Barriers to parents supporting children's learning in Volksrust Circuit, Gert Sibande District in Mpumalanga Province

by

Faith Thulile Nomga Mavuso

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Education

in

Curriculum Studies

in the

Department of Educational Studies

School of Education

at the

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

Supervisor: Dr T Malahlela

2022

DECLARATION

I declare that the research hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo for the MED has not previously been submitted to this or any other University for degree purposes, that it is my own work in design and execution, and that all sources that I have used have been acknowledged with a reference.

Mavuso, FTN (Mrs)   November 2021

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Themba, who has encouraged me all the way and whose encouragement has made sure that I give it all it takes to finish that which I have started. This work is also dedicated to my mother, who never stops giving herself in countless ways, my beloved sisters, particularly my younger sister, Ocelia, who constantly checked up on me and believing in me even when I did not believe myself. My children, Ntokozo, Nhlanhla and particularly Lungelo, who have been affected in every way possible by this quest. Thank you. My love for you all can never be quantified. God bless you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the barriers to parents supporting their children's learning. The objectives were to determine the factors that impede parents from supporting their children's learning and to find mitigating strategies thereof. The study further compared the practices in three types of schools, that is, the rural, township and suburban schools. The theory guiding the study was Lafaele and Hornby's the explanatory model. The study used a qualitative research approach within an interpretivist paradigm. A phenomenology study design was used. The research study was undertaken in three high schools (rural, township and suburban) in the Volksrust Circuit. The sample of participants comprised of the principal, a Departmental Head (DH) and six parents serving in the school governing body (five from the suburban school) form each school. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and document analysis of the policies on parental involvement. They were analysed using thematic analysis. The study found that school-based barriers such as methods and reasons for communication, parental involvement policies and the language used in teaching and learning hinder parental involvement in children's education. Parent and family based barriers such as work dynamics, knowledge of subject content, level of education, culture and delegated duties were also identified as barriers for parental involvement. The study also found that age of learners is a contributing child factor which hinders parental involvement in children's education despite parents' willingness to support their children's learning. The study concludes that parental involvement is a dynamic phenomenon and that schools should not make decisions based on assumptions but on facts. Thus, this study recommends the use of technology, and other methods of communication, transformation in school structures, capacity building and the development of 'Action Teams' to enhance parental involvement in children's education.

Keywords: Parental involvement, school-based barriers, parent and family based barriers.

Contents

ABBREVIATIONS /ACRONYMS

DBE   **Department of Basic Education**

NECT   **National Education Collaboration Trust**

SGB   **School Governing Body**

SASA   **South African Schools Act**

RSA   **Republic of South Africa**

PI   **Parental Involvement**

SMT   **School Management Team**

DH   **Departmental Head**

PTA   **Parent-Teacher Association**

QLTC   **Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign**

NSC   **National Senior Certificate**

CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Background of the study

The development of any community relies on the education of its children. Research shows that strong parental engagement in the schooling of their children has a beneficial impact on the success of the learners (Desimone, 1999; Cotton & Wikelund, 2001; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Al Sumaiti, 2012). Sapungan and Sapungan (2014) agree by stating that parental involvement also facilitates better conduct and social adjustment of children. Parents are viewed as their children's primary educators (Phillip, 2013). Young children rely on their parents to get information, knowledge and guidance, as they are their first teachers. Sapungan and Sapungan (2014) argue that schools with more parental support tend to perform better both academically and non-academically. Despite what the studies say about the importance of involvement of parents in children's education, the extent of parent involvement in their children's education remains low in South Africa.

In trying to redress this challenge, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) collaborated with the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) (2016) in developing a booklet called 'The Practical Guidelines: How parents can contribute meaningfully to the success of their children in schools. This booklet aims to direct parents on the ways to support their children's education at home and in school. The booklet clarifies the role of a parent in a child's learning, what can a parent do to provide support at home and at school. Literature is abundant with knowledge about what parents should do to make a positive difference to the schooling of their children; but the reality is that there is a huge gap between what is on books and what is actually happening in schools (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). This study aims to investigate the factors that hinder parents from supporting their children's learning and to recommend mitigation strategies thereof.

The challenge of poor level of parental involvement in children's learning is a worldwide challenge. In the United States of America, Goals 2000: Educate America Act has made involvement of parents in the education of its children a national priority (Baker & Soden, 1998). This means that parental support remains a challenge in the United States of America (US). Soutullo, Smith-Bonahue, Sanders-Smith and Navia

(2016) in their study in the US, have identified obstacles to fostering family school relationships with immigrant families as language and culture, family capital and families' illegal status. This means that parents encounter numerous obstacles which prohibit them from supporting their children in their educational pursuits.

Educators are dependent on parents to get their children to school on time. Some studies have identified poor communication as a significant barrier to parental involvement (Lemmer & van Wyk, 2004; Baker, Wise, Kelley & Skiba, 2016). Singh and Mbokodi (2011) discovered that communication only happened from the school to the home, but never the other way around. Parents do not reply to notifications and letters sent home by teachers (Singh & Mbokodi, 2011). Baker et al. (2016) argue that communication barriers vary across groups of people. Other authors concur as they outline that parents may be reluctant to assist their children if the language that is being used at school is not native to them (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Smith, Wohlstetter, Kuzin & De Pedro, 2011). Some parents would be unable to interact with the school because they do not speak English properly (Narain, 2005 as cited in Manilal, 2014). Some authors found that teachers have difficulty reaching out to some families (Baker et al., 2016) because parents do not update their contact details. For an example, some learners commute to and from school, if a learner misses the transport that s/he uses, the teachers encounter problems because the contact details of the parents that they have in their possession are either not working or no one pick-up. Therefore, this study is going to investigate factors that impede parental support in learning in the Volksrust Circuit, Gert Sibande District in Mpumalanga Province.

1.2 Research problem

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 allows parents to be interested in educating their children. This stipulates that parents are expected to participate in the School Governing Body (SGB) to make school decisions. The requirement is that the majority of the members of the SGB must be parents. This then puts parents in a powerful position of authority to influence vital issues. Research has found that even though legislation has given parents the power to have influence in the education of their children, only a few make use of this privilege (Naicker, 2013). Duma, Kapueja and

Khanyile (2011) argue that the majority of parents cannot and do not take part in SGB decisions.

Learners' behavioural problems, late coming, absenteeism, lack of discipline, lack of hygiene, parent's non-attendance of meetings and home works not done have a greater bearing on the teaching and learning process. Teachers indicate that parents are uninterested in their children's learning, they do not really acknowledge progress reports, and they have no knowledge what their child's grade is or whether or not he or she is repeating a grade (Naicker, 2013). Negligence and ignorance thus inhibit parents from becoming involved. This has been a trend that the researcher has observed throughout her career which has prompted this study. The investigation of parental involvement barriers will lead to suggestions and recommendations that will address the parental involvement barriers that exist in the Volksrust Circuit in Gert Sibande District.

Notwithstanding the DBE's attempts to provide guidance for parents on how to effectively help their children's learning, the problem still exists. As mentioned earlier, even the DBE agrees that involvement of parents in children's learning is minimal. There could be so many reasons why parents are reluctant in supporting their children's learning. Sapungan and Sapungan (2014) indicate that parents may have a pessimistic attitude towards their children's school, which inhibits them from supporting their children's learning. They further argue that the attitude may be because they do not realize their contribution to their children's success. Singh and Mbokodi (2011) concur that some parents may not understand their role and responsibility. Some parents believe that once their children reach high school, they will be able to handle their own schoolwork; learners, on the other hand, prefer their parents to take part in various school programs (Naicker, 2013). Learners also believe that parents are supportive of primary schools than secondary schools (Pule, Drotsky, Toriola & Kubayi, 2014). Thus, high school learners are left without any support from their parents. This study seeks to provide parents with an opportunity to voice out factors that hinder their support to their children's' learning.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate factors that impede parental involvement in learning of their children at secondary school level in the Volksrust Circuit, Gert Sibande District in Mpumalanga Province.

1.4 Research questions

Main research question:

- What are the factors that impede parental involvement in children's learning in the Volksrust Circuit?

Sub-Questions:

- What are the parents' barriers in supporting their children's learning?
- What strategies can be employed by the schools to ensure full parental involvement in learning?

1.5 Definition of key concepts

1.5.1 Parent

According to Onwughalu (2011), a parent is a person who looks after and is responsible for that child, and can be biological or non-biological, custodians or caretakers. This study adhered to the South African Schools Act's (SASA) definition of parent as "(a) the parent or guardian of a learner; (b) the person legally entitled to custody of a learner; or (c) the person who undertakes to fulfil the obligations of a person referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b) towards the learner's education at school" (RSA, 1996b). According to this definition, a parent is a person that is legally responsible for a child.

1.5.2 Parental involvement

According to Ngwenya (2010), parental involvement is a joint obligation in which the school and other organisations commit to engaging in valuable approaches, and parents commit to positively support their children's learning and development. Hoglund, Jones, Brown and Aber (2015) added that this involvement includes parents

assisting their child with homework and interacting with their child's teacher and supporting their child at school. These authors agree that parental involvement demands an active participation of a parent and the engagement between the parent and the school in the interest of the child (Dumont, Trautwein, Nagy & Nagengast, 2014). Epstein (2007) argues that parental involvement includes parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community (Finkbiner, 2014). The emphasis of these definitions is that parental participation promotes and supports the holistic development of the child at school, at home and in the community.

1.6 Brief research methodology

The researcher used qualitative approach for this study. Qualitative research provides insights into the problem (DeFranzo, 2011). It assisted the researcher to gain insight about the barriers to parental involvement in the selected schools. Boeje (2010) explains that the approach has the potential to produce conclusions that reflect the participants' point of view while also fitting the relevant field. This approach enabled the researcher to hear from parents, educators, and principals more about obstacles that impede parents' participation in learners teaching and learning.

1.6.1 Sampling

Sampling includes choosing which individuals, environment and actions you want to use in the study (Bertram & Christiansen, 2010). Decisions on sampling are made with the goal of getting the most comprehensive source of data possible to address the research objectives (Maree, 2013). It involves selected participants from the study population related to the problem. The participants were selected from a population of eight secondary schools. The participants in this study were chosen through purposeful sampling. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2013) provided guidance to the researcher, stating that purposeful sampling is used to achieve representativeness and allow for comparisons. Three high schools were sampled, a rural, township and a former Model C school. From each school a principal and two SMT members and six parent (five in Model C school) SGB members were sampled for data collection.

1.6.2 Data collection

The study used triangulation to collect data, which is the use of various approaches or sources of data to establish a comprehensive understanding of phenomena (Patton, 1999 as cited in Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe & Neville, 2014). Document analysis and semi-structured interviews were utilised to acquire data from the sampled individuals in this study.

1.7 Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance was firstly acquired from the Turfloop Research Ethics Committee. Nyambe (2015) posit that ethical considerations refer to the participant's rights being protected. With this in mind, approval was obtained from the Circuit office, the schools and the school governing bodies (SGBs) involved before beginning the research. All participants were given consent forms. They were informed of the goal of the study as well as their freedom to withdraw their participation at any moment. The privacy rights of the participants were maintained, and anonymity remained guaranteed. Pseudonyms are utilized instead of real names for the schools and participants.

1.8 Significance of the study

The findings of this study will assist the schools to have a better understanding of the barriers to parental involvement. The findings of this study will be helpful to the principals, teachers and the School Governing Bodies to review and amend their existing parental involvement policies. The outcomes of this study will assist the schools to have measures that can make involvement of parents more effective in schools. Effective involvement of parents will assist schools with learner discipline, absenteeism and other delinquent behaviours which will subsequently lead to performance improvement. Parents will benefit as well because they will have a better understanding of the importance of being involved in their children's learning. This study could influence policy making. A top-down method is used to develop policies (Muller, Massen & Cloete, 2006 as cited in Manilal, 2014). Parents' voices are ignored, and this study, when viewed through the eyes of parents, could lead to policy changes, resulting in a bottom-up approach to policy formulation.

1.9 Chapter outline

- Chapter 1 provides the background to the study. It also provides the research problem, the purpose of the study, and the research questions guiding the study. The explanation of the key concepts, research design and methodology, ethical considerations, significance of the study and outline of the chapters are provided.
- Chapter 2 examines the current literature on the barriers to parental involvement in the learning of their children. The chapter provides the definition of a parent and parental involvement. The extent of parental involvement is viewed from international, African and South African contexts. The model that underpins the study is discussed.
- Chapter 3 discusses methodology used to investigate the barriers to parental involvement, the research paradigm, the research design, sampling and description of the study population, quality criteria and the ethical considerations.
- Chapter 4 presents the data analysis and the findings of the study.
- Chapter 5 summarises the overview of major conclusions and recommendations.

1.10 Chapter summary

The context for this study on barriers to parental involvement in their children's learning was presented in this chapter. In addition, the chapter emphasised the study's research problem as well as the study's purpose. The key concepts were defined, the research design and methodology have been examined together with the ethical considerations and the significance of the study. A review of the literature relevant to this study is presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Parental involvement is a crucial aspect that has been proven to influence children's education in a positive way. This review of relevant literature begins with scholarly definitions of parental involvement. Parental involvement internationally, in Africa and in South Africa is reviewed. Lastly, the model that underpins the study will be discussed.

2.2 Conceptualisation of the main themes of the study

Different authors define parental involvement in different ways. Before delving into what parental involvement mean, the definition of a "parent" will be discussed. This study adhered to the South African Schools Act's (SASA) definition of parent as "(a) the parent or guardian of a learner; (b) the person legally entitled to custody of a learner; or (c) the person who undertakes to fulfil the obligations of a person referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b) towards the learner's education at school" (RSA, 1996b). According to this definition, a parent is a person that is legally responsible for a child. The person who looks after and is responsible for that child can be biological or non-biological, custodians or caretakers (Onwughalu, 2011).

The conceptualisation of parental involvement is miscommunicated between parents and educators (Young, Austin & Growe, 2013). Educators describe parental engagement as part of the education cycle by helping at school and assisting with homework; while parents see it as a means to bring children to school on time and discuss problems that concern them (Anderson & Minke, 2007 as quoted by Young, et al., 2013). The role of parents in schools is changing, it demands more involvement from the parents in their children's schooling. Ngwenya (2010) posits that involvement of parents is a joint obligation in which the school and other organisations commit to meaningful engagements, and parents pledge to actively support their children's educational and developmental needs. Hoglund, Jones, Brown and Aber (2014) added that this involvement includes parents supporting their children with homework and interacting with their children's teacher and supporting their child at school. These

authors agree that parental involvement demands an active participation of a parent and the engagement between the parent and the school in the interest of the child (Dumont, Trautwein, Nagy & Nagengast, 2014). On the contrary, parental involvement, according to Nye (2006), is defined as a parent's active engagement with their child outside of school hours.

Parent involvement, according to Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders, and Simon (1997), is described as families and communities that actively participate in developing a caring educational environment. Epstein (2007) says that family, school, and community are three overlapping domains of influence through which children learn and grow. She went on to say that these spheres must forge partnerships inorder to effectively cater for the needs of the child. With this in mind, Epstein et al. (2007) developed a framework that includes six key aspects of parental involvement. This framework is based on the findings of various studies into what aspects are most helpful in children's education (Epstein, 1995, 1996, 2001, 2003, 2009). The six aspects are parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community (Finkbiner, 2014).

Parenting is the first aspect and it means the basic obligations of parents, in which parents provide basic needs to ensure that the child is healthy and to provide a conducive environment for learning at home. Secondly, there must be shared communication between the school and the parents. Caňo, Cape, Cardosa, Miot, Pitogo, Quinio and Jewish (2016) recommend that parents interact openly with school staff members so that they are informed about school activities and their child's academic performance. If there is good communication between these partners, parents will also be able to share important information about their children that could be helpful in their children's education. Thirdly, parents must be persuaded to serve at school when there are events or sporting activities or even coaching. Learning at home, the fourth aspect means that parents provide assistance with learners' homework and other learning activities. It also entails the school providing parents with advice and information on ways to help their children with homework and other activities (Compton, 2016).

Next is decision-making which sees parents participating in school leadership activities and school governance structures. Lastly, schools are part of the community,

collaborating with them by involving community members in school activities will enhance children's learning and create a better learning atmosphere (Compton, 2016). There is no universally accepted definition of what parental involvement actually means (Dor, 2012). Several authors emphasise different aspects of parental involvement because their opinions are shaped by the contexts of their studies (Maluleke, 2014). This study aligned itself with Epstein's definition of parental involvement as it explains what parental involvement means in great detail. This definition calls for the active participation of parents, whether they are the biological or the legal guardian as partners in education. The education of the child requires involvement of a parent in all aspect of the child's education in order to assure academic success (Manilal, 2014). Epstein's model recognises that learning does not occur in isolation. This model assists parents in valuing and viewing themselves as valuable resources for teachers, as both parents and teachers can significantly benefit the child socially and academically (Oates, 2017).

2.3 Parental involvement from other countries

2.3.1 Parental involvement internationally

Globally, parents are increasingly recognised as important stakeholders in their children's education. Parents are recognised as the first teachers in their children's lives. Countries still experience challenges with parental involvement. In the United Kingdom, some schools are barriers to parental involvement. Manilal (2014) posits that some schools do not provide a suitable level of support for minority parents of different races. According to Crozier and Davies (2007) as cited in Manilal (2014), some schools make little attempt to educate immigrant parents, for example, the Bangladesh and Pakistani nationals, about the operations of the school. This hinders parents from participating as the culture of the school is of utmost importance in involvement.

These schools also did little to track immigrant parents' participation at school activities or encourage them to participate in parent meetings (Crozier & Davies, 2007 cited in Manilal, 2014). This study also reveals that some of these parents never made any effort to make contact with the school. They waited for the school to be in touch with

them, which was only when there are behavioural problems with their children (Crozier & Davies, 2007 cited in Manilal, 2014). Parents who made contact with the school are met with hostile teachers who gave them little to no time. This study concludes that schools throughout the United Kingdom do not promote effective involvement of parents despite policies in place.

In the United States of America, Goals 2000: Educate America Act has made participation by parents in the children's teaching and learning an important priority (Baker & Soden, 1998). This after the government recognised parents as their children's first and most significant teachers, as well as their critical role in education (Manilal, 2014). The United States of America has parents from various ethnic groups and economic backgrounds. Anderson and Minke (2007) as cited in Manilal (2014) say that different categories of people in America have different levels of involvement. Some parents are far more interested about their children's education at school, and others are more concerned about their children's education at home. Chinese Americans are more interested in home involvement. These Chinese parents assist their children with schoolwork, keep a close eye on their children's activities at home, and focus their children's lives on academic goals (Huntsinger & Jose, 2009 as cited in Manilal, 2014). Education is vital to the Chinese, whether they are rich or not, and they consider a child's achievement to be a reflection of his/her family. This means that parents of different ethnic groups are participating in their children's learning, however, it does not seem like there is a collaboration among school and home. Parental involvement in the United States of America is not without challenges. The research study aims to investigate parental involvement in communities with different backgrounds. The study seeks to find out whether there are differences in parental involvement within these communities as it was found in the United States of America.

In contrast, Graves and Wright (2011) discovered that, regardless of economic status, European parents spend more time at home reading, telling stories, and playing games with their children. However, African American parents are more active and participate in the school responsibilities such as serving and participating in meetings. Studies found that parental involvement among privileged parents in America is more prevalent than their underprivileged counterparts (Park, Byun & Kim, 2011; Cooper, Crosnoe, Suuizzo & Pituch, 2010).

Other researchers found that in as much as parental involvement has improved in the United States of America, it is not without any challenges (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Epstein, 2018). For instance, parents are heavily involved in some upper-class American schools, but this causes conflict among stakeholders. This is as a result of differing priorities between the school and the parents. Disputes and conflict arise as a result of these differing priorities between the school and the parents. (Lareau & Muoz, 2012). According to Huntsinger and Jose (2009) as cited in Makamani (2019), parents who have immigrated to the United States may be hesitant to participate owing to language issues, a lack of education, and a lack of experience with American classroom norms.

2.3.2 Parental involvement in Africa

In some African countries parental involvement appears to be improving, however, in some countries, it is relatively low. In Ghana, there have been fewer research on parental school involvement. Nyarko (2011) has found that Ghanaian parents are frequently involved in their children's education. Traditionally, their involvement at home has been restricted to school related tasks such as overseeing homework completion. In as much as there is some parental involvement in Ghana, the overall participation is limited (Chowa, Ansong & Osei-Akoto, 2012). However, a study conducted by Pryor and Ampiah (2003a & 2003b) cited in Nyarko (2011) in the village of Akuruse in Ghana's Ashanti region the majority of parents were found to be uninterested in their children's education (Mantey, 2020) and did not participate in their children's learning activities. The lack of interest may be attributed to the socio-demographic aspects such as economic difficulties, personal preferences and self-interest (Donkor, Issaka & Asante, 2013).

Nyarko (2011) found that in Ghana, it is mostly mothers who are involved in their children's schooling. These mothers may sell their personal belongings or borrow money from banks or friends to ensure their children's educational achievement. This is how committed these mothers are about their children's schooling. There is a difference in parental involvement in Ghana. Parental involvement in Ghana is still relatively low, although it is increasing, particularly in terms of school-based engagements (Nyarko, 2011). More research on barriers to parental school

involvement needs to be done in Ghana to enhance a more effective involvement by all parents.

According to Msila (2012), parents in Nigeria are more committed to bettering their own lives than to be concerned about their children's schooling. These parents also have habit of shifting their obligations to teachers, assuming that teachers are equipped with the essential professional capabilities to run schools despite their help (Msila, 2012). He further alluded that these parents become so irresponsible that they are unconcerned about their children being late or absent from school or whether their children have completed their homework. However, another study in Nigeria by Olatoye and Agbatogun (2009) as cited in Manilal (2014) revealed that some parents get involved whereas others do not. They argue that parents whose children attend private schools are more invested in their children's education than parents whose children attend public schools. This means that affluent parents invest more in their children's education when compared to their counterparts of low socio-economic standing. They identified school fees, educational levels and economic status as the attributing factors to parental involvement.

On the contrary, Erlendsdottir's (2010) research into a Namibian school that served children from a variety of socio-economic situations found that both rich and underprivileged parents actively participate in their children's learning at home and at school. The parents of these children are said to have high ambitions for them. They have good relations with the teachers, discuss their children's academics and keep a careful eye on their development. They anticipate that their children continue with their education beyond high school (Erlendsdottir, 2010). This suggests that regardless of their financial circumstances, certain parents hold great expectations and hopes for their children. The underprivileged parents may want to end and protect their children from the cycle of poverty by ensuring that they get educated. This study found that with the full involvement of parents, learners are motivated to perform better. It was discovered that parental involvement, regardless of social class, has a positive impact on student achievement.

2.3.3 Parental involvement in South Africa

Literature is abundant with knowledge about what parents should do to make a positive difference to the schooling of their children; but the reality is that there is a huge gap between what is on books and what is actually happening in schools (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). According to Okeke (2014), in South Africa, parental involvement remains an issue. This is evidenced by parents' low attendance at parent-teacher meetings, limited participation in fundraising activities, failure to keep appropriate control over teaching and learning assistance materials provided to their children, poor matric outcomes, and a lack of excitement for learning (Mestry, 2004 as cited in Naicker, 2013).

Lack of parental involvement is attributed to poverty and unemployment (Munje & Mncube, 2018; Mavhungu, 2013; Mbokodi & Singh, 2011). Mavhungu (2013) found that parents from low-income families struggle to provide for their children as they cannot afford school fees and other necessities that are needed at school and in turn feel that their opinions do not count. They are afraid of being mocked and humiliated because they lack some of the school's supplies due to unemployment. (Mbokodi & Singh, 2011). Motala and Lexumo (2014) found that these parents feel inadequate to participate in educational matters.

The area of study is poverty stricken, has high rate of unemployment and most parents are illiterate especially the grannies that are left to take care of the children. Most parents live in neighbouring cities because of work, leaving their children with relatives and in some cases alone. When parents are poor, their children's education is not a priority for them, and this explains why some South African schools have a lack of parental involvement (Mbhokodi, 2008). Parents from low socioeconomic backgrounds avoid participating in school fundraising because they are afraid of having to contribute financially. The economic status of the country demands that parents burden their children with domestic chores as they themselves focus on bringing food to the table. Domestic chores teach children responsibility to do their bit to keep the house in order. However, Akanle (2007) as quoted by Osonwa, Adejobi, and Osonwa (2013), says that when parents and guardians overburden their children with work, leaving little or no time for study, the children's education suffers. Studies

found that when children are constantly experiencing difficulties, parents may become discouraged and rely on teachers to provide support.

Illiteracy and parent's low educational attainments are contributing factors to non-participation in South Africa (Singh et al., 2004 as cited in Manilal, 2014). Bush, Jourbert, Kiggundu and van Rooyen (2010) in their study about the management of teaching and learning in South African public schools found that in Limpopo and Mpumalanga, parents are not completely engaged in education since they are uneducated and are unable to assist their children with their academics. A study of the factors that encourage parental involvement at a secondary school in KwaZulu Natal found that some parents claim that they would like to assist their children at school but they are unable to do so because they believe that their limited school education prevents them from assisting their children with learning (Naicker, 2013).

Some parents attribute their lack of involvement to lack of time. Parents are unable to check their children's homework due to a lack of time because some of them come back from work very tired, other get home very late, others come home only on weekends because they had to find employment away from their homes (Makgoba & Mokhele, 2013). Low income families engage themselves with low paying jobs with long hours of work (Fields, 2011). This makes it hard for such parents to effectively participate in parental involvement.

A study on the involvement of parents in South African multicultural schools by Michael et al. (2012) revealed that the diversity in languages and culture promotes lack of parental involvement. Carter (2008) as cited in Okeke (2014) agrees that the majority of parents in multi-ethnic communities experience considerably more difficulties, particularly when it comes to language and other cultural quirks. Many schools fail to communicate effectively with families. Schools with multilingual families, for example, may only provide information in English (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004). The researcher has had a first-hand experience of this situation. The multiracial school to be investigated in this study uses only English and Afrikaans. Involvement of parents in a multi-cultural school is more complicated than in a mono-cultural school (Michael et al., 2012). The literature reviewed has indicated that there is a lack of parental involvement in South Africa both at home and at school. Parental involvement remains low.

2.4 The Explanatory model of factors acting as barriers to parental involvement

Despite the strong theoretical context that summarises the multiple benefits of parental involvement, the rhetoric found in literature and the conventional parental participation techniques found in schools are significantly different. The reasons for these differences are conceptualised as barriers (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). They developed their model by adapting Epstein's (2011) framework of overlapping spheres of influence, which focuses on the areas of family, school and community to categorise various barriers. The spheres are adapted in this model to become larger society variables, that impact the school and family functioning, parent-teacher factors, individual parent and family factors and a special focus on child factors. This model was created to describe and expand on the barriers that exist in each of these four categories. The barriers that hinder the development of parental involvement (PI) are discussed below:

Individual parent and family factors	Child factors
- Parents' beliefs about parental involvement - Perceptions of invitations for parental involvement - Current life contexts - Class, ethnicity and gender	- Age - Learning difficulties and disabilities - Gifts and talents - Behavioural problems
Parent-teacher factors	Societal factors
- Differing goals and agendas - Differing attitudes - Differing language used	- Historical and demographic - Political - Economic

Table 1:   The Explanatory model of Hornby and Lafaele (2011).

2.4.1 Individual parent and family factors

2.4.1.1 Parents' beliefs about parental involvement

16

Parents' attitudes towards certain issues can develop barriers to effective parental involvement. Firstly, parents who believe their sole responsibility is to bring their kids to school could be unwilling to participate in their kid's education beyond that (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). These parents seem to think that it is the teacher's duty to take the role of educating their children because they have an expertise to do so (Berry, 2019 & Auerbach, 2007 as cited by Fan, Li & Sandoval, 2018). Some of these parents provide the school with wrong contact details and would not care to update their contact details if need arises. Some children are difficult to deal with even at home especially teenagers, so parents find it hard or are not motivated to help them with learning at home (Grolnick, Raftery-Helmer, Flamm, Marbel & Cardemil, 2015). Some parents seem to think that it is the role of the teacher to oversee their children's education as well as their behaviour. Others do not even respond when their children's behaviour concerns are reported at school.

Parents who are unsure of their abilities to aid their children are more prone to ignore contacting the school. This is because they do not believe that their involvement could bring any change or positive effect in their children's schooling, and subsequently they distance themselves (Abu-Hamour & Al-Hmouz, 2013 as cited in Al-Dababneh, 2018). This lack of confidence is sometimes caused by the language that the school uses to communicate with the parents. Hornby and Lafaele (2011) and Smith, Wohlstetter, Kuzin and De Pedro (2011) confirm that parents may be reluctant in assisting their children if the language that is being used at school is not native to them. The language barrier can have adverse effects even when the parent is willing to share some information with the school, it is going to be difficult. This is evident in this study where the school uses Afrikaans as one of the languages of communication. Some information get lost because some parents have never studied or used the language before.

The parents' lack of confidence in their abilities may be because they themselves never experienced success in school and therefore believe that they could not then help their children (Davis, 1996 as cited by Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017). As learners proceed through high school and their academic work improves, this viewpoint becomes more apparent. Parents' inadequacy beliefs about themselves act a barrier to parental involvement in children's learning.

Parents who feel that children's intelligence is inherent and that children who perform well at school is sheer luck will not get actively involved in their children's learning. On the contrary, parents who believe that their children's abilities can be enhanced and that how they raise them (such as reading to them) has an impact on their growth are more inclined to participate positively in their children's education (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Parental involvement in their children's education can be hampered by the belief that parents have little or no influence on their children's development.

2.4.1.2 Parents' perceptions of invitations for involvement

The way that parents view the invitations from schools is critical in the development of effective parental involvement. Berry (2019) found that if there is an increased positive communication between the school and the parents, parents will feel more comfortable and welcomed into the school. Also, parents are more inclined to participate if they believe the school values and encourages parental involvement (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Similarly, if the school does not appear to be welcoming, it will hinder the parental involvement. Eccles and Harold (1993) as cited in Hornby and Lafaele (2011) posit that secondary schools are not as welcoming as primary schools hence parent participation is higher in primary than in secondary schools.

Both teachers and parents are in agreement that lack of communication between the two partners impedes parental involvement because teachers frequently have difficulty in contacting some families which leads to lack of communication (Baker, Wise, Kelley & Skiba, 2016). The researcher concurs with Baker, Wise, Kelley and Skiba (2016) as she has experienced that with some parents who give the schools wrong contacts or they do not update their contacts as and when they change. This has resulted in schools not being able to contact parents even in cases of emergency. On the other hand, parents say that teachers more often invite them when their child exhibits negative behaviours than when they share positive information (Baker et al., 2016). They further found that parents want to hear about their child's accomplishments rather than just the negative.

2.4.1.3 Parents' current life contexts

Parents' life contexts can act as a motivator or can inhibit their participation in children teaching and learning. Studies have found that parents who were not successful in school themselves lack knowledge and confidence to assist their children (Baker et al., 2016). Hornby and Lafaele (2011) further alluded that parents who do not have college education may feel that they do not qualify to support their child as they know that the teachers have university or college qualifications. The level of education of some parents, especially grandmothers who live with their grandchildren and are responsible for their education have been found to contribute to the parents being unable to read letters from the school requesting their attendance in meetings (Munje & Mncube 2018). This is evident in grandparents of primary school children who are not yet able to read. Apart from their personal feelings, parents may be going through some issues in their lives, like divorce or anxiety about social situations (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018) and the stress that come with these issues may lead to a lack of interest in school activities (Baker et al., 2016).

Communities in South Africa have different family structures, child-headed, single parents, extended family members, traditional families among others. Certain family dynamics adversely affect learner performance. Single parents experience challenges of having to balance their work and family responsibilities (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Families with many children are challenged to participate as there is no one at home to care for them or they are unable to afford babysitters (Truege, 2008 as cited in Manilal, 2014). Another dynamic is that of learners who are living with extended family members or grandparents who are not invested in their education. Elders in a family ensure that there be a constant structure when the children's biological parents are absent (Mtshali, 2015). Munje and Mncube (2018) found that the grannies were either not capable or not willing to assist learners with their schooling. At the same time, the participants in their study argued that these children take advantage of their grannies as they do not follow up on them.

Parents from low socioeconomic backgrounds have been reported to be more difficult to engage with since they are less involved (Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017). They further explain that it should be noted that some of them may experience challenges or even transport money to get to schools. In South Africa, learners who

are residing 5km or more from school are transported to schools by the scholar transport organised by the Department of Basic Education. On the contrary, parents are expected to make means to reach the school when they are needed. This is confirmed by Sapungan and Sapungan (2014) who found that schools do not organise transport for parents who are living far from school to get to the meetings. Schools should take this into consideration when planning their programmes before passing harsh judgement on parents for a perceived lack of involvement. Another factor to be considered is that of parents who have multiple jobs, which act as a barrier due to lack of resources and time. You may find that the school meeting times clashes with their work time. Sometimes it could be that they are simply tired to participate in school activities. When both parents work, they will have less time to devote to their children's education at home. Many parents do not participate in school activities due to work commitments (Michael, Wolhuter & van Wyk, 2012).

2.4.1.4 Class, ethnicity and gender

Parents' class status can hinder or promote parental involvement. Parents with high income are considered as model parents when it comes to their involvement at home and school (Smith, 2006; Cucchiara & Horvat, 2009 as cited in Skaliotis, 2010). On the contrary, parents with lower incomes are perceived to be more reluctant to get involved especially in school activities such as volunteering even if they are encouraged to do so by the school (Ingram, Wolfe & Lieberman, 2007 as cited in Fan, Li & Sandoval, 2018). These parents believe that their only responsibility is providing financial, emotional and physical support to their children at home and that children's teaching is solely the teacher's role as they are expects in the field (Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017). However, some studies found that working class parents care about their children's wellbeing as much as the middle and high class parents. Michael et al. (2012) found that poor parents avoid going to school because they fear if they become too active, that they will be asked to contribute financially. As a result, these parents are also unsupportive of their children's cultural and athletic activities (Bhengu, 2003 as cited in Michael et al., 2012).

Gender of the parents should also be considered as it may prevent the optimal parental involvement in children's learning. Murillo and Hernandez-Castilla (2020) report that mothers are more involved in children's education than fathers. Mavungu (2013)

argues that fathers tend to shift the burden of responsibility to the mothers. However, fathers feel discouraged from participating because they believed that they were seen as inept parents by the school in general (Colpin et al., 2004 as cited by Okeke, 2014). Most South African homes are characterised by absent fathers, either as a result of them working far away from home, not being in their children's lives or not married to the mothers, or in conflict with the mothers and therefore not fully involved in their lives. These dynamics make it hard for mothers to be actively involved in their children's education as they need to balance work and home responsibilities (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). However, Michael et al. (2012) indicate that it should not be presumed that some parents lack children's interest, but the school should determine the reasons why those parents are absent in most school activities.

2.4.2 Child factors

2.4.2.1 Age

Parental participation can be hampered by a child's age, because it is usually believed that parental involvement declines as children become older, and reaches its lowest point at secondary school age (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). This is also confirmed by Sirvani (2007) as cited in Maluleke (2014) that statistics from the National Center for Education in the United States, indicate that parental involvement and activity decrease as their children get older. Secondary school children are at their adolescent years, mostly these children want to become more independent from their parents. They are less likely to want their parents to be involved in their school (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). They feel embarrassed to see their parents at school (Catsambis & Beveridge, 2001 as cited in Naicker, 2013). The researcher has noted that mostly schools use learners to communicate information about meetings, school programs and other activities from school to their parents. Epstein (1995) posits that when children fail to perform their responsibility as a go-between their parents and school, they create a barrier in as far as a partnership between school and parents is concerned.

On the contrary, a study by Deslandes and Clouter (2002) as cited in Hornby and Lafaele (2011) found that over three quarters of adolescents who participated in their

study were willing to show their parents what they had learnt or excelled at school, to ask their parents for project ideas, to listen to them telling stories about their adolescent years and to carry home notices and newsletters. This can create a confusion on the side of education because some parents of secondary school learners believe that children are mature enough to be self-sufficient in school. It is therefore not wise for parents and or teachers to assume that secondary school children do not need parental assistance.

2.4.2.2 Learning difficulties and disabilities

Several studies have revealed that when children struggle with schoolwork due to learning challenges, their parents are more likely to become involved. (Eccles & Harold, 1993 as cited by Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Hill & Craft, 2003 as cited in Al-Dababneh, 2018). Contrary to this view, a recent study found that when children are consistently underperforming, parents may grow discouraged and rely on teachers for assistance (Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017). Another factor to be considered is that of parents and teachers' expectations about children with learning difficulties. This factor may cause conflict between the two partners because teachers expect more support from the parents at home whereas the parents think that their children can achieve more academically at school.

2.4.2.3 Gifts and talents

Learners who are performing well at school facilitate parental involvement. Parents find it easier to be actively involved when their child is doing well at school (Berry, 2019). Differing views between parents and teachers about whether the child is academically gifted may create a barrier in parental involvement. Parents have a tendency of weighing their children's giftedness based on the certain subjects like Mathematics, if their child excels in the subject, it therefore means that the child is gifted. The parents may then be in conflict with the school if the child fails a grade, not understanding that excelling in one subject does not make the child pass. Gifted children who are not adequately challenged at school become frustrated and begin to underperform or develop a pattern of bad behaviour. This will make parents to lose faith in teachers and become less involved.

2.4.2.4 Behavioural problems

Children's behaviour at school may act as a barrier or a facilitator of parental involvement. When children exhibits problem behaviours at school, parents become more inclined to avoiding school with the fear of getting more bad news (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Parents may develop a negative attitude towards their beliefs in children's education (Fan et al., 2018). In addition, some parents believe that it is the role of the teacher to manage their child's education as well as their behavioural issues. This causes conflict between teachers and parents as teachers expect parents to help with discipline of their children hence the school calls parents to school when their children display behavioural challenges. When teachers fail to receive support from parents, they find it unreasonable to contact the particular parent (Flynn, 2007 as cited in Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017).

2.4.3 Parent-Teacher factors

2.4.3.1 Goals and agenda

Differing goals and agendas between home and school may inhibit parental involvement. There are goals that the school and parents agree on, for instance, the improvement of learner performances. But the role of parents does not end there. Teachers want parents to focus on assisting their children with homework, provide conducive learning environment at home (Makgopa & Mokhele, 2013), attend school events, meetings and fundraising (Rudney, 2005 as cited in Hornby & Lafaele, 2011) amongst other things. On the other hand, parents want to know more about the school life and the ethos of the school. School meetings' agendas cause conflict between parents and teachers. Parent teacher meetings are called for a specific reason (agenda), whereas parents would have their own items that they would want to discuss. Due to time constraints, parents agendas are left unattended, and parents are left further alienated.

2.4.3.2 Attitudes

Parents and teachers have differing attitudes towards education and parental involvement. Studies revealed that parents do not feel welcomed when they come to schools (Laftman, 2008 as cited in Okeke, 2014; Hoover –Dempsey, 2005 as cited in Al Dababnah, 2017). Parent teacher meeting happens per invitation by the teacher. Parents who felt the need to be actively involved and had time to do so, they found it difficult to participate because they were not invited (Fish, 2008 as cited by Lessard, 2015). When they try to push for being attended to, they were confronted with hostility and a refusal to collaborate from the teachers (Zetlin & Curcic, 2014). Some parents are disturbed by the controlling attitudes of teachers (Al-Dababneh, 2016b). Teachers have raised complaints and concerns of parents who do not attend meetings or check their children's homework (Hornby, 2000). This has led to some teachers making assumptions that some parents do not care about their children's education.

Epstein (2001) as cited in Naicker (2013) determine that primary school teachers believe in the importance of parental involvement as compared to secondary schools. She further posits that schools should provide more opportunities and assistance for parents to participate in education. Some parents avoid participating in parents' meetings because of 'teacher knows best' attitudes and that they feel that teachers will not consider their opinions (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). They also do not believe that what they have to offer is of any value to the school. This is especially true when parents are not well-educated.

Studies have recommended one-on-one meetings as effective influencers of parental involvement. Lemmer and van Wyk (2004) argue that in as much as individual parent-teacher meetings promote two way communication, they are brief to accommodate as many parents as possible. This makes these meetings to be less effective and parents will be inclined not to attend in future. The researcher has an experience of teaching in a secondary school with an enrolment of about 80 learners in a class, and observed that it is not possible to effectively attend to all of these parents in a space of two hours. The researcher would recommend that a day be set aside especially at the beginning of the year to build relationships and thereafter meetings be on the need from both sides.

Some studies have attributed the lack of parental support to the schools. Gwija (2016) found that in South Africa, some schools are overlooking the role that parents can play in their schools. If the schools do not have proper programmes on parental support, this could be a barrier that hinders parental support. If roles are not clearly defined, parents would not know what is expected and what they could do to provide support (Sapungan & Sapungan, 2014). Some teachers feel that some parents are overbearing by being overly involved and interfering on their professional work. This is especially the case with the affluent parents and it causes conflict between the stakeholders (Manilal, 2014).

It has been found that teachers have negative attitudes towards disadvantaged parents because they mostly do not participate in school activities due to their working hours (Manilal, 2014) and other dynamics in their lives. Many teachers have expressed dissatisfaction with their ability to connect effectively with parents due to a lack of skills (Dookie, 2014; Darch et al., 2004 as cited in Al-Dababneh, 2017). Others have also agreed that they need professional development training to be better equipped to support families (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). Epstein (2018) agrees with this view that educators are not equipped and further illustrates that teacher training institutions do not provide a specific curricula to prepare educators to deal with difficulties involving family-school-community partnerships (Lemmer, 2007 as cited in Munje & Mncube, 2018). Noting the above statements, teachers also need to be assisted, encouraged trained, and supported so that they can collaborate with parents to assist their children progress in school (Kigobe, Ghesquière, Ng'Umbi & Van Leeuwen, 2019).

2.4.3.3 Language

Language used by the school to communicate with parents is a serious barrier to parental support. Hornby and Lafaele (2011) and Smith, Wohlstetter, Kuzin and De Pedro (2011) assert that parents may be hesitant in helping their children if the language that is being used at school is not native to them. Flynn (2007) as cited in Durisic et al. (2017) posit that parents are overwhelmed by the language, curriculum and staff and, as a result, they avoid communicating with the school. Pena (2000) agrees that language used may be one of the factors influencing parental involvement. The researcher have noted that when teachers communicate with parents especially

in meetings, they tend to use education terms and forget that some parents do not know and understand the language.

The language used for correspondence benefit both the parents and educators because it allows them to think about and comprehend the importance of parental involvement (Selolo, 2018). Most parents are frustrated by today's technological communications, such as emails, text messages, and so on, because they are written in English and they do not comprehend it (Reynolds et al., 2015 as cited by Selolo, 2018). This is the case where this study is conducted, some schools use Afrikaans in their social media pages, which makes it impossible for parents to follow as most of them cannot comprehend the language. Savacool (2011) recommends that teachers speak honestly and openly without using educational jargon. If parents do not trust their abilities to support their children, they are more likely to prevent further contact with the school (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

2.4.4 Societal factors

2.4.4.1 Historical and demographic factors

Historically, schools were viewed as formal environments that are inflexible and did not promote parent-school relationships which are characterised by flexibility (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). It is very clear that some schools still hold the past views and attitudes. Such schools do not allow parents to visit the school without making appointments. This makes parents to be discouraged because some of them may have come to school randomly because when the school actually invites parents to school they are at work or have other commitments. Some parents live far from the schools where their children go to. Parents sometimes may not have the means to reach the school as expected because most of the schools have their meetings in the evenings when the public transport is scarce.

The Ministry of Education in South Africa (White paper 2, 1996) firmly advocated parental rights in their children's education, stating that parents or guardians are responsible for their children's education and have the right to be advised by state authorities and participate in its governance. In as much as this provision is stated, better opportunities make parents to move from their homes leaving their children with their grandparents and or their extended families who may not care for these children's

education. This is an opposition to improved parental involvement. Parent's stress levels, shortage of money and limited time also contributed to lack of parental involvement in their children's education.

2.4.4.2 Political factors

Hornby and Lafaele (2011) posit that there are several factors at the national government that act as barriers to parental involvement. They argue that inconsistencies in different parts of education legislation, as well as variances in government policy and activity, all contribute to the practice of parental involvement being limited. Ndlanzi (1998) as cited in Maluleke (2014) argues that Acts of Parliament, such as the Planning and Utilization of Resources Act of 1967, indirectly encourage non-parental involvement. This Act, in conjunction with Boarder Industries, Apartheid policies, and other Acts, made it possible for parents to be uninvolved in their children's education. During this time, parents became fearful of punishing their children and shield away from taking control over their children's education (Maluleke, 2014).

Another barrier determined at a political level is the organization of school systems (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Some communities have enough schools and their children attend schools that are located within their community. However, in some communities children commute to schools which threaten the development of partnerships with parents. This is the case where this study is situated.

Teacher training is another example of how national government actions influence PI. Epstein (2001) argues that in the United Kingdom (UK), there are no teacher education programmes on working with parents and communities, even though there is a huge acknowledgement of such courses as they provide teachers with the necessary skills. On the contrary in the United States where one of the requirements to get an accreditation for education programmes a topic of parental involvement must be one of the courses. However, a further study on the teachers and parental involvement has found that the course does not offer practical parental involvement experiences to ensure that teachers are ready to work effectively with parents (Flanigan, 2007 as cited in Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). This hinders partnerships between parents and teachers.

2.4.4.3 Economic factors

Funding in the education sector can be a barrier in parental involvement. Hornby and Lafaele (2011) found that the share of funding must be justified in this field and is constantly evaluated for improved performance in national numeracy and literacy tests. In this context, programmes targeted at boosting parental involvement are at a disadvantage since they are concerned with a long-term process rather than short-term aims. In South Africa, schools do not have budget allocated specifically to capacitate parents (SGB). However, the districts host such workshop but can only accommodate a chairperson plus one or two other members due to budget constraints. Matshe (2014) in his study about the challenges of parental involvement in rural public schools of the North-West province in South Africa found that parents fault the Department of Education for neglecting to provide them with the required capacity-building training. The funding has detrimental effects on parental involvement.

In conclusion, this model classifies barriers to parental involvement based on its four categories, namely, the individual parent and family factors, parent-teacher factors, the child factors and societal factors. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate factors that impede parental involvement on their children's education. This model will therefore assist the researcher in categorising the identified impeding factors and to recommend mitigation strategies.

2.5 Chapter summary

Although parental involvement is regarded as an important factor on children's academic success, the emphasis placed on it and the manner in which it is implemented vary. The level of parental participation varies by country. Despite the widely held belief that parents should be involved in their children's education, not all communities have collaboration between home, school, and community. Numerous obstacles prevent parents from participating in their children's education. On the other hand, parental involvement is still lacking in many underdeveloped countries including South Africa. This chapter analysed parental involvement from different countries. The model that underpins the study was discussed and how it relates to the study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided the literature review related to parental involvement barriers in children's learning. This chapter presents the research methodology of the study. Rajasekar, Philominathan and Chinnathambi (2013) describe research methodology as the study of methods by which information is gathered. This chapter begins by describing the researcher's decisions regarding the appropriate study approach, research paradigm, research design, sampling and data collection methods. The chapter also outlines data analysis, quality criteria, ethical considerations, summary and references.

3.2 Research paradigms

A paradigm is introduced when conducting research. Different perspectives on the world are presented through paradigms, which lead to new insights into social reality (Nyambe, 2015). These paradigms are founded on knowledge assumptions and methods of assessment (Chilisa & Preece, 2005, cited in Du Plooy, 2010:33). A paradigm is a basis for the formulation of theories and which has a significant impact on the way one perceives the world (Govender, 2011). A paradigm can also be thought of as a prism whereby a researcher tries to comprehend, give meaning of, as well as decipher certain settings and occurrences. This study followed an interpretivist paradigm. The basic goal of interpretive studies is to comprehend a social occurrence and give credence to the participant's environment (Grix, 2010). Using this paradigm has assisted the researcher in understanding the barriers to parental involvement in their children's learning and give meaning as to why these barriers happen.

3.3 Research approaches

The research approach refers to whether the study is conducted using qualitative, quantitative, or mixed approaches. A qualitative method was employed in this research study. Qualitative research studies enable a researcher to gain insights about particular phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005: 134). De Franzo (2011) concurs by arguing that qualitative research provides insights into the problem (DeFranzo, 2011). This approach assisted the researcher to gain insight on the barriers to parental

involvement in the selected schools. Boeje (2010) explains that the method has the ability to produce findings that reflect the participants' point of view while also fitting the relevant field. This approach assisted the researcher to get the parents, teachers and principals' views on the factors that impede the involvement of parents in their children's learning.

3.4 Research design

According to Nesane (2008:56), research design is a framework for determining individuals, study locations, as well as information gathering techniques in order to address a study question. Its major purpose is to help the researcher predict what decisions should be made in order to ensure that the final results are as accurate as possible. Flick, Von Kardorff and Steinke (2004: 146) defined research design as a set of principles and instructions for gathering and examining findings in order for the researcher to reply to the questions given. The purpose of this research study is to examine the barriers that inhibit parental involvement in their children's learning.

This study employed a phenomenology study design because "the phenomenologists are concerned with understanding social and psychological phenomena from the perspectives of people involved" (Welman & Kruger, 1999:189, as cited in Groenewald, 2004). The phenomena in this study are the barriers to parental involvement. The value of personal perspective and interpretation is stressed in phenomenological techniques, which are centred on a worldview underlying personal experience and subjectivity (Lester, 1999). He further alluded that these approaches are effective at deciphering sentience, providing new insights into people's attitudes and behaviours, and filtering through the complexities of presumptions and conventional wisdom. This design is relevant to this study because the researcher intends to understand parents' reasons for not supporting their children's learning from the participants' own point of view.

3.5 Sampling

Sampling includes choosing which individuals, environment and actions you want to use in the study (Bertram & Christiansen, 2010). It involves selected participants from the study population related to the problem. The participants were selected from a population of three high schools in Volksrust Circuit in the Gert Sibande District in Mpumalanga. Random or systematic sampling, deliberate or non-probability sampling, and stratified random sampling are the three basic types of sampling used in qualitative research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 145) agree when they posit that the selection by qualitative studies is purposive hence the researcher used the purposive sampling to select the participants in this study.

Qualitative researchers choose certain individuals or items who provide the most detail regarding the topic under investigation. The researcher was guided by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2013) who state that purposeful sampling is used to establish comparability and the abilities to create comparisons. The researcher purposely sampled three schools in Volksrust Circuit in the Gert Sibande District. One school from a rural community, one township school and one former model C school. The three schools chosen for this research study are referenced as schools A, B and C for the sake of retaining confidentiality. This enabled the researcher to ensure representativeness of all types of schools in the municipality and to be able to make comparisons of the participants' perspectives from these three unique environments.

In qualitative research, the researcher should select a setting or a group that is large enough for the researcher to blend in but small enough for the task to be manageable (Mupa & Chinooneka, 2015). Purposive sampling's goal is to find people who are knowledgeable about the topic being studied (Magwa & Magwa, 2015). Given this view, the three principals, grade heads or Departmental heads (who attends to parents when they visit their grades' teachers for various reasons) of the sampled schools and the parent SGB members of each school were sampled. This means a sample size of twenty-three participants as represented below:

NO.	Schools	Participant type	No. expected
1	School A	Principal	1

		Grade head/Departmental head	1
		Parent SGB members	6
2	School B	Principal	1
		Grade head/Departmental head	1
		Parent SGB members	6
3	School C	Principal	1
		Grade head/Departmental head	1
		Parent SGB members	5
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS			**23**

Table 2:   Number of sampled participants per school (Author)

3.6 Data collection

This study used triangulation, which uses various approaches or sources of data to establish a thorough comprehension of phenomena (Patton, 1999 as quoted by Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe & Neville, 2014). Through the triangulation of data, the researcher attempted to provide a convergence of credible evidence (Eisner, 1991 as quoted by Bowen, 2009). To collect data, the researcher used document analysis and semi-structured interviews methods.

3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

An interview is a two-person interviewer-mediated conversation consisting a simple set of content to be discussed and questions to be asked (Cohen, 2013). Qualitative interviews aims to comprehend the world from the subject's perspective, to unravel the significance of human experiences, and to discover their current reality before scientific reasoning (Smith, 2004 as cited in Naicker, 2013). Participants are interviewed to learn about facts, motives, participant opinions and viewpoints, current

and past behaviours, behavioural norms, and why they believe a specific behaviour is desirable (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:146).

This research study employed semi-structured interviews as they are more adaptable, allowing the researcher to pursue new leads as they arose during the interview (Rule & John, 2011). The main reason for choosing semi-structured interviews is to determine as to what impedes parents from being involved in their children's schooling. De Vos and Fouche (2005) as cited in Naicker (2013) assert that the researcher must prepare an interview schedule that will guide rather than drive the interview process. The interview schedule is crucial because it forces the researcher to think about the topics to cover during the interview (Naicker, 2013). Moreover, he alluded that the structured interviews are effective in getting detailed data, however, they are dependent on personal interaction and co-operation. Sometimes participants are not willing to share information. The interviews were done in IsiZulu for most parents and in English for the Principals, Departmental Heads and some of the parents. The responses were recorded.

3.6.2 Document analysis

The researcher also collected data by analysing documents. According to Bowen (2009), document analysis is a comprehensive means of analysing or examining written and online records. The researcher analysed the schools' method of inviting parents to parents' meetings, the attendance registers for parents' meetings and the school policies on parental involvement in the quest to investigate the factors that impede parents from supporting their children's learning. These documents also assisted the researcher in comparing practices from different schools, which may assist in providing strategies for ensuring full parental involvement in the Pixley kaSeme municipality schools.

3.7 Data analysis

Graziano and Raulin (2010) claim that data analysis is process of examining and describing data in order to give it a significance. Before analysing the data, the data was transcribed and translated by the researcher into word format and the data

collected in IsiZulu was translated into English. Transcription is the method of translating recordedings into words, and it is completed first before the question and answer session data is analysed (King & Horrocks, 2010). Thematic analysis has been used to examine data in this study. Thematic analysis is a sort of qualitative analysis that examines groupings and presents patterns that are relevant to the findings (Ibrahim, 2012). The data was transcribed and coded before looking for themes in the coded data. (King & Horrocks, 2010). The researcher followed the six steps in thematic analysis as suggested by Clarke and Braun (2013). They are as follows:

Step 1: Familiarisation

The researcher must get familiar with the data to get an overview before analysing it. This involves transcribing recorded data and then reading and re-reading through the text noting down initial analytical observations.

Step 2: Coding

Important features of the data that are relevant are given labels. Each data item is coded and then compiled.

Step 3: Generating themes

From the codes that have been created, patterns are identified. After that, all of the coded data are compiled into the relevant themes.

Step 4: Reviewing themes

In this step, the researcher must ensure that the generated themes are accurate and relevant representations of the data. Themes can be combined into a one, broken into two or even more themes, or deleted entirely.

Step 5: Defining and naming themes

The process of defining themes requires expressing precisely what each theme means and determining how it contributes to data comprehension (Caulfield, 2019). In this stage, the core of each pattern is determined, and the fitting labels for each theme are created.

Step 6: Writing up

Lastly, an interpretive narrative and content excerpts are used to build a meaningful story, putting it in context with related literature. This step is presented in Chapter 4 of this study.

3.8 Quality assurance matters

To ensure trustworthiness, Major and Savin-Baden (2010) stated that the factors of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability must be considered.

3.8.1 Credibility

The term "credibility" relates to the outcomes being convincing and plausible, as well as how exactly the conclusions accurately reflect reality (Major & Savin-Baden, 2010). Triangulation, or the use of many procedures (Shenton, 2004 as cited in Manilal, 2014) and sources in the generation of data (Heck, 2004 as cited in Manilal, 2014) is one way to improve credibility. The researcher used triangulation to get the core of the information needed to ensure the credibility of this study. The study's credibility was established by the alignment of the research design, selected participants, and the study's setting. (Ary, Jacobs & Walker, 2014).

3.8.2 Transferability

The findings are transferable if they can be applied to other similar situations or if they are similar in some way in another setting. (Major & Savin-Baden, 2010). The researcher used thick description to ensure transferability which will allow the reader to understand the context within which the behaviour occurs (Ponterotto, 2006). The types of schools and the people sampled were described. The interview schedule used to collect data is attached and the document analysed are specified.

3.8.3 Dependability

Dependability relates to the research's ability to be trusted throughout time, and it necessitates the researcher's detailed documentation of the study's background (Major & Savin-Baden, 2010). The researcher is in charge of outlining the alterations

occurred in the study milliue and how these alterations influenced the way he or she undertook the investigation (Mqulwana, 2010:61 as cited in Maluleke, 2014).

3.8.4 Confirmability

The researcher's neutrality in data analysis and interpretation is referred to as confirmability (Major & Savin-Baden, 2010). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), confirmability criterion is the depth which the researcher is aware of his or her existing biases. Triangulation was used to minimize prejudice consequences and a full methodological description was created to allow the work to be scrutinized (Shenton, 2004).

3.9 Ethical matters

Ethics is defined as morally good conduct for researchers (Gomm, 2008). Research ethics generated and embraced by a group of academics manage and regulate research procedures, according to Rule and John (2011:112). According to Cohen et al. (2011:85), ethics is a subject of sensitivity to other people's rights that is based on principles. To meet the university's ethical requirements, the researcher received an ethical clearance certificate from the University of Limpopo (see attached Appendix).

In order to comply with study ethics, the researcher wrote a request letter to the Circuit Manager requesting authorisation to perform the research in the sampled schools. Permission was also sought from various stakeholders via request letters, including the principals, department heads, and the SGB (see Appendix for request letters).

During the interviews, participants' ethical protection was critical. To safeguard the subjects, the researcher omitted factors that could lead to their identity and hence jeopardize their anonymity. Ogletree and Kawulich (2012) argue that obtaining consent from research participants' information, preventing deception, avoiding any harm to the participants, and recognising self-regulatory habits are just a few of the ethical concerns that must be addressed. For De Vos, Strydom, Fouchè and Delport (2011) informed permission, anonymity and confidentiality, voluntary participation and privacy are all ethical considerations. The researcher asked participants to sign a consent form prior to the interviews, which included the synopsis of the study,

authorisation to be audiotaped, and the freedom to withdraw at any point. The researcher informed participants of the purpose of the study from the start and that they could opt out at any time. The researcher used pseudonyms to protect the participants' identity and confidentiality. The researcher established a healthy working relationship with the participants. Even though they knew that their participation was voluntary and that they will not be paid for it, the researcher sent letters of appreciation to all participants, appreciating their time and effort in contributing to her study.

3.10 Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the study's paradigm, research approach, research design, sampling, quality assurance matters, and ethical matters. In the following chapter, the findings would be presented and interpreted. The data collected would be used to draw conclusions and make recommendations.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the research methodology, design and paradigm employed in this study. The findings of the study are presented in this chapter, with an emphasis on the study objectives such as: to examine the factors that impede parents from being involved in the learning of their children at a secondary school level; the parents' barriers in supporting their children's learning and to explore mitigation strategies that can be used by the schools to ensure full parental involvement in learning.

This chapter presents data collected from the participants who were purposely sampled. The researcher acquainted herself with the data by repeatedly examining the written responses and listening to the interview voice records. Patterns from the responses were identified and themes were later generated from the data collected. These themes will be discussed later. In accordance with the ethical reasons, the participants are referred to by numbers to protect their identities.

4.2 Profiling of research sites

The following represent the profile of each school that the study is focused on. The three sampled schools are situated in the Volksrust Circuit in the Gert Sibande District in Mpumalanga. For the purpose of this study, these three sampled schools are referred to as school A, school B and school C as per the ethical considerations to protect their identity. They all cater for learners from grade 8 to 12. School A is situated in a rural community, school B is situated in a township community and school C is situated in a suburban community. School A and B have 100% African learners and school C has 70% African, 25% White and 5% Indian learners. In each site, a principal, a departmental head and the parent members of the SGB were interviewed. The number of learners determines the size of the staff, support staff, the School Management Team (SMT) and the School Governing Body (SASA 84 of 1996).

The learner enrolment, medium of instruction, number of educators and the positions they hold at the school and policies on parental involvement are significant in this study to discover the factors that impede the involvement of parents in learning.

Schools	School A	School B	School C
Learner enrolment	1735	1075	595
Medium of instruction	IsiZulu and English	IsiZulu and English	English and Afrikaans
Number of educators	51	34	22
No of SMT members	9	7	5
SGB parent members	6	6	5
Policy on parental involvement (Available/Not available/incorporated to other policies)	Incorporated to other policies	Incorporated to other policies	Incorporated to other policies

Table 3:   Profile of the sampled schools (Author)

4.3 Administration of data collection tools

For this research project, data was collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Responses were obtained from the principals, departmental heads and parents from the sampled Volksrust Circuit schools. Interviews with the principals and departmental heads were done individually at their schools. Their interviews were done in English. Some parents were interviewed at their children's schools while others preferred to be interviewed at their homes. Three parents were interviewed in English and the rest were interviewed in isiZulu. Because most interviews with parents were conducted in vernacular, care was taken to ensure that meaning was not lost when translating. Follow-up and confirmations after transcriptions were done telephonically.

Invitations to SGB election meetings; attendance registers of the meetings and parental involvement policies were the documents analysed in this study. The SGB election meetings were the only meetings that sat in all the schools because of the Covid-19 pandemic regulations. These documents were requested from schools and the researcher chose them. However, in school C the attendance register was analysed at the school because of the thickness of the document.

4.4 Themes associated with interviews

The study established themes from the responses of the participants and they shall be presented as findings and be discussed in this section. Literature will be incorporated in data analysis. Parents are referred to as P in the study followed by the number that identifies him/her and then the school that s/he belongs to, and Departmental Heads are referred to as DH followed by the identity of the school.

4.4.1 Work dynamics

Parents in low-income communities have jobs that make it difficult for them to participate in the education of their children. Most of the participants in all the three schools identified work commitments as an attributing factor to the lack of parental involvement. This is supported by studies which found that many parents are unable to participate in school events due to work obligations (Michael, Wolhuter & van Wyk, 2012; Mbokodi & Singh, 2011). P3 of school A also explained that:

P3 school A: '*Parents have to work to maintain the financial standing of the family*'.

DH school C: 'Parents don't have time to support because they need to provide…'

Some of the participants indicated that parents may come home late and tired from work, which prevents them from attending to their children's educational matters or even attending any school meetings after work. Principal of school B and P2 of school B had this to say about being tired from work:

School B principal: 'Parents who are referred to as unskilled labourers work long hours and are unable to attend to their children's educational matters'.

School B P5: 'Those that are working tend to come late from work, tired and do house chores, like cooking and then go to sleep….on weekends it's chores again and attending funerals…..'

Fields (2011) concurs with the findings of this study by indicating that low-income families frequently work in low-paying jobs that require long working hours and have a negative impact on the family. As a result, children lack parental support with schoolwork as parents are preoccupied with managing their households and putting food on the table (Naicker, 2013).

School C as an urban school, requires parents to pay school fees, uniform and other necessities like attire for sports activities that the learner is participating in. This means that parents need to have some sort of income if the parents choose this school for their child. If they are staying in the neighbouring towns, then boarding fees or transport fees are also required. This may prove to be difficult for parents with such jobs. Low-wage jobs inhibit the ability of parents to supply their children with the required educational materials (Anderson & Minke, 2007 as cited in Munje & Mncube, 2018).

On the contrary, some participants identified unemployment and poverty as having detrimental effect to parental involvement. Unemployment seem to have the same effect as employment as shown above. P2 of school B had this to say:

P2 school B: ' ……depend on social grants which results in them not having means to buy educational things like study guides, Casio calculator……..'

As a result of unemployment, parents are unable to support their children with their basic school necessities. A study by Munje and Mncube (2018) concurs with the findings of this study that poverty forces many parents to focus solely on household necessities while ignoring their children's educational needs, because the majority of caregivers are unemployed or rely on meagre social grants that barely cover the family's needs. What is puzzling about this is that the parents that claim not to have money for school supplies wear fancy clothes. These findings are accordance with those of Donkor, Issaka and Asante (2013) which indicate that parents claim to have no money for school supplies whereas they dress up in elegant clothes to parties and funerals.

The participants also noted time as an important factor. They noted that sometimes meeting times clashes with their work times. Which means that even if they would want to attend such meetings, they could not because of time. For instance, at school A all meetings are held during the day, which disadvantaged parents who are working from being involved. On the other hand, in school B and C, meetings are held in the evening at 17H00 and 18H00 consecutively. These times were also a disadvantage to some parents especially those that stayed far away from the schools. School B learners are transported by the scholar transport that is provided by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) whereas School C learners use taxis and personal transport

to school. Transport became a challenge since meetings happened after hours hence the non-attendance from such parents. A principal of school C and the Departmental Head of school B had this to say about meeting times versus knock-off times.

Principal school C: 'Most of our parents are government employees, police; nurses; warders etc., they sometimes work at night which clashes with our meeting times'.

DH school B: 'Most parents are employed as domestic workers therefore they knock-off late……'

Mbokodi and Singh (2011) agree that some parents are unable to attend parent meetings because of work obligations. Some mothers sleep at their workplace and are unable to attend meetings (Mbokodi, 2008 as cited in Manilal, 2014). Some of these parents work in the neighbouring cities which makes it hard for them to attend to their children's needs. Some leave their children with their extended families, mostly grandmothers and some alone which has detrimental effects on learner performance, behaviour and discipline. This factor will be discussed later in this section (in 4.4.5).

4.4.2 Lack of subject content knowledge

The South African Basic Education curriculum has evolved over the years. This has proven to be a challenge, parents are having a huge challenge in assisting their children with their learning because the curriculum is no longer the same as the one the parents did at school. This is not only experienced by parents with low level of education, even parents who have matric plus some post matric qualification experience challenges. These are indications that parents find the content more difficult to understand than they did when they were in the same grades, which limits their involvement. It is very embarrassing for them to admit to their children that they do not understand the subject matter.

P4 School C: '….I remember when I had to help my son with Maths and I could not'

DH School B: 'I think most parents find it difficult to support their children due to changes in the curriculum.'

This study also found that it is not humanly possible for a parent to know all the subjects that his/her child/children is/are doing (especially high school subjects) even if s/he is educated. This is in accordance with a study by Hornby and Lafaele (2011)

which found that as children get older, their homework and curriculum become more difficult. Some parents reduce their involvement with their children's schoolwork because they are unable to assist their children. Parents find it difficult to comprehend schoolwork (Narain, 2005 as cited in Manilal, 2014).

4.4.3 Not understanding the role of parent in child's learning

This study found that parents are willing to support their children's learning, but they do not know how to help, or the role they should play to show support. These findings are in line with findings of Naicker (2013) and Okeke (2014) that indicate that some parents claim to want to visit schools and aid their children, however they are unsure how to do so. In agreement with the above findings, Michael et al. (2012) assert that underprivileged parents were unaware of what parents' involvement constituted.

Principal school B: 'Parents don't have an understanding of their role to their children's education.'

P1 School C: '.....having no knowledge of what they should do or of what is going on at school'.

Some participants believe that it is the obligation of the teachers to teach. The parents' only responsibility is to bring the children to school and pay school fees. The staff's attitude towards parents when they visit schools discourages them from being involved.

Principal school C: 'Parents think that when they have paid school fees then it is all up to the teachers'.

Matshe (2014) proposes a paradigm shift in order for parents to comprehend and play an effective role in schooling. Prior to the implementation of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement, there must be a paradigm shift in parents' perceptions. The statement describes a movement in learning from a teacher-centred approach to a more participatory one. According to Meador (2019), parents must take an active role in ensuring that their children complete homework and ensuring that they are directed and managed to rest and prepare for the next school day.

4.4.4 Level of education and culture

Some parents identified level of education as one of the factors that hinder parental involvement. In this study, all parents agreed that most learners live with their grandmothers and parents who are mostly illiterate or have low level of education.

Principal of school B alluded that 'parents who did not have secondary level grades tend to be shy to support their children. '

These findings are consistent with those of Mbhokodi and Singh (2011) which found that because they are embarrassed by their lack of literacy abilities, parents do not assist learners at home and stay away from school.

On the contrary, principal of school A asserts that in as much as the educated parents know the importance of being involved in their children's learning, they are usually absent due to their busy schedules. She further states that uneducated parents are the ones who are mostly involved as they do not want their children to be like them. Chowa, Ansong and Osei-Akoto (2012b) also found that parents with less education were more interested in their children's education, probably because they want their children to obtain a greater level of education than they did.

Cultural differences were also identified as another factor detrimental to parental involvement. School C principal said that "English" parents do not seem to understand the concept of fundraising, which means volunteering your services for the betterment of your child's school. He observed that on one occasion one parent after finishing preparing and selling food at a sporting event at school, she asked for her money. Some parents are unwilling to volunteer at their children's schools. Mbokodi (2008) discovered that unless parents are compensated for their services, they do not provide anything to the school, such as money or volunteering their time.

Participants also identified language as a huge hindrance to parental involvement. All 'English' participants agree that language is a barrier to them supporting their children in learning. This study found that most of these parents do not understand 'Afrikaans' which they claim is uncompromisingly being used at the school. They alluded that even if the parent wants to speak to the teacher about his/her child, they could not because they are not conversant with the language used.

P2 School C: 'Usage of a language that parents do not have confidence in makes it difficult even if you want to talk to them about your child….'

P3 School C: '…..we come out of the meeting without having a full understanding of what the meeting was about……..we fail to talk about the content of the meeting to our children when we get home.'

P3 School A: "…if parents do not have the same command of English that their child has…..keep communication with the teacher to a minimum.

According to Hornby and Lafaele (2011), some parents face difficulties because of the language of instruction. When teachers communicate in a language that is not the parents' first language, it can add to the difficulties of parental involvement. Some parents lack proficiency in the language of instruction and, as a result, avoid contact with school if such contact would result in communication and comprehension difficulties.

4.4.5 Delegating parental duties

It is expected that parents provide necessary support to their children at home to lay foundation for a well-rounded learner at school. One parent pointed out that it is the responsibility of parents to teach their children values not the teachers. This study found that parents delegate their duties to other family members or even friends, they go as far as requesting them to stand in for them in parents meetings. All participants reported that many learners are residing with extended family members or grandparents which this study found it has detrimental effects on learners' performance; behaviour and discipline (as indicated in 4.4.1).

DH school C: "…. Grannies are not physically and mentally strong to raise teenagers and they cannot discipline them"

DH school A: "…..our learners lack discipline…and it is probably because they live with their grandparents…"

Children who live with grandparents are naughty, they do not take their grannies seriously because grannies do not check up on them (Munje & Mncube, 2018). According to Mtshali (2015), grandparents were either unable or reluctant to help students with their studies, particularly when it came to homework. Delegating all parental obligations to relatives prove to be detrimental to children's education. Some

grandparents speak ill of the children's parents which is demoralising and creating animosity at home hence sometimes such children become delinquents.

4.4.6 Adolescent stage/age

One of the participants indicated that high school learners are at a critical stage in their lives and they need parental guidance to cope with challenges. P1 of school B supported this view by adding that these learners tend to choose their friends over their parents' support.

P1 School B: "Children stages changes and these changes can damage the children's opportunities of being supported……children ignore their parents but choose their peers for support and that is where the problem starts…."

Hornby and Lafaele (2011) contend that learners at this age and stage were less likely to want their parents to be involved in their school. It should be noted that learners at this stage are trying to find themselves, they actually do not know what they want. Parents should therefore not assume that they do not need to help if they say so. Assuming that high school children are old enough to manage their school work is wrong because Naicker's (2013) study found that learners wanted parental interest in their school work. Parents should find ways of getting through to them. Children at this stage want to belong hence they turn to their friends for assurance. This stage has the highest rate of suicide and suicide attempts hence parents must never stop trying to get through to their children and always assuring them of their love.

Five out of eight participants identified the use of drugs and alcohol as a factor that hinders parental involvement. Others identified misbehaviour and disrespect as indicated below:

P3 School B: "because we as parents no longer believe that our children go to school to learn…….nowadays they have become increasingly involved in crime and drug abuse".

Drugs have infested townships and rural areas and high school children because of peer pressure are lured to such habits. It is very sad because these drugs are addictive and children resorted to theft to get their next fix. These children end up having delinquent behaviour. Their parents shy away from any involvement in schools as a

result. Such behaviour can be curbed if there was effective communication between the school and the parents.

4.4.7 Lack of communication

Participants identified lack of communication as an issue that obscured parents' engagement in learner teaching. Parents did not seem to receive communique inviting them for meetings from school. This study found that if a learner has done something wrong at school, that learner would not give or tell the parents about the invitation. Studies concur that teachers have a hard time reaching out to some families (Baker, Wise, Kelley & Skiba, 2016; Darch, Miao & Shippen, 2004 as cited in Al-Dababneh, 2018).

Principal school B: "parents of naughty learners more often don't receive notices or invitations forwarded to them by the school. In our school, the main line to communicate with parents is by writing to them. Those notices do not reach parents as a result they do not participate in their children's learning.

DH school A: "some parents are unaware of the work given to learners as learners easily deceive parents and guardians saying they don't have homework".

Epstein (1995) posits that when children fail to perform their responsibility as a go-between their parents and school they create a barrier in as far as a partnership between school and parents is concerned. The school needs to find new ways of contacting parents as this way has proven to be fruitless.

School C was in agreement that letters never reach parents. However, the school also used technology to ensure that they reach all parents. They use school communicator, Facebook, WhatsApp, SMS and calls where necessary. They were however not without challenges. Both SMT members pointed out that the challenge they experienced was that the parents that they actually needed to see did not pitch.

Principal school C: "only parents whose kids are doing well do come…"

DH school C:"…..the needed parents don't pitch".

In all the three schools, they mostly called parents to meetings when there were challenges with their children, whether it was underperformance or behavioural

problems. A study has found that parents want to hear about their children's accomplishments rather than only the negative (Baker et al., 2016). The schools still need to do more in promoting parental involvement; improve communication so that even parents may not only respond to invitations but also initiate them.

4.4.8 Strategies to promote parental involvement

Participants in this study suggested an improved communication through the use of different methods of communication; transformation in school structures to ensure equal representation of all parents; building healthy relations between teachers and parents through social activities and educating parents on the importance of parental involvement in their children's learning and how to be involved in areas that need development to enhance parental involvement. Lau (2013) believes that if the communication is not as frequent and meaningful from the school to home and equally so if there is no opportunity for active involvement in the school activities, parents become very dissatisfied.

4.4.8.1 Improved communication

Participants in this study are in unison that there is a need for an improved communication between parents and teachers for the improvement of parental involvement. They suggested the use of diaries for homework and other important due date to be communicated to the parents. The study found that the use of these diaries will ensure that children's work is regularly checked, including project or any other activity that is given to him/her. These diaries can also be a way to communicate with parents. As parent 2 of school B puts it:

P2 School B: "….the diary should be made compulsory that the parents check it every day and leave a signature for confirmations".

Most respondents from school A and B think that if the schools could use various social media platforms (SMSs; WhatsApp; Facebook; communicator etc.) as additional ways of communication that could assist in enhancing parental involvement. They also suggested that each class teacher should have contact details of his/her learners' parents and create a WhatsApp group for fast and easy communication. However, this may impose data challenges. Since the study found that some parents do not receive

letters that were sent to them by the school. This will avoid concerns by parents that they did not receive messages.

Principal school B: "I think as a school we need to improve our line of communication….use other platforms and social media to communicate with them."

Principal school A: "…..the school should have more communication lines with the parents."

In school C, on the contrary, they no longer send letters to parents because they found that parents never received them. They now use all of the above-mentioned media platforms but still experienced parental non-involvement. The school C principal pointed that "it is not ideal because not all parents are always on their computers or phones" and that "there's still a lot of parents who are not technologically inclined". This means that introducing the use of different media platforms of communication would not entirely alleviate the challenges that school A and B are experiencing.

Parents and teachers also suggested more parent meetings, one-on-one meetings and grade meetings. They suggested that these meetings should be done frequently. Some parents suggested that when schools award learners with certificates of excellence, they should also invite parents because parents will be motivated to be involved.

P5 School B: "I think when learners who did well are given awards, parents should form part of that occasion……"

P2 School A: "…..giving pupils some rewards for doing well …..then call the parents"

With the Covid -19 restrictions, schools are finding it difficult to communicate with the parents as they would want to. For instance, school C has resorted to inviting only parents whose children were not doing well academically. Learners who are performing well academically were awarded at school but parents were not allowed. The school used various media to communicate this information to parents. The findings are consistent with what Baker et al. (2016) found, that teachers contacted parents more frequently when their child was exhibiting negative behaviours, rather than sharing positive information. Parents reported that they would love to be called for positive things that their children are doing at school.

4.4.8.2 Transformation in the school structures

Parents suggested transformation in the school structures. They suggested that the language spoken by the majority of parents should be the one used in meetings. This is consistent to what Larios and Zetlin (2011) argued that parents would attend meetings with less resistance and hesitation if the school could provide information in the parents' preferred language. These parents argue that there was little that the school is doing to ensure involvement of parents. The school systems were not accommodating, this was evident in the SGB composition, parent-teacher association (PTA) and the management of the school. The SGB comprised of all white parents and one African parent, in the PTA and the school management, only whites are members. There is some transformation in the newly elected SGB and the parents are hopeful.

4.4.8.3 Building relationships

This study also found that building relationships between parents and teachers are motivated to play major role in children's learning. One of them suggested a "braai day" where teachers and parents will get to know each other better. This will then help parents to be more welcomed when coming to school and not intimidated by the teachers. These findings are in line with those of Kabir and Akter (2014) whose participants also suggested holding an 'annual gathering and cultural program for parents' to foster a family atmosphere at school and provide parents more opportunities to get to know one another.

4.4.8.4 Capacitate parents

Parents reported that they need to be capacitated on how to help their children and also on the importance of their involvement in their children's learning. This is consistent to what Makamani (2019) found that there is a need for parents to be educated on the value of parental involvement and the areas in which they should be involved. This will assist parents to better understand their role to play in their children's learning. The aforementioned findings show that increased communication is the most effective strategy to increase parental involvement.

4.5 Themes associated with document analysis

Documents that were analysed are the invitations to the meeting held in schools, attendance registers to the meetings and the minutes of the meetings. The schools do not have a stand-alone policy on parental involvement. However, how the school involve or wishes to involve parents is incorporated in other school policies. For instance, the sports policy included ways on how parents could be involved in sports, the academics policy included how parents could support learners in such. Discussed below is the analysis of the above documents in a quest to investigate the barriers to parental involvement.

4.5.1 Parental involvement in sports and academics

In all the schools, parents are encouraged to support learners by attending their children's sporting activities and accompanying learners to district or provincial games or competitions. In school C, parents with expertise in coaching or training any sport activity are encouraged to volunteer their skills at the school. Engaging coaches with expertise motivated parents to take their children to sporting activities (Makamani, 2019). All schools encourage parents to ensure that learners complete their home works, prepare for their tests and exams and buy necessary stationery for their children. The researcher also found that in all the schools, there is a structure called Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC), which includes parents (selected SGB members), teachers, social worker, school 'cop' and other co-opted members of the community who are interested in the betterment of education. This is in line with the recommendations of the Department of Basic Education that QLTC which was launched in 2008, must be implemented to assist in addressing academic or society challenges that have an impact in schools. Parents are also encouraged to join the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) structure, to assist with any challenges that learners may face that hinder their performance or well-being at school. Code of conduct is one of the documents analysed. It is available in all the schools. The document includes the disciplinary system of the school. Certain offences require parents to visit school to assist in mitigating certain behaviours that are not allowed at school. In school C, the contents of this document are available in learners' school diaries. In the other schools, the document is available for perusal at school on

request. The availability and contents of this document is in line with Section 8(2) of the South African Schools Act (84 of 1996).

4.5.2 Meetings

The documents analysed in all the three schools were for the SGB elections meeting. The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 demands an involvement of parents in the education of learners in schools. This should be the most important meeting because it is a meeting where parents get to elect parents to represent them in ensuring that their children's interests are taken into consideration. The SGB is responsible for the creation of a conducive environment and preparation of a learning space through infrastructure and provision of resources. According to SASA 84 of 1996, parents must be a majority in the composition of the SGB. Because of Covid-19 restrictions schools could not have any other whole school parents' meetings. However, school B and school C managed to hold another meeting although it did not involve all parents but some. In school B, the meeting was for grade 12 learners and in school C, it was for the parents of grade 8 and 9 learners who were underperforming.

4.5.3 Communication from the school and the parents' response

School A and B used letters to communicate with parents. Learners were trusted with the responsibility of giving the letters to their parents. All letters were written in isiZulu as it is the language spoken by the community. On the other hand, school C used the school communicator, Facebook and the big notice board at the school for meetings that involve large number of parents. They also use SMSes to communicate with individual parents and to remind all parents about scheduled meetings. For the SGB elections meeting, letters were also issued to parents via learners. A study by Williams (2021) found that the use of social media to communicate with parents make it easy to disseminate school's information and result to faster responses.

Analysing the minutes of the election of SGB members, the researcher found that in all the three schools, the first meetings that they called never materialised because the available parents on the day never formed a quorum which is at least 15% of the number expected (DBE, 2014). In school A, only 54 out of at least 435 (see Table 1 above) expected parents were in attendance, and this was the second meeting without

a quorum. Parents identified themselves by their identity documents as the legal parents or guardians of the learners in the school. The meeting was delayed by an hour with the hope that more parents would show up but to no avail. The meeting eventually proceeded and nominations were made and eventually nine parents were elected.

The same scenario of school A happened. Parents never formed a quorum in the first meeting and then the second meeting was called. The number expected was a minimum of 270 and only 28 parents were in attendance. Of the 28 parents, only two were males. The meeting had to proceed by following the rules about people who can participate in the elections as stipulated above (school A). Nine SGB members were elected, two males in attendance and seven females.

The second meeting in school B was for the grade 12 parents, approximately more than a week ahead of the National Senior Certificate (NSC) exams. According to the minutes, this meeting was to advice parents on how to support their children during that significant period in their lives. With that said, one would think that parents would jump at the opportunity to attend such an important meeting, however, only 36 out of 96 parents attended. The researcher also noted that the meeting was held at 2pm on a Sunday afternoon.

School C is a multiracial school and learners are from different races. The school comprises of 70% African learners, 25% white learners and 5% Indian learners. The SGB elections' first meeting also did not materialise, for the same reasons as the other two schools. In the first meeting, 81 out of a minimum of 150 were in attendance. The second meeting also did not form the quorum, 66 parents attended. The electoral officer decided that the meeting should continue as prescribed by the guidelines relating to the elections of governing bodies of public schools (DBE, 2014), seven parents were elected. Of the seven parents, two are African males; one White male and four White females.

The second meeting's minutes that the researcher analysed was for a meeting called for parents of grade 8 and 9 learners who were underperforming as per the June and September results. Messages (SMSes) were sent to 313 parents' cell phone numbers and they were not delivered in 22 numbers. From the document, the researcher also noted that some learners had more than one number attached to their names.

However, the number of parents who were in attendance was nowhere near what the school expected. Only fifty-nine parents attended. In this meeting, the principal addressed the parents about the purpose of the meeting and the significance of them supporting their children at that time as the exams are nearing. The parents then moved to the teachers of the subjects that the learner performed poorly.

4.6 Chapter summary

This chapter begins by presenting the research sites and how the data collection tools were administered. It then proceeds to present the findings of this study obtained through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Emerging themes from the interviews were presented and discussed by infusing literature where possible to give authority to the submissions as presented by the participants. Thereafter, the themes from documents analysed were presented and discussed. The following chapter will present the researcher's findings and recommendations on what to be done to better parent participation and conclusions based on the data presented.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented an analysis of data collected and the discussions of data using generated themes. This chapter provides a summary of the findings derived from the themes in the previous chapter. The purpose of the study was to investigate factors that impede parents from supporting their children in secondary schools, identifying the barriers to parental support and strategies for improving parental involvement. The researcher makes recommendations based on how rural, township, and former model C schools encourage parental involvement, as well as additional recommendations. The chapter ends with concluding remarks, which describe the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

5.2 Summary of themes

The key findings of the data collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis techniques are summarised below. Firstly, the barriers to parental involvement will be summarised and followed by the themes from documents analysis.

5.2.1 Work dynamics

Parental involvement in their children's education is influenced by a variety of circumstances in which parents find themselves. The study identified work commitments and unemployment as the attributing factors to lack of parental involvement. Most of the parents from school C are employed and in the other two schools some are employed. Domestic work, entrepreneurship, government work, Eskom work and other jobs in neighbouring cities are among the jobs held by parents. Parents' involvement then would depend on the type of employment that the parents have. Domestic workers have a challenge attending parents' meetings as they come home late and tired and need to still do home chores and cooking before going to bed. Some of them sleep over at their work places and come home during weekends which makes it impossible for them to attend meetings that are held during the week. One parent admitted that even in those weekends they must do chores, attend funerals, go to church and rest before the new week.

Some parents are taxi drivers, owners and some are owning shops. These parents are experiencing challenges with the meeting times. Their businesses determine their busy times and knock-off times which sometimes clashes with meeting times. Government employees and Eskom employees work during the day and some also work at night. School A normally holds their meetings during the day because of the geographic area that the school is situated in. School B and C hold their meetings at 17H00 and 18H00 respectively. School B has recently scheduled one meeting on a Sunday at 14H00. These times proved to be challenging for the parents to honour as per the attendance registers reviewed. The number of parents who actually attend the meetings is less than 40% in average. Unemployment and poverty is another constraint to parental involvement. Parents, especially in schools A and B face financial constraints that limit their involvement. Furthermore, some of these parents believe they are unable to assist their children with their schoolwork.

5.2.2 Subject content knowledge

Parents and teachers in all the three schools were in agreement that content knowledge has a negative effect on parental involvement. The Basic Education Curriculum in South Africa has evolved over the years. This has proven to be a challenge; parents are having a difficult time assisting their children with their learning because the curriculum is no longer the same as what they did in school. The participants also pointed out that the high school content subjects specifically proved to be more challenging for parents, and not only those with low level of education but also those with matric and above. As a result, some parents limit their involvement in their children's schoolwork because they are unable to assist them.

5.2.3 Understanding the role of parental involvement

This study found that parents were willing to be involved in their children's learning but they did not know how. Privileged parents believe that their obligation is to pay school fees and to ensure that their children come to school on time (school C). Some of these parents make donations to the school to expect that teachers must ensure that their children are taught and supported in whatever way necessary. They also pointed out that teaching is the responsibility of the teachers. Parents believe that schools could do more to engage them in their children's education. Some parents want to get

involved but they are not sure how, so they want the school to help them figure out what they can do.

5.2.4 Level of education and culture

Parents and educators in all the three schools identified that most learners live with their grandmothers. Some educators pointed out that some parents are illiterate, and some have low level of education. One educator in school A mentioned that most parents are their former learners who either dropped out of school or were not performing well. It is inevitable for these parents to shy away from school and assisting their children because they might feel embarrassed by their lack of literacy abilities. However, this study found that assuming that educated parents are involved in their children' learning would be a mistake. Educated parents mostly have busy schedules and have less or no time to support their children. On the other hand, uneducated parents have been found to be more involved in their children's learning because they do not want their children to be like them.

Cultural differences were also identified as a constraint to parental involvement especially in school C. Parents do not identify with the practices of the school such as fundraising. Historically, African parents are used to government providing them with all the necessary resources to schools and that one gets paid for the services rendered. If the school requests that parents come and assist in preparing food and selling during sporting activities at school, parents expect to be paid for such activities.

Language used in meetings limited parental involvement in school C. Parents who lack proficiency in Afrikaans language shy away from the school or talking to the teachers who are mostly Afrikaans speakers, avoiding embarrassing themselves. According to the statistics of the school, 75% of learners in the school are English speakers.

5.2.5 Delegated parental duties

Another factor limiting involvement is the parents' absence from the home, whether because they have passed on or children are not leaving with them. The study found that some parents, especially in school A and B delegate their duties to their friends, neighbours even their older children to attend meetings on their behalf. Children of

these parents are found to have underperformance and behavioural problems because of neglect.

5.2.6 Adolescent stage/age

Findings in all the schools have shown that a 'stage' or 'teenage' is an impeding factor to parental involvement. Children who are at the 'stage' do not listen to their parents, believe that there is nothing that concerns school that they can get from their parents. Learners themselves as noted by the participants can be an impediment to parental involvement. These learners may purposefully fail to notify their parents of school events in which they are expected to participate. They believe that their parents lack the knowledge to assist them with their schoolwork. Peer pressure also has an influence in their behaviour and actions. Findings reveal that some of these learners end up using drugs and alcohol. Their parents do not see any need for them to be involved in their learning as they do not believe that they are even learning at school.

5.2.7 Communication

Communication has been identified as preventative issue to parent participation. School A and school B solely use letters to communicate with parents and rely on the learners to pass them to their parents. The study found that in most cases these letters do not reach parents, especially if the letters are about learners' bad behaviour or underperformance. This prevents parents from getting involved. All schools experience that when they invite parents to meetings, the parents that they actually need, do not show. These parents in all the schools are called in because of their children's behaviour and underperformance. This factor has been found to impede parental involvement. If it is bad news, then parents shy away.

Documents analysis summary

5.2.8 Language used

This study shows that school A and B used isiZulu language to invite and to conduct meetings. School C uses English and Afrikaans for invitations and meetings. Letters are the only method of communication that schools A and B used to communicate with

parents, whereas school C used different technological forms, like Facebook, SMS, school communicator and the school's big notice board.

5.2.9 Attendance

Attendance to parents' meetings has been found to be very poor in all the schools under investigation. The maximum attendance in the meetings where their documents were examined was less than 40%, which is a cause for concern.

5.2.10 Agenda

In all the three schools, agenda items were scheduled and no other matters were accommodated in the agenda. Although the findings from the minutes show that parents were given a chance to ask questions if they had any, of which there were no questions asked.

5.2.11 Policy on parental involvement

The findings show that in all the three schools, parental involvement is not a stand-alone policy but it is incorporated in other school policies. Some of the policies analysed include school's code of conduct, sports and cultural activities, academics, and SGB. It is in these policies where one would find how parents can get involved. In conclusion, most factors identified by this study are parent individual and family factors as categorised by Hornby and Lafaele's model. Both parents and teachers have identified family dynamics and parents' work dynamics as some of the barriers to parents' supporting their children's learning. This is in line with Hornby and Lafaele (2011) who also said that these dynamics make it hard for mothers to be actively involved in their children's education as they need to balance work and home responsibilities.

The study also identified school factors as an impediment to parental involvement. The model says schools should look at their invitations and how they communicate with parents because these factors may influence parental involvement. In this study, parents expressed that they would love to come to school for something positive about their children than to always be called when there is something negative. Some

parents and teachers identified children's age as an attributing factor to parental non-involvement. This, according to the Hornby and Lafaele's model, is a child factor.

5.3 Recommendations

Schools can implement a range of measures to increase parental involvement. Listed below are the recommended strategies that can enhance parental involvement:

5.3.1 Improved communication

To ensure improved and sustained parental involvement, schools must make a concerted effort to improve communication with parents by utilising all available communication channels (for instance, WhatsApp messaging, SMS, school communicator, etc.) to reach out to parents. Usage of technological methods is recommended because it is quick and affordable. Instant messaging services are a simple, cost-effective, and user-friendly means to communicate in South Africa (Shambare, 2014). Each class teacher should have a WhatsApp group for the parents of children in his/her class. This will assist in sharing important and urgent information to parents and parents will have an easy access to the teachers.

An introduction and effective use of diaries is another measure to establish a connection between home and school (Lemmer & van Wyk, 2004). It must be mandatory for a parent to sign off as his/her child finishes a homework given.

A continuous study must be conducted to determine the challenges and difficulties that parents face as they strive to become involved. The findings of such studies must aid in the development of customised strategies to maximise the effectiveness of involvement. Schools must know the dynamics of the communities they are servicing to develop a two-way communication between home and school.

Schools can also be flexible in the scheduling of parent meetings, scheduling them on weekends when most parents are not working. For parents who still cannot attend, they should be allowed to make arrangements with the teachers to meet at a convenient time for all parties. Language/s of instruction must be used equally in

meetings. If it is not possible, the language used by a majority of the parents must be used in meetings.

5.3.2 Transformation in school structures

According to Epstein's theory, parents from diverse backgrounds should be included on school committees and governance structures (Epstein and Sheldon, 2005). The South African Schools Act (SASA) promotes parental involvement in education by granting them the democratic right to serve on the School governing body (SGB) (RSA, 1996b). The school should ensure that parents of all backgrounds are encouraged and invited to serve, so that they also can make meaningful contribution to their children's learning.

5.3.3 Capacity building

Schools must develop their parental involvement policies with clear roles that are expected from both school and home. Schools must empower parents to make their participation more meaningful through meetings and workshops, and such activities must be mandatory and monitored. Activities that cater for the holistic development of the child, such as parenting skills, fundraising, reading club and sports training. Inform parents at the beginning of the academic year of what is expected of them and how they can get involved in their children's education. The school year programme that includes all activities of the year, including the assessment dates, sporting activities, meetings etc. must be issued to parents when the year begins. Knowing beforehand could assist parents to make necessary arrangement to be available to support their children.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) should capacitate teachers who are already in the system by providing compulsory workshops to sensitize teachers on the matters of parental involvement. For the teachers in training, a course on parental involvement is highly recommended for the teachers to ensure full collaboration of all the stakeholders for improved performance and discipline in learners.

5.3.4 Development of Action Teams in schools

Schools must establish a comprehensive programme of parental involvement by adopting Epstein's six types of involvement framework as a guide. Epstein (1997) proposed an introduction of an 'action team' as an organisational structure that should be formulated in schools to launch, coordinate, and evaluate the programme. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009) adopted and customised this organisational structure to a South African context. The action team may constitute of three parents, three teachers, two learners and a social worker or any other member of the community who may want to be involved (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009). All parent-related activities, as listed below and in 5.3.3 above can be managed by the Action Team:

- The Action Team should organise a single parent support group in the community. As a result, if parents are having difficulties participating in their children's education, they can be connected to community services that can help them. Parents might also be visited at their homes to better understand and support them.
- Parents can receive newsletters alerting them of school events and activities. The newsletters might be written in all the school's languages of instruction.

5.4 Conclusion

Parents in South Africa are legally obligated to participate in the education of their children (SASA, 84 of 1996). The findings of this study showed that parents are having some difficulties that inhibit them from fulfilling their obligations. The recommendations listed above are some strategies that the schools under consideration can consider. Some of the techniques advised in this study can be used by other schools in a similar situation.

This study was limited to three schools in one out of eighteen Circuits in the Gert Sibande District. The study explored teachers and SGB parents members only. It is therefore, recommended that learners and more parents be included in future studies to get more perspective on the phenomenon. The study can be extended to other Circuits and Districts to acquire a more complete view of the problem.

REFERENCES

Al Sumaiti, R. (2012). Parental involvement in the education of their children in Dubai. *Dubai School of Government Policy Brief, 30*, 1-8

Al-Dababneh, K. A. (2018). Barriers preventing parental involvement in mainstream education of children with specific learning disabilities: parent perspectives. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, *33*(5), 615-630.

Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Sorensen, D., & Walker, D. (2014). Types of qualitative research. *Introduction to Research in Education*, 481-511.

Baker, A. J., & Soden, L. M. (1998). *The challenges of parent involvement research*. New York: ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education.

Baker, T. L., Wise, J., Kelley, G., & Skiba, R. J. (2016). Identifying barriers: Creating solutions to improve family engagement. *School Community Journal*, *26*(2), 161-184.

Bertram, C. & Christiansen, I. (2010). *Understanding research: An Introduction to Reading Research.* Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Bhengu, T. B. (2003). Accountable parental involvement in primary school (Doctoral dissertation, University of Zululand).

Boeje, H., (2010). *Analysis in Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *9*(2), 27-40.

Bush, T., Joubert, R., Kiggundu, E., & van Rooyen, J. (2010). Managing teaching and learning in South African schools. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 30(2), 162-168.

Caño, K., Cape, M. G., Cardosa, J., Miot, C., Pitogo, C., Quinio, C., & Jewish, M. (2016). Parental involvement on pupils' performance: Epstein's framework. *Online Journal of New Horizons in Education*, 6(4), 144.

Carter, N., Bryant-Lukosius, D., DiCenso, A., Blythe, J., & Neville, A.J. (2014, September). The use of triangulation in qualitative research. In *Oncology nursing forum* (VOL.41, No.5).

Caulfield, J. (2019). How to do thematic analysis. *Retrieved on July*, *7*, 2020.

Chowa, G., & Ansong, D. & Osei-Akoto, I. (2012). Parental involvement and academic performance Ghana. CSD Publication No. 12-42.

Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2013). Teaching thematic analysis: over-coming challenges and developing strategies for effective learning. The Psychologist, 26(2), 120-123.

Cohen, D., & Crabtree, B. (2006). Semi-structured interviews. *Qualitative research guidelines project, 2*.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2011). Research methods in education. (7th Ed). London: RoutltdgeFalmer.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2013). Research methods in education. Hoboken.

Cohen, T. (2013). The relationship between teacher-learner interaction and the laboratory-learning environment during Chemistry practical's in Namibia. DED-thesis in the subject Didactics of Education University of South Africa.

Compton, A. N. (2016). Strategies for increasing parental involvement for elementary school students. Doctoral Dissertation. Walden University. Retrieved from ScholarWorks. https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3748&context=dissertations

Cooper, C. E., Crosnoe, R., Suizzo, M. A., & Pituch, K. A. (2010). Poverty, race, and parental involvement during the transition to elementary school. Journal of Family Issues, 31(7), 859-883.

Cotton, K. and Wikelund, R.K. (2001). Parent Involvement in Education. http://www.nwerel.org/scpd/sirs/3/cu6ht

De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C. B. and Delport, C. S. L. (2011). Research at grass roots: For the social science and human service professionals (2 nded.). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

DeFranzo, S.E. (2011:16). What is the difference between qualitative and quantitative research? https://www. Skillyouneed.com/leran/quantitative-qualitative.htm.

Department of Basic Education and National Education Collaboration Trust. (2016). *The Practical Guidelines: How parents can contribute meaningfully to the success of their children in schools.*

Department of Basic Education. (2008). *Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign.* *https://www.education.gov.za/Programmes/QLTC.aspx*

Department of Basic Education. (2014). *Guidelines relating to the elections of governing bodies of public schools.* *https://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=8CT%2BHY9KtVM%3D&tabid*

Desforges, C., & Abouchaar, A. (2003). *The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment: A literature review* (Vol. 433). London: DfES.

Desimone, L. (1999). Linking Parent Involvement with Student Achievement: Do Race and Income Matter? *The Journal of Educational Research, 93*(1), 11-30.

Donkor, A. K., Issaka, C. A., & Asante, J. (2013). Cultural practices and education in Ghana: the effects of traditional culture on parental involvement in education. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, *3*(7), 110-120.

Dookie, S. S. (2014). *An evaluation of the levels of parental involvement in activities that support student learning and how it impacts on student performance* (Doctoral dissertation).

Dor, A. (2012). Parents' Involvement in School: Attitudes of Teachers and School Counsellors. *Online Submission*. Education (Unpublished thesis). University of Zululand, Kwadlangezwa.

Du Plooy, K. J. (2010). *Investigating the participation of school management teams in managing the instructional programme: A case study* (Doctoral dissertation).

Duma, M., Kapueja, I. S., & Khanyile, P. (2011). Educators' experiences on the role of parents in the school governing bodies of rural schools. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, *1*(3), 44-52.

Dumont, H., Trautwein, U., Nagy, G., & Nagengast, B. (2014). Quality of parental homework involvement: predictors and reciprocal relations with academic functioning in the reading domain. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *106*(1), 144.

Epstein, J. L. (1995). School/family/community partnerships. *Phi delta kappan*, *76*(9), 701.

Epstein, J. L. (1997). A comprehensive framework for school, family and community partnerships. In J. L. Epstein, L. Coates, K. C. Salinas, & B. S. Simon (Eds.), School, family, and partnerships: your handbook for action. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.

Epstein, J. L. (2007). Improving family and community involvement in secondary schools. *Principal leadership*, *8*(2), 16-22.

Epstein, J. L. (2018). *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. Routledge.

Epstein, J. L., & Sheldon, S. B. (2005). Moving forward: ideas for research on school, family, and community partnerships. In C. F. Conrad & R. C. Serlin (Eds.), The SAGE handbook for research in education: engaging ideas and enriching inquiry (pp. 117-137). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Inc.

Epstein, J. L., Coates, L., Salinas, K. C., Sanders, M. G., & Simon, B. S. (1997). *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.

Fan, W., Li, N., & Sandoval, J. R. (2018). A reformulated model of barriers to parental involvement in education: comment on Hornby and Lafaele (2011). *Educational Review*, *70*(1), 120-127

Finkbiner, B. W. (2014). Can a one-size-fits-all parental involvement framework be applied to an entire school district? A comparative case study of a district magnet program. Doctoral Dissertation. University of South Florida. Retrieved from Scholar Common, USF Libraries. https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/5479/

Flick, E., Van Kardorff, E. and Steinke, I. 2004. Companion to Qualitative Research. London. SAGE.

Foley, A. (2015). African American Parent Perceptions of Barriers to Parental Involvement.

Gomm, R. (2008). *Social Research Methodology: A critical Introduction.* Macmillan International Higher education.

Govender, P. (2011). *A team-based approach to leading and managing a rural primary school* (Doctoral dissertation).

Graves, S. L., & Wright, L. B. (2011). Parent involvement at school entry: a national examination of group differences and achievement. School Psychology International, 32(1), 35-48.

Graziano, L.T. & Raulin (2010:38). The quality of teaching and learning resources and instructional media in teaching. Henning, E., Van Rensburg, M. & Smith, B. (2004). Finding your way in qualitative research. Pretoria. Van Schaik Publishers.

Grix, J. (2010). The foundations of research (2nd ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Groenewald, T. (2004). A phenomenological research design illustrated. *International journal of qualitative methods*, *3*(1), 42-55.

Hampden-Thompson, G., & Galindo, C. (2017). School–family relationships, school satisfaction and the academic achievement of young people. *Educational Review*, *69*(2), 248-265

Hill, N.E., & Taylor, L.C. (2004). Parental school involvement and children's academic achievement: Pragmatics and issues. *Current directions in psychological science, 13*(4), 161-164.

Hoglund, W. L., Jones, S. M., Brown, J. L., & Aber, J. L. (2015). The evocative influence of child academic and social-emotional adjustment on parent involvement in inner-city schools. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *107*(2), 517.

Hornby, G. & Lafaele, R. (2011). Barriers to parental involvement in education: An explanatory model. *Educational Review, 63:1,* 37-52, DOI:10.1080/00131911.2010.488049

Hornby, G., & Blackwell, I. (2018). Barriers to parental involvement in education: an update. *Educational Review*, *70*(1), 109-119.

Kabir, A. H., & Akter, F. (2014). Parental Involvement in the Secondary Schools in Bangladesh: Challenges and a Way Forward. *International Journal of Whole Schooling*, *10*(2), 1-18.

Kigobe, J., Ghesquière, P., Ng'Umbi, M., & Van Leeuwen, K. (2019). Parental involvement in educational activities in Tanzania: understanding motivational factors. *Educational Studies*, *45*(5), 613-632.

King, N., & Horrocks, C. (2010). Interviews in qualitative research. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Lareau, A., & Muñoz, V. L. (2012). "You're not going to call the shots": structural conflicts between the principal and the PTO at a suburban public elementary school. Sociology of Education, 85(3), 201-218.

Larios, R., & Zetlin, A. (2011). Parental involvement and participation of monolingual and bilingual Latino families during individual education program meetings. *Public Law*, *94*, 142.

Lau, E.Y.H. (2013). '*Chinese parents' perceptions and practices of parental involvement during school transition', Early Childhood Education and Care*, Volume 184(2014), 403 – 415.

Leedy, P. & Ormrod, J.E. (2005). Practical research: planning & design. 8th edition. Pearson. New Jersey.

Lemmer, E., & Van Wyk, N. (2004). Home-school communication in South African primary schools. *South African Journal of Education*, *24*(3), 183-188.

Lemmer, E., & Van Wyk, N. (2004). Schools reaching out: Comprehensive parent involvement in South African primary schools.

Lessard, S. A. (2015). Parents of students with disabilities views of schools' efforts to facilitate their involvement in their child's educational progress.

Lester, S. (1999). An introduction to phenomenological research. Stan Lester Developments.

Magwa, S and Magwa, W. 2015 A Guide to conducting research: A student handbook. Texas: Strategic Book Publishing Rights Co., LLC.

Major, C. H., & Savin-Baden, M. (2010). An introduction to qualitative research synthesis: managing the information explosion in social science research. New York: Routledge.

Makamani, R. E. (2019). *The involvement of parents in the learning of their children at a private school in Windhoek, Namibia* (Doctoral dissertation).

Makgopa, M., & Mokhele, M. (2013). Teachers' perceptions on parental involvement: A case study of two South African schools. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, *3*(3), 219-219.

Maluleke, S. G. (2014). *Parental involvement in their children's education in the Vhembe District, Limpopo* (Doctoral dissertation).

Manilal, R. (2014). *Parental involvement in education: a comparison between a privileged and underprivileged school* (Doctoral dissertation).

Mantey, E. E. (2020). Parental Involvement: A Response to Children with Disability's Education. *African Research Review*, *14*(1), 27-39.

Maree, M. 2013. First steps in research. (13th ed). Pretoria:Van Schaik.

Matshe, P. F. (2014). Challenges of parental involvement in rural public schools in Ngaka Modiri Moleme District of North West province (South Africa). *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education*, *1*(6), 93-103.

Mavungu, E. M. (2013). Provider Expectations and Father Involvement: Learning from Experiences of Poor "Absent Fathers" in Gauteng, South Africa. African Sociological Review, Volume 17(1). University of Johannesburg. Johannesburg.

Mbokodi, S. M. (2008). Black parental involvement in education (Doctor of Philosophy unpublished thesis). *Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth*.

Mbokodi, S. M., & Singh, P. (2011). Parental partnerships in the governance of schools in the Black townships of Port Elizabeth. *Perspectives in education*, *29*(4), 38-48.

Meador, D. (2019) '25 Things Every Teacher Wants from Their Stakeholders', *Home ThoughtCo*, 12 February 2019. Available at https://www.thoughtco.com (accessed 18 September 2019).

Michael, S., Wolhuter, C. C., & Wyk, N. V. (2012). The management of parental involvement in multicultural schools in South Africa: A case study. *CEPS journal*, *2*(1), 57-82.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Sage.

Mncube, V. (2009). The perceptions of parents of their role in the democratic governance of schools in South Africa: Are they on board? *South African Journal of Education*, *29*(1), 83-103.

Motala, S. & Lexumo, V. (2014). Parental Involvement and Access to Learning: A Perspective from Gauteng and the Eastern Cape. Southern African Review of Education. South Africa.

Mtshali, M. N. G. (2015). The relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren in the black families in South Africa. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, *46*(1), 75-83.

Munje, P. N., & Mncube, V. (2018). The lack of parent involvement as hindrance in selected public primary schools in South Africa: The voices of educators.

Mupa, P & Chinooneka, T.I. (2015). Factors contributing to ineffective teaching and learning in primary schools: Why are schools in decadence? Journal of Education and Practice, v6 n19 p125-132

Murillo, F. J., & Hernández-Castilla, R. (2020). Does parental involvement matter in children's performance? A Latin American primary school study. *Revista de psicodidáctica*, *25*(1), 2.

Naicker, K. (2013). *The Factors Promoting Parental Involvement at a Secondary School in KwaZulu-Natal* (Doctoral dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban).

Nesane, M.A. (2008). Selected school-related reasons why teachers abandon their teaching profession: An educational management perspective. Pretoria: UNISA.

Ngwenya, V. C. (2010). *Managing parental involvement with education in Zimbabwe* (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Africa).

Nyambe, T.N. (2015). Primary school teacher's experiences of implementing assessment policy in Social Studies in the Kavango Region of Namibia. A mini-thesis in Master's Education in the Department of Education Policy Studies: Stellenbosch University.

Nyarko, K. (2011). Parental School Involvement: A Case of Ghana. University of Ghana, Psychology of Department. Ghana.

Oates, T. (2017). Building effective parental involvement in middle schools: The Parents' Perceptions. Doctoral Dissertation. Concordia University – Portland. Retrieved from CU Common. https://commons.cu-portland.edu/edudissertations/41/

Ogletree, T., & Kawulich, B. (2012). Ethical considerations in conducting research Inc.

Okeke, C. I. (2014). Effective home-school partnership: Some strategies to help strengthen parental involvement. *South African Journal of Education*, *34*(3).

Onwughalu, O. J. (2011). Parents' involvement in education: the experience of an African immigrant community in Chicago. Bloomington: iUniverse.

Osonwa, O.K., Adejobi, M.A.I. & Osonwa R.H. (2013). 'Economic status of parents, a determinant on academic performance of senior secondary schools' students in Ibadan, Nigeria'. *Journal of Educational and Social research 3(1), 115-122.*

Park, H., Byun, S. Y., & Kim, K. K. (2011). Parental involvement and students' cognitive outcomes in Korea: focusing on private tutoring. Sociology of Education, 84(1), 3- 22.

Philip, J. (2013). The role of parents in the dynamics of school discipline. *International Journal of Independent Research and Studies, 2(1),* 45-50.

Ponterotto, J. G. (2006). Brief note on the origins, evolution, and meaning of the qualitative research concept thick description. *The qualitative report*, *11*(3), 538-549.

Pule, R. E. J., Drotsky, G. A. P., Toriola, A. L., & Kubayi, N. A. (2014). Children's perceptions of parental involvement in sport at public township schools in Tshwane, South Africa. *African Journal for Physical Health Education, Recreation and Dance*, *20*(4), 1564-1571.

Rajasekar, S., Philominathan, P., & Chinnathambi, V. (2013, June 12). Research Methodology. Retrieved from http://arXiv.org/abs/physics/060/009.

Republic of South Africa 1996. The South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Republic of South Africa. (1996b). South African Schools Act, No. 84. Government Gazette, 377(17579). Pretoria: Government Printer.

Ruholt, R.E., Gore, J., & Dukes, K. (2015). Is Parental Support or Parental Involvement More Important for adolescents?. *Undergraduate Journal of Psychology, 28*(1), 1-to.

Rule, P & John, V. (2011). Your guide to case study research. Van Schaik Publishers.

Sapungan, G.M. & Sapungan, R.M. (2014). Parental Involvement in Child's Education: Importance, Barriers and Benefits. *Asian Journal of Management Sciences & Education, Volume 3(2).*

Shambare, R. (2014). The adoption of WhatsApp: breaking the vicious cycle of technological poverty in South Africa. *Journal of economics and behavioral studies*, *6*(7), 542-550.

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. Education for Information, 22(2), 63-75.

Singh, P., & Mbokodi, S. M. (2011). Parental partnerships in the governance of schools in the Black townships of Port Elizabeth. *Perspectives in education*, *29*(4), 38-48.

Skaliotis, E. (2010). Changes in parental involvement in secondary education: An exploration study using the longitudinal study of young people in England. *British Educational Research Journal*, *36*(6), 975-994

Smith, J. G. (2006). Parental Involvement in Education Among Low-Income Families: A Case Study. *School Community Journal*, *16*(1), 43-56.

Smith, J., Wohlstetter, P., Kuzin, C. A., & De Pedro, K. (2011). Parent involvement in urban charter schools: new strategies for increasing participation. *School Community Journal*, *21*(1), 71-94.

Soutullo, O. R., Smith-Bonahue, T. M., Sanders-Smith, S. C., & Navia, L. E. (2016). Discouraging partnerships? Teachers' perspectives on immigration-related barriers to family-school collaboration. *School Psychology Quarterly*, *31*(2), 226.

Van Wyk, N., & Lemmer, E. (2009). Organising parent involvement in South Africa. *Cape Town. Juta*.

Williams, N. (2021). *Rural Educators' Challenges Using Social Media to Communicate with Parents and Students: A Qualitative Case Study* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Phoenix).

Young, C., Austin, S., & Growe, R. (2013). Defining parental involvement: Perception of school administrators. *Education* 133(3), 291-297.

Zeitlin, V. M., & Curcic, S. (2014). Parental voices on individualized education programs:'Oh, IEP meeting tomorrow? Rum tonight!'. *Disability & Society*, *29*(3), 373-387.

ANNEXURES

Annexure A: Approval letter from the University

University of Limpopo
Department of Research Administration and Development
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 3935, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email:makoetja.ramusi@ul.ac.za

---

TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: **10 December 2020**

PROJECT NUMBER: **TREC/417/2020: PG**

<u>**PROJECT:**</u>

Title:	Barriers to parents supporting children's learning in Volksrust Circuit, Gert Sibande District, in Mpumalanga Province
Researcher:	FTN Mavuso
Supervisor:	Dr T Malahlela
Co-Supervisor/s:	N/A
School:	Education
Degree:	Master of Education in Curriculum Studies

PROF P MASOKO
CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: **REC-0310111-031**

Note:
i)   **This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.**
ii)   **Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.**
iii)   **PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.**

Finding solutions for Africa

Annexure B: Letter of request to conduct the study

<div align="right">

Box 476

Volksrust

2470

29 January 2021

</div>

TO: THE CIRCUIT MANAGER

Mr. BJ MPANZA

VOLKSRUST CIRCUIT OFFICE

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS IN YOUR JURISDICTION

1. I, Faith Thulile Nomga Mavuso, Persal number: 81789785 am a registered student at the University of Limpopo. I hereby request permission to collect data at your schools.
2. I have selected the following three high schools: Elangwane, Volksrust High and Vukuzenzele Combined.
3. Participants on my request will include the Principals, Departmental Heads and the SGB parents' members.
4. My research topic: BARRIERS TO PARENTS SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S LEARNING IN VOLKSRUST CIRCUIT, GERT SIBANDE DISTRICT, IN MPUMALANGA PROVINCE.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Mrs FTN Mavuso (Student no: 201834613)

Annexure C: **Permission to conduct study**

VOLKSRUST CIRCUIT OFFICE
Private Bag X 419
Volksrust, 2470, 042 Adelaide Street, Volksrust 2470
Telephone number: **017 801 6102**

Litiko le Temfundvo. Umnyango weFundo	Department van Onderwys	Ndzawulo ya Dyondzo
Enquiries MR BJ MPANZA		017 801 6134

TO   :   **MRS MAVUSO FJ. N**
                 :   **PHEMBINDLELA PRIMARY SCHOOL**

FROM   :   **THE CIRCUIT MANAGER**
                 :   **MR MPANZA B.J**
                      VOLKSRUST CIRCUIT

DATE   :   **03 FEBRUARY 2021**

SUBJECT   :   **PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Madam

The above matter bears reference

Your request to conduct research in the following schools : Elangwane Secondary School, Volksrust High School and Vukuzenzele Combined Is hereby granted.

The Circuit wishes you all the best in your studies .

Yours in education
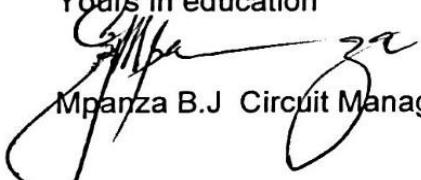
Mpanza B.J Circuit Manager

Volksrust Circuit

INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPALS AND DEPARTMENTAL HEADS

1. What factors do you think hinder parents supporting their children's learning? (school perspective)

2. What activities are used by the school to encourage parental support?

3. What do you consider to be the main barriers to parents supporting learning?

4. What do you think should be done to enhance/promote parental support?

INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS [ENGLISH]

1. What factors do you think hinder parents in supporting their children's learning? (parent perspective)

2. What activities are used by the school to encourage parental involvement?

3. What do you consider to be the main barriers to parents supporting learning?

4. What do you think should be done to enhance/promote parental support?

INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS [ISIZULU]

1. Yiziphi izinto ocabanga ukuthi zivimbela abazali ukuxhasa ukufunda kwezingane zabo? (ngokubona kwakho njengomzali)

2. Yimiphi imisebenzi esetshenziswa yisikole ukukhuthaza ukwesekwa ngabazali?

3. Yini oyithatha njengezithiyo ezinkulu ezivimbela ukuba abazali bangaxhasi ukufunda kwezingane zabo?

4. Ucabanga ukuthi yini okufanele yenziwe ukuthuthukisa ukusekelwa ngabazali ekufundeni?

Annexure E: Letter from the editor

<div align="right">

P.O BOX 663

THOLONGWE

0734

20 November 2021

</div>

Dear Sir/Madam

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "Barriers to parents supporting children's learning in Volksrust Circuit, Gert Sibande District in Mpumalanga Province" by Faith Thulile Nomga Mavuso has been edited and proofread for grammar, spelling, punctuation, overall style and logical flow. The edits were carried out using the "Track changes" feature in MS Word, giving the author final control over whether to accept or reject effected changes prior to submission, provided the changes I recommended are effected to the text, the language is of an acceptable standard.

Please don't hesitate to contact me for any enquiry.

Kind regards
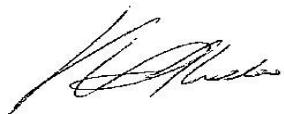
Dr. Hlaviso Motlhaka (BEDSPF-UL, BA Hons-UL, MA-IUP: USA, PhD-WITS, PGDiP-SUN)

Cell number: 079-721-0620/078-196-4459
Email address: hlavisomhlanga@yahoo.com