% of Denmark's families had both parents working from home after the society shut down during COVID-19 (Madsen, 2020). Parents battled with being caring parents and conscientious professionals at the same time. The survey conducted by Worklife Hub (Madsen, 2020), reports that the majority of parents felt that they could only put in up to half of the normal working hours while working and caring from home. Parents were between a rock and a hard place as parents had to choose between their jobs and their children's caring. Many parents in Denmark had gone back to old-fashioned gender roles where fathers primarily maintained their full-time jobs, while mothers primarily took care of the children, Madsen (2020) explains, as parents had to choose what they would put first a paid job or their child.

A key study comparing countries levels of parental involvement is that of Justice et al. (2020), who found that Danish parents showed significantly higher school involvement levels than family learning activities, learning extensions, and parental time investment. According to Anderson and Nielsen (2019), large-scale intervention in Denmark found that providing parents with information about the malleability of children's reading skills combined with reading materials led to sizable effects on children's reading writing skills. These effects were the largest when parents held fixed beliefs about the malleability of language skills before the intervention.

In Denmark, more highly educated parents reported higher regard for the importance of reading to their children and their roles in facilitating early skill development than less-educated parents. A study conducted by Anderson and Nielson (2019) suggests that highly educated parents provide their children with more learning opportunities at home. However, evidence suggests that the time invested in children declines as a function of maternal work hours' increase. Danish parents have spent far less time with their children than other countries (Justice et al., 2020).

### 2.3.4 United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, Sellgren (2020) points out that parents had to choose to support their children in doing their schoolwork or doing their work and keeping their job. In the UK, they concede that parents are the child's first teachers and only position themselves as cooperative and supportive professionals. Sayers et al. (2019) explain that the British expectation is that schools should have positive relationships with parents, quality communication, and reporting to parents on their children's learning progress. They also expect mechanisms to be in place for parents to support their children's learning. A redefining movement for students, parents, and schools shows that children spent an average of 4,2 hours per day or 46% of their waking time on remote learning. It showed that parents dedicated an average of 2,5 hours per day to support their children and the home's learning process (Cision PR Newswire, 2020). Spending more time with their children and the learning process, parents picked up on details that they had overlooked in the past. Parents did not spend as much time with their children in the past and were not as involved in their children's academic programme.

Parents feel that young children do not have the motivation and self-discipline to work independently, especially now that they are isolated from other children. Sayers et al. (2019) argue that children are very emotionally unstable and do not get any exercise contributing to their academic struggle. Sayers et al. (2019) further explain that parents find it very difficult to get children to work at home as parents usually play at home, becoming their learning environment. Therefore, learners are not enjoying the learning process as this is not their learning environment, and parents are now more aware of their children and their academic achievement.

Packman (2020) points out that the pandemic and the learning process at home had allowed parents to see where their child achieves academically. Parents feel that their children had gone backward academically despite their lengths to provide the learners with work. Parents have also noticed that the schoolwork struggle damaged their parent-child relationship. Sayers et al. (2019) suggest that there is a different dynamic between children and their parents than the dynamic of children and their teacher. Despite this, parents are now more invested in the learning process and would like to become more involved in the future, as described by Packman (2020).

### **2.3.5 Finland**

In Finland, the relationship between schools, parents, and the larger school community is vital to providing contextual and quality education. During this crisis, open and fluid interaction between the school staff and parents became more important than ever before. Data show that schools' and parents' or guardians' interactions were not viewed as very important before the crisis. A study conducted by Albiser et al. (2020) shows that during the pandemic, teachers spent, on average, 1,2 hours a day communicating and cooperating with parents.

In Finland, the non-compulsory part of the curriculum was excluded and each week of school closure represented about 21 hours of face-to-face teaching time lost. Schools were forced to replace this time with online learning and homeschooling mostly facilitated by teachers and parents (Albiser et al. 2020). A survey conducted by Albiser et al. (2020) found that 57% of the teachers in Finland were confident that they could assist their learners with online learning. However, according to Education Minister Li Anderson, a long period of remote learning may negatively impact children's learning and well-being (Reuters, 2020). Räisä (2020) points out that parents found it very difficult to assist their children as there were some language barriers as parents in Finland often do not speak the language their child is educated in.

In Finland, schools have the primary responsibility to initiate parent involvement procedures, but parents themselves should take the responsibility to participate in these programmes (Sorumune, Tossavainen & Turunen, 2013). Schools created a more parent-friendly environment. Teachers experienced interaction with parents in a positive way. Baeck (2010) argues that teachers tried to limit parents' influence through emphasizing their professionalism, thus leaving parents with the role of supporters.

### **2.3.6 Singapore**

In Singapore, the impact of the pandemic and the stay-home orders increased parenting stress. Chung et al. (2020) suggest that parents' relationships with their children have been harmed by the increased parenting stress and this led to an increase in harsh parenting. Therefore, as parents stress increases, researchers warn that there will be an increased risk of family violence and child abuse during this period

when families remain at home with reduced community contact and external social support (Chung et al., 2020). Higher parental stress levels are associated with poorer parenting-related outcomes such as harsh parenting and poor parent-child relationships.

Being a parent is not an easy task, and sometimes a little advice and help are needed. In Singapore, parents often rely on family, church schools, and neighbours for caregiving support, financial help, and social interactions. Chung et al. (2020) point out that due to the lockdown implementations, they were cut off these support systems. Working parents worked from home, which meant they had their normal workload and an extra task in assuring that their children were paying attention to online classes. Randstad (2020) correctly identifies that parents no longer had the privilege of a child care or tutor to assist their children. Parents in Singapore often relied on family members and neighbours to look after children to help them save money on day care or a child caretaker. During the COVID-19 pandemic, parents could no longer rely on these individuals due to social distancing. Randstad (2020) further explains that working parents had to take care of their infants 24 hours a day, which became very challenging.

Findings from the Singapore Longitudinal Early Development Study, conducted by the Centre for Family and Population Research at the National University of Singapore, Yeung (2020) revealed that only 35% of parents read to their children daily. The study showed that only 14% of parents from a lower socioeconomic status read to their children. 31% of this group of parents have never read to their children. Research shows that parents of a higher socioeconomic status provide their children with a more enriching learning environment. These parents are better informed about their children's developmental needs; they have more resources and are better equipped to create an environment that stimulates learning. Up to now a number of studies shows that parents of a higher socioeconomic status are more involved in children's learning in and outside of school. They set more limits for their children's activities and are more likely to set regular time and place for their children's schoolwork. Yeung (2020) argues that better-educated parents have a better set of skills to help their children with schoolwork. It is very important that parents have a set of skills to assist their children in the learning process that is taking place at home. Parents would need

to be informed on how they could assist their children as their children would need extra help to succeed academically.

### **2.3.7 Sweden**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Sweden implemented very few changes. They relied on its citizens to follow government guidelines on social distancing and crowd size to avoid overwhelming the national health care system. People worked from home where possible. High schools and universities transitioned to online instruction, but preschools and primary schools remained open with few changes in routines. Samuelsson, Wagner and Odegaard (2020) describe how the daily life in Sweden remained much the same as usual.

Samuelsson et al. (2020) explain that parents and students in Sweden have a right to early education and care. Therefore it becomes very important for the Swedish Government to ensure that all children in Sweden can attend pre-primary schools. These schools remain open for the children to receive an education as this is their right. Baker (2020) points out that everyone under the age of 15 in Sweden had to keep attending school throughout the pandemic. The closing of schools would have a negative impact on society by leaving essential workers struggling to find childcare. According to the Swedish Government, it will also put other groups of people like grandparents at an increased risk if they care for children (Baker, 2020). However, children kept attending school, and the relationship between parents and teachers became vital as parents relied on teachers to keep their children safe during the pandemic.

Good relationships between parents and teachers can benefit the child. In Sweden, they see schools and homes as complements and beliefs that establish good communication between parents and teachers. Löwenhielm et al. (2017) explain that in Sweden, they believe that there should be mutual interest and understanding between teachers and parents.

In Sweden, the belief that indirect parental involvement is just as important as direct parental involvement. Löwenhielm et al. (2017) argue that indirect parental involvement refers to how parents influence their children's learning. Therefore, parents must display positive attitudes towards the learning process taking place.

Parents are a child's first and primary teacher, and therefore will the parent's attitude towards learning influences the child's attitude towards learning. Suppose a parent is negative towards the learning process. It does not allow the child to form their own opinion about the learning process and their opinion towards subjects. Direct parental involvement refers to parents helping children with homework. In Sweden, teachers believe that homework should be designed not to be dependent on parental support but to be about repetition and the practicing of skills that children can manage to complete independently without parental explanation (Löwenhielm et al. 2017). Baker (2020) points out that Sweden has strong beliefs in a child's rights, including the right to education, and does not allow that learning takes place outside of school. Löwenhielm et al. (2017) reveal that teachers only ask for parental involvement when they struggle and need extra support. Time within the school day is limited and teachers cannot spend time with learners that are struggling academically. It is critical for parents to be involved with learners that are struggling academically.

### **2.3.8 United Arab Emirates (UAE)**

According to the chief executive officer (CEO) of the Dubai-based Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education, Masude (2017) suggests that parental engagement improves student achievement more than any other factor. It becomes critical for parents and schools to find effective ways to engage and provide parents with the support and resources they need to ensure that effective learning occurs. Parental engagement should not just be about helping their children with homework. More importantly, it should focus on the attitude and frame of mind parents have towards their children and their education. To date, several studies have investigated the quality early education and care positively impact children's cognitive, social, and emotional development, as did Brown (2019) and he argues that this will impact their long-term success.

According to Arab news, the pandemic has led to an increase in parents now interested in homeschooling (Diaz, 2020). Diaz (2020) explains that many parents are taking on homeschooling because of financial strains. Many parents are still looking at homeschooling, as they were not pleased with what they saw with online learning. Parents feel that traditional learning is not child-centred. Parents feel that children should be given the freedom to learn the things they want to learn. They feel that they

should take subjects that they would find interesting. The opportunity for specialized platforms to build on skill development becomes increasingly evident.

Diaz (2020) reveals that some parents and students were not comfortable using live webinars and the technical aspect. In the UAE, training was provided to learners, teachers, and parents, but not everyone felt ready to use online education as they still felt overwhelmed by all the new aspects happening in their lives. A survey study conducted by Erfuth and Ridge (2020) shows that in public schools, only 47% of their teachers received formal training and preparedness, 74% of the learners and 82% of the parents received formal training. The UAE focused on preparing their parents to help assist their children with the learning process taking place at home.

### **2.3.9 United States of America (USA)**

For many years, parental involvement has been seen as critical to student achievement. Harris (2020) clearly identifies that this has never been truer as parents have to play teacher aid, hall monitor, counsellors, and cafeteria workers while trying to do their jobs under extraordinary circumstances. Harris (2020) explains that there is a worldwide concern that many students will return to school being more behind than they should have been in a classroom, even with remote learning in pace. Harris (2020) further reveals that teachers had little time to prepare for remote learning, and children had inadequate or no computer access. Teachers, parents, and children had received little to no training regarding remote learning, and many could not deal with the frustrations of remote learning. Bushwick (2020) argues that students without parental guidance could fall behind. When returning to school, the outcome could be far worse, as prolonged virtual learning can disrupt a child's educational and social development.

A fifth-grade teacher in Columbus, Ohio, said that only six of her 25 learners were constantly participating in online lessons. These were the children whose parents were already in regular communication with the teacher (Harris, 2020). According to Harris (2020), parents in the USA told teachers that they would no longer participate in their virtual classrooms and that their children are done with the year. By doing these, parents are creating a negative view of the learning process. Children are given the impression that education is not important, and that they do not need to be educated.



Parents in the USA are struggling with discipline in the house. Children refuse to do work provide by teachers and parents are extremely frustrated with children not doing their work, which adds stress to the parent's day. Parents telling teachers that their children will no longer participate in virtual classrooms play into the child's hand as the child now gets what he wants, doing no schoolwork, and playing all day. Therefore we have obedient parents and not obedient children.

Justice et al. (2020) suggest that we should help parents to develop a stronger orientation towards the role of efficient learning may lead to heightened time investments with their children as a mechanism for improved child outcomes. Therefore, parents will have to take the time to invest in their children to ensure academic success.

### **2.3.10 Summary**

Schleicher (2020) points out that when looking at different views of parental involvement globally has provided some discrepancies between the countries Worldwide. It has become evident that most parents worldwide struggled to maintain their professional position and provide their children with assistance in doing their schoolwork. Parents were constantly faced with the challenge; do I help my child with schoolwork or provide for my family. Parents across the globe felt that the online learning process was not effective. Many felt that their children did not benefit from remote learning as they were constantly distracted and not paying attention. It also became evident that parents needed to be literate to help reinforce learning at home. The illiterate was only more disadvantaged and created a depend on inequality within the socioeconomic class. It has become clear that to have a successful quality education. One has to have quality, successful communication, and parental involvement. It becomes evident that school management needs to provide parents with strategies and support for them to assist their children academically.

## **2.4 DIFFERENT VIEWS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA DURING COVID-19**

Mestry and Grobler (2007) argue that the educational process requires a great deal of adult supervision in the formative years of a child's life. During these early stages of a

child's life, it becomes the parent's responsibility to monitor their children's activities, such as homework. The *South African Schools Act* (RSA, 1996) supports this. A child spends most of his childhood at home, and therefore he must receive the love and support from home he needs. A parent is the primary teacher and has to enforce the learning process at home. When a child is born, the parent becomes that child's first teacher and most influential teacher. The child would look up to the parent and follow in his footsteps. Price (2017) points out that it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that this child becomes a successful adult and therefore plays a vital role in the education of the child.

In a study investigating the amount of time learners spend at school Kraft and Rogers (2015) report that learners only spend 25% of their waking hours at school. The remaining 75% are spent away from school. Therefore, the vast majority of academic achievement differences are determined by out-of-school factors. Parents are the most influential teachers in the lives of their children.

Naidu, Muthukrishnu and Holden (2011) argue that South African parents struggle to cope with their role as active stakeholders in education. According to Naidu et al. (2011), parental interest and support are very important factors for children's success at school. The *South African Schools Act* (RSA, 1996) emphasizes that parents play a pivotal role in supporting a child's education. However, in South Africa, there are many problems in providing effective education during the pandemic. South Africa faces challenges that make it very difficult to provide learners with an effective education, which should be considered when strategies are put in place to support parents who have to assist with the learning process.

In today's society, schools and parents respond to increased expectations, economic pressures, and time constraints. Therefore, improving parental involvement is one of the most challenging tasks that various stakeholders face in the education system. Patton (2019) explains that the lack of parental involvement is since parents and teachers do not understand one another's views. It is a school management's task to assist and provide support strategies to parents and teachers for successful learning to enhance academic achievement. School management can do this through effective communication with parents and teachers, setting out clear expectations.

For years now, schools and families have been seen as partners in their children's education, as schools and parents share the common goal of developing the child to their full potential. Substantial research supports that positive parental involvement in schooling leads to improved academic achievement and socioeconomic development (Meier & Lemmer, 2015). In South African schools, the bond between parents and teachers is not always evident, and very often, parents and teachers don't share the same idea of what is best for the child's needs. Parents find it extremely difficult to be involved in their child's education. Parents are uncertain of their part that they are responsible for in their child's academic programme. Durisic and Bunijevac (2017) explain that parent's uncertainty creates conflict between the parent and the teacher as they might not share the same idea of who is responsible for the child's academic achievement and the extent to which they share this responsibility.

The findings of a study conducted by Segoe and Bisschof (2019) reveal that most parents are not actively involved in their children's schoolwork and that this affects the school's functioning. According to teachers, this is because parents have a weak understanding of their roles as stakeholders. Many parents in South Africa have very little schooling. Therefore they are not able to help their children with the learning process taking place. This became a very big problem during the pandemic as thousands of learners see their parents as their teachers. Many of these parents could not even read the teacher's instructions, as parents are illiterate. A study done by Statistics South Africa in 2018 has found that just over three million South Africans remain illiterate (Newman, 2018). Bangani (2020) argues that children of parents with low literacy levels and limited education resources are at risk of learning loss as they cannot reinforce their children's learning at home.

It is therefore critical that a parent takes the time to invest in their child. If parental involvement is not managed and implemented at this stage, the child will have some disadvantages that affect him later in his school career, as the fundamental building blocks are missing. A child loses between one and two months of progress after a 10-week break. A study conducted by NWEA shows that learners lose nearly 20% of their schoolyear gains in reading and 27% of their schoolyear gains in mathematics when taking a 10-week break (Huffman, 2020). Learners will only lose a larger amount of their schoolyear gains if parents do not assist with the learning process. Huffman further points out that online teaching is ineffective, as the child loses interest and

needs stimulation with the direct contact time. Hobbs and Hawkins (2020) point out that this much-needed stimulation needs to come from parents. Lack of this will only create a bigger gap in the child's academic achievement as students do not sign into classes or complete the work if they do not keep a close eye on their schoolwork and what is expected of them. Therefore, parents have to provide support to their children and ask open-ended questions during the learning period to promote authentic and cognitive learning while reinforcing critical thinking. In order to promote cognitive learning, learning should take place in a well-arranged environment. One of the activities that play a vital role in cognitive development is reading, as reading builds on a vast variety of levels. Through reading, one can achieve many things, like expanding the child's vocabulary, attention span, memory, problem-solving abilities, and writing skills. Language is very important when it comes to cognitive abilities. Therefore also helps to talk to a child, as this promotes cognitive learning. It also helps to play thinking games as this learns the child problem-solving techniques. Mcilroy (2020) explains that a child should partake in creative activities as this helps the child develop the skill of thinking outside the box.

According to Professor Jonathan Jansen, if one does not have access to the internet, Google Classroom, and other digital learning platforms, one will only get further left behind in an already compromised and divided education system (Ramrathan, 2020). In South Africa, there is a great variance in school infrastructure to support learning and teaching. There is a significant difference between higher socioeconomic and lower socioeconomic families. Parents from lower socioeconomic status cannot afford data costs or provide their children with devices. Reddy, Soudien and Winnaar (2020) point out that some children do not even have a book or a desk to work on. Therefore not all learners will have access to learning material, and these learners will have no learning process taking place at home. Learners from impoverished backgrounds had fallen behind unavoidably. Bangani (2020) explains that parents from higher socioeconomic classes do not understand this as they have never dealt with this problem of not providing for their children. However, teachers are in a very difficult situation as they are now deepening the inequalities between the socioeconomic lower class and the socioeconomic higher class of families. Bangani (2020) argues that remote learning and teaching success depends on infrastructure and the support learners receive.

South African parents of a higher socioeconomic class feel dissatisfied with teachers and their online education efforts during the pandemic, especially in government schools. The Human Rights Watch (2020) interviewed a parent where the parent said she was not very happy with the schooling system. Her child did not receive the adequate schooling she needed, and that her child is falling behind and is becoming an uneducated individual. Bangani (2020) points out that parents feel that private schools provide learners with access to quality resources and determine the success or failure of the children. Parents often forget that government schools are a variety of socioeconomic classes and diverse cultures within a government school. However, parents compare the government schooling system to the private schooling system. By doing this parents find themselves dissatisfied with their children's online education during the closure of schools. Bangani (2020) further points out that parents feel that private schools provide quality education and access to resources that government schools do not have. Human Rights Watch (2020) found that parents of government schools felt that their children were no longer learning at home and that they only sat at home waiting for the schools to reopen to continue with their studies. Many parents felt that learners did not do enough work. Teachers found themselves in a very difficult situation as they received complaints from both ends. Some parents felt that they had not done enough work to study fewer topics or less content through distance learning (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Others felt that the work was too much and they drowned, trying to support their children and keep their jobs, as they are classified as essential workers. Mandel (2020) describes how parents had emotional breakdowns as they felt that they could not help with reinforcing their children's learning and still focus on their work. However, teachers provided work as they would have within the allocated face-to-face time within a normal school day. Parents were not satisfied with the education system and the learning loss (Ramrathan, 2020).

Meier and Lemmer (2015) suggest that parents want two-way communication. Leenders et al. (2019) describe two-way communication as a message sent to another person and the person receiving the message response to the message by sending back a response. During the pandemic, parents felt that they were unprepared for online learning. They received no training, and they also felt that they were not ready to take on the role of the facilitator of the learning process now taking place at home. Parents feel that communication was not clear enough and that teachers were not

easily accessible to parents. Teachers did not communicate directly to parents. They used online platforms to reach a group of learners as a whole. Human Rights Watch (2020) points out that no direct communication was made use during the pandemic. Therefore, parents felt that it was a one-way communication line and that they had many questions unanswered. Parents felt that schools could have been more open with communication as parents often felt uninformed.

## **2.5 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS DURING COVID-19**

Parental involvement in a child's education is constantly found to be positively associated with a child's academic performance. Parents must be involved in their children's education, especially during a pandemic, as emergencies lead to negative impacts on the educational process and outcomes (Garcia & Weiss, 2020). Emergencies tend to strain existing resources and bring forward new challenges that have not been dealt with in the past in many cases. Therefore, parents must help with the learning process and reinforce learning. If they do not, their children will only fall behind. Garcia and Weiss (2020) suggest that the most disadvantaged population experience the largest and most lasting negative consequences.

It is now well established from a variety of studies that parental involvement is an important ingredient for many problems in the education system. Parents can assist their children as they know their child the best. A study conducted by Fan and Chen in 2001 found that a parents' expectations of a child performing well at school level drive a child to better academic achievements as the child wants to please the parent. Therefore, a higher expectation of parents can improve academic achievements during the COVID-19 pandemic as learners would be more motivated to achieve these results. Parents should help learners reinforce the work and provide the child with the necessary support. The Ministry of Education Guyana (2019) has found that the more support a child is provided, the better the child would achieve academically.

It is not easy to promote and maintain the participation and involvement of parents. Schools are becoming very diverse, and teachers face great challenges in meeting all the students' needs. Families play an important role in creating a school that meets all their children's needs. LaRocque, Kleiman and Darling (2011) point out that teachers

have very little knowledge on how to get parents to be effectively involved in the learning process and the reinforcement process that needs to take place at home. Therefore, it becomes critical that teachers receive some guidance in involving parents in the reinforcement of learning so that parents can be informed on how they can contribute to their children's academic achievements.

Parents who are more involved in their children's education have children who do better at school. Lansford (2020) explains that children with more involved parents have better grades, higher standardized test scores and are less likely to get in trouble for their school. Data from several studies suggest that a home learning environment provides young children with key opportunities to develop skills in various domains, including early literacy, language and numeracy. This is also supported by Curenton and Justice (2008). They show in their study that the higher-educated parents reported a higher regard for the importance of reading to their children and their roles in facilitating early skill development than less-educated parents. There is a positive correlation between the volume of learning opportunities provided to their children at home.

Justice et al. (2020) suggest that academic success is built on four dimensions of the home learning environment: parenting time investment, parental school involvement, learning extension, and family learning activities.

The table below shows the four dimensions and an explanation of the four dimensions.

*Table 2.1: Dimensions of the home learning environment (Justice et al. 2020)*

<b>TYPE OF DIMENSION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>PARENTING TIME INVESTMENT</b>	The actual amount of time parents spends directly engaging with their children. This direct engaging differs from household to household and is dependent on socioeconomic status, family structure, and the child's birth order. Children's early and later skill development also plays a role in the direct engagement of parents. Parents worked from home during the pandemic, and evidence suggests a decline in the time invested in children as material work hours increased. Therefore there is an inverse effect on the time parents directly invest in their children.
<b>PARENTAL SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT</b>	The extent to which parents are engaged in their children's early schooling. It is consistently found in research that there are positive effects of parent involvement in their children's schools,

	including actual engagement in school-based activities and ongoing communication with children's teachers. It is positively associated with children's short and longer-term academic development.
<b>LEARNING EXTENSION</b>	The concrete activities that caregivers do in the home with children, are like reading a book or telling a story. Studies have found a moderated association between the frequency of family learning and children's early skills development.
<b>LEARNING ACTIVITIES</b>	Activities that can enhance the child's skills beyond the immediate home environment. These would be activities that the family does together, like going to a library or a museum.

The types of parent involvement that are the most beneficial to the child will depend on the child's age and needs. Lansford (2020) describes how parents should be carefully attuned to scaffolding their child's learning in a way that provides support when needed and gives the child as much autonomy as possible to grow their abilities and confidence. Lansford (2020) further points out that parental involvement during a pandemic becomes vital and more challenging as parents are now more directly responsible for aspects of their child's online education handled by the school in the past.

## **2.6 BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT DURING COVID-19**

Schools rapidly began to close for long periods due to the coronavirus, but who will care for the children at home and ensure that effective learning occurs at home. Parents have to plan how they would assist their children by being the teacher, parent and provider. Parents are faced with many problems they have to deal with to support their children physically, emotionally and financially provide for them.

South Africa is one of the countries with the highest single-parent rate in the world. According to research conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the South African Race Relation Institute (SARRI), 60% of South African children have absent fathers, and more than 40% of South African mothers are single parents (Bertelsmann, 2016). Stine (2020) points out that being a single parent makes it very difficult to be involved with the child's learning process. Many of them have shift jobs, working in warehouses, healthcare, administration, or maintenance, making them essential workers during the pandemic. Therefore, parents cannot just abandon their



jobs and are finding themselves in a very difficult situation where they are holding on to their jobs and a sense of economic security. As single mothers are more likely to have their savings drained by the high costs of raising children alone, and many of them will never recover financially (Stine, 2020). Therefore, it becomes critical that single mothers hold on to their jobs as they are depending on a monthly income to provide for their children. It is very difficult for a single parent to spend time with their child and ensure that effective learning occurs at home as the parent has a full-day job requiring all of their attention.

Parents are often requested to work from home, which brings new challenges as parents have to keep children entertained while working as there is a shortage of childcare workers due to the COVID-19 virus. Caron (2020) points out that parents are reluctant to allow non-family members in their homes. Many other parents are not requested to work from home and have to be present at work. These parents often rely on grandparents to look after their children, especially single parents, who often find it very difficult to look after their children as there is no spouse to help look after the child while attending to work. During the COVID-19 pandemic this has become a very big problem as children are carriers of the COVID-19 virus, and grandparents are vulnerable. Parents are placed in a very difficult situation of whether they would risk the elderly's life or have their child unattended at home (Gibson, 2020). Children are left in the care of grandparents, and parents expect that grandparents should attend to the learning process and help them with schoolwork. Still, very often, grandparents cannot do this, as many grandparents have not received an education and are not literate. According to a study done by Peterson et al. (2019) looking at the common concerns of teachers had when grandparents look after children, concluded that the most common concerns where grandparents are taking on the role of a parent were concerns of the child's social, emotional, and academic needs as well as the grandparent's well-being.

Parents are faced with economic pressure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Stine (2020) explains that parents are unsure if they can afford the extra books, workshops, and supplies they need to keep their home-from-school child active as many parents may lose their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Parents are very concerned about whether they would provide for their children and help them achieve academically. According to a poll done by the Los Angeles Times, 89% of parents are concerned

about children falling behind academically. The same poll showed that 80% of parents showed that their stress levels were higher or much higher than usual (Khohli, 2020). These high-stress levels impact children as emotions are running high, and parents are less patient with their children. Several parents who had lost their jobs tried to keep it from their families, but children are often aware and worried about the future as parents are barely making months' end (Vorster & Magnes, 2020). According to Mabuza (2020) of *Times Live*, 3 million South Africans lost their jobs. A survey conducted by Times Live showed that 47% of the respondents reported that they had ran out of money and could not provide for their families. Therefore, money is limited to school supplies, data to do schoolwork becomes a luxury, and parents cannot assist learners with the learning process taking place at home during the pandemic.

More than 58 million people in South Africa can use the internet, but only 31 million use the internet. Makanda (2020) points out that mobile phones are the most basic access to the internet that most South Africans have, as only 22% own laptops. Mobile phones cannot do all the functions needed to take place for the online learning process effectively. Therefore, it is very difficult for the learning process to occur on an online platform as the teacher only reaches a small number of learners. Parents very often only have one laptop and need to use it for work purposes. Learners and parents are too tired after a long day's work, and the schoolwork does not get done as the laptop can only be used after hours as a parent has a responsibility towards their work. Parents with more than one child need multiple devices to access their material, which is not always possible. Therefore, siblings have to find a way to solve this problem and use the device at scheduled times, which can be challenging for the learning process taking place at home.

Families are now also challenged with data costs and the quality of their data connection. In many families, a low-cost data line was sufficient in the past as data were used for social activities. In contrast, during the pandemic, more load was added to the line as parents worked from home, and learners were attending to their schoolwork online. Sun (2020) explains that there were many frustrations, as students could not attend to their lessons as they lost connectivity. Although the most general way of accessing the internet is through mobile devices, data costs remain a problem (Makanda, 2020), and parents are faced with the difficult choice between buying food or data for a child to continue the learning process in these poorer areas where people

do not have access. Mokhoali (2020) argues that every effort must be made to breach the gap in access to learning between those who can afford to learn from home and those who cannot. The Department of Basic Education did go the extra mile to breach the gap by opening up radio stations and television that provided help through broadcasting educational programmes. Still, many South Africans do not own a radio or television, and the children will never be reached. Parents also have more than one child and find it difficult to keep the child who is not receiving a lesson entertained.

## **2.7 INDICATIONS BY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TO INCREASE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT DURING COVID-19**

Reimers and Schleicher (2020) suggest that parents must be informed of what they can do to support their children during the online learning process taking place at home. A communication strategy is vital to motivate coherence and collaboration as the entire school system seeks to support education during the pandemic. Therefore, there must be clear, effective communication with families so that families know what is expected of their children and how they could achieve this outcome. Belfali (2020) suggests that information should be shared on what parents can do to support learning at home.

In 98 countries, education leaders said that their supporting parents are among the top priorities in response to the crisis. More than 70% of the respondents of a survey reported that supporting parents and caregivers as they help their children at home is critically important, along with the support of teachers and students. More than 70% said that it is challenging to support parents, possibly because it is difficult for parents to stay available for the school to communicate with parents (Belfali, 2020).

Reimers and Schleicher (2020) describe that a teacher should remain essential in steering the students learning in the educational learning process. Parents should, however, be facilitators in the learning process taking place. To achieve this, parents need some form of training and guidance, as many parents do not know their role as parents in their child's education. Parents also need this training when it comes to the technology involved in the learning process as some parents are not literate and will not be able to use technology. The school should develop a strategy with clear implementation plans, and where possible, schools should engage with similar groups

in the education sector. Belfali (2020) argues that the main goal would be to provide concrete guidance and tools to parents to help their children's learning.

Schools should be aware that some parents and children will need more help and guidance as they struggle and need extra support with their schoolwork. Therefore, the schools should provide specific support and resources to disadvantaged parents, including parents that may have a language barrier. Belfali (2020) suggests that schools can provide these parents with a social network to get relevant information and support. Doing this will close the gap in inequalities between the lower socioeconomic class and higher socioeconomic class.

## **2.8 CONCLUSION**

It became very clear from the findings that parents found it challenging to take responsibility for their child's learning. Parents were faced with some challenges. Their knowledge, educational background, the time they were able to spend with their children, and their socioeconomic status all played a role in whether their children could learn remotely and what extent they could adopt virtual learning. Inequalities between lower socioeconomic and higher socioeconomic classes were only increased, as not everyone had equal access to learning material and remote learning.

It also became evident that parents experienced higher stress levels as they were trying to provide for their families by still doing their day-to-day job while attending to their children's learning process at home. Parents found that learners were very reluctant to work at home and preferred a learning environment, as a school. The home environment to the child is seen as an environment for play. Parents found it very difficult to take on the role of parent and teacher, and in many cases, the child told the parent that they would not do their work, and they did not.

Substantial evidence supports that positive parental involvement leads to children achieving academically. However, parents found this difficult as they found that communication between schools and families was not efficient and clear enough. Schools need a critical communication system that focuses on communication with families. Schools would also need to provide parents with training and guidance regarding their role as parents and what the school expects of them when helping their

children with the learning process at home. It becomes critical that schools develop a strategy with clear implementation plans to help assist and support parents. This education strategy should prevent learning loss. Chapter 3 will explain the study methodologies used and how strategies can be implemented to prevent learning loss in supporting parents in assisting their children at home with the learning process.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 2 provided an in-depth literature study of the COVID-19 pandemic and how it influenced the education system. The literature study provided insight into how different countries worldwide dealt with the pandemic and how involved parents were in the online learning process at home. It also provided insight into how parents could assist their children and their general feeling towards the learning process, moving towards the online platform. The literature study provided insight into how school management can provide parents with a support structure to ensure that effective learning occurs and that learners don't fall behind and create a bigger gap between the educated adult and the uneducated adult.

Chapter 2 also discussed the two theoretical frameworks the study is based on and included a detailed discussion of each framework and its ties with the study. It also explained why the theoretical framework is important and how it can be used to provide support to the parents to ensure that their children develop to their full potential.

Chapter 3 will discuss and explain the specific research design that guides the research decision. It provides a detailed justification for using quantitative research. It provides details on the population and sampling of the study. It justifies the reason for the selection of the population and sampling methods used in the study. Chapter 3 will also provide insight into the data collection producers and how data will be presented and will specifically look at the data collection methods and instrumentation regarding the qualitative Likert-scale questionnaires used in the study. In Chapter 3, validity and reliability will be explained. It will also look at the ethical measures that the study would follow to respect all respondents' rights and dignity. The next section of the chapter will discuss the research approach.

## **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **3.2.1 Introduction**

Salkind (2010) explains that, at heart, the research design can be described as a formalised approach towards problem-solving, thinking, and acquiring knowledge. The success of the knowledge accumulated depends on the appropriate choice of statistical tools, tests, and the analysis of this to meet the study's objectives. Leavy (2017) describes the research methodology as a plan for an unbuilt house, and if one follows the plan, one can build the house. Therefore, a research design is a specific plan to investigate the research problem; for this plan to work, the researcher has to take specific steps to answer the research question. This view is supported by Joubert et al. (2016). A good research design describes the researcher's procedure to follow for the study to be successful in detail and clarity.

The types of research design are viewed from two perspectives, the quantitative research design or the qualitative research design. Rahman (2017) describes qualitative research as any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification. It can refer to research about persons' lives, lived experiences, behaviour, emotions and feelings, as well as about organisational functioning, social movements, cultural phenomena and interaction between nations. Therefore, qualitative research is not statistical and incorporates multiple realities. Rahman (2017) further explains that quantitative research is a research strategy that emphasizes quantification in the collection and analysis of data. Therefore, this research method attempts to investigate the answers that the researcher has. Quantitative research is therefore used to measure variables. For this study a quantitative, description method was used. The literature was reviewed to from an understanding of how school management could provide support to parents during a pandemic to ensure that effective learning takes place.

### **3.2.2 Research approach**

Creswell and Creswell (2017) describe the research approach as a plan and the procedure for research. The research approach includes the steps from the broad assumption to detailed data collection methods, data analysis, and the interpretation

of the data collected. This plan involves several decisions and steps that have to be taken in a systematic order by the researcher to investigate, identify, define, and explain the study.

A quantitative research approach was suitable for this study as it tests objective theories by examining the relationship among variables, as described by Creswell and Creswell (2017). The data would be numeric, and it could be analysed using 11 statistical procedures. I then had to write a final report of a set structure consisting of an introduction, literature and theory, methods, results, and a discussion.

The quantitative approach relates to the study because it wants to determine if schools' management of primary schools in the D12 district in Gauteng can support parents during a pandemic in the use of online procedures to improve learning at home. The data collected by a quantitative method allowed me to establish how primary schools can support parents. Where support is needed to ensure that effective learning occurs, the child achieves academically and becomes a successful adult accepted by society, as described by Durisic and Bunijevac (2017).

### **3.2.3 Research paradigm**

Park et al. (2020) describe scientific research is a systematic quest for knowledge. It can be considered through different research paradigms that make assumptions about how the world operates. Park et al. (2020) further explain the research paradigm as the philosophy of science and guides the way science is conducted. A research paradigm, therefore, represents the researcher's perspective of the world. It represented how I found meaning from the data collected. According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) the term 'paradigm' in educational research is used to describe a researcher 'worldview'. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) describe this worldview as the perspective that informs the meaning or interpretation of the data. Therefore, paradigms give insight into how reality is viewed and how the nature of knowledge is interpreted. It also looks at the role and the value of the research. as Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) explain. that a research paradigm reflects on the researcher beliefs about the world that he/she lives in. The research's paradigm, therefore, becomes the criteria used to justify the quality of the research.



A research paradigm is a set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientist about how problems should be understood and addressed. The research paradigm of post positivism was used in this quantitative study. Creswell and Creswell (2017) suggest that one begins with a theory; then collects data to either support it or reject it. I then have to develop a test or experiment to test the variables. Park et al. (2020) describe this as a circular process that begins with a theory that is from the literature (1) turning abstract concepts into measurable observations; (2) communication via text; (3) findings need to be interpreted; (4) and ultimately the findings from this study will be used to help inform theory and to contribute to the literature; (5) thus completing the circular process.

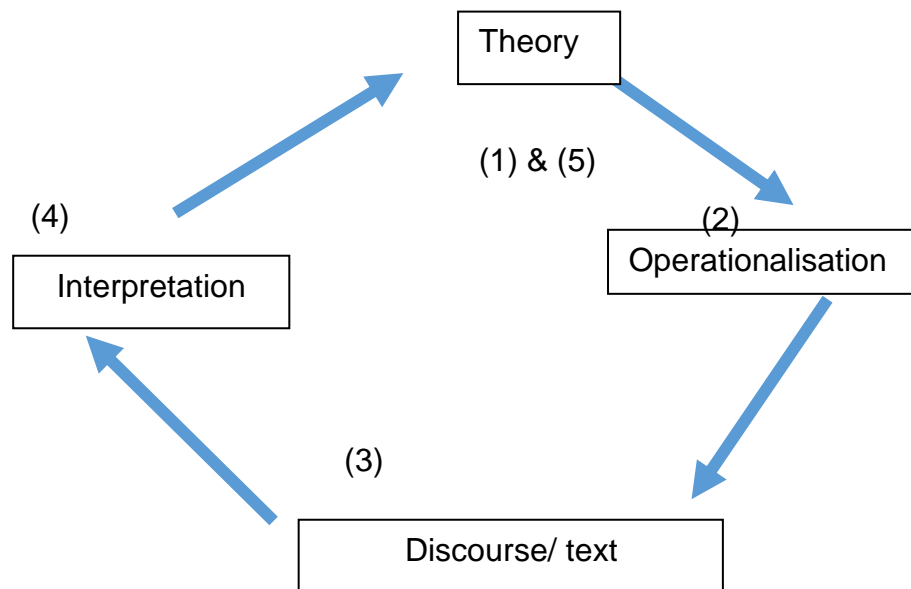


Figure 3.1 Circular process of positivism (Park et al., 2020).

Joubert et al. (2016) suggest that post positivism is associated with quantitative research. Therefore, the post positivism paradigm allowed me to gather quantitative data through surveys and statistics to measure selected quantitative details of a large group of people and then use the data to understand how people deal with the situation in real life.

The rationale for choosing this paradigm was to investigate the aim of how the school management of a selected primary school in the D12 district in city of Johannesburg in Gauteng can support parents during COVID-19 to ensure that effective learning occurs at home.

The study intended to investigate how the school management of a primary school in the D12 district in Gauteng can support parents to ensure academic success during COVID-19. To do this, the study had to answer the research problems and realise the study aims and sub-aims through the utilisation of appropriate research design and methods. These research aims and sub-aims are listed in section 1.4 of Chapter 1, but repeated below for a quick reference.

The main aim or purpose of this study was to investigate how the school management of a primary school in the D12 district in Gauteng can support parents to ensure academic success during COVID-19. The study focused on a primary school in the D12 district in Gauteng and how its parents experienced the online learning process.

The research determined the parents' views and perspectives on their experience of online learning. The research further shed light on the areas in which parents need support in order to help their children achieve academically. This helped put forth recommendations on guidelines that could be implemented by the school management in order to help support parents with online learning during COVID-19.

The research aimed to determine how relationships between senior management, teachers and parents can improve academic success for learners during COVID-19. The research should shed light on the areas which parents need support in order to help their children achieve academically. This should help put forth recommendations on guidelines that could be implemented by the school management in order to help support parents with online learning during COVID-19.

The research conducted would in turn help the school management team to implement support measures to parents to ensure academic success for the learner during COVID-19. To do this one has to consider the perception of the parents and the impact that online learning had on them and their children. The research would evaluate how parents experienced the online learning process and how it was conducted by the school and its management team. In order to determine where the school was not providing enough support to the parents and to determine how the school could provide their parents with support they feel that they need. As a result, the research would evaluate if there is a need for supporting parents and how parents would like to be supported.

To achieve this aim, the following research sub-aims were formulated to guide this study and its investigation on how the school management of a primary school in the D12 district in Gauteng can support parents to ensure academic success during COVID-19:

### *3.2.3.1 Research problem*

*How can school management support parents to ensure academic success for the learner during and after COVID-19?*

To help provide an answer to this question, the following secondary research question or sub-questions were developed:

- How can school management support parents with the learning process taking place at home?
- Which problems at home hinder academic success for the learner during COVID-19?
- How can relationships between senior management, teachers and parents improve academic success for the learner during COVID-19?
- What strategies can school management implement to support parents during and after COVID-19

### *3.2.3.2 The sub-aims of the research*

The study sub-aims that were necessary to answer the problems under 3.2.3.1 are:

- To determine the how school management could provide parents with support in order to ensure effective learning. (addressed in Chapter 2).
- To explore the problems at home which hinder academic success for the learner during COVID-19 (discussed in Chapter 2).
- To measure how relationships between senior management, teachers and parents can improve parental engagement to ensure academic success for the learner during COVID-19 (to be addressed in the empirical investigation).
- To provide recommendations on strategies that school management can implement to support parents during and after COVID-19 (to be addressed as the final outcome).

### **3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

#### **3.3.1 Population**

McMillan and Schumacher (2014) describe the population as a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that comply with specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the research result. In quantitative research, the group of subjects or participants from which we collect the data is called a sample.

The study sample for this study consisted of the parents of primary-school learners of Grades 3–7. South Africa public ordinary schools are all categorised into five groups, called quintiles. This categorizing is due mainly for the purpose of allocating financial resources. Quintile one is the poorest quintile, while quintile five is the ‘least poor’. The sample was taken from a selected quintile 5 primary school in the city of Johannesburg that have the similar problems as other quintile 5 schools in the city. These problems include a demand in quality education. According to the findings of a study conducted by Van Wyk and White in 2019, parents send their children to a quintile 5 to receive quality education and will become reluctant to pay school fees if they feel that they do not receive quality education. Therefore it is critical to maintain a high standard of education, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. This demand for quality education during the COVID-19 pandemic had an enormous impact on teachers as they now had to adapt to remote learning. Many of the teachers did not have the knowledge to do this, nor the technology. Du Plessis (2020) explains that remote learning requires great improvements in connectivity, technology, teachers’ digital skills and other related investments. At many quintile 5 schools, learners and parents expected this remote learning process to be implemented more interactively, but many teachers did not have the technology and skills to do this. Therefore expectations were not met and the parents were not very satisfied with the remote learning process.

In this study, I made use of a non-probability random sample technique. Etikan and Bala (2017:149) describe non-probability sampling as “a sampling procedure that would not bid a basis for any probability. All elements in the population will have a chance to be included in the study.” It means that each individual that complied with the criteria was selected to take part in the study. The respondents to the study were all parents of primary school learners in Grades 3–7, and these parents were all of

different race, gender, cultural backgrounds, religious groups, and economic status. All these parents were multi-cultural and represented diverse groups. The respondents were requested to complete a Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaire, the data gathering tool used for this research study. The respondents to the study were not randomly selected. The criteria for selection were parents of Grade 3 to 7 learners of the selected primary school based in Johannesburg, Gauteng. Parents who opted to complete the questionnaire took part in the study. 500 questionnaires were sent out and 374 of them were returned. This gave me a return rate of 71,4%, which is a good return rate for a quantitative study.

The data collected from the Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaire enabled me to obtain facts and opinions from primary school learners' parents regarding how school management can support parents during a pandemic to ensure that effective learning takes place at home. The collected data could be used to help develop guidelines to support parents and ensure academic success during COVID-19, which could be used by the school management of a primary school in the D12 district in Gauteng.

### **3.3.2 Sample selection for the study**

Respondents who participated in the study were parents of primary school learners in Grades 3–7. Approximately 500 parents of the Quintile 5 primary school based in Johannesburg, Gauteng, were asked to complete the Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaire. Approximately 500 questionnaires were delivered to the school in unsealed envelopes. This was handed out to the children for parents to complete and return the sealed envelopes to school.

### **3.3.3 Sampling method used**

The participating respondents selected for the study were parents of primary learners in Grades 3–7. The study made use of quota sampling, which is a non-probability sampling technique. Etikan and Bala (2017) explain quota sampling as a technique

where some evident characteristic guides the researcher; in this case, the respondent had to be a parent of a primary school learner in Grades 3–7.

This allowed me to gain insight into parents' views on how school management can provide parents with support during a pandemic to ensure that effective learning occurs. A diverse group of people represented this view from different ages, gender, racial groups and religious groups. The parents of primary school learners from Grades 3–7 were selected from a quintile 5 public school based in the city of Johannesburg, Gauteng.

### **3.4 INSTRUMENTATION**

McMillan and Schumacher (2014) argue that “instrumentation is a threat to the internal validity that is related to testing”. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) explain that it refers to the way changes in the instrumentation or persons used to collect the data can affect the results. It is therefore important that the instrument is fair, reliable and valid. The instrument should be administered to all the respondents without disadvantaging any individual.

#### **3.4.1 Questionnaires**

Boynton and Greenhalgh (2004) describe a questionnaire as an instrument that can, by objective means, collect information about people’s knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour. Patten (2016) explains that a questionnaire allows me to ask a large group of respondents the same questions they can answer by writing down responses.

Therefore, the data collection instrument for this quantitative research study was a Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaire. The purpose of this Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaire was to determine the relationship between the dependent and the independent variables, as described by McMillan and Schumacher (2014), the dependent variable in this study being how school management might support primary school parents during COVID-19 with online learning. According to Awang, Afthanorhan, and Mamat (2016), the Likert- scale and item-format combined questionnaire is commonly used in survey research to measure the respondents’ attitude by asking questions agrees or disagree with.

The following are advantages of using a questionnaire, as Bartram (2019) argues:

- It allows one to collect data from a large number of respondents in a relatively short period.
- Having many respondents can contribute to the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. Because of the central limit theorem which tells one that, as samples get large, the sampling distribution has a normal distribution with a mean equal to the population mean.
- When the sample is a large and diverse group, it leaves the researcher to use statistical means and the possibility of analysing and comparing particular sub-groups. The mean score obtained on the dependent variable by an independent group of respondents. For example, on a six-point interval scale, males could get a mean score of 4.25 and females a mean score of 4.50. Hence, depending on the distribution of data, one can compare the scores with one another using statistical techniques to eliminate the probability of chance being involved.

The primary school learners' parents in Grades 3–7 were requested to complete a Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaire with 41 questions. The questionnaire consisted of three sections:

- Section A contained categorical variables like gender, present grade your child is in and so on. Respondents provided their demographic information for me to facilitate meaningful and constructive comparing as a result. Section A therefore comprised the background and general information of the respondent.
- In Section B and Section, C respondents were requested to respond to questions using a six-point Likert scale. They answered these questions by making a “X” over the appropriate number. The scale was described to the respondents as follows:

*Table 3. 1: Six-point Likert scale*

Strongly disagree	Disagreed	Partially disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

- Section B addressed teaching and learning in an online environment during a pandemic; therefore, providing me with the background as to how parents have experienced the online learning process at home during a pandemic.
- Section C addressed the management of teaching and learning in an online environment during COVID-19 and provided me with insight into how management can assist parents in ensuring academic success.

The Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaire was handed out in unsealed envelopes to Grade 3 to Grade 7 classroom teachers, as this was the group that formed part of the focus study. The unsealed envelopes were hand delivered to each teacher with the instructions they had to convey to the children. The unsealed envelopes were handed out to the learners accompanied by a letter explaining the research and how the questionnaire should be answered. Learners were requested to hand the Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaire to their parents for completion. Learners were also requested to return the questionnaire in the same envelope sealed to school on the next day. The classroom teachers collected the sealed envelopes and returned them to me. A week was given to complete and hand in the completed questionnaires and the re-turned questionnaires were ticked off on a class list for the child to receive a sweet in return.

### **3.5 PILOT TESTING**

A pilot study was conducted to test the Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaire. Junyong (2017) describes a pilot study as a study that is conducted on a smaller scale than the main study. Junyong (2017) further argues that a pilot study is important to improve the main study's quality and efficiency.

The questionnaire was distributed to a small number of individuals (20 parents) from the same test population. These respondents did not form part of the main study and enabled me to test and validate the questionnaire. The respondents were allowed to write on the questionnaire if questions were unclear or misunderstood so that I could correct this for the main study. The pilot test thus allowed me to enhance the instrument's face validity, identify and detect possible flaws in the questionnaire due to poor wording, inadequate time to complete the questionnaire, and poor language



use. Based on the pilot study's findings, corrections were made to questions in terms of questions or items that had similar concepts and the time frame given to the respondents to complete the questionnaire.

### **3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

Before the data could be collected, permission from the Gauteng Department of Education was obtained to conduct the study at the selected primary school in Gauteng. I handed the Likert-scale, item-format combined questionnaire to the teachers in the unsealed envelopes to hand out to the children for their parents to complete. A letter was included to inform the participants about the purpose of the study. The letter was accompanied by the Gauteng Department of Education letter, granting me permission to conduct the study at the selected school. I explained to the school and wrote how to distribute the Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaire. I had no direct contact with the respondents. The respondents had to read the letter and the questionnaire to gain insight on how to answer the questionnaire. The Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaire was completed and sent back to the school where I collected the filled-out questionnaires from the teachers that were asked to assist.

### **3.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

#### **3.7.1 Data analysis**

Albers (2017) describes a quantitative study as a study that collects numerical data that must be analysed to help draw the study's conclusion. Therefore, the analyses of the data collected will bring meaning to the data collected. The analysis enabled me to summarize the data and explain the findings in meaningful terms. The data from the questionnaires were captured in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Furthermore, the captured data were numerical by nature and could be placed in SPSS to enable me to categorize the data and derive meaning from the data to answer the hypothesis and aims of the study. The validity of the data was determined using factor analysis and the reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient and the comprehensive reliability (CR) measure.

### **3.7.2 Data presentation**

All the completed Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaires were gathered, and I used frequency distribution tables as it displays the frequency of various outcomes in a sample (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The information gained was used to draw up frequency tables to display the relative frequencies of the various independent groups in the sample. The tables could also be of assistance in determining various descriptive statistics such as the mean, mode, median and standard deviation in the data.

The original Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaires and statistics were securely stored in hard copy and then computed using SPSS 27. The data collected will be stored for a minimum of five years.

## **3.8 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY**

Mohajan (2017) argues that reliability and validity are the two most important and fundamental features in evaluating any measurement instrument. Mohajan (2017) explains that validity concerns what the instrument measures and how well it does measure, where reliability concerns the trustworthiness one has in the data obtained from the measuring instrument. Can the instrument be interpreted consistently across different situations? If it can, then it is reliable.

When one looks at validity, it refers to how accurately a method measures what it is intended to measure as described by Middleton (2019). Therefore, in this research study the validity will depend on the Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaire and how well it is designed to measure the perceptions of parents about aspects of online teaching and learning and how school management can support parents during a pandemic to ensure that effective learning occurs at home.

The following measures were taken to ensure the validity of the study:

- Construct validity asks the question, does the questionnaire measure the concept it was intended to measure? Therefore, the Likert-scale and item-format questionnaire should measure the perceptions of parents regarding aspects of online teaching and learning and how school management can

support parents during a pandemic to ensure that effective learning occurs. As construct validity consists of converging and diverging validity, these will also be determined

- Content validity asks the question whether the questionnaire fully represents by the aims it wants to measure? Therefore, the Likert-scale and item-format questionnaire should measure any challenges that parents experienced regarding online teaching and learning to ensure that effective learning took place at home during the pandemic.
- Face validity asks whether the content of the text appears to be suitable to its aims. Therefore, the Likert-scale and item-format questionnaire should measure how school management can support parents during a pandemic to ensure that effective learning takes place; the challenges parents experience to ensure that effective learning takes place at home during the pandemic and how the school can improve parental engagement with the online teaching and learning process.

Reliability refers to the consistency of measurement (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). When one looks at reliability in quantitative research, one looks at the test-retest reliability. Thus, if one retests the group of people, the same outcome should be reached, in which case the research instrument will be deemed reliable. In this research the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient as well as the comprehensive reliability (CR) on the various constructs will be determined.

### **3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

When research is conducted, I must understand the ethical and legal responsibilities of researching since working with human beings. Research ethics are focused on what is morally proper and improper when engaged with participants, as described by McMillan and Schumacher (2014). In this study, the following measures were taken to ensure that the study complies with all ethical measures in place by the University of South Africa and the Higher degree and Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education.

### **3.9.1 Research role and competency**

Brittain et al. (2020) explain that poor research practice risks harming participants and can often leave negative legacies. Therefore, I was particularly sensitive to beneficence, justice, respect for persons, protecting the vulnerable (the children), and social betterment. The researcher always respected the rights and welfare of the respondents.

### **3.9.2 Relationships with participants**

I kept relationships with the respondents strictly professional and had no direct contact with any of the respondents that took part in the study.

### **3.9.3 Protection of human rights**

I ensured that all human rights of all the participants were always protected. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) describe the respecting of human rights of the respondents as a very important aspect of ethical consideration.

### **3.9.4 Informed consent**

Informed consent was achieved by providing the participants with an explanation of the research they had to sign. The respondents were allowed to terminate their participation at any time with no penalty involved. The participants were also provided with the risks involved when partaking in the study.

### **3.9.5 Anonymity and confidentiality**

The privacy of the research participants was protected as they were not expected to write their name or give their personal information that could lead to their identity. The data were as treated strictly confidential and were only seen and captured by me.

Therefore, the study was conducted in a manner that upholds the ethical requirements and procedures of the University of South Africa. The study received approval from the Higher degree and Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of South Africa. The Gauteng Department of Education also granted permission for the study to be conducted.

### **3.10 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided insight on how the study was conducted and which research methodology was made use of. The chapter also discussed the data collection method used and the data analysis used to answer the research question, how the school management of a primary school in the D12 district in Gauteng can support parents to ensure that effective learning takes place during a pandemic. The chapter also outlined and described how validity and reliability were used to make sure that the correct instrument measures what it is intended to measure and answers the aims of the study. Lastly, the chapter described how ethical considerations would be followed to ensure that all human beings were protected. In the next chapter, Chapter 4, the results of the quantitative data collection will be revealed.

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 3 focused on the research design and methodology that was used for this study. The data gathered provided me with statistical answers concerning my research question, namely

*What are the perceptions of parents about online teaching and learning and how can school management support parents to ensure academic success for the learner during and after COVID-19?*

The main aim of the study was to investigate how the school management of a primary school in the D12 district in Gauteng can support parents to ensure academic success during COVID-19. The questions asked in the questionnaire were intended to clarify if parents felt the need for assistance from school management to ensure that effective learning takes place at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. The questionnaire also focused on finding out what parents found challenging during this learning process taking place at home. The most important aspect of the questionnaire was to find management strategies and approaches that could help improve parental assistance in the learning process taking place at home during a pandemic.

Chapter 4 represents the analysis and interpretation of the results of the study. The analysis was based on the data collected from the questionnaires. I sent 500 questionnaires to the parents. The analysis was based on the data collected from the questionnaires completed by 354 parents. The return of the questionnaires was good as I received 70,8% of the questionnaires back.

### **4.2 FINAL SAMPLE**

Descriptive statistics are used to describe or summarize the characteristics of a sample or data set, as described by Hayes (2021). Therefore, descriptive statistics are sets of numbers or observations that one transformed into indices that describe and summarise the data. Descriptive statistics therefore enabled me to present the data in a more meaningful way through numerical calculations, graphs or tables, which allowed for simpler interpretation of the data.

The results are discussed in detail below and, where relevant, are presented in tabular and graphic format.

#### 4.2.1 Gender (A1)

The gender profile of the respondents is summarised in Table 4.1. According to O’Neil (2021) the South African female population amounted to approximately 30,09 million, while the male population amounted to approximately 29,22 million inhabitants. Therefore this sample is not a representative of the population regarding gender as the sample is made up of 79,4% females and 20,6% males. The population is 54,02% female and 52,46% male.

*Table 4.1: Frequencies of the gender groups in the sample*

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Male	73	20,6	20,6	20,6
	Female	281	79,4	79,4	100,0
	Total	354	100,0	100,0	

South Africa is one of the countries with the highest single-parent rates in the world. According to research conducted in 2018 by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the South African Race Relation Institute (SARRI), 63% of South African children have absent fathers, and more than 43,1% of South African mothers are single parents (Bertelsmann, 2016). However, it becomes clear that mothers are more involved in their children’s education and the father’s absence becomes more as this turns to a 3.76:1 ratio in this sample group. Therefore, for every four mothers who completed the questionnaire one father completed the questionnaire. According to Statistics South Africa in 2018 in the Gauteng province 34,9% of the children in Gauteng resided with a mother only and 3,4% with a father only. Furthermore, many of these single parents have shift jobs, work in warehouses, health care, administration, or maintenance, making them essential workers during the pandemic and this makes supporting their academically children very difficult as explained by Stine (2020). According to research conducted by the HSRC and the SARRI, more than 40% of South African mothers are single parents. They further state that 51% of SA’s single mothers are not able to afford household expenses. Therefore it is critical that these mothers secure their income in order to provide for their children, which makes caring for a child and online remote learning very difficult and time consuming.

### 4.2.2 Child's Grade (A2)

Respondents indicated the grade their child is currently in.

Table 4.2: Frequencies of child's grade

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Grade 3	65	18,4	18,4	18,4
	Grade 4	65	18,4	18,4	36,7
	Grade 5	100	28,2	28,2	65,0
	Grade 6	60	16,9	16,9	81,9
	Grade 7	64	18,1	18,1	100,0
	Total	354	100,0	100,0	

Observation of the data in Table 4.2 needs to be done in conjunction with Table 4.4. Such comparison suggests that the number of respondents per grade and the phases in which parents indicate their children are in, do not correlate. This suggests that parents are not as involved in their children's education as they should possibly be and that they are not aware of the General Education and Training (GET) system. Durisic and Bunijevac (2017) explain that parents' uncertainty creates conflict between the parent and the teacher, as they might not share the same idea of who is responsible for the child's academic achievement and the extent to which they share this responsibility. This is probably what happened during the COVID-19 pandemic, as parents and teachers did not share the same point of view. Such a lack of mutual understanding could influence communication between school and parents, and this could in turn impact on the child's education and development. It is possible that the way learning was conducted at home, did not correlate with what the school expected as parents were unsure of the resources available to them.

### 4.2.3 Age Group in Years (A3)

The age given by each respondent was grouped using the binning facility in SPSS27.



Table 4.3: Frequencies of parents age (binned)

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	<37.00	94	26,6	26,6	26,6
	38.00 – 41.00	102	28,8	28,8	55,4
	42.00 – 44.00	72	20,3	20,3	75,7
	45.00+	86A	24,3	24,3	100,0
	Total	354	100.0	100.0	

The mean of parents age was 40,96 years, the median was 41,0 years, the range was 31years and the SD was 5,10 years.

According to De Wet (2019), the mean recorded age for mothers in 2018 was 27,9 years. Therefore, the average South African parent gave birth at the age of 27,9 years. That means that when a child reaches the age of 9 years, which is Grade 3, the mean of a parent should be 36,9 years. The mean for this study was 40,96 years, which means that the average age of parents having a child in 2008–2012 was not much higher or lower than the average age in present day. The range is 31 years, which means there is a 31-year age gape between the youngest and the oldest parent that responded to the questionnaire. This highlights the range of age difference that the school management should look at when implementing strategies to support parents in order to ensure that academic success takes place during COVID-19. The median for the study was 41,0 years, which means that 50% of the respondents were between the age of 37 and 41, where 50% of the respondents were between the ages 41–45 and older.

#### 4.2.4 Child's School Phase (A4)

Respondents indicated the school phase their child is currently in.

Table 4.4: Frequencies of child's school phase

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Junior phase	71	20,1	20,1	20,1
	Intermediate phase	180	50,8	50,8	70,9
	Senior phase	103	29,1	29,1	100,0
	Total	354	100,0	100,0	

The GET band comprises three phases, namely the foundation phase (GR to G3), the intermediate phase (G4 to G6) and the senior phase (G7 to G9). There seems to be confusion among the respondents as the various phases should correlate with data in Table 4.2. Hence, the 71 listed in Table 4.4 should be the same as the 65 in Table 4.2. Similarly, the 225 learners in G4 to G6 in the intermediate phase do not correspond to the 180 learners in Table 4.4. However, a parent is more likely to know what grade his/her child is in and that the confusion is likely to be about the school phase. The correspondence analysis biplot shows the association of grade and school phase as it should be namely Grade 7 associated with the senior phase, Grades 4 to 6, with the intermediate phases and Grade 3 with the junior phase.

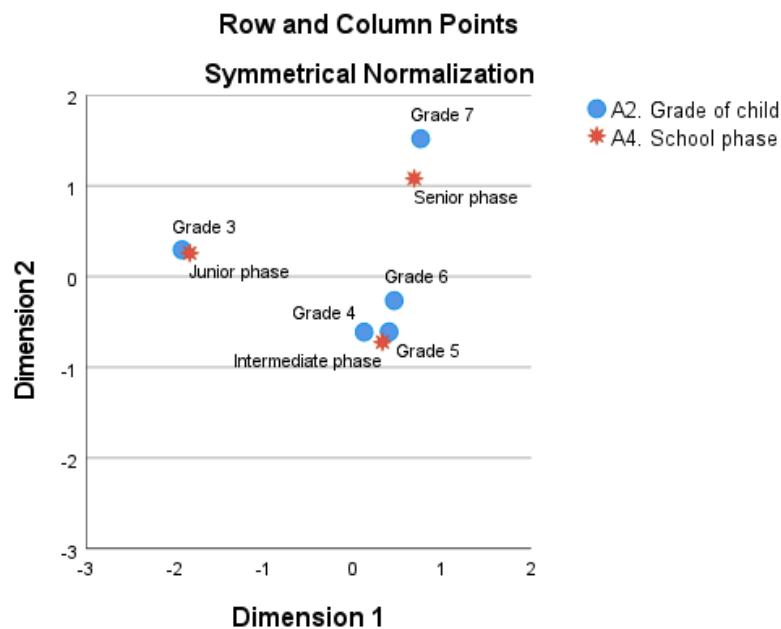


Figure 4.1: Biplot showing the correspondence between grade and school phase

It becomes clear by looking at the biplot chart above that parents are not familiar with the GET band that comprises of three phases namely, the foundation phase (GR to G3), the intermediate phase (G4 to G6) and the senior phase (G7 to G9). Parents seem to be confused by this and is more likely to only know the grade their child is in. The misunderstanding is cause by the administrative structure of most schools in South Africa as they don't reflect the division of bands and phases, but are referred to as primary, secondary and high school as described by K12 Academics (2021).

#### 4.2.5 Highest Educational Qualification (A5)

Table 4.5: Frequencies of highest educational qualifications

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Grade 9	10	2,8	2,8	2,8
	Grade12	49	13,8	13,8	16,7
	Post-school diploma or certificate	40	11,3	11,3	28,0
	Diploma	72	20,3	20,3	48,3
	Diploma + FDE	52	14,7	14,7	63,0
	B. Degree	43	12,1	12,1	75,1
	B. Degree + Diploma	33	9,3	9,3	84,5
	PG Qualification	55	15,5	15,5	100,0
	Total	354	100,0	100,0	

Most respondents 72 (20,3%) who participated in the study indicated that they possessed a Diploma; 55 (15,5%) had a post graduate qualification. Only 10 (2,8%) of the respondents indicated that they have an education qualification of Grade 9. That means that only 2,8% of the sample did not complete their full 12 years of schooling. Thus parents should be capable to assist their primary school children academically as they do however have the basic knowledge to do so.

#### 4.2.6 Race (A6)

The race profile of the respondents is summarised in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Frequencies of race groups

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Asian	4	1,1	1,1	1,1
	Black	172	48,6	48,6	49,7
	Coloured	32	9,0	9,0	58,8
	Indian	29	8,2	8,2	66,9
	White	117	33,1	33,1	100,0
	Total	354	100,0	100,0	

The various race groups in the sample are not representative of race groupings in the population, as Black respondents are under-represented and White respondents'

over-representative in this sample relative to the population. According to StatsSA, the black African population is in the majority at 80,64%. the white population is estimated at 7,99%, the coloured population at 8,85% and the Indian/Asian at 2,55%. The sample is clearly not representative of the population regarding race.

A study conducted in 2018 by Hall and Sambu indicates that less than one third 30% of African children lived with both their parents, while the vast majority of Indian and white children (83% and 78%, respectively) reside with both biological parents. These figures suggest the limited presence of biological fathers in the home lives of large numbers of African children.

#### 4.2.7 Religious Affiliation (A7)

*Table 4.7: Frequencies of religious affiliation groups*

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	African traditional	15	4,2	4,2	4,2
	Christian	290	81,9	81,9	86,2
	Islam	7	2,0	2,0	88,1
	Hindu	22	6,2	6,2	94,4
	Jewish	1	0,3	0,3	94,6
	None	11	3,1	3,1	97,7
	Other	8	2,3	2,3	100,0
	Total	354	100,0	100,0	

The various religious affiliations in the sample are not representative of religious affiliation grouping in the population as Christianity, Islam and Hinduism is over-represented. According to South Africa's people (2012), 78,8% of South Africa's population follows the Christian faith, 1,5% Islam and 1,2% Hinduism. Therefore, the sample is not representative of the population regarding religious affiliation groups.

Religion emphasizes moral codes designed to instil values such as self-control and social competence as described by Pedersen (2019). According to the findings of a study conducted by the researchers from The University of Texas at San Antonio, learner's psychological adjustment and social competence were positively associated with various religious factors. However, students' performance on reading, math and science test was negatively tied to several forms of parental religiosity. Therefore, the

way children are brought up religiously will impact their academic performance. It is very important that there is a balance between religion and time spent on academics. Religion does, however, impact the child's social competence and psychological adjustment and therefore impacts on the way the child is brought up at home.

#### 4.2.8 Home Language (A8)

*Table 4.8: Frequencies of mother tongue recoded to five groups*

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Afrikaans	22	6,2	6,2	6,2
	English	173	48,9	48,9	55,1
	Nguni	78	22,0	22,0	77,1
	Sotho	56	15,8	15,8	92,9
	Other	25	7,1	7,1	100,0
	Total	354	100,0	100,0	

The data in the Table 4.8 are not representative of home language groups in Gauteng. English speaking respondents are over-representative in this sample. According to Stats SA's Community Survey of 2018, English was spoken by 8,1% of the population at home, making it the sixth-most common language home language. Therefore, the sample is not a true representative of the population as 48,9% of the sample indicated that English is their home language.

According to Bonar et al. (2021), remote learning is even harder when English is not a first language. According to Stats SA only 8,1% of the population speaks English, which means that for many parents and children this is a second or even third language. This makes online learning very difficult as there are language barriers and a lack of understanding. The language barrier and lack of understanding impacted on the online learning process as parents now had to take on the role as teacher and explain the learning content to their child, which became a problem as they did not understand the content and to teach content one first has to understand the content.

#### 4.2.9 School Principals' Gender (A9)

Table 4.9: Frequencies of principals' gender

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Male	350	98,9	98,9	98,9
	Female	4	1,1	1,1	100,0
	Total	354	100,0	100,0	

The study was conducted at one school and therefore the respondents should only respond that the principal is a male. It thus has become clear that 1,1% of the sample is not aware that their child's principal is a male and thus makes it clear that the parents are not familiar with the school management team. This is not a true representative of the population of school principals.

#### 4.2.10 School Principals' Race (A10)

Table 4.10: Frequencies of principal's race

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Black	4	1,1	1,1	1,1
	Coloured	1	0,3	0,3	1,4
	Indian	1	0,3	0,3	1,7
	White	348	98,3	98,3	100,0
	Total	354	100,0	100,0	

The study was conducted at one school only and therefore all respondents should have indicated that the principal is of white race. This was not the case it again brings forward the uncertainty of who forms part of the management team and knowing who the management of the school is. This is not representative of the population.

#### 4.2.11 Assisting the Child Academically (A11)

Respondents indicated who assisted their child with their educational needs during "lockdown".

Table 4.11: Frequencies of person mostly involved with assisting child/children's education during lockdown (A11)

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Mother	229	64,7	64,7	64,7
	Father	28	7,9	7,9	72,6
	Both	78	22,0	22,0	94,6
	Tutor	8	2,3	2,3	96,9
	Other	11	3,1	3,1	100,0
	Total	354	100,0	100,0	

In the table above it is evident that mothers in general are mostly responsible and involved with assisting their children with their education during lockdown. According to a study conducted by Hall and Samba in 2018, 41% of the 8,1 million children in South Africa lived with their mothers but not their fathers. Only 3% of the children live in a household where their fathers are present and their mothers absent. 21% of the children population do not have either their biological parents living with them. 64,7% of the respondents indicated that they as mothers are the ones mostly involved with assisting children's education during lockdown.

According to a study conducted by Oldford-Matchim and Singh (2018), a mother possessed a greater sense of efficacy for helping a child read and learn than fathers. It is very difficult for one parent to be solely responsible as parents have to provide for their families and still maintain their day to day job. According to Leonhardt (2020) working parents panic as they struggle to find a way between ensuring their child's online learning and their full time job. This makes it very difficult for the child to achieve his/her full potential as the time spent with the child is limited due to parents having other responsibilities. Leonhardt further explains that parents are very concerned with their ability to keep everything running smoothly without neglecting their kids or their work responsibilities. Parents have limited time and therefore do not spend enough time to be involved and informed about the online learning process and its demands.

#### 4.2.12 Devices Connected to the Internet (A12)

Respondents indicated whether they had access on multiple devices.

Table 4.12: Frequencies of devices with which you have access to internet

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Cell phone	81	22,9	22,9	22,9
	Computer/laptop	74	20,9	20,9	43,8
	Tablet	10	2,8	2,8	46,6
	All the devices	186	52,5	52,5	99,2
	None of the devices	3	0,8	0,8	100,0
	Total	354	100,0	100,0	

Most of the respondents had all the devices mentioned to access the internet (52,5%). Only 0,8% indicated that they had no devices. According to The Spacestation (2021), 60,62% of South African's use their mobile phone to access the internet, 25,94% uses a laptop or computer and 9,66% uses a tablet. According to Stats SA only 59,3% of all South Africans have access to the internet in some way.

#### 4.3 ANALYSIS OF SECTION B OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Section B of the questionnaire contained 20 items which probed the opinions of respondents about teaching and learning in an online environment during a pandemic such as COVID-19. The items were all operationalized by placing them on a six-point interval scale where 1 marked *strongly disagree* and 6 was *for strongly agree*. In general, the respondents agreed with the items, but some items were answered opposite to the general direction and the scales had to be inverted. Items B3, B6, B9, B10 and B20 had scales inverted. Item B13, B4 and B5 had low measures of sampling adequacy (MSA) and were removed from the factor analytic procedure. A factor analytic procedure (PCA with Varimax rotation) was performed on the remaining 17 items and four first-order factors resulted explaining 62,36% of the variance present. The items and their factors were:

FB1.1 – 18, 7, 8, 14, 19, 2, 15, 17, 12, 11 – This factor was named “Online service provision by the school during the pandemic”. The average variance extracted (AVE) was 0.57 indicating converging validity. The square root of the average was 0.76, which was larger than any of the correlations between FB1.1 and the other three factors. This indicates that divergent validity was present. The comprehensive reliability (CR) was 0.92, which was like the Cronbach Alpha of 0.91.



FB1.2 – 9Rec, 10Rec, 6Rec, – This factor was named “Concerns regarding online teaching and learning”. The AVE was 0.60 and the square root of AVE was 0.775 which was larger than any correlation between FB1.2 and the other factors. Hence, both converging and diverging validity was present. The CR was 0.82 and the Cronbach alpha was 0.67.

FB1.3 – 20Rec, 16. – This factor was named “Aspects hindering online teaching and learning”. The AVE was 0.68 and its square root was 0.825, which was larger than the correlations between FB1.3 and the other two factors. Both converging and diverging validity were present in this factor. The CR was 0.79 and the Cronbach reliability was 0.48.

FB1.4 – 3Rec, 1. – This factor was named “Challenges experienced by online teaching and learning”. The AVE was 0.68 and its square of 0.824 indicated both converging and diverging validity. The CR was 0.79 and the Cronbach reliability was 0.46.

These four first-order factors were placed into another factor analytic procedure to see if a more parsimonious solution than four factors could be possible. The KMO of 0.723 with Bartlett’s sphericity value of  $p = 0.000$  indicated that this was plausible. One factor resulted, which explains 53,24% of the variance present. It had a Cronbach reliability of 0.890 and was named “Aspects facilitating an online teaching and learning environment during a pandemic (FB2.0)”. The data distribution of items in this factor is given in Figure 4.2.

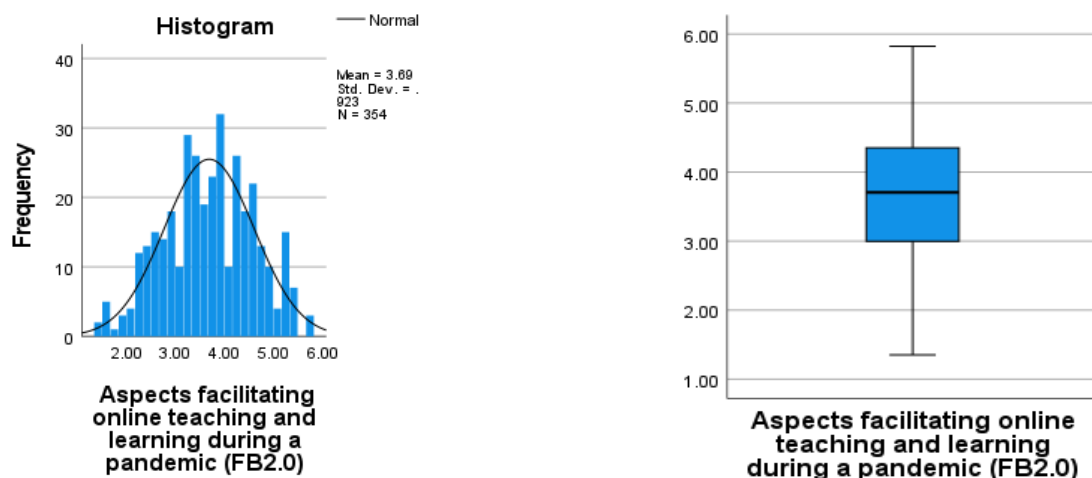


Figure 4.2: Histogram and boxplot showing data distribution of aspects facilitating

The mean for the factor was 3.69 (95% CI – LL = 3.59, UL = 3.79) with median of 3.71 and SD of 0.923. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality of data had a p value of 0.200 indicating that the distribution was not significantly different from normal (it is probably normal) (Field, 2018: 249). Respondents could thus be said to be neutral in opinions about this facilitation factor. At most one could say they were uncertain tending towards partial agreement. One would have wished for a higher factor mean indicating larger agreement. However, the aspects influencing online teaching and learning is also relatively new to school management and the relatively low factor mean does inform school management that more effort needs to be put into communication with parents regarding this.

#### **4.4 ANALYSIS OF SECTION C OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE: PARENTAL SUPPORT AND ONLINE LEARNING DURING COVID-19**

Section C of the questionnaire contained 10 items asking respondents to what extent they believed that certain aspects influenced the management of teaching and learning in an online environment during the pandemic. Each item was posed on a five-point interval scale where 1 represented *no extent* and 5 was *to a very large extent*. The items were subjected to a PCA with Varimax rotation factor analysis, The KMO of 0.770 and Bartlett's sphericity p-value of 0.000 indicated that a more parsimonious solution was possible. Three first-order factors, explaining 60,62% of the variance present resulted. The items in the factors were as follows:

FC1.1 – 10, 9, 6, 5. – This factor was named “Training and development for online teaching and learning”. The Average variance extracted (AVE) was 0.59 and its square root was 0.77 which was larger than any of the correlations between the factors. The factor thus shows construct validity in that bothy converging validity (AVE>0.50) and diverging validity. The Comprehensive Reliability was 0.85. The Cronbach reliability was 0.77.

FC1.2 – 2, 3. – This factor was named “Costs of online teaching and learning”. The AVE was 0.76 and its square root of 0.87 was larger than any correlations between the factors. The factor can be said to show construct validity in the form of both converging and diverging validity. The CR was 0.88 and the Cronbach Alpha was 0.694.

FC1.3 – 8, 1, 7, 4. – This factor was labelled “Difficulties experienced by respondents regarding online teaching and learning. The AVE was 0.48 which  $< 0.50$  and the factor does not exhibit converging validity. Item C1 (The online teaching and learning environment has been unsupported of parents) had a relatively low loading and this item should either be removed or rephrased. This item is likely to have made respondent feel guilty if answered truthfully and hence it should be reworded and the word unsupported replaced with supportive. However, the square root of the AVE of 0.69 was larger than any of the correlations between the factors and diverging validity was present. The CR was 0.78 and the Cronbach alpha was 0.602.

These three first-order factors were subjected to a second-order factor analytic procedure and the KMO of 0.636 and Bartlett’s sphericity p-value of .000 indicated that the three factors could be clustered in fewer factors. One factor resulted, explaining 55,73% of the variance present with a Cronbach reliability of 0.769. The data distribution in this factor is given in Figure 4.3

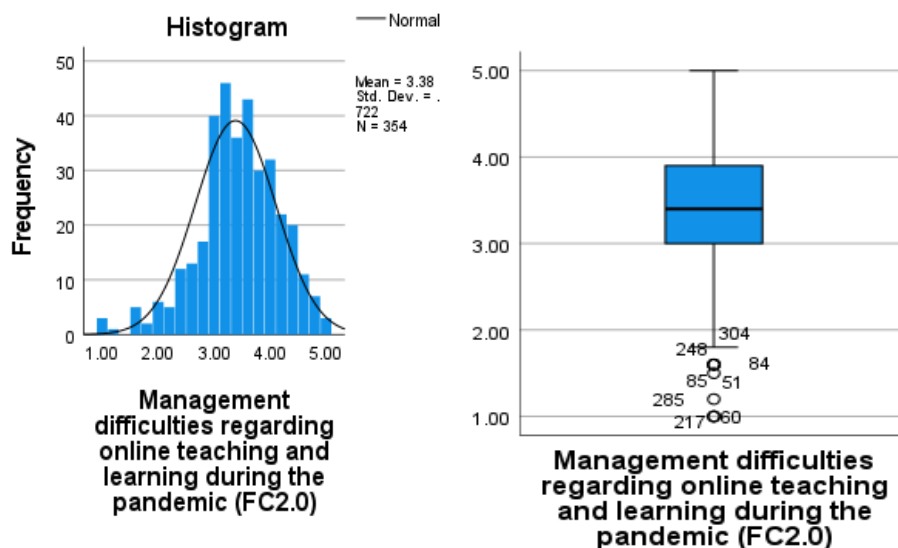


Figure 4.3: Histogram and boxplot of data distribution in the management difficulties of online teaching and learning during the pandemic

The items in FC2.0 had a factor mean of 3.38 (95% CI – LL = 3.31, UL = 3.46), median of 3.40 and SD of 0.72. Data distribution was slightly negatively skew probably due to some outliers as can be seen in the boxplot in Figure 4.3. Respondents could be said to have “agreed to a moderate extent” with the management difficulties experienced in online teaching and learning during the lockdown (FC2.0).

## 4.5 SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TWO INDEPENDENT GROUPS REGARDING ASPECTS FACILITATING ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING DURING A PANDEMIC (FB2.0)

### 4.5.1 Gender

The independent t-test made use of bootstrapping (1 000 samples). The abbreviated results were:

$$[FB2.0 - \bar{X}_M = 3.83; SD = 0.863, N = 73; \bar{X}_F = 3.65; SD = 0.936; N = 281; t(352) = 1.50; p = .14; g = 0.19 ]$$

Male respondents thus agreed more strongly with the aspects facilitating online teaching and learning during a pandemic (FB2.0) than female respondents. However, this difference in mean scores was not statistically significant. The effect size (Hedge's  $g$  for different sample sizes) was small ( $g = 0.19$ ).

Regarding FC2.0 no statistically significant differences were found between the gender groups. Both gender groups partially disagreed with the items in the management factor.

### 4.5.2 Age groups binned to two groups

The ages were visually binned using IBM SPSS27 and two age groups formed. The results of the independent t-test were:

$$[FB2.0 - \bar{X}_{<41y} = 3.80, SD = 0.934, N = 196; \bar{X}_{42+y} = 3.55, SD = 0.894, N = 158; t(352) = 2.52, p = .01, g = 0.30]$$

The lower the age group the stronger the agreement with aspects facilitating online teaching and learning during the lockdown. This difference at the multifactorial level was statistically significant with moderate effect size ( $g = 0.30$ ). FB2.0 is composed of four first-order factors, and it is necessary to see which of the first-order factors are involved in the significant difference at the multivariate level. Hence, this researcher made use of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). The various assumptions for MANOVA such as independence of residuals, random sampling, multivariate normality, and homogeneity of covariance matrices (Box's test  $p > 0.05$ ) were all met.

(Field, 2018: 753). The researcher used the Wilks' Lambda test at multivariate level ( $\Lambda$ ). The summarised results were:

$$\Lambda = 0.97, F(4, 349) = 2.50, p = 0.03$$

There was a significant effect of age groups on the aspects facilitating online teaching and learning during the pandemic ( $p < 0.05$ ).

This multivariate test was followed by univariate tests with Bonferroni corrections. Only two of the four first-order factors indicated significant differences namely FB1.1 (Online service provision by the school during the pandemic) and FB1.2 (Concerns regarding online teaching and learning). The results of the significant univariate tests were:

$$[FB1.1 - \bar{X}_{\leq 41y} = 4.03; \bar{X}_{42+y} = 3.78; F(1) = 4.38, p = .04, r = .11]$$

The younger age group agreed statistically significantly more strongly with the online service provision delivered by the school than did the older age group. The effect size was small ( $r = 0.11$ )

$$[FB1.2 - \bar{X}_{\leq 41y} = 4.21; \bar{X}_{42+y} = 3.78; F(1) = 8.49, p = .004, r = .15]$$

The younger age group agreed statistically significantly more strongly with the concerns about online teaching and learning factor than did the older age group. The effect size was small ( $r = 0.15$ ), but larger than it was for the school's service provision for online learning. As the second factor (FB1.2) had the largest effect size and is thus considered to be more important than FB1.1 by the respondents, this researcher investigated each of the items involved in this factor. Such differences could prove useful for the SMT of a school as they could attempt to lessen such concerns. All three items were recoded and when interpreting mean scores this needs to be kept in mind. The results of the independent t-test, showing only the two items that differed statistically significantly were:

$$[B9Rec - \bar{X}_{\leq 41y} = 4.27, SD = 1.58, N = 196; \bar{X}_{42+y} = 3.85, SD = 1.61, N = 158, p = .015, g = 0.26]$$

$$[B10Rec - \bar{X}_{\leq 41y} = 4.26, SD = 1.59, N = 196; \bar{X}_{42+y} = 3.84, SD = 1.65, N = 158, p = .016, g = 0.26]$$

In both B9Rec (I find it difficult to be involved in my child's/children's education) and B10Rec (I am uncertain of my part that I am responsible for in my child's/children's academic programme) the younger age group disagreed significantly more strongly (scale inverted) with the item than did the older age group. The effect size of both were the same (0.26), possibly an indication that the SMTs of schools should provide greater clarity about parental involvement with online activities, especially to older respondents.

In FB1.1 the Online service provision by the school during the pandemic, there were three items where the younger age group (<41 years) agreed significantly more strongly than the older age group (42+ years) did. Hence, the SMT should be made aware of the following items namely:

B19 – The school helped parents in need of resources ( $p < 0.01$ )

B8 – I understood what was expected from me as a parent to help my child in his/her learning process ( $p < 0.05$ )

B14 – In my opinion the school management provided enough support to ensure that academic loss was kept to a minimum ( $p < 0.05$ ).

In each of these items the older age group agreed significantly less strongly than did the younger age group indicating that age of parents is significantly associated with perceptions about the online service provision by the school. Older age groups possibly more guidance about what parts they are responsible for with respect to online aspects of teaching and learning.

#### **4.5.3 Devices to access the internet**

As there were only three respondents who indicated that they had no devices to access the internet, it was grouped with respondents which had only one device. No statistically significant differences could be found between the two groups regarding the aspects which facilitate online teaching and learning as both groups tended towards partial agreement with the items in the factor (Males = 3.68 and Females = 3.69).

With respect to the management of challenges factor (FC2.0) no significant differences could be found between the devices to access the internet. Both groups indicated that it impacted them to a moderate extent.

#### **4.5.4 Religious affiliation groups**

This variable was collapsed to two groups as most respondents affiliated themselves with Christianity. No significant differences were present between the two religious groups. No significant differences were present between the religious affiliation groups regarding the management of challenges (FC2.0). Both groups perceived the impact to be moderate.

### **4.6 SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THREE OR MORE INDEPENDENT GROUPS REGARDING ASPECTS FACILITATING ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING DURING A PANDEMIC (FB2.0) AND MANAGEMENT DIFFICULTIES (FC2.0)**

#### **4.6.1 School phase (A4)**

The assumptions for MANOVA such as Box's test for equality of covariances was met ( $p = 0.715$ ). The Wilk's Lambda test at the multivariate level gave the following results:

$$\Lambda = 0.03, F(4.700) = 0.94, p = 0.000, r = 0.18$$

The two dependent variables (FB2.0 and FC2.0) differed at the multivariate level when tested together with respect to the three school phases. Univariate tests to determine which of the two dependent variables are involved in this difference gave the following results:

$$[FB2.0 - \bar{X}_{JP} = 4.10; \bar{X}_{IP} = 3.67; \bar{X}_{SP} = 3.44; F(2) = 11.55, p = .000, r = 0.25]$$

Respondents who have children in the junior phase agreed significantly more strongly with the aspects facilitating online teaching and learning (FB2.0) than did the respondents whose children were in the intermediate and senior phases. The lower the phase the stronger the agreement and this seems plausible as the content for teaching and learning becomes more difficult the higher the phase of schooling. With

respect to the management challenges experienced during online teaching and learning the results were:

$$[FC2.0 - \bar{X}_{JP} = 3.40; \bar{X}_{IP} = 3.45; \bar{X}_{SP} = 3.42; F(2) = 0.49, p = .67, r = 0.04]$$

Respondents did not differ statistically significantly from one another on the management challenges experienced factor. All respondents partially disagreed with the items in the factor but not significantly so.

However, they did differ significantly from one another regarding aspects facilitating online teaching and learning during a pandemic (FB2.0) which is composed of four first-order factors. The results of the Wilk's Lambda multivariate test were:

$$[\Lambda = 0.923, F(4, 496) = 3.56, p = .000, r = 0.20]$$

When all four first order factors are tested against the three school groups at the multivariate level there is a statistically significant difference. The univariate tests indicated that only FB1.1 (the online service provision by the school) and FB1.3 (Aspects hindering online teaching and learning) were involved in the significant differences. The results of the univariate tests were:

$$[FB1.1 - \bar{X}_{JP} = 4.45; \bar{X}_{IP} = 3.86; \bar{X}_{SP} = 3.64; F(2,351) = 12.33, p = .000, r = 0.26]$$

The results show that respondents with children in the junior phase agreed significantly more strongly with the online services provided by the school (FB1.1) than did respondents who had children in the intermediate and senior phases. There was an inverse proportion in the sense that the higher the grade of the child, the lower the agreement with the online teaching and learning service provided by the school. Regarding FB1.3 (Aspects hindering online teaching and learning) the univariate test result was:

$$[FB1.3 - \bar{X}_{JP} = 2.93; \bar{X}_{IP} = 2.62; \bar{X}_{SP} = 2.25; F(2,351) = 6.41, p = .002, r = 0.19]$$

The result indicates that the lower the grade the larger the agreement with the factor. Again, there is an inverse proportion in that the lower the grade the larger the extent of agreement. It is only the junior phase respondents who differ significantly from the senior phase respondents. It should be noted that all scores are below three (3) and on the six-point interval scale that is partial disagreement. So, all respondents partially



disagreed (with respondents with children in the senior phase disagreeing the most strongly or agreeing the least strongly).

#### 4.6.2 Race (A6Rec)

When testing the two factors (FB2.0) and (FC2.0) at the multivariate level against the three race groups the following multivariate results for 1 000 bootstrapped samples were present:

$$[\Lambda = 0.938, F(4,700) = 5.65, p = .000, r = 0.18]$$

The three race groups differ statistically significantly from one another when tested at the multivariate level. Results at the univariate level indicated that this difference was in the FB2.0 factor only namely:

$$[FB2.0 - \bar{X}_O = 3.60; \bar{X}_B = 3.91; \bar{X}_W = 3.41; F(2,351) = 11.25, p = .000, r = 0.25]$$

Hence, Black respondents agreed the most strongly with aspects facilitating online teaching and learning during the pandemic. They differed statistically significantly from White respondents at the 1% level of significance. Thus, although all race groups partially agreed with the items in the factor aspects facilitating online teaching and learning, Black respondents agreed the most strongly and White respondents the least strongly. The aspects facilitating online teaching and learning is composed of four first-order factors and it is necessary to see which of these first-order factors are responsible for this difference between race groups. Using 1 000 bootstrapped samples the results indicated that the differences found at the multivariate level were the result of differences in FB1.1 (Online service provision by school during pandemic) and FB1.3 (Aspects hindering online teaching and learning) only. A summary of results was as follows:

$$[FB1.1 - \bar{X}_O = 3.79; \bar{X}_B = 4.21; \bar{X}_W = 3.55; F(2,351) = 13.92, p = .000, r = 0.27]$$

The result shows that respondents from the Black race group partially agreed with the items in the factor online service provision by the school during the pandemic. They differed statistically significantly from the other race group at the 5% level ( $p = 0.021$ ) and from the White race group at the 1% level of significance ( $p = 0.000$ ) who both partially disagreed with the items in the factor.

Regarding aspects hindering online teaching and learning during the pandemic the following result was found:

$$[FB1.3 - \bar{X}_O = 2.53; \bar{X}_B = 2.83; \bar{X}_W = 2.23; F(2,351) = 8.11, p = .000, r = 0.21]$$

All three race groups partially disagreed with the items in the factor aspects hindering online teaching and learning. However, Black respondents differed statistically significantly from White respondents ( $p = 0.000$ ) and hence Black respondents could be said to disagree the least strongly with aspects hindering online teaching and learning.

Of the two factors FB1.1 had the larger effect size difference between means (0.27) and could be seen as the more important of the two factors involved

#### **4.6.3 Highest educational qualification (A5Rec)**

The highest educational qualification groups were recoded to three groups, namely:

Post-school diploma or lower; Diploma/Diploma + FDE; B. Degree or higher. They served as independent variables while the dependent variables were FB2.0 (Aspects facilitating online teaching and learning in an online environment during a pandemic) and FC2.0 (management difficulties experienced in online teaching and learning during the lockdown). A MANOVA test gave the following results:

$$\Lambda = 0.94, F(4,700) = 5.40, p = 0.000, r = 0.17$$

The Wilk's Lambda value shows that there was a difference at the multivariate level and tests at the univariate level are needed to show which of the dependent variables were responsible for this significant difference. Only FC2.0 (Management challenges experienced indicated a significant value namely:

$$[FC2.0 - \bar{X}_{PSD} = 3.18; \bar{X}_{D.D+FDE} = 3.34; \bar{X}_{B.Deg+} = 3.57; F(2,351) = 9.31, p = .000, r = 0.22]$$

Although all three groups partially disagreed with management challenges experienced respondents with a B. Degree or higher agreed more strongly than the other two qualification groups at the 5% level ( $p = 0.028$  for Diploma/Diploma + FDE group) and at the 1% level ( $p = 0.000$ ). As the management of challenges was

composed of three first-order factors it is necessary to see which of the three first-order factors are involved with this significant difference. Hence, a MANOVA test was conducted with the three first-order factors involved in the management difficulties factor (Training and development for online teaching and learning; costs of online teaching and learning; problems experienced by respondents regarding online teaching and learning). The Wilk's Lambda test results were:

$$\Lambda = 0.938, F(6,698) = 3.79, p = .001, r = 0.18$$

Hence, the three first-order factors differ at the multivariate level ( $p < 0.05$ ) and univariate tests for the three first-order factors gave the following results:

$$FC1.1 - F(2,351) = 3.50, p = 0.003, r = 0.14$$

$$FC1.2 - F(2,351) = 5.06, p = 0.007, r = 0.17$$

$$FC1.3 - F(2,351) = 8.60, p = 0.000, r = 0.22$$

All three of the first-order factors involved in the management of challenges factor showed significant differences were present between the three highest educational qualification groups with the highest qualification group agreeing more strongly than the other two groups. Using only effect sizes (they are standardised and can be compared) it is observed that the largest effect size occurs for the problems experienced regarding online teaching and learning and hence it is seen as the most important of the three effects. In each of the factors the higher qualification group perceived the extent of the impact of the three first-order factors to be larger than the lower qualification groups did. The higher the educational qualifications the larger the extent of the management of challenges of teaching and learning in an online environment during a pandemic was perceived to be.

#### **4.6.4 Mother tongue groups (A8Rec)**

The various mother tongue groups were recoded to five groups, namely Afrikaans, English, Nguni, Sotho and Other. The results of 1 000 bootstrapped samples using the two factors FB2.0 and FC2.0 as dependent variables and five mother tongue groups as independent variables or predictors was as follows:

$$\Lambda = 0.937, F(8,696) = 2.87, p = .004, r = 0.18$$

The two factors differ statistically significantly from one another at multivariate level with respect to the five mother tongue groups. Univariate tests indicated that the difference was only due to the aspects facilitating online teaching and learning in an online environment during a pandemic (FB2.0). The results at univariate level were:

$$[FB1.0 - \bar{X}_A = 3.61; \bar{X}_E = 3.50; \bar{X}_N = 3.91; \bar{X}_S = 4.01; \bar{X}_O = 3.66; F(4) = 4.87, p = .001, r = 0.23]$$

The English home language group had the lowest factor mean and differed statistically significantly from the Sotho home language group at the 1% level ( $p = 0.003$ ) and the Nguni home language group ( $p = 0.009$ ). However, as the aspects facilitating online teaching and learning (FB2.0) is composed of four first-order factors it is necessary to determine which of the four first-order factors are involved in this significant difference between mean factor scores. A MANOVA test using the four first-order factors showed that FB1.1 (Online service provision by school during pandemic) and FB1.3 (Aspects hindering online teaching and learning) were the only two factors involved in the significant differences at multivariate level:

$$\Lambda = 0.903, F(16, 1057) = 2.24, p = .003, r = 0.16$$

Tests at univariate level were:

$$[FB1.0 - \bar{X}_A = 3.80; \bar{X}_E = 3.66; \bar{X}_N = 4.16; \bar{X}_S = 4.38; \bar{X}_O = 3.95; F(4) = 6.00, p = .000, r = 0.25]$$

The English mother tongue group, with the lowest factor mean, differed statistically significantly from the Nguni ( $p = 0.009$ ) and the Sotho groups ( $p = 0.000$ ). The Sotho mother tongue group agreed the most strongly with the online services provided by the school, followed by the Nguni group. The English mother tongue group agreed the least strongly with the items in the factor and possibly were the least satisfied by the online teaching and learning service delivery of the school during the lockdown. Race groups are significantly related to issues involved with this factor probably due to cultural and socioeconomic differences.

$$[FB1.3 - \bar{X}_A = 2.45; \bar{X}_E = 2.38; \bar{X}_N = 2.95; \bar{X}_S = 2.82; \bar{X}_O = 2.30; F(4) = 3.68, p = .006, r = 0.20]$$

With respect to the aspects hindering online teaching and learning all groups disagreed with the items in the factor but the English mother tongue group disagreed more strongly than the other race groups and differed statistically significantly from Nguni mother tongue group ( $p = 0.01$ ).

#### **4.6.5 Who is mostly involved with assisting in child/children's education during lockdown (A11Rec)**

The groups were recoded to three viable groups, namely mother, mother and father and other (father, tutor and other). The MANOVA using FB2.0 and FC2.0 showed significant differences at the multifactorial level, namely:

$$\Lambda = 0.971, F(4,702) = 2.04, r = 0.12.$$

The involvement with children's education groups differed significantly from one another when the two factors are considered together. However, it was only FB2.0 where significant differences were present at the univariate level

$$FB2.0 - \bar{X}_M = 3.58; \bar{X}_O = 3.85; \bar{X}_{M+F} = 3.92; F(2,351) = 4.83, p = .009, r = 0.12]$$

The group where both mother and father claimed involvement with the children's education had the highest mean score and agreed the most strongly with the aspects facilitating online teaching and learning in an online environment during a pandemic (FB2.0). The group where only mothers were responsible for the education of the children had the lowest mean score and hence the lowest agreement. The data in Table 4.11 show that mothers (64,7%) are by far the largest group who claim to be assisting with the children's education and as they have the lowest level of agreement with the items in this factor. This finding possibly suggests that mothers need more support from the school in facilitating online teaching and learning. It is also this researcher's own observation that mothers are far more involved with their children's education than fathers are. Lansford (2020) points out that parental involvement during a pandemic becomes vital and more challenging as parents are now more directly responsible for aspects of their child's online education handled by the school than they were in the past. Stine (2020) points out that being a single parent makes it very difficult to be involved with the child's learning process. Many of them have shift jobs, work in warehouses, healthcare, administration, or maintenance, making them

essential workers during the pandemic. Therefore, parents cannot just abandon their jobs and are finding themselves in a very difficult situation where they are holding on to their jobs and a sense of economic security as well as assisting their children with their education.

The aspects facilitating online teaching and learning is built on four first-order factors and it is necessary to delve deeper into which of the factors is or are responsible for this significant difference. Tests at the univariate level indicated that FB1.3 (Aspects impeding online teaching and learning) and FB1.4 (Problems experienced with online teaching and learning) were involved in the significant difference when the four first-order factors were tested together. The results of these tests were:

$$[FB1.3 - \bar{X}_M = 2.41; \bar{X}_O = 2.61; \bar{X}_{M+F} = 2.92; F(2) = 4.52, p = 0.012, r = 0.16]$$

Regarding the aspects impeding online teaching and learning the mother only group had the lowest mean and thus disagreed significantly more strongly with the items in the factor than did the two other groups. The mother group differed significantly from the mother and father group ( $p = 0.010$ ). All three of the involvement groups could be said to disagree with the items in the factor.

$$[FB1.4 - \bar{X}_M = 3.04; \bar{X}_O = 3.43; \bar{X}_{M+F} = 3.33; F(2) = 3.18, p = 0.04, r = 0.13]$$

The test shows a significant difference at the 5% level ( $p = 0.04$ ). However, a pair-wise comparison at univariate level shows no significant differences between the three groups of involvement with the children's education.

## **4.7 SYNTHESIS OF STATISTICAL FINDINGS**

### **4.7.1 Structure of the underlying dimensions of the role of parents in supporting online teaching and learning during a pandemic such as COVID-19**

The role of parents in supporting learning during the COVID-19 pandemic is based on two underlying multifactorial dimensions, namely "Aspects facilitating an online teaching and learning environment" (FB2.0) and "Management difficulties regarding online teaching and learning" (FC2.0). Each of the dimensions were found to consist of sub-dimensions. The "Aspects facilitating an online teaching and learning

environment” (FB2.0) had the following sub-dimensions, namely Online service provision by the school during the pandemic (FB1.1); Concerns regarding online teaching and learning (FB1.2); Aspects hindering online teaching and learning (FB1.3); Challenges experienced by online teaching and learning. All four of these first-order factors exhibited both converging and diverging validity.

The second dimension named “Management difficulties regarding online teaching and learning” (FC2.0) was found to be composed of three sub-dimensions, namely “Training and development for online teaching and learning” (FC1.1); “Costs of online teaching and learning” (FC1.2) and “Difficulties experienced by respondents regarding online teaching and learning” (FC1.3). All factors showed diverging validity and it was only FC1.3 that did not exhibit converging validity due to poor wording of one of the items. The CR was 0.78 and the Cronbach alpha was 0.602, which improved to 0.654 if item C1 was removed.

#### **4.7.2 Significant differences between two independent groups and the two dimensions involved with online teaching and learning during COVID-19**

Regarding the aspects facilitating online teaching and learning during a pandemic (FB2.0) significant differences were found between the younger (<41 years) and older age groups (42+ years). The younger age group agreed more strongly with the items in this factor. This difference was found to be due to two of the first-order factors namely:

- FB1.1 – Online service provision by the school during the pandemic. The younger age group agreed significantly more strongly than did the older age group with respect to B19 (The school helped parents in need of resources), B8 (I understood what was expected from me as a parent to help my child in his/her learning process) and B14 (In my opinion the school management provided enough support to ensure that academic loss is kept to a minimum).
- FB1.2 – Concerns regarding online teaching and learning. The younger age group of parents disagreed significantly more strongly with the items in this factor than did the older age group of parents. The two concerns where significant differences were found between the age groups were B9 (I find it difficult to be involved in my child’s/children’s academic programme and B10 (I

am uncertain of my part that I am responsible for in my child's/children's academic programme). In each of these items the younger age group appear to be more confident (disagreed more strongly) with the items than the older age groups are.

No significant differences could be found between gender, devices to access the internet with or religious affiliation groups.

#### **4.7.3 Significant differences between three or more independent groups and the two dimensions involved with online teaching and learning during COVID-19**

##### *4.7.3.1 School phase*

Respondents who had children in the junior phase (G1 to G3) agreed significantly more strongly with the factor aspects facilitating online teaching and learning (FB1.2) than did parents who had children in the intermediate phase (G4 to G6) and the senior phase (G7 to G9). These significant differences were found to be the result of differences in two of the first-order factors, namely FB1.1 (Online service provision by the school) and FB1.3 (Aspects hindering online teaching and learning). In both first order factors the lower the grade level, the larger the extent of agreement with the factor. Hence, parents who have children in higher grades appear to need more assistance with respect to facilitating online teaching and learning activities which seems logical as the content of the academic programme becomes more complicated.

##### *4.7.3.2 Race groups*

Statistically significant differences were found in FB2.0 (Aspects facilitating online teaching and learning during the pandemic). Black respondents agreed significantly more strongly with the items in the factor than White respondents did. These significant differences were found to be due to two of the four first-order factors, namely FB1.0 (Online service provision by the school during the pandemic) and FB1.3 (Aspects hindering online teaching and learning). In both first-order factors, Black respondents disagreed less strongly with the items involved. FB1.0 (Online service provision by the school) had the largest effect size difference between means and could be seen to be the most important of the two factors.



#### *4.7.3.3 Highest educational qualification*

The MANOVA test indicated that significant statistical differences were present in the FC2.0 dimension (Management challenges experienced during the pandemic). Respondents with a B. Degree or higher agreed significantly more strongly with this factor than did the other two educational qualification groups. All three the first-order factors involved in the management challenges factor (FC2.0) indicated that the B. Degree or higher respondents agreed significantly more strongly than did respondents with lower educational qualifications. Factor FC1.3 (Problems experienced regarding online teaching and learning) had the highest effect size and was perceived as the most important of the three first-order factors. The higher the educational qualification the larger the extent of perceived management challenges to teaching and learning in an online environment.

#### *4.7.3.4 Mother tongue groups*

Significant differences were found to be present between the five mother tongue groups regarding FB2.0 only (Aspects facilitating online teaching and learning during the pandemic). The English mother tongue group agreed significantly less strongly than did the Nguni and Sotho mother tongue groups. This significant difference in the FB2.0 dimension was found to be due to differences in FB1.1 (Online service delivery by the school during the pandemic) and FB1.3 (Aspects hindering online teaching and learning). In the FB1.1 factor (Online service delivery by the school) the English mother tongue group agreed the least strongly with the items in the factor and were the least satisfied group and differed significantly from the Nguni and Sotho mother tongue groups. With respect to aspects hindering online teaching and learning (FB1.3) the English mother tongue group disagreed the least strongly with the items in the factor and differed statistically significantly from the Nguni and Sotho mother tongue groups. Presently English is the language of use in South Africa and it appears as if more attention is needed with respect to the Nguni and Sotho mother tongue groups when it comes to aspects concerned with online service providers such as schools.

#### *4.7.3.5 Groups mostly involved with assisting in child/children's education during lockdown (A11Rec)*

Significant differences between the three groups claiming involvement with their children's education were found to be present in the FB2.0 dimension only (Aspects

facilitating online teaching and learning during the pandemic). The group where both parents (mother and father) stated involvement with their children's education agreed the most strongly with the factor. The group containing only mothers agreed the least strongly with the items in the factor. Two of the four first-order factors contained in the FB2.0 dimension, namely FB1.3 (aspects impeding online teaching and learning) and FB1.4 (Problems experienced with online teaching and learning) were responsible for the differences present between the involvement groups. In both the first-order factors the mother-only group had the lowest factor mean and hence disagreed more strongly with the factor than the other two involvement groups did. The SMT is surely aware of this situation as South Africa is still largely patriarchal with mothers taking on the caring role, which includes responsibility for the children's education. The SMT needs to make larger provision for this and find ways and means to be more supportive of mothers' when it comes to planning to a caring climate that will take cognisance of the important role that mothers' play in children's education.

#### **4.8 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the data collected by means of a Likert-scale and item-format combined questionnaire from parents were analysed and interpreted. The programme used to translate the data was the SPSS 27 system. Factor analytic procedures were utilised to determine the construct validity of the various constructs in the questionnaire. The reliability of the various factors found was determined using Cronbach's Alpha and the comprehensive reliability. The analysis of the data enabled me to identify the critical aspects and factors that can be used when developing management strategies to improve and assist parents with the learning process taking place at home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapter 5 will present the findings and summary emerging from the literature and data analysis. The research findings will be formulated and recommendations regarding the development and implementation of a guideline for school management to help ensure that effective learning takes place at home during a pandemic will be formulated.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS TO THE STUDY**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this study it has been clearly stated and researched that there is a definite need for the development and implementation of management strategies to ensure that parents are supported in order to ensure academic success for learning during and after COVID-19. In this final chapter, a summary of the study, findings and recommendations will be presented. This chapter will also outline the limitations and suggestions for future research. The findings in this chapter enabled me to present how a management plan, such as The OPEN supportive parental model should be developed and recommendations will allow me to illustrate how The OPEN supportive parental model should be implemented to improve academic success for learning during and after COVID-19.

### **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

This section of Chapter 5 outlines the fundamental aspects discussed in Chapter 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 data collected.

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

Chapter 1 introduced the study and provided insight to the background of the study. This chapter established that a child needs continuous reinforcement and that the school, parent and community should work together to ensure academic success. Thus there should be clear, effective communication and a common goal (cf. par. 1.1). I as a researcher strongly believe that this is critical for ensuring that academic success takes place during and after COVID-19. I conducted this study to find management strategies and approaches that might serve as guidelines to enhance support given to parents to ensure academic success during and after COVID-19. This formed the

basis of the rationale for the study (cf. par. 1.2), as I could see that this pandemic would become a problem globally for education and the traditional way of conducting education and the learning process in South Africa. From the information provided from the background of the study as well as the research problem, the following research question was phrased (cf. par. 1.3):

*How can school managements support parents to ensure academic success for learning during and after COVID-19?*

The significance of the study is that COVID-19 will have a lasting effect on education and the way it is conducted. Therefore, one has to evolve education to suit the future and be prepared for future pandemics (cf. par. 1.5).

Chapter 1, however, provides a brief overview of the research paradigm (cf. par. 1.6.1), research approach (cf. par. 1.6.2), research design (cf. par. 1.6.3), population and sampling (cf. par. 1.6.4), instrumentation and data collection techniques (cf. par. 1.6.5), and data analysis and interpretation (cf. par. 1.6.6) Furthermore, this chapter discussed the ethical considerations (cf. par. 1.8) as well as the limitations and delimitations of the study (cf. par.1.9).

### **5.2.2 Literature review**

Chapter 2 provided a literature review, which formed the foundation of this study. The literature guided me in the questions asked in the questionnaire I used to gather data for my study. The study was based on two theoretical frameworks. The chapter discussed the benefits of parental involvement by studying Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres and her typology of effective parental involvement (cf. par. 2.2.2).

The Cognitive Consistency Theory was used to explain the contradictions between teachers' beliefs and benefits of parental involvement and actions teachers adopt to promote and encourage parental involvement during this pandemic (cf. par. 2.2.3).

Furthermore, this chapter focused on how the world experienced COVID-19 and how it affected education as well as the different views of parental involvement during this COVID-19 pandemic (cf. par. 2.3). This chapter further looked at the views of South African parents and their involvement (cf. par. 2.4). The chapter then focused on the parental involvement and academic performance of learners during a pandemic (cf.

par. 2.5), as well as the barriers to effective parental involvement during a pandemic (cf. par. 2.6).

### **5.2.3 Research design and methodology**

Chapter 3 provided the research design and methodology of the study. A quantitative research approach was used for this study, as it was used to test objective theories by examining the relationship among variables (cf. par. 3.2.2). The population of the study included parents of Grades 3–7 learners from a primary school in Gauteng (cf. par. 3.3.1). Non-probability random sampling was used to select the respondents for the study (cf. par. 3.3.2). The sampling method used was quota sampling (cf. par. 3.3.3). The data collection techniques used in this study were a Likert-scale and item-based questionnaire (cf. par. 3.4.1), which allowed me to collect information about people's knowledge, beliefs, attitude and behaviour.

Furthermore, the chapter discussed validity and reliability (cf. par. 3.8). Ethical considerations (cf. par. 3.9), which were of paramount importance to this study were also discussed. This included the researcher's role and competency (cf. par. 3.9.1), relationships with participants (cf. par. 3.9.2), protection of human rights (cf. pa. 3.9.3), informed consent (cf. par. 3.9.4), and anonymity and confidentiality (cf. par. 3.9.5).

### **5.2.4 Data analysis and discussion of findings**

Chapter 4 presented the findings from the data collected by means of the Likert-scale and item-based questionnaires. The chapter started off with a description of the sample from which the data were collected (cf. par. 4.2). This enabled me to present the data in a more meaningful way through numerical calculation, graphs or tables, which allow for simpler interpretation of the data. This was followed by a demographic overview of the respondents.

Section B of the questionnaire was analysed (cf. par. 4.3), followed by the analysis of section C (cf. par. 4.4). The chapter then focused on the significant differences between two independent groups regarding aspects facilitating online teaching and learning during a pandemic (cf. par. 4.5). This was followed by the significant differences between three or more independent groups regarding aspects facilitating

online learning and learning during a pandemic and management difficulties (cf. par. 4.6.).

The following became clear by analysing the two sections.

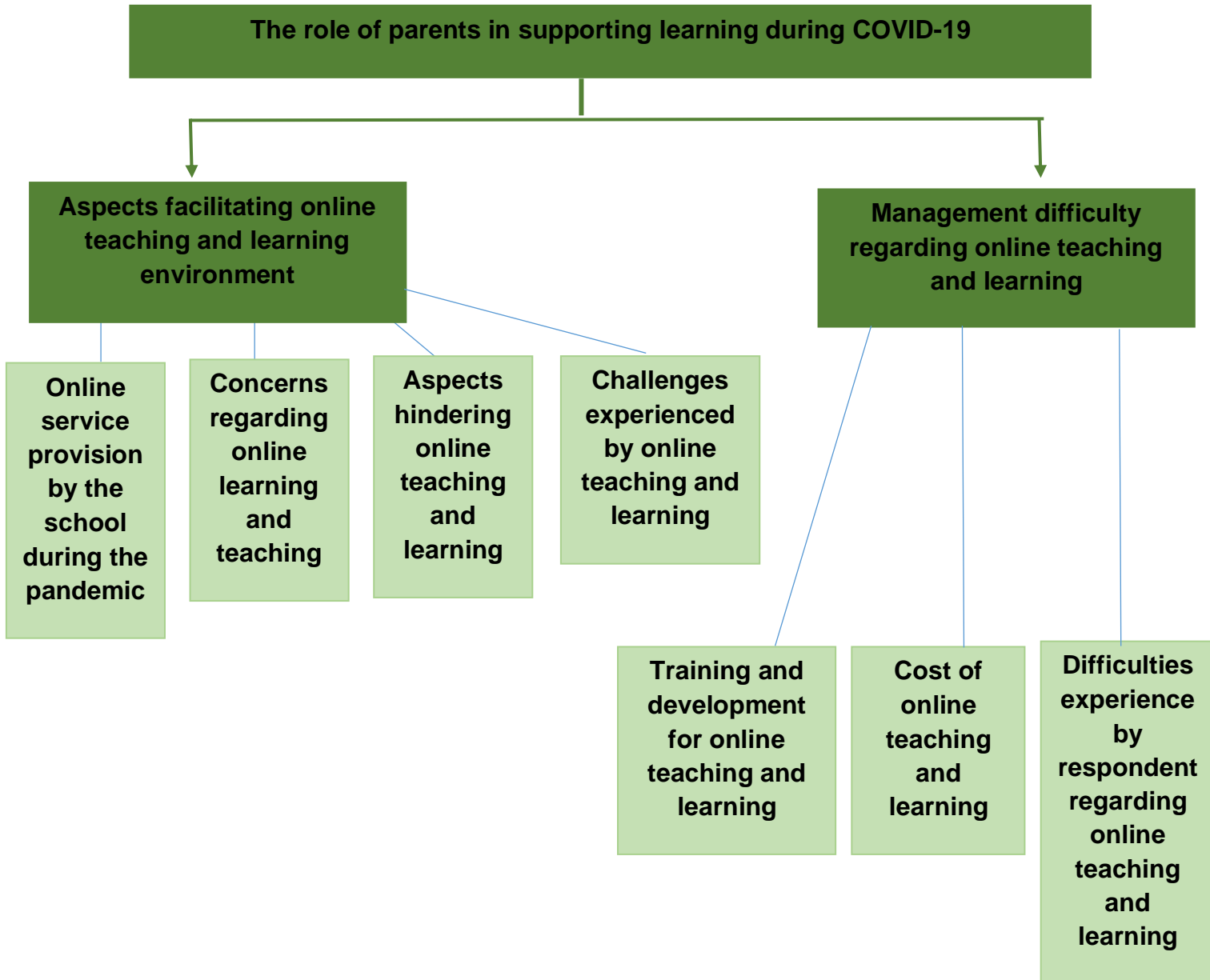


Figure 5.1: Analysis of the two sections (cf. par. 4.6.1)

The role of parents in supporting learning during the COVID-19 pandemic is based on two underlying multifactorial dimensions, namely “Aspects facilitating an online teaching and learning environment” and “Management difficulties regarding online teaching and learning” (cf. par. 4.6.1). “Aspects facilitating an online teaching and learning environment” looks at how the online learning is conducted and its challenges, while “Management difficulties regarding online teaching and learning” looks at the

managing of online learning and the challenges of managing online learning. Each of the dimensions consists of sub-dimensions. The “Aspects facilitating an online teaching and learning environment” has the following sub-dimensions, namely:

- **Online service provision by the school during the pandemic** (cf. par. 4.6.1). The online service provision indicates how the school conducted online learning and how the parent experienced the online learning process.
- **Concerns regarding online teaching and learning** (cf. par. 4.6.2). Parents experienced concerns regarding the online learning process and that it had an impact on their child’s future education, as some of the fundamentals were not in place and could cause gaps. These concerns are seen more among the younger age group of parents (cf. par. 4.5.2).
- **Aspects hindering online teaching and learning** (cf. par 4.6.1). Parents experienced some hindering aspects as they had to focus on their work as well as educating their children.
- **Challenges experienced by online teaching and learning** (cf. par. 4.6.1). Parents experienced challenges with online teaching and learning as they are not qualified teachers and do not always understand the content. All the parents are not English First Language speakers and they often do not understand the instructions or content (cf. par. 4.2.8, 4.6.4, 4.7.3.4)

The second dimension, “Management difficulties regarding online teaching and learning”, comprises three sub-dimensions, namely:

- **Training and development for online teaching and learning** (cf. par. 4.6.1). There is a need for online teaching and learning that needs to be fulfilled. If teachers, learners and parents are educated and know how the platform works they would work better together towards a common goal to maximize learning and academic success.
- **Costs of online teaching and learning** (cf. par. 4.6.1). Not all learners are privileged enough to afford data costs and therefore the school should find ways to assist learners.

- **Difficulties experienced by respondents regarding online teaching and learning** (cf. par. 4.6.1).

### **5.3 FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY**

The findings of the study will subsequently be discussed according to the sub-research questions (cf. par. 1.3). This discussion enabled me to compare findings from the theoretical framework, the literature review and the findings of the research data analysis in order to identify correlations between the literature review and the data gathered from the respondents. This allowed me to provide recommendations on how school managements could implement measures to ensure that parents are supported by the school management to ensure that academic success takes place during and after COVID-19.

#### **5.3.1 Findings pertaining to sub-research question one**

##### **How can school managements support parents with the learning process taking place at home?**

The first sub-research question (cf. par. 1.3) was aimed to determine whether there is a need for parents to be supported by school management to ensure their children's academic success. The theoretical framework clearly outlined that there is a link between parents being involved with their child's academics and their academic success (cf. par. 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.4 & 2.5). The theoretical framework makes it clear that the school, parent and the community should work together to ensure academic success, and one party cannot solely be responsible for the academic success of a child; thus the three parties should work together and have the same common goal in mind (cf. par. 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.4 & 2.5).

It is therefore critical that a parent knows exactly what is expected from him/her in order to assist their child (cf. par. 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.4 & 2.5). When looking at the findings from Chapter 4, it becomes clear that schools should provide greater clarity about parental involvement, especially to older respondents (cf. par. 4.5.2, 4.6.5 & 4.7.3).

The findings in Chapter 4 suggest that the older age group of parents expect more service provided by the school during a pandemic (cf. par. 4.5.2.). The older age group of parents also have more concerns regarding online teaching and learning (cf. par.



4.5.2). Parents who know what is expected of them are more likely to have a child that succeeds academically (cf. par. 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.4 & 2.5). Thus if parents are supported they will know what is expected and their child will most likely succeed academically, as they would be able to provide the support to their children. It is therefore critical that a school management team ensures that all parents are aware of online activities and knows how to support their children in mastering the online activities (cf. par. 4.6.5 & 4.7.3.5).

The findings from the literature review regarding parental support and academic success during COVID-19 (cf. par. 1.7.5, 1.7.5.1 & 1.7.5.2) allowed me to formulate questions asked to respondents in the form of a Likert-scale and Item-based questionnaire (cf. par. 3.4.1). The questions were aimed to determine if parents can support their children to ensure academic success during COVID-19. This was done to determine if the findings in Chapter 2 correlate with the findings in Chapter 4.

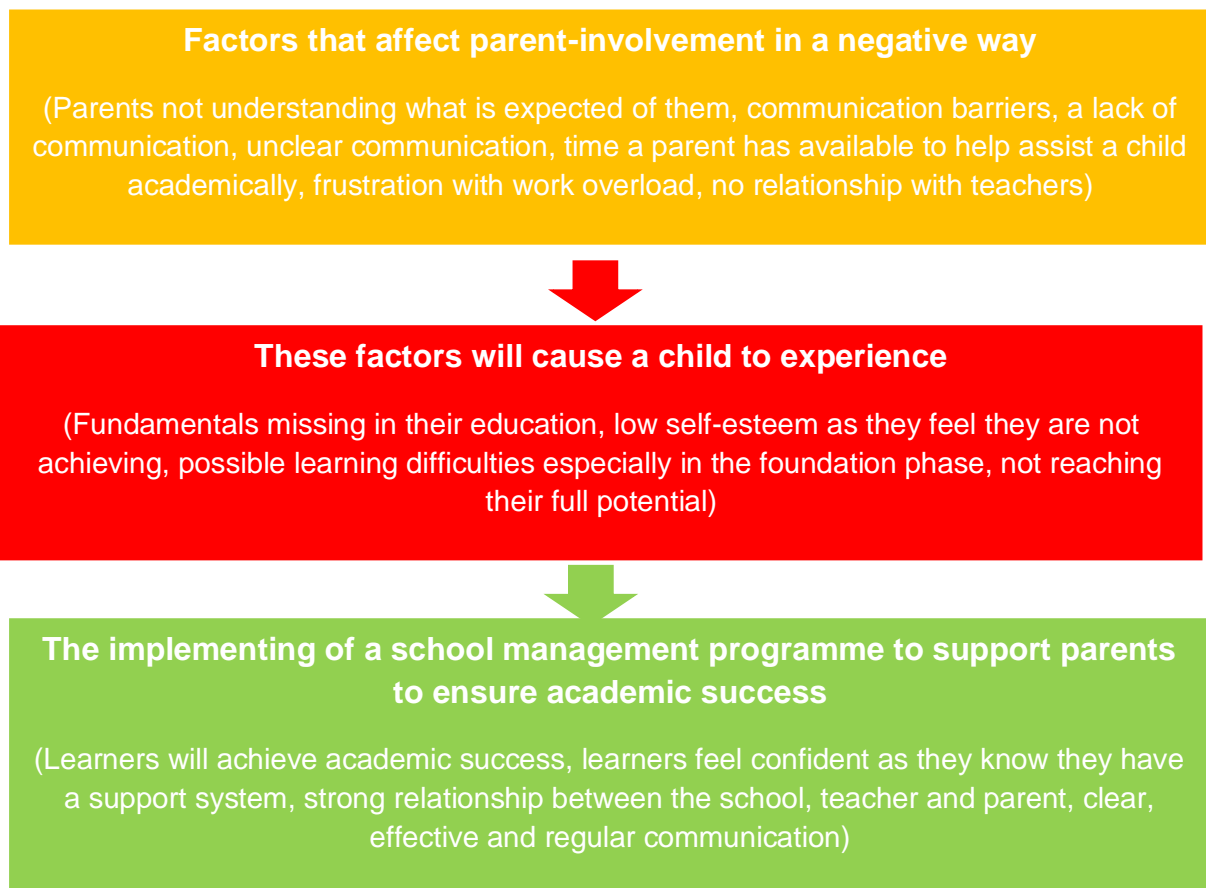
Chapter 2 has found that academic success is more likely to be achieved by learners with parents that are involved and knows what is expected from them to assist their child academically (cf. par. 1.2 & 2.5). Studies have also shown that if parents are negative towards the learning process it is reflected in their child's academic achievements (cf. par. 2.3.2 & 2.3.9). Thus it is very important for a school to maintain a positive relationship with the parent in order to enhance academic achievement (cf. par. 4.7.3.5).

Therefore, from the findings it is evident that an effective partnership between the school, parents and teachers will lead to improved academic success (cf. par. 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.5 & 4.7.3.5). It is very important that the school provides a healthy school environment where parents feel welcome and free to express their need for academic assistance (cf. par. 2.2.2 & 2.2.3). It is thus critical there is a strong school-teacher-parent relationship, as all the spheres have to interact with one another in order to ensure that academic success takes place (cf. par. 2.2.2). The more individuals are involved in the academic process and assist the child, the more likely the child is to succeed and the easier the learning process becomes (cf. par. 4.7.3.5).

Clear, effective communication is needed to create a strong school-teacher-parent relationship. Findings suggest that communication is not evident and that communication should take place regularly (cf. par. 4.3). Parents cannot be supportive

parents if they do not know what is expected of them and know their role in the learning process, thus becoming a school management's duty to ensure that communication takes place on a regular basis (cf. par 4.3 & 4.7.3.5).

The following illustrates the link between parent involvement and their child's academic success.



*Figure 5.2: The link between parent involvement and their child's academic success.*

There are several factors that can affect parental involvement in negative way. Parents are very often not able to assist their children academically as they do not understand what is expected of them as it is not always communicated clearly (cf. par. 2.2.2, 2.4, 4.5.2 & 4.7.2). Parents very often do not understand the instructions or content, as they are not English first-language speakers. Parents are also overloaded with personal work and find it very difficult to assist their children academically or they easily become frustrated with a child that does not understand the work (cf. par. 2.3.3). This will, however, have an impact on a child and will have a lasting effect on the child. A child could experience learning loss and this will result in the child missing out on fundamentals (cf. par. 2.4). This in turn could lead to a low self-esteem, as they might

struggle academically. Learners may experience learning difficulties and will not reach their full potential as they are missing the fundamentals (cf. par. 2.4 & 4.5.2). In order to prevent this from happening, it is important to implement a school management plan to support parents to ensure academic success during COVID-19.

### **5.3.2 Findings pertaining to sub-research question two**

#### **Which problems at home hinder academic success or the learner during COVID-19?**

The second research question (cf. par. 1.3) was formulated to identify which problems at home hinder academic success or learning during COVID-19 at a primary school in Gauteng. The literature review in Chapter 2 was used to correlate the findings of Chapter 4. The literature review in Chapter 2 revealed that there were a few factors that hindered academic success during COVID-19.

Through research done in Chapter 2 it was found that many South Africans did not have access to devices to ensure that their children could study online. In addition, data costs were too high for parents to ensure that their children stay up to date with their schoolwork. In many cases parents had to make the tough decision between buying data or providing food for their children (cf. par. 2.4 & 2.6). However, in the study conducted at the primary school in Gauteng, it was found that this did not have an effect on the parents at this primary school, as only three parents indicated that they did not have access to a device to ensure that their child received the educational resources provided. They further indicated that this had no impact on their child's education (cf. par.4.2.12, 4.5.3 & 4.7.2).

The literature reviews also revealed that single parents (mothers) found it very difficult to maintain a job, provide for their children, and to assist their child academically, especially if the parent had more than one child (cf. par. 4.2.6, 4.5.1, 4.6.5, 4.7.3.5). This correlated closely with the findings of Chapter 4, as it became clear from respondents that single mothers require more assistance and support. Single mothers have to provide for their families while helping their children academically. This causes overload and frustration, as a single mother might feel that she does not succeed in her job as a parent (cf. par. 4.2.6, 4.5.1, 4.6.5, 4.7.3.5).

The findings in Chapter 4 suggest that when both the parents (mother and father) are involved in a child's education it is easier for the parents (cf. par. 4.7.3.5). Therefore, the school management team needs to make provision and provide more support to mothers, as mothers play a very important role in a child's education. According to Lee (2020), a mother is a teacher in every aspect of a child's developmental growth. Therefore it is very important that a mother is informed and supported when it comes to online learning, as she is taking on yet another role of a teacher of something new, but this time something that is unfamiliar to her.

The findings from Chapter 4 show that parents who do not speak English as their home language seem to find the online learning process more challenging and seem to be struggling more than parents who speak English as a home language. It is very difficult for parents to teach their children in a language that they themselves do not understand and comprehend (cf. par. 4.2.8, 4.6.4 & 4.7.3.4). School managements teams should thus find ways to support parents in ensuring that they understand the content to make sure that parents can assist their children during a pandemic. A study conducted by Garbe et al. (2020) shows that parents are concerned with the quantity of work and concerned with the quality as they experience the workload to be a lot and above their children's ability.

The findings also reveal that parents that have a higher education qualification expect more from the online learning process (cf. par. 4.2.5, 4.6.3 & 4.7.3.3). Parents who have a higher education qualification have a larger expectation of online learning and the way it is conducted (cf. par. 4.6.3). Parents with higher education qualifications find it less challenging to assist their children with the online learning process.

The following illustrates the factors that hinder academic success.

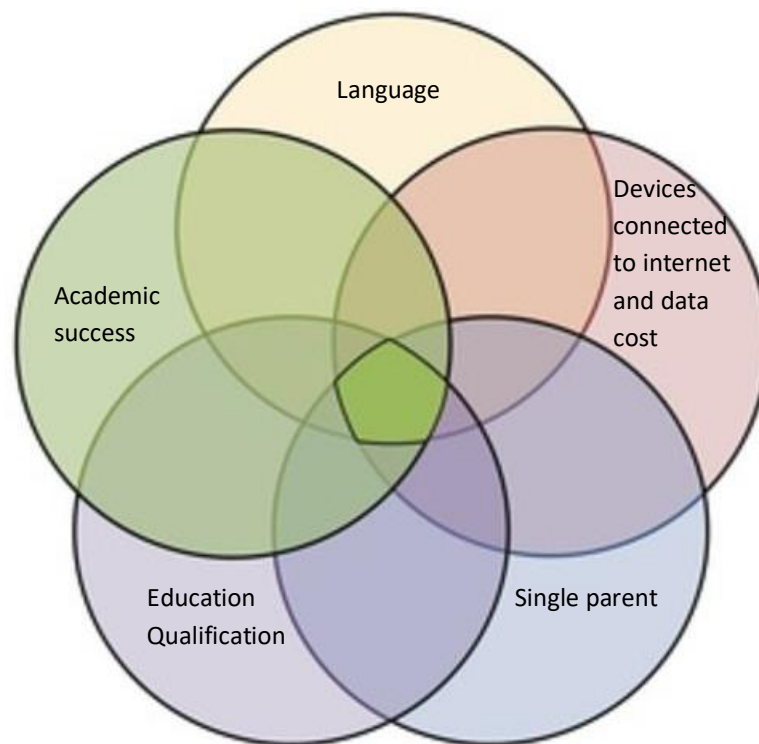


Figure 5.3: The factors that hinder academic success.(cf. par. 4.5.1, 4.5.3, 4.6.3 & 4.6.4)

There are four factors that hinder academic success. It is therefore very important to eliminate these factors, as they can cause learning loss and leave a child with missing fundamental blocks. It is very important that a parent understands the instruction and content. If parents do not understand the content and instructions, they cannot assist their child as they do not know how to do this (cf. par. 4.2.8, 4.6.4 & 4.7.3.4). It is very important that a parent can access the learning material and therefore needs a device that can connect to the internet. Parents would also be able to afford data costs. A big influence on academic success is the involvement of parents. Single parents find it very difficult to be involved as they have to provide for their children and help them with their academics (cf. par. 4.2.6, 4.5.1, 4.6.5, 4.7.3.5).

### 5.3.3 Findings pertaining to sub-research question three

#### **How can relationships between the school and parents improve academic success for the learner during COVID-19?**

The third sub-research question (cf. par. 1.3) enabled me to understand how the relationship between the school, teacher and parent could be improved to ensure academic success for learning during COVID-19. This is a very important aspect of the study, as it is necessary to know the relationship to develop guidelines for the

school. This will ensure that parents are supported to ensure academic success during COVID-19. In a relationship it is critical that clear communication takes place, mutual respect should be visible, there should be support for one another, and in order to achieve this, each party should know its role in the relationship (cf. par. 4.3).

From the findings in Chapter 4 it has become clear that there is not a good relationship between the school, teachers and parents. Many parents felt that the school did not facilitate online learning and there was a lot of miscommunication on what had to be done and whose responsibility it was to do this (cf. par. 4.3 & 4.7.1). In Chapter 4 it became clear that parents from the foundation phase found the online learning facilitating to be efficient, but intermediate, and senior phase parents found that the school and its teachers did not facilitate online learning (cf. par. 4.6.1). At first it was thought that this was because of the difficulty and level of work expected from learners, but upon deeper analysis of the data it was revealed that respondents from the foundation phase felt that communication was in place, while intermediate and senior phase respondents felt that there was no communication (cf. par. 4.6.1). Communication is one of the fundamentals of a healthy relationship; without communication the relationship does not exist and therefore parents do not know their role as a parent and do not assist their child academically (cf. par. 4.3).

#### **5.3.4 Findings pertaining to sub-research question four**

##### **What strategies can school management implement to support parents during and after COVID-19?**

The main purpose of this study was to establish strategies and approaches that might serve as guidelines to support parents to ensure academic success during COVID-19 (cf. par. 1.4). The findings from this study suggest that there is a continuous need for support and the parents feel that the school shortfall this and therefore there is a need for support. The respondents indicated that online learning was not facilitated and it was not consistent throughout the school (cf. par. 4.6.1 & 4.7.3.1).

The study also found that there is a need for the school to improve its communication channels and communicate with parents more regularly (cf. par. 4.3). The school should communicate its decisions and explain why these decisions were made.

The school should look at providing workshops for parents on how to assist and support their child with the online learning process now taking place. As this would increase parental involvement and would lead to academic success. It has become clear from the findings that where both parents were involved, the online learning process was easier (cf. par. 4.7.3.5). Thus, if a parent has other parents to assist with content or instructions not understood, the online learning process will be easier. If the school provides workshops, parents will have a platform to meet one another and build relationships with one another as well as with teachers.

The school should provide assistance and support to single parents, especially mothers, as they play a very important role in their child's education (cf. par. 4.2.6, 4.5.1, 4.6.5, 4.7.3.5). It became clear that when parents have support, for example, a spouse to help with the learning process, it became less overwhelming and challenging (cf. par. 4.7.3.5).

The school should also close the gap between English mother tongue speakers and English second language speakers, as parents who do not speak English as a first language struggle significantly more with the challenges of the online learning taking place at home during COVID-19. The parents who do not speak English as their mother tongue have to spend a lot of extra time on online learning, as there is a communication barrier. They do not understand the language and therefore very often do not understand the content. The parents then have a very difficult job to explain this to their children or often explain it incorrectly as they themselves do not understand the content. This communication barrier also affects parents' abilities to follow instructions (cf. par. 4.2.8, 4.6.4 & 4.7.3.4).

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section of the study provides clear and structured recommendations regarding each sub-research question retrieved from the findings explained in the previous section. The recommendations are made to guide the school management teams in developing supporting strategies to improve online learning's effectiveness.

#### **5.4.1 Recommendations pertaining to sub-aim one**

##### **To determine how school management could provide parents with support in order to ensure effective learning.**

From the findings it became clear that the school management team is in need of a policy to guide the school and its teachers on how the online learning process should be facilitated to ensure that there is some constancy in the school (cf. par. 4.6.1 & 4.7.3.1). The following recommendation is based on the findings of the study, which could be used by school management to support parents to ensure their children's academic success during COVID-19 (cf. par. 1.4.). The school management team will have to implement guidance and support to parents and should be knowledgeable regarding the factors that could have an influence on how support should be conveyed (cf. par. 4.7.3.1, 4.7.3.2, 4.7.3.3, 4.7.3.4 & 4.7.3.5).

From the findings it became clear that parents felt a need for better communication, as parents felt uninformed about the online process and parents had conflicting views on how the online learning process was conducted (cf. par. 4.7.2). It is very important that there is a strong teacher-parent relationship. In order to create a strong relationship, it becomes critical for the school to ensure that clear communication takes place on a regular basis. Therefore my recommendation would be that the school's communication should be clear between the school management team and the teachers as well as the school management team and the parents. The school should communicate with the teachers first explain to the teachers which decisions were made and why these decisions were made. The teachers need to be informed and be able to give feedback to any parent. The school should conduct a survey and determine the common first language and have instructions and content available in these languages to help assist parents with language barriers. Teachers that speak these languages should be available to assist parents with difficulties. It should be conveyed to parents that these options are available.

From the findings it became clear that when parents know what is expected of them, they are more likely to have a child that succeeds academically (cf. par. 4.7.3.5). Therefore, the school management team should provide parents with support in order to be able to support their children. My recommendation would be to involve parents in a programme where parents support one another. Very often an individual can



better understand a concept if its explained by an individual in the same situation. The school should have an open-door policy where parents have the opportunity to communicate with the school without fearing the outcome, as the outcome should be beneficial to the child. The school can look at creating an online parent room in the school where parents can enter virtually and receive assistance with the online learning process. The relationship between teachers and parents should be kept professional.

The school management team should focus its support on the older age group of parents as they seem to need more support. The school could engage parents on a platform where parents could interact and engage with one another to get support from fellow parents. The school could use its therapists to provide parents with a course on how to assist their child with the online learning process taking place at home to ensure that all parents can help their children succeed academically. The course should be conducted at the beginning of the year and should be mandatory. The course should also include what is expected of a parent and it how could help their child. It is very important that the school maintains a positive relationship with the parents in order to enhance academic achievement. It is therefore critical that the school creates a healthy school environment where parents feel free to express their need for academic assistance. There is a need in South Africa to include parents in their children's education in a positive way and for parents to work *with* teachers and not *against* them. The therapists course could provide parents with a platform of meeting on another and having an idea of how they fit into their children's education and their responsibilities. The online platform will keep the door of communication open and parents can be interactive with the learning process.

#### **5.4.2 Recommendations pertaining to sub-aim two**

##### **To explore the problems at home which hinder academic success for the learner during COVID-19**

Before one should develop guidelines for a school management team to ensure academic success during and after COVID-19 through the online learning process, one must understand which problems at home hinder the academic success of the learner. It is recommended that the supportive strategies below should be included

when setting the guidelines in place to ensure that effective online learning takes place during COVID-19:

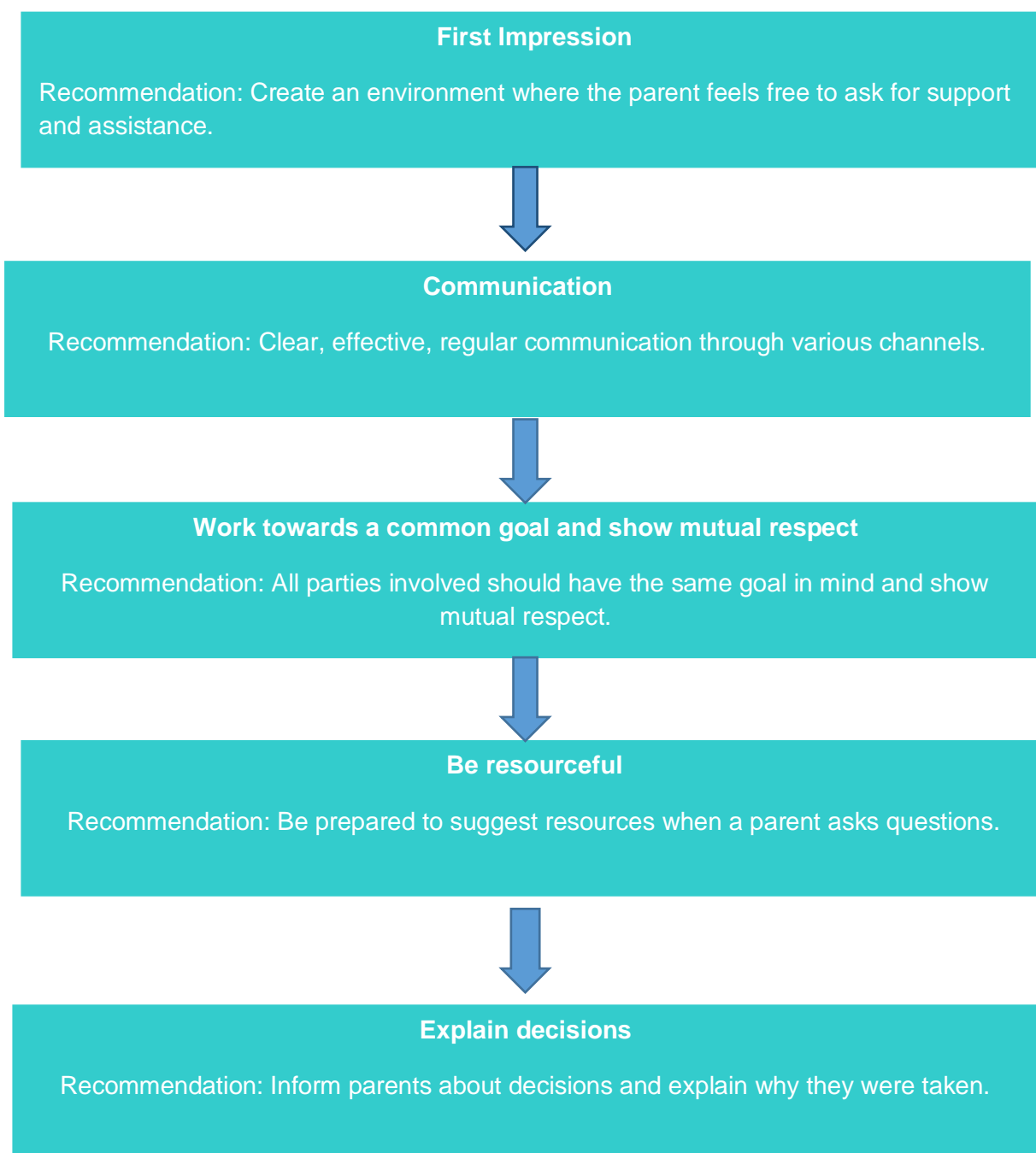
- Ensure that all learners have access to the online learning material. Thus all learners should have access to the internet and be able to afford data costs. Schools can collaborate with data provisioning companies by doing advertising for them and making them their choice of provider if they assist with a lower data rate.
- Provide single parents with additional support and create a support group to ensure that they have a support structure. A course for parent involvement and online learning conducted by the therapists at the beginning of the year can bring single parents in contact with one another and parents can build on these relationships. This can be stressed in the workshop.
- Provide support to parents who do not speak English as a home language, as it is very difficult to teach a child if one does not understand the content oneself. The school can use the National Youth individuals who were appointed to each school to help assist in the various languages the learners speak. The individuals can translate documentation and content for parents to understand.
- Create an online discussion platform where parents with a higher educational qualification take the lead in assisting the parental groups and help parents who do not understand the content or misunderstood instructions.
- Provide parents with knowledge and the skills to help their child succeed academically.
- The school should consider in-depth training of teachers on how to facilitate online learning, as this is a new domain for many teachers, especially the older generation. The school could conduct its own training by using its own teachers and their knowledge and experience. In that way, all teachers are on the same page and there will be consistency in the online teaching being facilitated.

### **5.4.3 Recommendations pertaining to sub-aim three**

**To measure how relationships between the school and parents can improve parental engagement to ensure academic success for the learner during COVID-19**

It is recommended that clear communication take place between the school management team, its teachers and the parents. It is very important that there is visible mutual respect. If mutual respect is not visible between parents and teachers, learners might feel that they do not need to show respect and if no respect is shown, clear and effective communication will not take place. It is recommended that each party, parents and teachers know their role in the relationship in order to achieve the common goal, ensuring academic success for the learner.

The following ways are recommended to improve the school and parent relationship.



*Figure 5.4: Ways to improve the school and parent relationship*

Pertaining to recommendations to improve the school and parent relationship, it is very important for a school to create a good first impression. A good first impression will be a lasting impression. It is very important to create an environment where the parent feels free to ask for support and assistance. A parent should be able to ask help to assist their child. It is important to have clear and effective communication. It is recommended that this communication takes place on a regular basis and in various languages to close communication gaps (cf. par. 4.7.3.4). It is important that all parties work together towards a common goal and show mutual respect. It is recommended

that mutual respect is visible between parents and teachers. If no respect is shown, clear and effective communication will not take place. Teachers and parents should both have the same goal in mind to ensure academic success. It is recommended that each party, parents and teachers know their role in the relationship to achieve the common goal, ensuring academic success for the learner. In order to maintain a professional role, it is important that a teacher stays resourceful. It is recommended that a teacher always have additional resources to offer a parent in need. It is important to support parents and to inform them on decisions taken. It is important to explain to parents why the decision was taken for them to understand the reasoning behind the decision making.

#### **5.4.4 Recommendations pertaining to sub-aim four**

##### **To provide recommendations on strategies that school management can implement to support parents during and after COVID-19**

The following recommendations portray guidelines to support parents during and after COVID-19 to ensure academic success. The following four key aspects form the base of an effective guide to ensure this:

- Consistency in facilitating online learning. It is critical that all teachers do the same thing regarding conducting online learning. All teachers should use the same platform and be consistent in the amount of work done online.
- In-depth training should be conducted. The school should provide training to all teachers on how to facilitate online learning as this is a new domain for teachers and many teachers need help and assistance on how to use technology to their advantage in order to conduct effective online learning. The in-depth training can be conducted by the school's own staff, who are knowledgeable and willing to share their knowledge. By doing this, there would be a consistency in the online learning facilitated.
- In order for the online learning process to be effective and to ensure academic success during and after COVID-19, it is very important that the school improves its communication channels. The school and teachers should communicate with parents on a regular basis. The school should communicate its decisions and explain why the decision was made. It is critical that the

communication takes place for parents to be confident and to trust the school. Effective, clear and regular communication will restore the relationship between the parents and the school.

- The school should provide parents with workshops on how to assist a child with the online learning process, as many parents are unsure on how to assist their child and prevent a learning loss. This will also create an environment where parents feel free to express their concerns and to seek help if they need help.

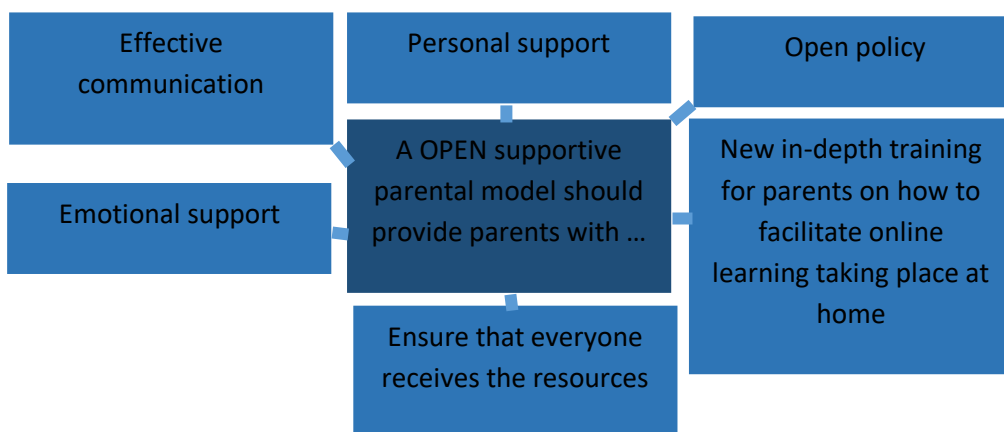
Parents should be in contact with one another. Parents should form support groups in order to support one another with the learning process taking place. Parents could also support one another emotionally, as there are many challenges that parents have to deal with during a pandemic.

## **5.5 CONTRIBUTION AND MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY**

The findings (5.3) and recommendations (5.4) from this study could be structured and used for the development of an online learning model to support parents during COVID-19. I developed an online learning model to support parents during COVID-19 and named the model, The OPEN supportive parental model. The model will be suitable to improve the support parents need during COVID-19 to ensure academic success.

### **5.5.2 Design of the OPEN supportive parental model**

The OPEN supportive parental model can be utilised by school managements to ensure that parents are supported and to implement a support programme that would provide parents with support in possible shortcomings that they could experience during and after COVID-19 and the online learning process.



*Figure 5.5: The OPEN supportive parental model*

It is named the OPEN Supportive Parental Model, because it is open for every parent who needs help and support during COVID-19 and who wants to join the supportive programme:

O: Open policy

P: Personal support

E: Effective communication and emotional support

N: New In-depth Training

Therefore, a support programme should focus on the following:

- **Open policy to parents (O).** Parents need to feel free to contact the school when experiencing problems. Parents need to be treated with respect and parents need to treat the teachers and management team with respect. This contributes to the open policy the school needs to have in order for the relationship between the school and parents to be positive. The open relationship makes it easier to work towards the same common goal ensuring academic success during COVID-19. This open policy will also make it easier to assist the parents with the support they need in order to be there for their children to achieve academically. The parents will feel more at ease to ask for assistance with language barrier problems and they will feel more at ease to build relationships with other parents to support one another.

- **Personal support (P).** Parents should be provided with support on how to conduct the online learning process. Parents with language barriers should be assisted in order for them to help their children.
- **Effective communication (E).** There should be clear communication between the school and parents. Parents should be informed at all times about decisions and why they were taken.
- **Ensure everyone receives resources (E).** It is critical that all parents and learners receive the necessary resources in order to keep up to date with the online learning process and to ensure academic success. School management, head of departments, grade leaders and teachers need to work together and ensure that all learners will receive the resources to support them with their learning, as well as the parents who will help them with the learning at home.
- **Emotional support (E).** Parents need emotional support as they are experiencing a lot of stress during the COVID-19 pandemic, as the pandemic brought many challenges. It is therefore imperative for parents to keep emotionally fit, as they have to be strong for their children in order to support them. The school management and teachers need to support the parents when needed.
- **New In-depth training (N)** on how to facilitate online learning taking place at home. Parents need to attend a course during which they are shown and guided on how to help their children with the online learning process in order to ensure academic success during and after COVID-19. The training can be developed with the lead of school management and the school management can identify capable parents who can help with the training.

## 5.6 LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

The choice of the aims was to gain insight into how parents experienced the online learning process, the challenges involved and if they needed support in order to ensure academic success. The research study focused on one school and included parents of learners in Grades 3–7. Although all parents are facing challenges with online learning, time limits restricted a larger population to be researched, especially



now that schools were not allowed to have visitors due to the strict COVID-19 protocols that were put in place by the Department of Education.

Due to the COVID-19 protocols that must be adhered to at all time, there was a concern for the spreading of the virus through questionnaires, by individuals that do not adhere to the protocols. If the questionnaires were distributed through means of an app, one will only have respondents that have access to technology, excluding a social class.

Despite the list of limitations mentioned above, the research findings contributed to a better understanding of the challenges that parents are facing to implement guidelines that the school management of a primary school in the D12 district in Gauteng can implement to support parents to ensure academic success during COVID-19.

## **5.7 RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTHER RESEARCH**

This study revealed that the school management of a primary school in the D12 district in Gauteng should support parents to ensure academic success during COVID-19. It also revealed that parents are experiencing real struggles with the online learning process, as many of them are confronted with language barriers. They are overworked and frustrated with no-one to lean on for support. It became clear that communication is not always clear, and parents do not have a positive relationship with the school. Considering this realisation, further research could be done on exploring stakeholders' opinions and understanding of online learning. Furthermore, research can be done about the struggle of communication barriers. I would also recommend that further research explore the lack of parental involvement and their resilience towards parental involvement to gain a better understanding of why this behaviour occurs. I would recommend that further research be conducted on how the rural schools experience COVID-19 and the online learning process and compare this with quintile 5 schools, looking at what could be learned from one another and how the situation could be handled.

## **5.8 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this study revealed that the school management team of a primary school in the D12 district in Gauteng should provide parents with support to ensure academic success during COVID-19. The study identified a series of factors that were utilised to develop a support programme that school management teams can use to help support parents with the online learning process taking place at home during COVID-19. This study might have identified guidelines to a support programme that is suitable for the support offered to parents during and after COVID-19 to ensure academic success. It is important that school managements take the findings and recommendations into consideration when implementing a model like The OPEN supportive parental model. The school management team needs to address the challenges raised by parents to improve the online learning process experience for parents, teachers and learners. This will in turn ensure academic success for the learners.

It is hoped that this study has highlighted some of the challenges that parents experienced at home and solutions that the school management team could use when implementing a support programme to ensure support to parents and academic success for the learners. Let all of us (school management, parents, and teachers) work together and implement the new norms in education during COVID-19. Our children are the leaders of our beloved country for generations to come.

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# ANNEXURE A: COVERING LETTER FOR RESEARCH SURVEY RESPONDENTS



C. de Jager  
41 Cockspur road  
Weltevredenpark  
Johannesburg  
1709

Tel: (011) 679 5625

---

## A questionnaire on "The role of parents in supporting learning during COVID-19 at a primary school in Gauteng."

Dear Prospective Participant,

This questionnaire forms part of my research study entitled, "The role of parents in supporting learning during COVID-19 at a primary school in Gauteng" for the degree of M Ed at the University of South Africa under the supervision of Dr P.K. Triegaardt. You have been selected by a purposive sampling strategy from the population of parents in the Gauteng Province. Hence, I invite you to take part in this survey. The aim of this study is to investigate how the school management of South African primary schools could support parents to ensure effective learning takes place during a pandemic. The findings of the study could help school's management in providing parents with sufficient support during future pandemics to ensure that effective learning takes place.

You are kindly requested to complete this survey questionnaire, comprising of three sections as honestly and frankly as possible according to your personal views and experiences. No foreseeable risks are associated with the completion of the questionnaire, which is for research purposes only. The questionnaire will take approximately ten minutes to complete.

You are not required to indicate your name or organisation, and your anonymity will be ensured. However, indication of your age, gender, etcetra will contribute to a more comprehensive analysis. All information obtained from this questionnaire will be used for research purposes only and will remain confidential. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you have the right to omit any question if so desired, or to withdraw from answering the survey without penalty at any stage. After the completion of the study, an electronic summary of the findings can be made available to you upon request.

Permission to undertake this survey has been granted by the Basic Department of Education and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. If you have any research related enquiries, they can be addressed directly to me or my supervisor. My contact details are:

Tel no: 011 679 5625

By completing the questionnaire, you imply that you have agreed to participate in this research. Please return the completed questionnaire in the sealed envelope to your child's register teacher.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Yours sincerely

C de Jager

Dr P.K. Triegaardt



University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

# ANNEXURE B

## LETTER OBTAINING PERMISSION FROM THE GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH



C. de Jager  
015 Gregorstreet  
Mindalore  
Krugersdorp  
1739

Tel: 072 650 7726  
c.dejager@icloud.com

---

Mr. T. Tshirado  
Basic Department of Education  
Tshirado.t@dbe.gov.za

### **Request for permission to conduct research in the Province of Gauteng at Weltevreden Park Primary School**

The Role of School Management to Support Parents During a Pandemic at a Selected Primary School in Gauteng.

Dear Mr Tshirado,

My name is Chane de Jager, and I am a M Ed student at the University of South Africa. I am conducting research on Educational Management under the supervision of Dr. P.K. (Paul) Triegaardt, a supervisor in the Educational Management Department. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled, "The Role of School Management to Support Parents During a Pandemic at a Selected Primary School in Gauteng."

The aims of the research study are:

- To determine the problems parents experience to ensure that effective learning takes place at home during the pandemic.
- To explore the literature to determine how school managements can support parents during a pandemic.
- To measure how relationships between the school and parents can improve parental engagement to ensure that effective learning occurs at home during a pandemic.
- To provide recommendations on strategies that school managements can implement to support parents during a pandemic.

In this particular case, the quantitative research method will be used to collect data from the participants (500 parents of Grade 3 to Grade 7 learners from the selected school in Gauteng) in the form of questionnaires and will be administered to participants to draw a demographic profile from the analysis of data. The quantitative study could increase the understanding of the effectiveness of school management's role in supporting parents during a pandemic.

There will be no reimbursements or any incentives for participation in the research. participation is strictly voluntary and participants may withdraw without any consequences. Feedback can be provided to the respondents via email should they request

Thank you for your support

Chane de Jager (Research Student)



University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
www.unisa.ac.za



# ANNEXURE C: LETTER OBTAINING PERMISSION FROM THE SCHOOL TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH



C. de Jager  
015 Gregorstreet  
Mindalore  
Krugersdorp  
1739

Tel: 072 650 7726  
c.dejager@icloud.com

Dear principal,

My name is Chane de Jager, and I am a M Ed student at the University of South Africa. I am conducting research on Educational Management under the supervision of Dr. P.K. (Paul) Triegaardt, a supervisor in the Educational Management Department. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled, "The role of parents in supporting learning during COVID-19 at a primary school in Gauteng."

The aims of the research study are:

- To determine the problems parents experience to ensure that effective learning takes place at home during the pandemic.
- To explore the literature to determine how school managements can support parents during a pandemic.
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There will be no reimbursements or any incentives for participation in the research. participation is strictly voluntary and participants may withdraw without any consequences. Feedback can be provided to the respondents via email should they request

Thank you for your support

Chane de Jager  
(Research Student)

Dr P.K. Triegaardt  
(Supervisor)

(Principal)



University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

## ANNEXURE D: QUESTIONNAIRE



C. de Jager  
41 Cockspur road  
Weltevredenpark  
Johannesburg  
1709

Tel: (011) 679 5625

---

### A questionnaire on "The role of parents in supporting learning during COVID-19 at a primary school in Gauteng."

Dear Prospective Participant,

This questionnaire forms part of my research study entitled, "The role of parents in supporting learning during COVID-19 at a primary school in Gauteng" for the degree of M Ed at the University of South Africa under the supervision of Dr P.K. Triegaardt. You have been selected by a purposive sampling strategy from the population of parents in the Gauteng Province. Hence, I invite you to take part in this survey. The aim of this study is to investigate how the school management of South African primary schools could support parents to ensure effective learning takes place during a pandemic. The findings of the study could help school's management in providing parents with sufficient support during future pandemics to ensure that effective learning takes place.

You are kindly requested to complete this survey questionnaire, comprising of three sections as honestly and frankly as possible according to your personal views and experiences. No foreseeable risks are associated with the completion of the questionnaire, which is for research purposes only. The questionnaire will take approximately ten minutes to complete.

You are not required to indicate your name or organisation, and your anonymity will be ensured. However, indication of your age, gender, etcetra will contribute to a more comprehensive analysis. All information obtained from this questionnaire will be used for research purposes only and will remain confidential. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you have the right to omit any question if so desired, or to withdraw from answering the survey without penalty at any stage. After the completion of the study, an electronic summary of the findings can be made available to you upon request.

Permission to undertake this survey has been granted by the Basic Department of Education and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. If you have any research related enquiries, they can be addressed directly to me or my supervisor. My contact details are:

Tel no: 011 679 5625

By completing the questionnaire, you imply that you have agreed to participate in this research. Please return the completed questionnaire in the sealed envelope to your child's register teacher.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C de Jager".

C de Jager

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Triegaardt".

Dr P.K. Triegaardt



Please **DO NOT** write your name or the name of your school on any part of this questionnaire.

The questionnaire consists of three sections:

- **SECTION A** refers to the background and general information of the respondent.
- **SECTION B** refers to the aspects of teaching and learning in an online environment during a pandemic in a school in Gauteng.
- **SECTION C** refers to the impact on management of teaching and learning in an online environment during a pandemic in a school in Gauteng.
- You are requested to respond to all questions in every section.
- There are no correct or incorrect responses. Don't ponder your answer and indicate your immediate/ initial response by making a cross (X) over the number you feel to be your most appropriate response.

**SECTION A – PERSONAL AND GENERAL INFORMATION**

To facilitate meaningful and constructive comparisons of results, kindly provide your demographic information. Please answer the following questions by crossing (X) in the relevant block, writing down your answer or filling in the number where necessary in the space provided.

**EXAMPLE FOR COMPLETING SECTION A**

QUESTION 1: Your gender?	
If you are a male then mark 1 as follows:	
Male	<del>1</del>
Female	2

**SECTION A**

1. Your gender?

Male	1
Female	2

2. My child is in grade?

Three (3)	1
Four (4)	2
Five (5)	3
Six (6)	4
Seven (7)	5

3. How old are you (in complete years)? e.g. if you are 46 years, then enter

Age		
-----	--	--

4. Your child's school phase:

Junior phase	1
Intermediate phase	2
Senior phase	3

5. Your highest educational qualification?

Grade 9	1
Grade 12	2
Post school diploma or certificate	3
Diploma	4
Diploma + further education diplomas	5
Bachelor's degree	6
Bachelor's degree + Diploma	7
Post graduate qualification	8

6. Your race?

Asian	1
Black	2
Coloured	3
Indian	4
White	5

7. What is your religious affiliation?

African traditional	1
Christian	2
Islam	3
Hindu	4
Jewish	5
None	6
Other (specify)	7

8. Which language do you consider to be your mother tongue? (Choose ONE)

Afrikaans	1
English	2
Ndebele	3
North Sotho	4
South Sotho	5
SiSwati	6
Tsonga	7
Tswana	8
Venda	9
Xhosa	10
Zulu	11
Other (Specify)	12

9. What is the gender of the principal at your school?

Male	1
Female	2

10. Your principal's race?

Asian	1
Black	2
Coloured	3
Indian	4
White	5

11. Who was mostly involved with assisting your child/children education during the lockdown?

Mother	1
Father	2
Both	3
Tutor	4
Other	5

12. Do you have access to the internet on one or more of the following devices?

Cellphone	1
Computer/ laptop	2
Tablet	3
All of the above	4
None of the above	5

**SECTION B – TEACHING AND LEARNING IN AN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT DURING A PANDEMIC**

To what extent do you agree/disagree with each of the following statements? Please indicate your response using the following 6-point scale. Make a cross (X) over the relevant number. Choose only one (1) response to each statement.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Partially disagree
4. Partially agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

**EXAMPLE FOR COMPLETING SECTION B**

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statement?

1. Working with different people requires a great deal of patience. *If you agree but not strongly agree then make an X over 5 as follows:*

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	X	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

**TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE/DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?**

1. It was easy to assist my child/children with online learning.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

2. Resources from the school were widely available to help assist children with the learning process taking place at home.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

3. I found the online learning process to be overwhelming.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

4. The time I spent on personal work has increased during the pandemic.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

5. My personal work outside of my home made it difficult to help children at home with the learning process.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

6. My child is at risk of not progressing with the learning process as I could not assist with the learning process during the pandemic.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

7. Communication between the school and parents was effective during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

8. I understood what was expected from me as a parent to help my child in his/her learning process.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

9. I find it difficult to be involved in my child's/children's education.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

10. I am uncertain of my part that I'm responsible for in my child's/ children's academic program.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

11. There is a positive relationship between myself and teachers.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

12. I found that that my child's teachers were easily accessible during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

13. I show respect towards the management of the school.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

14. In my opinion, the school management provided enough support to ensure that academic loss was kept to a minimum.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

15. The amount of work done online was sufficient to ensure that learning loss was kept to a minimum.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

16. In my opinion the online teaching and learning was just as good as face-to-face teaching and learning.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

17. I feel all the teachers put in the same amount of effort in the online learning process.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

18. I received sufficient support from the school and its management in order to assist my child/children with the learning process taking place at home.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

19. The school helped parents in need of resources.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

20. I feel that the Covid-19 pandemic has hindered my child's/children's academic progress.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

**SECTION C – IMPACT ON THE MANAGEMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN AN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT DURING A PANDEMIC**

To what extent do you feel each of the following statements impact on the management of teaching and learning in an online environment during a pandemic? Please indicate your response using the following 5-point scale. Make a cross (X) over the relevant number. Choose only one (1) response to each statement.

1. To no extent
2. To a small extent
3. To a moderate extent
4. To a large extent
5. To a very large extent

**EXAMPLE FOR COMPLETING SECTION C**

To what extent do you feel each of the following statements impact on the management of teaching and learning in an online environment during a pandemic?

1. Working with different people requires a great deal of patience. *If you think the impact is only to a small extent, then make an X over 2 as follows:*

To no extent	1	<del>2</del>	3	4	5	To a very large extent
--------------	---	--------------	---	---	---	------------------------

**TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU FEEL EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS INFLUENCED THE MANAGEMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN AN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT DURING THE PANDEMIC?**

21. The online teaching and learning environment has been unsupported of parents.

To no extent	1	2	3	4	5	To a very large extent
--------------	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------

22. Availability of internet connection.

To no extent	1	2	3	4	5	To a very large extent
--------------	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------

23. Cost of online data.

To no extent	1	2	3	4	5	To a very large extent
--------------	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------

24. The number of children at home.

To no extent	1	2	3	4	5	To a very large extent
--------------	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------

25. Two-way communication between parents and teachers.

To no extent	1	2	3	4	5	To a very large extent
--------------	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------

26. Providing parents with resources required in order for the learning process to take place at home.

To no extent	1	2	3	4	5	To a very large extent
--------------	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------

27. Difficulty in keeping a child stimulated during the online learning process.

To no extent	1	2	3	4	5	To a very large extent
--------------	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------

28. Difficulty in balancing careers and still supporting a child's learning taking place at home.

To no extent	1	2	3	4	5	To a very large extent
--------------	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------

29. Provision of training to parents to facilitate involvement in their children's academic program.

To no extent	1	2	3	4	5	To a very large extent
--------------	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------

30. Provide learners with training on how to use online platforms for educational purposes.

To no extent	1	2	3	4	5	To a very large extent
--------------	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire.**

**Your participation is much appreciated.**



## ANNEXURE E: TURNITIN REPORT

### THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN SUPPORTING LEARNING DURING COVID-19 AT A PRIMARY SCHOOL IN GAUTENG

#### ORIGINALITY REPORT

<b>25%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>11%</b>
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

#### PRIMARY SOURCES

<b>1</b>	<b>uir.unisa.ac.za</b> Internet Source	<b>5%</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>hdl.handle.net</b> Internet Source	<b>3%</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Submitted to University of South Africa</b> Student Paper	<b>2%</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Submitted to University of Johannesburg</b> Student Paper	<b>1%</b>
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