



Cape Peninsula  
University of Technology

**THE NATURE AND INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR  
CHILDREN'S EDUCATION IN A PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL IN THE EDEN AND  
CENTRAL KAROO DISTRICT IN THE WESTERN CAPE.**

by

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Pieter Johannes Sam, declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

**Signed**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Pieter Johannes Sam', written over a horizontal line.

**Date**

**01/12/2022**

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my late parents-in-law, John and Sarah Powell, who inspired and motivated me to reach for the stars and to chase my dreams.

May your souls rest in eternal peace.

From Pieter

## **ABSTRACT**

Parent involvement in schools in Eden and Central Karoo is at a very low level. Legislation allows parents to be involved in the governance of schools through the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996. Chapter 3, section 20(h), of the Act stipulates that the governing body must encourage parents, learners, educators, and other staff at the school to render voluntary services to the school. The power and authority given to parents should, therefore, assist school managers and teachers with an increase in parental involvement of parents at schools.

The thesis explores the nature of parents' involvement in the education of their children as well as what hinders them from being involved. The problem statement required an investigation into the low levels of parent involvement to assist school managers and the school governing body in finding mechanisms to increase parental involvement in children's education.

A questionnaire and open-ended questions were used to extract feedback from parents, the school principal, and educators. The open-ended questions allowed parents to indicate reasons for their low level of involvement in their children's education. It also allowed parents the opportunity to air their views on what can be done to improve parental involvement at the school. The questions to teachers were to extract responses on the nature of parents' involvement and what factors hinder them from becoming involved in their children's education.

Results from the study participants indicated that parents' working conditions, communication from the school, transport issues, and educational levels of parents are the common factors for the low level of parental involvement. School atmosphere is to a lesser extent one of the reasons for parents not becoming involved in their children's education. The factors raised by the participants can be linked to Epstein and Salinas's (2004) classification of types of parental involvement. The school can use their typology as a guide to improve parental involvement at institutional level.

Key words: parents and schools, School Governing Body, parental involvement, newsletters, socio-economic issues

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Schools as educational institutions expect parents to be actively involved in their children's education during their schooling career. There is a plethora of evidence that points towards numerous benefits associated with parents' involvement in children's education. Wide-ranging research has been conducted on how parents are involved in the education of their children as well as the benefits enjoyed by both parent and child (Echaune and Ndiku, 2015:51; Jethro and Aina, 2012). Jethro and Aina (2012) concluded in their study that when parents come to school to inquire about the well-being of their children, this reinforces the view in the child's mind that the school and home are connected and that the school is an integral part of the whole family's life.

Young, Austin, and Growe (2013) concur with Jethro and Aina (2012) stating that parental involvement boosts a child's perceived level of competence and autonomy, which offers a sense of security and connectedness, and helps to internalize the value of education and performance. Echaune and Ndiku (2015:51) concluded in their study at 93 schools in Busia County (Kenya) that educational outcomes are beneficial with respect to parental involvement, and they confirm the significance of involving parents in educational processes.

Notwithstanding the many benefits associated with parental involvement in schools, many school managers and teachers find it difficult to get parents involved in school activities. The reasons for their non-involvement or partial involvement can be attributed to many influences. There is a general perception that parents do not want to be involved in school activities because they are quite passive in their children's education or are not directly involved and that parents have an "I-don't-care" attitude, they are not visible at the school or involved in the desired goals of the school (Supangan and Supangan, 2014).

Chaudry, Hassan, Khaliq and Agha (2015) are of the opinion that parents could provide a motivating home environment to utilize the dormant faculties of the child, as a starting point for being active parents in children's education. They recommended in their study that parents should attend parent-teacher meetings as such involvement has a positive influence on students' achievement as well as school performance. In order to strengthen this possibility, school administration should establish a coordinator at the school level who should be responsible to work with teachers and principals in initiating support for parental involvement.

Even though parents are often blamed for being disinterested in their children's schooling affairs, Singh, Mbokodi, and Msila (2004) discovered in their study that parents complained about schools not involving them enough in school matters. Two parents in their study indicated that although they were not able to assist their children academically, they offered them emotional support. Young, Austin, and Growe (2013) associated the issue of parental involvement with a lack of a clear definition of the concept of non-involvement. Some writers consider the situation in terms of parents not knowing how to help a child academically, lack of encouragement from the teachers, the fact that parents are only contacted when something is wrong, and the negative teacher treatment of parents. These gaps add to the problem of low parental involvement. The question of what parental involvement entails will be discussed and explored in the current study and empirical data on parents' influences on the work of schools and the involvement of parents will be presented and interpreted to gain insight into the topic.

## **1.2. Background to the problem**

It is evident that, based on the multitude of literature, many studies have been conducted on the benefits of parental involvement in children's education and the reasons why parents become involved in school activities. However, the same cannot be said about studies conducted in the Eden and Central Karoo District in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. Parental involvement in public schools in the Eden and Central Karoo District is relatively low and is a concern for school managers and

teachers. Although some degree of involvement exists, there is no clear evidence through research regarding the nature of parents' involvement in their children's education or what influences parents' involvement in their children's education.

The initial review of the literature also points towards a need to clarify whether the problem that I am proposing is one of engagement or involvement. The research focused on the concept of "parental involvement" instead of "parental engagement" in children's education.

Involvement is defined as "cause to experience or participate in an activity or something" (*Compact Oxford English Dictionary for Students*, 2006:535) whereas engagement is described as "the state of being involved in something" (*Compact Oxford English Dictionary for Students*, 2006:329).

Goodall and Montgomery (2014:400) conceived that engagement encompasses more than activity and there is some feeling of ownership of that activity which is greater than what is present with simple involvement. Larson (2017) writes that schools use parental involvement programmes to increase opportunities for families to participate in school activities whereas, schools with parental engagement programmes create a partnership with their families and design activities for home which focus on a child's learning outcomes. Teach and Kids Learn (2017) articulates when schools "involve" parents, they are leading with their institutional self-interest and desires – the school staff is leading with their mouths. This implies that schools tell parents what to do, and how to be involved and the staff takes the leading role. When parents are "engaged", the parents are leading with the parents' self-interest to develop a genuine partnership. The staff is leading with their ears.

Although the two concepts are closely related, "involvement" is more appropriate for the purpose of the study due to the lack of involvement by parents in school activities. It is my opinion that engagement assumes the pre-existence of involvement. The core concept of interest is to first ascertain issues of involvement in the context of the study. Analysis of data might later point towards engagement.

Furthermore, in the absence of any study being conducted in the Eden and Central Karoo District on parental involvement in children's education, together with the context of the definitions, it is appropriate to use the term involvement instead of engagement.

The study will assist me and principals to understand influences that enable or disable parents and their perception of parental involvement. This knowledge will pave the way for developing responsive strategies that can improve the participation of parents in school activities, especially in the Eden and Central Karoo District. It is expected that an increase in parental involvement will contribute positively to teaching and learning. The mentioned possible responsive strategies to improve parental participation as well as the academic success of the circuit, is however, not the aim of this study and will not be researched or established.

### **1.3. Research question**

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 stipulates in Chapter 3, section 20(h), that the governing body of a school must encourage parents, learners, educators, and other staff at the school to render voluntary services to the school. One would argue that this power and authority vested into the school governing body would lead to an increase in parental involvement in school activities. If school governing bodies can exercise this power to their full potential, learners' academic performance will increase, and a decrease in behavioral problems and low levels of absenteeism will be experienced, only to name a few benefits.

On the contrary, this is not happening at many of our public schools, hence the following research question can be articulated:

What is the nature and the influencers of parental involvement in education in a public school in the Eden and Central Karoo District?

The problem statement is supported by the following sub-questions.

- In what ways are parents involved, or not, in their children's education and schooling?
- What are parents' understanding of parental involvement in children's education?
- What are parents' perceptions of their involvement in their children's education?
- What are the factors in the parents' contexts that enhance or limit their involvement in their children's education in the school?
- What institutional factors enhance or hinder the parents' involvement in their children's education?

#### **1.4. Aim of the research**

The aim of the study is to use the responses from the participants in the study to answer the questions to establish the nature of parents' involvement and what hinders them from being involved.

The aims of the study are to:

- Understand parents' involvement or non-involvement in their children's education and schooling.
- Understand parents' understanding of the concept of parental involvement in children's education.
- Understand parents' perception of their own involvement or lack of it in the children's education in the school.
- Understand what factors in the parents' contexts enhance or limits their involvement in their children's education in the school; and,
- Understand what institutional factors enhance or limit the parent's involvement in their children's education.

## 1.5. Literature Review

This segment of the study gives literature on previous research on parental involvement obtained from articles, journals, books, the internet, and previous theses. Information that will be discussed is based on parents' perceptions of parental involvement, factors influencing parents' involvement in their children's education, and ways in which they (parents) are involved in their children's education.

Cotton and Wiklund(n.d.) cited that parents' lack of time or energy, embarrassment or shyness about their educational level or linguistic abilities, lack of understanding or information about school structure, accepted communication channels, perceived lack of welcome by teachers and administrators and their assumption of parents' disinterest or inability to help with children's schooling are contributing factors to low parental involvement in education. These observations are of interest as they resonate with the focus of the current study.

Hoover- Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, Wilkens and Closson (2005:114) are of the opinion that families with a lower socio-economic status (SES) may find access to involvement more difficult than parents with a higher SES because schools make the assumption that school-based resources are less available to lower SES. This assumption, according to them, denies parents access to the resources which schools can bring to families' involvement decisions. This study sought to establish whether these previous findings can be supported by those obtained in the context in which the current study was conducted.

In line with the findings above by Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) Jethro and Aina (2012) state that many parents feel put off from involvement by the way teachers treat them. Working class parents, in a study conducted by Crozier (2002), cited in Bouakaz and Persson (2007) expressed a view with the statement "Teacher knows best". These parents regarded the teachers as experts who knew more about their child and their education than they themselves did which led to delegating their responsibility for their children's schooling to the teachers.

Michael, Wolhulter and Van Wyk (2012:67) found in a study, conducted at three schools, that there is a lack of a written policy on parental involvement and that principals do not see a need for such policies. I believe schools, like any other institution, are managed and administered using various policy documents. It should be noted that the non-existence or non-implementation of a parental involvement policy will have a negative impact on parental involvement.

Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salinas, Jarnson and Van Voorhis (2002) stated that at schools with excellent academic and support programmes, some children succeed in school without much family involvement or despite family neglect or distress. However, given the fact that many schools in South Africa lack these support systems parental involvement becomes necessary.

## **1.6. Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study, based on Epstein's Parental Involvement Model which consists of six types of involvement, will guide the study as outlined by Epstein and Salinas (2004:2). The model involves the following concepts:

- *Parenting* – Assisting families with parenting skills, family support, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions to support learning at each grade level.
- *Communicating* – Communicating with families about school programmes and student progress. Creating two-way communication channels between school and home.
- *Volunteering* – Improving recruitment, training, activities, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and as audiences at the school or in other locations.
- *Learning at home* – Involving families with their children in academic learning at home, including homework, goal setting, and other curriculum-related activities.

- *Decision Making* – Including families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy activities, and
- *Collaborating with the community* – Coordinating resources and services for families, students, and the school with community groups, including businesses, agencies, cultural and civic organizations, and college or universities

Epstein et al. (2002:27) also suggested sample practices for each type of involvement as a guide for schools. They mentioned that school must chart their own course in choosing practices that suit them.

They suggest the following practices for each type of involvement:

*Parenting* – which includes workshops, videotapes, parent education, and other courses or training, home visits at transition points, and meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools understand families.

*Communicating* – involves a regular schedule of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters

*Volunteering* – consisting of school and classroom volunteer programmes to help teachers, administrators, students, and other parents.

*Learning at home* – can consist of family mathematics, science, and reading activities at school.

The aforementioned sample practices are covered extensively in the literature review in Chapter 2 and the current study seeks to establish the extent to which these practices are evident in the area under study here.

## **1.7. Methodology**

A constructivist/interpretive paradigm is used in the study because the data that will be collected entails what the participants experience and is used based on their own

perceptions. Shaheen (2012) articulates that constructivism is based on the belief that human beings are not just passive recipients of knowledge, they rather construct knowledge based on their experiences and beliefs. The experiences of the participants were captured through the questionnaires and the completion of open-ended questions which were used to collect data from the participants during the study. This would provide an understanding of how they are involved in their children's education.

A qualitative approach was used in the research as it offers the most appropriate methods to collect, analyse and validate the data for the study. Creswell (2014:32) defines qualitative research as an approach to exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social human problem. The research did not necessarily use a mixed-methods strategy, even if the questionnaire used to collect the data used a straightforward likert scale. However, in technical terms, the study does fit the definition of a mixed-methods approach. As a result, the study was mostly qualitative.

A case study design was adopted in the research. Yin (2003) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. Parental involvement is the phenomenon that is investigated where I seek to find out what the parents, teachers, and management in the selected school understand about parental involvement and the schools' experience with the problem of parental involvement.

Purposeful sampling was used in the research. Patton (1990) states that the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. He describes information-rich cases as those from which we can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research.

Gay and Airasian (2000:209) in Singh, Mbokodi, and Msila (2004) state that qualitative researchers deal generally with small purposefully selected samples that can enrich the data. The participants who were selected are knowledgeable and experienced about the problem and provided rich data regarding the problem.

Seventeen participants, comprising of five parents on the School Governing Body (SGB), seven selected parents from class lists, the principal, and four teachers, completed the questionnaire and open-ended questions during the data collection process. I believe that the participants were suitable for the research as they are directly involved in the schools' activities and are best suited to give insight into the research problem.

### **1.8. Ethical Considerations**

The study was conducted after approval was granted by the Faculty Research Committee (FRC). Clearance from the Faculty of Education ethics committee was obtained to conduct the investigation. Permission letters to carry out the study were sent to the Western Cape Education Department, the school principal, and the School Governing Body to seek permission to conduct the investigation. Written consent forms to complete the questionnaire and the open-ended questions were issued and signed by the participants to collect data. Participants were informed that participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw at any stage from the research process.

Contact with the principal was telephonically made and followed up with e-mails to explain the purpose and process of the study in detail. This was followed up by personal meetings with the participants where they were informed about the purpose and procedure of the investigation. The questionnaire was designed in such a way that it did not reveal any personal information or identification of the selected parents, parents serving on the School Governing Body, teachers, and school principal. Nor was the name of the school revealed where the study was conducted. After completion, the questionnaires were sealed, and the data capturing was done in confidence away from the school.

Confidentiality was guaranteed by the use of pseudonyms in the transcription of the open-ended questions, and analysis of the questionnaires. Individual questionnaires were completed by the participants. The reviewing of the data by the participants for verification purposes strengthened the ethicality of the study. Research findings and documentation were be stored in a safe place and electronically on the university's protected drives.

## **1.9. Organization of the dissertation**

The dissertation is structured as follows:

**Chapter One** gives an overview of the study, outlines the research problem, the objectives of the research as well as the purpose of the study. It gives a brief summary of the literature review as well as the methodology and methods employed in the empirical aspects of the study.

**Chapter Two** presents an expanded Literature Review and Theoretical Framework. The literature review provides clarity on the definition of parental involvement, the difference between involvement and engagement, legislation by countries to increase parental involvement, factors influencing or limiting parental involvement, the nature of parental involvement in schools, and teachers' perception of parents' involvement in their children's education. The theoretical framework is drawn from Epstein's Parental Involvement Model which consists of six types of involvement that will be employed in the study.

**Chapter Three** discusses the Research Design and Methodology. A qualitative approach is applied and the questionnaires, open-ended questions, and source documents are used to collect the appropriate data for the study. Reliability, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations are addressed.

**Chapter Four** presents the responses collected from the participants and source documents as well as the interpretation of the data from the research.

**Chapter Five** draws conclusions based on the findings and makes recommendations, discusses the limitations of the study, and makes suggestions for future research. The chapter also arrives at overall conclusions from the study.

The next Chapter, Chapter 2, presents a detailed literature review and outlines the theoretical framework.

## CHAPTER 2            LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Introduction

A review of the literature and the theoretical framework is presented in this chapter. The chapter provides a review of previous research conducted on parental involvement which includes a definition of concepts, legislation by countries to improve parental involvement, and factors influencing parental involvement.

### 2.2. Definition of concept

#### (a) *Parental involvement*

Aziz, Hazzan, and Atta (2011) state that parental involvement includes several forms of participation with schools. Parents can support their children's schooling by attending school functions and responding to school obligations. The term is also defined as reading a bedtime story to your preschool children, checking homework every night, discussing your children's problems with a teacher, voting in school elections, helping the school to set challenging academic standards, limited viewing of television, and, getting personally involved in governing the school.

Similarly, Cotton and Wikelund (1989) suggest that parents can become more involved in providing encouragement, arranging for appropriate study time and space, modelling desired behaviour, monitoring homework, and actively tutoring their children at home. Parents can serve as advocates for the school by volunteering to help out with school activities or work in the classroom. They can also take an active role in the governance and decision-making necessary for planning, and providing an education for the community's children.

Parent involvement is what parents do to enhance their children's schooling success and strengthen the communication they have with their children's school. (Haack, 2007).

Parental involvement can take many forms, from involvement at the school (as a governor), helping in the classroom or during lunch breaks through to reading to the

child at home, teaching songs or nursery rhymes, and assisting with homework (Department for children, schools and families, 2008).

Redding (2000) mentioned that parental involvement includes parents' involvement with their children, involvement with parents of other children, and involvement with their children's school. This observation is supported by Ferlazzo (2009,2011); Ferlazzo and Hammond (2009) cited in Manzon, Miller, Hong and Khong (2015:4) who suggest that parental involvement implies what schools are "doing to" parents (telling them how they can contribute) whereas parent engagement refers to "doing with" parents and gaining their partnership in supporting children's education and overall development.

The term "involvement" will be used in the study as it is more appropriate because school managers are still telling parents what to do and how to be involved in their children's education. Parents seldom take the initiative or develop ideas to improve conditions at the school.

*(b) Parent*

The South African Schools Act 84, (1996) defines parents 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.

*(c) School governing body*

The School Governing Body (SGB) is a statutory body of parents, educators, non-teaching staff, and learners (from Grade 8 or higher) who seek to work together to promote the well-being and effectiveness of the school community and, thereby, enhance learning and teaching. ("Western Cape Government For You",2018).

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 decrees in Chapter 3, section 16(1), that the governance of every public school is vested in its governing body.

Cotton and Wikelund (1989) refer to governance as any activity which provides parents with the opportunity to take part in decision-making about school programmes. This can

include being a school board member, a participant on a parent advisory committee or a local school improvement council, or an active member of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA).

### **2.3. Legislation by governments to improve parental involvement**

Countries around the world have developed various policy documents and legislation to empower parents to be involved in their children's education. These policy documents are designed to assist school managers, teachers, and the community to deliver quality and effective education.

The Indonesia Law on the National Education System (No. 20,2003), stipulates in part two, Article 7, that "(1) Parents shall have the right to take part in the choice of the unit of education for their children and to obtain information concerning circumstances of their children's education. (2) Parents of the children entitled to receive compulsory education shall have the obligation to ensure basic education for their children".

Indonesian parents, therefore, must ensure that their children attend school, free of charge, up to the age of fifteen.

In a European context, Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) indicate that the English government devised a strategy for securing parental involvement which was set out in the 1997 White Paper, "Excellence in School". This strategy described three elements, namely: "(a) providing parents with information, (b) giving parents a voice, and (c) encouraging parental partnerships with schools."

In a different context, Israeli parents, according to Fisher (2009), determine or prepare enrichment programmes, choose their children's school, criticize the curriculum, hire or fire a teacher; and place teachers in classrooms. They believe in two levels of involvement: the classroom level and the school level. Regulations for electing parental delegations are set out in the Israeli Director-General Code of By-Law, administered by the Israeli Minister of Education (May 1996).

Closer home Chindanya (2011) states that the 1987 Education Act of Zimbabwe, makes provision for parental involvement in various ways which include fund-raising, management of school resources, infrastructural development, and maintenance.

In the context of the current study, the South African Schools Act (SASA) 84, (1996) gives authority to the school governing body to encourage parents, learners, educators, and other staff at the school to render voluntary services to the school. It also makes provision for the enhancement of the capacity of governing bodies by providing continuing training to promote the effective performance of their functions or to enable them to assume additional duties.

According to Singh, Mbokodi, and Msila (2004) the South African Schools Act, (1996) stipulates that the parent component should be more in a school governing body than the combined total of the members with voting rights. This is an indication that parents have the ultimate say and majority power in determining the quality of education their children receive.

Despite the provisions embedded in the SASA with regard to training and powers that are given to school governing bodies, parental involvement remains still relatively low in children's education.

All these observations provide background insights into the way parental involvement has been understood and legislated in various contexts globally and this is important for positioning the current study.

#### **2.4. Factors influencing parental involvement**

It is widely researched that parents' socio-economic status (SES) is a determining factor in their involvement in education. Issues like parents' educational levels and income levels are used to determine their socio-economic status.

Findings from the Department of Children, Schools, and Families (2008) reported that lone parents and non-resident parents are both less likely than average to be involved.

Astone and Mclanahan (1991) in Jafarov (2015) stated that single parent children or children with step parents are offered with less assistance and control in comparison with children with both parents. They further mentioned that marital disruption in the family can cause low levels of involvement by reducing the time spend by parents with children.

Singh, Mbokodi, and Msila (2004) also acknowledged that parents' social class and socio-economic status influenced their parental involvement. McGrath and Kuriloff (1999:604) in Singh, Mbokodi, and Msila (2004), pointed out that policymakers and school administrators cannot be indifferent to the effects of SES on parental involvement in education. In similar vain, Waterford.org (2018) identified that parents experiencing scheduling or transporting issues will find it difficult to volunteer to attend parent-teacher conferences.

The above sentiments are collaborated by Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005:114) who argue that families with a low socio-economic status may find access to involvement more difficult than parents with a higher socio-economic status because, according to them, schools make assumptions that school-based resources are less available to lower-SES families.

According to Singh, Mbokodi, and Msila (2004), many parents do not understand their role as parents and believe that schools are competent enough to deal with their children. All these findings are interesting for the current study in which the level of parental involvement in a selected school located within a particular context is the focus.

Still focusing on reasons for low levels of parental involvement in children's learning, Bouakaz and Persson (2007) found that lack of knowledge kept parents from participating in school activities and made them less willing to participate. A lack of knowledge of the language used in schools is one problem inhibiting parents from getting involved. Despite being aware of it, Kimaro and Machumu (2015) also indicate that parents are unable to prepare and implement out-of-school programmes for their children because of the lack of resources and knowledge.

In addition to parent's literacy levels, Lee and Bowen (2006) cited in Jafarov (2015) discovered that parents who have a 2-year or higher college degree, attend activities or parent meetings more, talk more regularly on educational issues with their children and expect their children to be successful in their education. In contrast, parents with low educational levels are less involved because they feel not confident enough to contact school staff.

Explanations given by parents and teachers (Mills and Gale, 2004) include lack of time to participate, family commitments, and having "little kids" as some of the constraints preventing them from being involved in school activities. One parent in their study stated that she will only visit the school if her children are sick or in trouble. As long as she is not needed, she keeps a distance from the school. Parents also blame their own negative experiences of schooling, either as a parent or as a student, for their non-participation.

In line with the views reported on above, John (2019) discovered that parents' lack of education and low economic status are some of the barriers experienced by parents when supporting their children in their school work. As a result of parents' economic status, they cannot provide their children with learning support material.

Wulandary and Herlisa (2019) similarly cited ignorance of participating in school events, non-attendance of PTA meetings, school fairs, bazaars, and poor participation in school events as factors leading to a lack of parental involvement. They also observed a lack of communication between parents and homes and schools with each other.

## **2.5. Parent and teacher attitude**

Parents want their children to be successful in their future careers and life. However, for children to achieve these expectations, their parents need to play a big role in their educational needs. The success of parents' involvement in their children's education can be influenced positively or negatively. The attitude or perceptions of parents start when they enrol their children at school. They may regard that after enrolling the child at

the school their responsibility ends and that it is the responsibility of the school and teachers to educate and teach their children. However, Vassalo (2000), as cited in Singh, Mbokodi, and Msila (2004), thinks that once parents assume responsibility for advocating for and supporting their children's education, they will become partners with educators to create the school their children need.

One parent in a study conducted by Bouakaz and Persson (2007) mentioned that it was difficult to help her child because the child did not listen and did not grasp what she said. Parents' position and status make it difficult for them to establish educational relationships with their children. Children then feel that their parents are not equipped to assist them with their schoolwork.

Michael, Wouter and Van Wyk (2012:67) concluded in their group discussions that parents from poor communities displayed a very constrained understanding of what parental involvement encompass beyond basic obligations such as buying uniforms, books and paying school fees.

Supangan and Supangan (2014), similarly, are of the view that teachers and administrators believe that parents' lack of skills and resources adds to the malady. Observations performed in their study showed that parents' pessimistic attitude, "we-don't-care-attitude", parent's lack of ability to recognize their role in their children's success, and parents' lack of ability to support the school's academic achievements are the motives for the low involvement of parents in their children's education. In addition, they indicated that families do not trust staff, that staff feel uncomfortable talking about issues in front of families, and that families think that they have nothing to contribute.

Supporting the previous argument above, Aslan (2016) discovered in his study that all teachers expressed a view that parents behaved according to the perception that they had the right to offer their opinion in every instance and to interfere in every issue. They emphasized that parents have an interrogative and interfering approach and that they (parents) tried to give their viewpoints and interfere on issues such as the curriculum content, how and where homework should be given as well as which methods and techniques should be used. Aslan further stated that teachers expressed the view that

parents displayed jealousy towards other students and teachers and resorted to comparisons.

In agreement with the views above, Salin (2017) reported that illiterate parents do not want to go to school because they are not confident to talk or do not know what to talk about to teachers and they do not know the school system. This is then used as an excuse to neglect their children's education. In addition, they believe that teachers have to be responsible for their children's education. The teacher will be blamed if the children do not do well at school.

## **2.6. Institutional factors**

The principal as head of the institution is responsible for implementing policies designed by the SGB which ensure quality education and the enhancement of parental involvement at schools. The existence and implementation of a policy on parental involvement is regarded as a crucial factor that needs to be adopted by schools. At many schools, such policies are non-existent or, if they exist, they are not implemented or are poorly designed to be able to improve parental involvement.

Michael, Wolhuter, and Van Wyk (2012:67) found in a study conducted at three schools, that there is a lack of a written policy on parental involvement and that principals do not see a need for such policies. Parents are unfamiliar with school policies or are not properly informed about a particular situation or event.

In line with the observation by Michael, Wouter and Van Wyk (2012) above, data collected from a study conducted by Smit and Liebenberg (2003) shows that the parents are disempowered by the school. They are of the opinion that parents feel disempowered when they have little say in the education of their children. This is attributed to the fact that the principals do not give attention to their concerns or when their role as a parent is being judged. This, according to Smit and Liebenberg (2002), results in a decrease in parental involvement and an increase in levels of intimidation for parents regarding teachers.

Michael, Wolhulter and Van Wyk (2012) found that newsletters, term-end letters, and circulars are not delivered by children, resulting in non-attendance at meetings or activities organized by the school.

Adelman (1994:13) classified invitations to parents in two forms, namely: “(a) general communication such as mass distribution of flyers, newsletters, classroom announcements, and formal letters and (b) special, personalized notes from the teacher, invitations a student makes and takes home, and interchanges at school, over the phone, or during the home visit”. Adelman thinks that addressing the invitation problem begins with efforts to ensure that most communications and interactions between the school and personnel and home convey a welcoming tone. The suggestion is based on the fact that parents feel unwelcome at the school due to various experiences, inter alia, school and office staff whose demeanour is unfriendly, language barriers which make communication frustrating, or parents who are “called on the red carpet” to discuss their children’s learning or behaviour problems.

Some parents do not feel welcome to visit the school because they might have bad experiences or memories at the school such as being victims of school violence or that they have failed at school. They, therefore, do not want to be reminded of their failures or nightmares (Salin, 2017).

Ten principals in a study conducted by Aykac and Msengi (2019) mentioned that having an open-door policy is an effective and important communication tool for principals. One parent emphasized that it is important to help parents get involved in school and serves as an indication to parents that the principal is available for parents anytime they needed him, such as answering their calls and being available to meet with parents when needed.

## **2.7. Challenges of parental involvement in the South African school context**

Ordinary public schools in South Africa face unique challenges to get parents involved in their children’s education. These challenges are part of the socio-economic conditions of disadvantaged communities and contribute significantly to the low parental involvement

in ordinary public schools. Issues such as absent fathers, unemployment and poverty, substance abuse and cultural issues are some of the socio-economic issues faced by disadvantaged parents for not being involved in their children's education.

Parents feel that teachers are not abreast with community realities and should be in touch with parents' livelihood (where they live, sleep, what clothes they wear and what food they eat). By doing this, teachers will have a better understanding of children's realities and might be more empathetic and understanding (Smit and Liebenberg, 2003).

Mavungu (2013), cited in Patel and Mavungu (2016), states that due to many fathers' economic circumstances and being unable to provide material or financial support, they feel like failures and ultimately decide to retreat from their children's lives. One father interviewed by Patel and Mavungu (2016) indicated that he used to visit his son while he was working and was able to provide for his son. He decided to distance himself from his son when he lost his job as he could no longer provide for his son materially or financially.

Some fathers according to Patel and Mavungu (2016) are excluded by the child's mothers or their family against their will when they are unable to make material or financial contributions to the child's life. The absence of a father figure in a child's life impacts negatively on their education because the mother or grandparents have to fulfil the father's role.

Many absent fathers blame unemployment and poverty as reasons for their disengagement from the lives of their children and not being involved in their children's education. One father indicated that he is called a useless man because he is not able to provide for his children. He, therefore, has no access to his children (Patel and Mavungu, 2016).

Cultural factors such as 'ilobolo' and 'intlawulo' are also reasons given by the fathers for being disengaged from their children. 'ilobolo' is paid by the father before getting married whereas 'intlawulo' is payment paid for damages to the woman's family for a child born out of wedlock. The inability of the father to pay damages or failure to pay for 'ilobolo' results in the father being excluded from being involved in their children's lives as explained by Nduna and Jewkes (2012), cited in Patel and Mavungu (2016).

In a study conducted by Mudavanhu and Schenck (2014) on substance abuse amongst the youth in Grabouw, Cape Town, the following issues, which impact negatively on parental involvement, were revealed:

- Uninvolved parents' neglect, and the absence of a parent can lead to substance abuse by children. One parent testified that her son started using drugs because his father neglected him and he had to live with his grandmother.

Another girl blamed her mother for her drinking because the mother was not present in her life as she had to live with her grandmother.

- Many youths who are involved in substance abuse are brought up by parents who abuse substances. A social worker confirmed that children see nothing wrong with substance abuse because they come from homes where the mother uses tik and the father uses drugs.
- One auxiliary worker said that domestic violence is in the form of violence, abuse in or outside the home and that some of the youth does not have a place to stay. This attributed to the reasons for substance abuse.
- One youth member indicated that his mother was killed in front of him whilst another youth member said that his father beats and shouts at his mother in front of them and this led to them using drugs.
- One parent confessed that she is in an abusive relationship and that her alcoholic husband shouts at her and the children for no reason and when she confronts him, he physically attacks her in front of the children.

The aforementioned issues on substance abuse contribute to the low levels of parental involvement because parents do not attend parent meetings or when they attend, they are under the influence of alcohol. This is sometimes embarrassing to their children and as a result, they do not notify their parents when called upon by teachers or school management as observed by Michael, Wolhulter and Van Wyk (2012) earlier. The children are also ashamed to inform their teachers about their parent's substance abuse problems or that they are exposed to domestic violence.

The type of school that a child attends, contributes also to the level of parental involvement. Mnkwa (2011) revealed the following findings (presented in tabular form) in an investigation of the governance of public and private schools in the Matatiele District.

<b>Findings from public school</b>	<b>Findings from private school</b>
Parents are not involved in the governance of the school.	Parents are more involved in the governance of the school.
The school does not involve parents in financial matters	They attend and participate actively in school meetings
Parents do not attend meetings when invited.	The school involves parents in financial matters and as such the financial support from the parents is very good.
They do not know their roles and responsibilities, for example, according to the South African Schools Act (SASA), parents must be actively involved in the governance of the school in their community.	Parents are also very much involved in monitoring the progress of their learner's education.
There is an element of ignorance and negligence on the part of parents towards their children's education.	Parents are passionate about the school and seem to own the policies and the governance of the whole school system.

It is clear from the investigation that parents at private schools are more involved in their children's education as well as in the governance of the school than parents whose children are at public schools. This literature supports the purpose of the study as to what factors influence parental involvement at a public school.

These issues are relevant to the current study because they support the research problem of low parental involvement in children's education.

## 2.8. Theoretical framework

This study draws on the six levels of the school-related involvement framework developed by Epstein and Salinas (2004:2). The typology can be used by schools to help parents to become more involved in their children's education and, at the same time, assist the school to put programmes and measures in place to increase parental involvement. The framework also provides sample practices that can be employed by schools and educators to develop comprehensive programmes of partnerships (Epstein et al. 2002).

The theory consists of six types of parent involvement, namely: (1) parenting, (2) communication, (3) volunteering, (4) learning at home, (5) decision-making, and (6) collaboration with the community (Tekin,2011).

*Parenting.* This involves helping all families establish home environments to support children as students. Sample practice examples include suggestions for home conditions that improve learning, parental education activities, and family support programmes. Good and improved attendance and awareness of the importance of school are results for children.

*Communication.* This includes establishing two-way communication about school programmes and children's progress. It also encompasses clear information on school policies, programmes, phone calls, and parent-teacher conferences.

*Volunteering.* This involves recruiting and organizing parental help and support at school, home, or other locations. Assisting educators and helping other parents as well as helping with school maintenance are examples of this kind of involvement.

*Learning at home.* This includes information and ideas to families on how parents can help their children at home with their learning. How to supervise children, information on homework policies and family reading activities are examples of this type of involvement.

*Decision-making.* Having parents serving on PTA/PTO as representatives and leaders on school committees are examples of this type of involvement.

*Collaboration with the community.* This is defined as identifying and integrating resources and services from the community to improve school programmes. Participation of alumni

in school, and partnerships with organizations such as civic, cultural, and health agencies in the community are examples of this kind of involvement.

### **Justification for using the Epstein framework**

The Epstein theory draws on six types of parental involvement that schools can implement to improve parental involvement. The typology is, however, influenced by various factors related to parental involvement in the South African context. The current study was undertaken to understand the nature and influencers of parental involvement in education in a public school in the Eden and Central Karoo District. The factors influencing the six types of involvement can be linked to the South African context in the following way based on the aforementioned literature.

- a) Parenting – home conditions of children are influenced by poverty, single parents, absent fathers, absence of family support structures, and substance abuse.
- b) Communication – absence at parent meetings is influenced by transport problems, unemployment, or the non-existence of parental involvement policies.
- c) Volunteering – high levels of unemployment influence the unwillingness to volunteer at schools without being compensated.
- d) Learning at home – parents' educational levels hamper them to assist their children at home as well as the role played by grandparents in raising their grandchildren.
- e) Decision-making – parents lack understanding of their role in school governance and policy writing on improving the education at their schools.
- f) Collaboration with the community – the absence of alumni partnerships or cultural activities at schools which should foster relationships with the community.

These challenges are common in South African communities and the study aims at understanding parents' perception of their involvement and which factors influence their involvement in their children's education in the case study context.

## **2.9. Conclusion**

This chapter reviewed previous research on defining parental involvement, legislation on parental involvement, and factors influencing parents to become involved in their children's education. The theoretical framework presented is based on the Epstein typology which includes six types of parental involvement, each with its challenges and suggestions on how to improve parental involvement. The next chapter, Chapter 3, discusses the methodological aspects of the study in detail.

## **CHAPTER 3            METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Chapter 2 presented literature on the definition of parental involvement, legislation put in place by countries to improve parental involvement, factors that influence parental involvement, and the theoretical framework. In this chapter, the components under discussion include the research design, research methodology, data collection instrument, data analysis, trustworthiness, researcher's position, ethical considerations, and conclusion. A detailed discussion of each aspect is provided.

### **3.2.    Research design**

Kothari (1990) defines research design as the arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure.

A constructivist/interpretive paradigm was used because the data collected entailed what the participants experience and was based on their own perceptions. This is in line with the research questions which are phrased to elicit how parents and other stakeholders view and understand parents' participation in their children's schooling. According to Rahi (2017), the supporter of the interpretive paradigm believes in a deep understanding of a concept and exploring the understanding of the world in which they live. A subjective meaning is developed from their experiences or toward certain objects or things and the belief that true knowledge can only be obtained by deep interpretation of the subject.

Rehman and Alharthi (2016) stated that the goal of interpretive research is not to discover the universal, context and value-free knowledge, and truth but to try to understand the interpretations of individuals about the social phenomena they interact with.

A qualitative research design was used during the study to answer the research question, which utilised interviews, official documents, and a questionnaire which uses a Likert scale to make data collection user-friendly. Technically speaking the study adopted a mixed-methods approach although the study is largely qualitative. Rahi (2017) states that the qualitative approach is used to collect in-depth details on a particular topic. The approach assumes a single person represents the group's feelings and the emotions of a person are equally important to interpret.

Kothari (1990) argues that qualitative research is important in behavioural science which aims to discover the underlying motives of human behaviour. Researchers can analyse the various factors which motivate people to behave in a particular way or which make people like or dislike a particular thing.

Merriam (1998), in Kgosidialwa (2010), sketched the following characteristics of qualitative research:

- it intends to understand the phenomena being studied by the participant
- the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis
- qualitative research involves fieldwork
- the researcher employs an inductive research strategy to understand the situation and
- qualitative research is more concerned with meaning and interpretation, and its outcome is mostly narrative.

The study employed a case study design that explored parents' involvement in their children's education. Rahi (2017) defines a case study as a written description of a problem or a situation that represents a small group's problems or focuses on a particular issue. It is preferred when the researcher has little control over events. The problem at hand in the study is the low level of parental involvement in children's education in the Eden and Central Karoo District.

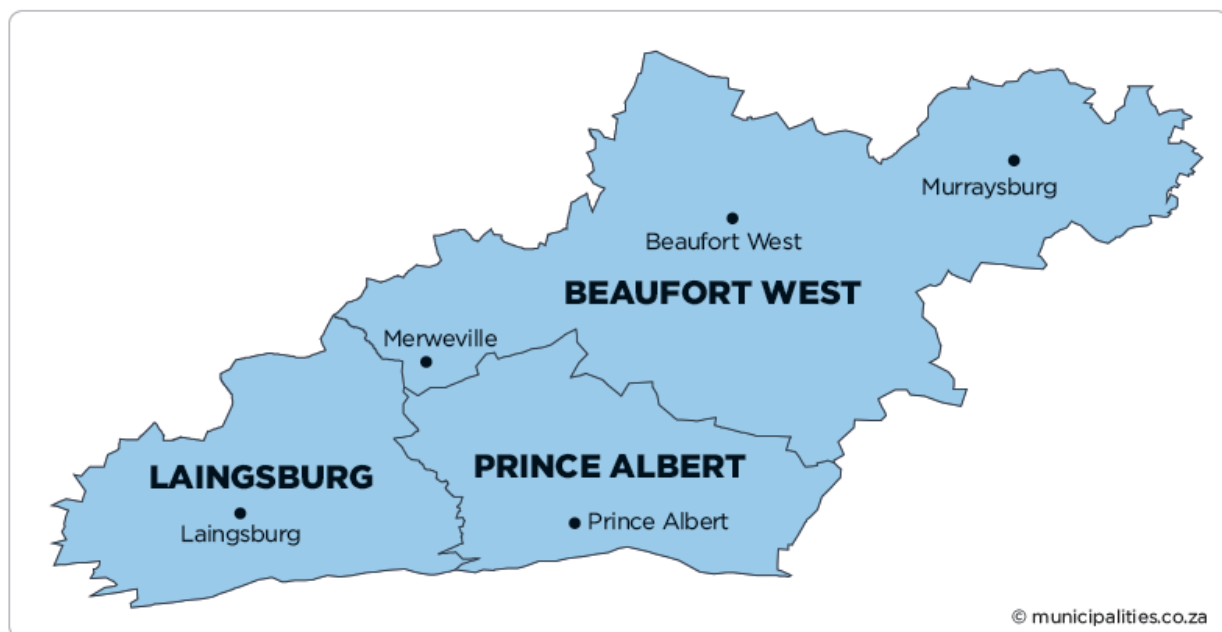
A structured questionnaire and open-ended questions were used in the study to collect the data from the participants as well as document analysis.

### 3.3 Research methodology

#### 3.3.1 Site selection

The research was conducted at a public primary school in Beaufort West, a town in the Eden and Central Karoo District. This area is the focus of the study and provides the context in which the research problem and research questions are positioned.

The Central Karoo District consists of 3 municipalities, namely: Beaufort West, Laingsburg, and Prince Albert. Beaufort West is the largest town in the district and serves as the administrative centre of the district. The total population, according to the Municipal Economic Review Outlook (MERO, 2019), was 73 218. Beaufort West is strategically situated approximately 415km northwest of Cape Town along the N1 route, which connects Cape Town with Bloemfontein and Johannesburg (Central Karoo District Municipality Annual report 2020-2021).



The literacy rate in 2009 for the Central Karoo District was 63.6% in comparison with the overall provincial rate of 82.4%. This was the second lowest of all municipalities in the Western Cape (Integrated Development Plan for Central Karoo 2012-2017, May 2012:30).

Twenty-three schools out of the twenty-eight schools in the district, which include primary, intermediate, and secondary schools, are no-fee schools. Learners from these schools live in low-income households and low-income communities where most of the learners are unable to make a financial contribution toward education (IDP for Central Karoo 2012-2017, May 2012:32).

For the purpose of conformity and identification, the site will be referred to as the selected school. The selected school is a Quintile 3, no school fees school with a staff complement of 32 and 1146 learners. The total number of parents registered on the school's CEMIS database is 652 of which 99% are biological parents of the children enrolled at the school.

### **3.3.2 Participant selection**

Purposive sampling was used in the study. Kothari (1990) stated that this involves the purposive or deliberate selection of particular units of the population for constituting a sample that represents the universe. He further stated that the organisers of purposive sampling choose the particular units of the universe for constituting a sample on the idea that the small mass that they selected out of a huge mass will be typical or representative of the whole.

Kyngäs, Elo, Pölkki, Kääriäinen and Kanste (2011), cited in Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen and Kyngäs (2014), mentioned that purposive sampling is suitable for qualitative studies where the researcher is interested in informants who have the best knowledge concerning the research topic. The selected participants are well vested in the topic as they possess the knowledge of the information to collect the data needed in the study.

Elo et al. (2014) argued that there is no commonly accepted sample size for qualitative studies because the best sample depends on the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the richness of the data. The selected sample size meets the said elements as argued by Elo et al.(2014) and was sufficient to collect the information to address the research problem.

Malterud, Siersma and Guassora (2015) proposed the concept of *information power* to guide adequate sample size for qualitative studies. They argued that information power indicates that the more information the sample holds, relevant to the actual study, the lower the number of participants needed. The aim, sample specificity, use of established theory, quality of dialogue, and analysis strategies are the five items of information power that supports the sample size in the study.

A total of seventeen participants were selected to take part in the study, consisting of five school governing body members, seven selected parents from Grade 1 to Grade 7, four teachers, and the principal. The participants were able to provide the relevant information because they are directly involved in the school and are the best qualified people who can give insight into the research problem.

The parents were the focus of the topic as they possessed the characteristics and knowledge of the information needed for the study. The SGB is responsible for governance matters in the school and it is, therefore, important as they ensure that parents are available to serve on the various committees and that they take ownership in school matters.

The teachers as the persons directly in contact with the learners build good relationships with parents to ensure that parents participate in their children's education.

The principal as school manager is responsible for implementing school policies and ensuring quality education is delivered to achieve predetermined targets.

### 3.3.3 Data collection

Creswell (2014:234) pointed out that qualitative researchers gather multiple forms of data, such as interviews, observations, documents, and audio-visual information rather than relying on a single data source.

The following data collection methods were the most appropriate to collect the information from the participants and to investigate the research problem.

#### *Open-ended questions and questionnaire*

Data were collected using questionnaires completed by the SGB members, purposefully selected parents, the principal, and teachers.

The SGB members and seven selected parents completed the same questionnaire with seventeen questions to answer (See Appendix A ). Section A of the questionnaire comprised 12 questions with a 5-point scale system. The options to choose from are strongly agree, agree, are not sure, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Questions in Section A were based on parents' willingness to take part in school activities, parent meeting attendance, training provided to parents, and support of administrative staff. Questions in section B consisted of multiple-choice answer options where parents could provide more than one answer to each question and 2 open-ended questions which allowed participants to express their understanding and feelings on the research problem.

The questions posed to the parents determined the nature of their involvement in school activities. The purpose was to elicit information on (i) parents' perception of parental involvement, and (ii) the reasons for their low or high level of involvement in their children's education.

The questionnaire completed by teachers consisted of 12 questions to answer (Appendix B). Section A comprised 9 questions with a 5-point scale and 3 open-ended questions. The options of the 5-point Likert scale questions were: strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree, and strongly disagree. The 3 questions in Section B allowed the teachers to express their feelings on the nature of parents' involvement in their children's education, as well as, which contributing factors prevent parents from becoming involved in their children's education.

The principal completed 8 open-ended questions (See Appendix C ). The questions covered the existence and implementation of a parental involvement policy, monitoring, and follow-up on parent meetings, and factors that influence parental involvement at the school.

Questionnaires and open-ended questions by the participants were completed at the selected school on different dates. Parents and SGB members completed their questionnaire in the school hall. Teachers completed the questionnaire in the staffroom, and the principal felt comfortable completing the open-ended questions in his office.

### *Document analysis*

Fisher (2006:1) in Armstrong (2021) describes document analysis as a systematic procedure used to review or evaluate documents, being it printed or electronic material. Armstrong further stated that by scrutinizing the collected information from various methods, the researcher can corroborate findings across data sets and therefore reduce the impact of potential bias which can exist in a single study. The information collected from the various documents were used to validate the data in order to reduce probable biases in the study.

Attendance registers of parents were analysed to determine the percentage of parents attending and the attendance trends. Incident registers were used to determine the reasons for parents' visits as well as lists of parents involved in school activities. Copies of newsletters, notices issued to parents, the existence of a parent involvement policy,

and other relevant documentation which entails parental involvement in the school were included. The frequency and type of information contained in newsletters and notices were analysed to determine if a Parental Involvement Policy exists or is implemented.

### **3.3.4 Data analysis**

Data were analysed through the inductive analysis process. Thomas (2006) described the inductive approach as a systematic procedure for analysing qualitative data which is likely to be guided by specific evaluation objectives. He stated that the approach primarily uses detailed readings of raw data to derive concepts or a model through interpretation made from the raw data by an evaluator or researcher.

Documents were content analysed. The content of the questionnaire was analysed using a grid to collate the data and a simple coding system was used to group and evaluate the data and to generate themes for discussion.

### **3.3.5 Trustworthiness**

Methodological triangulation was used to collect the data through questionnaires, open-ended questions, and document analysis in order to support the cogency of the study. Shenton (2004) suggested that supporting data may be obtained from documents to provide a background to and help explain the attitudes and behaviour of those in the group under scrutiny and to verify particular details that participants have supplied. The information collected from the participants can be regarded as trustworthy because they had exposure and experience with parents' involvement at the selected school.

Guba and Lincoln (n.d.) cited in Shenton (2004) considered *member checks* as a provision to ensure credibility as an important factor in establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research. Checks relating to the accuracy of the data may take place "on the spot" and at the end of the data collection dialogues. They further suggested that informants may also be asked to read any transcripts of dialogues in which they have participated. The participants, who are members of the study, were asked to check the

accuracy of the data in order to strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings. This ensured that data collected were trustworthy and reliable.

The relevance of the questions in the questionnaire was first piloted by parents and teachers at my school as they were not involved in the research. Their experience in the field of parental involvement is highly regarded and they were able to confirm the outcomes of the data and enable me to address the issues of the research problem. This action is referred to as *peer scrutiny of the research project* (Shenton, 2004). Peer scrutiny by colleagues, peers, and academics should be welcomed and feedback should be offered to the researcher at any presentation that is made over the duration of the project. The documents used to collect the data were analysed for their content.

Guba and Lincoln (1994:114), in Rehman and Alharthi (2016), proposed trustworthiness can be judged on the criteria that research is of good quality if it has credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability), and confirmability (objectivity). Rehman and Alharthi (2016) are of the opinion that a study meets the criteria proposed by Guba and Lincoln when researchers are honest and conscientious in their efforts for approximation to the truth, the results hold resonance for people in other contexts, and the steps and methods of the study are described in detail.

#### *Credibility of qualitative research*

Noble and Smith (2015) associated *truth value* and *Consistency* as alternative terminology with the credibility of qualitative research. *Truth value* recognises that multiple realities exist; that the researchers' outline of personal experiences and viewpoints may have resulted in methodological bias; and that it clearly and accurately presents participants' perspectives.

*Consistency*, on the other hand, relates to the 'trustworthiness' by which methods have been undertaken and is dependent on the researcher maintaining a 'decision-trial' which means that the researcher's decisions are clear and transparent. Confirmability can only be achieved when truth value, consistency, and applicability have been addressed

## *Reliability*

Mulder (1982:209), as cited in de Wit (2007), indicated that reliability is the extent to which an instrument is consistently measuring whatever it measures. Kothari (1990) stated that a measuring instrument is reliable if it provides consistent results. He argued that a reliable measuring instrument does contribute to validity, but that a reliable instrument need not be a valid instrument.

Similarly, Joppe (200), in Bashir, Afzal, and Azeem (2008), stated that reliability is referred to as the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study. He further states that if the results of the study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered reliable.

The questionnaire used in the study was reliable because the questions were not changed when it was tested by parents and teachers at my school. I ensured that all attempts were made to exclude ambiguity, bias, and unethical issues which could negatively affect the findings of the study.

### **3.4 Researcher's position**

The role of the researcher is to collect the data in the study and not to influence the outcomes of the study. However, Morrow (2005) reports that it has become a standard in qualitative research that researchers make their implicit assumptions and biases open to themselves and others. Researchers, therefore, create doubt by questioning whose perceptions are being described in the findings. To dispel this doubt, Morrow argues that investigators constantly believe something about the phenomenon in doubt and that a greater grounding in the literature counts against bias by expanding the researcher's understanding of multiple ways of viewing the phenomenon.

Interpretivist researchers are likely to accept the position of the researcher as co-creator of meaning, as integral to the interpretation of the data, and as unapologetically political in purpose.

Although I have vast knowledge and experience as a school principal on the topic and information collected on the research problem, I did not influence the outcome of the study. I was unbiased in collecting, analysing and interpreting the data. My role as a researcher was to ensure that ethical procedures and protocols were adhered to, that participants are safeguarded and protected from any harm, and that their rights, welfare, and safety were protected. I respected the beliefs and views of the participants. This ensured the objectivity of the study.

### **3.5 Ethical considerations**

The Faculty of Education Ethics Committee of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology granted ethical clearance to conduct the study at the selected school in the Eden and Central Karoo District in the Western Cape.

#### *Permission*

Permission was obtained from the different bodies to conduct the study. I initially contacted the principal to conduct the study at the school. I contacted the principal telephonically to explain the purpose and nature of the study. An application to collect data from the participants was submitted to the Western Cape Education Department to complete the questionnaires.

My supervisor secured permission from WCED to conduct the survey at the selected school. Official permission letters were sent to the principal, SGB members, parents, and teachers to take part in the study by completing the questionnaires.

### *Individual Consent form*

All participants were requested to complete an individual consent form which contained information such as the title of the study, details of the researcher and supervisor, the purpose of the study, and the role of the participant.

Participants were informed that participation was *voluntary* and that they were under no obligation to participate in the study. They could at any stage withdraw from the study or refuse to answer any questions without suffering any negative consequences. All information collected at the time of withdrawal would be destroyed.

### *Confidentiality and Anonymity*

The permission letters, individual consent forms, and questionnaires issued to the participants were designed in such a way that they would not disclose their biographical data or identity information. The identity of the school or any information that could reveal the name of the school was also removed from the resource documents during the document analysis process to ensure anonymity. Pseudonyms and unique identifiers were used instead of the names of the participants during the completion of the questionnaire. Participants will remain anonymous and will not be exposed to providing sensitive information or viewing unpopular opinion. Participants completed the questionnaires individually and not as a group to protect the identity of other.

Completed documents were sealed after the completion of the questionnaires to ensure confidentiality. The data collected were available to me and my supervisor only and electronic files were protected by a password.

### *Full information: Letter to collect data*

The Western Cape Education Department requested the following information before permission was granted to collect data from the participants:

- Completion of the WCED Research Application form
- Research Proposal
- Letter from the Supervisor
- Ethics Approval Letter
- Copy of questionnaire
- Short note on how the WCED will benefit from the study

A Research Approval Letter was issued with the following conditions:

- Participants (principals, teachers) are under no obligation to assist in the investigation
- Participants (principals, teachers) should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation
- Educators' programmes are not interrupted
- No research should be conducted during the fourth term
- The research is limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the WCED
- Adherence to the POPIA with regard to the sharing of personal information without personal consent
- A brief summary of the content, findings, and recommendations must be provided to the Director: Research Services

I ensured that all the conditions were met as set out by the Directorate: Research Services of the Western Cape Education Department.

Participants remained anonymous, and their identity, gender or any personal information were not revealed. All written data collected will be stored in a safe and secure, locked place for five years before being shredded. Electronic data and files will similarly be kept for five years then they will be deleted so that no soft copies are available after that period nor can they be retrieveable. Data will be kept for five years in case I need to draw on it for publications or when conducting doctoral studies in the future.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the design, methodology, participant selection, data collection, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations were discussed. An in-depth discussion on the data collection instrument, supported by motivation, was provided. To ensure that the study is credible, all aspects which might influence the findings adversely were taken care of through objectivity with careful consideration of reliability, validity, and ethical issues. The next chapter, Chapter 4, will examine the results of the study.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

### **4.1. Introduction**

The study aims to determine what factors influence parental involvement in a public school in the Eden and Central Karoo District in Beaufort West. It also seeks to establish the degree of involvement of parents in their children's education and what hinders them from being involved. The results of the questionnaires and open-ended questions completed by the participants as well as an analysis of the data are presented in this chapter.

A questionnaire, which included both closed-ended and open-ended questions was used to collect the data. Participants were issued a letter of consent to participate in the study by completing a questionnaire. Section A of the questionnaire consisted of questions inter alia related to parent meetings, training courses offered to parents, the explicitness of communication, and parents' role at the school. The responses from the respondents were captured on a spreadsheet which simplified the analysis.

The responses to each statement rated by the respondents are presented in tabular format as an indication of how they feel about the statement.

Responses from the randomly selected parents are analysed and reported followed by the responses from the parents on the SGB, teachers, and then the open-ended questions answered by the principal.

### **4.2. The Questionnaire: Section A**

Section A consists of 12 questions that allow respondents to rate statements based on parents' level of involvement at the school level. These closed-ended questions allowed respondents to rate each question using a 5-point Likert scale. Respondents were requested to give only one option as an answer. Options available to choose from were, *Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Are not sure, Agree, and Strongly Agree*. The option *Are not sure* allowed respondents to give a rating when they were not sure about which answer to give.

### Options for the questions

<b>Options</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Are not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Rating</b>	1	2	3	4	5

### 4.3. Responses from parents

Answers from the respondents to each question are presented in tabular form followed by a summary of the results.

#### 1. Parents' willingness to participate

This question seeks to determine parents' willingness to participate in activities hosted and organised by the school. Activities may include sporting events, fundraising, school bazaars, or open days. This kind of activity can be social in nature which allows teachers the opportunity to engage with parents on a social platform. It will also foster collaboration between parents and teachers where ideas can be shared in organising such activities. The responses of all seven parents are listed with an average response.

**Table 1 Parents are willing to participate in school activities**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Parent 1</b>	<b>Parent 2</b>	<b>Parent 3</b>	<b>Parent 4</b>	<b>Parent 5</b>	<b>Parent 6</b>	<b>Parent 7</b>	<b>Average scale</b>	<b>Average Response</b>
<b>Rating</b>	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

All seven respondents gave a 5-point rating indicating that parents are willing to participate in school activities if they were requested to do so. They strongly agreed with

the statement and this shows that they would like to be involved when the school organise activities.

## 2. Volunteering

Question 2 refers to parents' keenness to volunteer when asked to assist teachers. Voluntary work may include assisting teachers in the class with some administrative work, photocopying or assisting with sports coaching and cultural activities. This activity allows the parent first-hand experience off what is happening in the classroom during lessons and also gives them insight into the curriculum. It also presents the opportunity to parents who were athletes during their schooling career or who were involved in cultural activities, to use their expertise and knowledge to develop the learners at the school. Voluntary work refers to work without being compensated by the school.

**Table 2 Parents are keen to volunteer when asked to assist teachers.**

Respondents	Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3	Parent 4	Parent 5	Parent 6	Parent 7	Average Scale	Average Response
Rating	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	Strongly Agree

Only Parent 1 scored a 4-point rating on this question, whereas all the other parents gave a 5-point rating. This indicates that parents are keen to volunteer at the school to assist teachers when asked.

## 3. Parent attendance at parent meetings

This question solicited whether parents attend meetings regularly. Meetings with parents are held to inform parents about learners' progress, fundraising activities, the school budget, learner discipline, learner attendance, behavioural issues, and supporting structures at the school. It presents parents the opportunity to discuss their

children’s academic progress with their teachers and what can they do to assist their children to improve their performance or behaviour.

**Table 3 Parents regularly attend parent meeting**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Parent 1</b>	<b>Parent 2</b>	<b>Parent 3</b>	<b>Parent 4</b>	<b>Parent 5</b>	<b>Parent 6</b>	<b>Parent 7</b>	<b>Average scale</b>	<b>Average Response</b>
<b>Rating</b>	5	3	5	4	4	4	3	4	<b>Agree</b>

Three parents scored a 4-point rating whereas two parents gave a 5-point and 3-point rating respectively to this question. An average scale with a 4-point rating was scored by the parents which indicates that parents agree with the statement.

#### **4. Parents’ fundraising skills**

This question tries to establish whether parents have the necessary skills to assist with fundraising activities. Fundraising activities are taking place to increase the schools’ finances which are normally approved at the annual budget meeting. Skills do not necessarily refer to financial skills but rather to any skill which can include baking, selling, advertising, or leading a project which will be successfully supported by the school community.

**Table 4 Parents have the necessary skills to assist in fundraising activities**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Parent 1</b>	<b>Parent 2</b>	<b>Parent 3</b>	<b>Parent 4</b>	<b>Parent 5</b>	<b>Parent 6</b>	<b>Parent 7</b>	<b>Average scale</b>	<b>Average Response</b>
<b>Rating</b>	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

All seven parents rated the statement with 5 points which indicated that they strongly agree with the statement. This is a good result for the school, which can be beneficial if parents are properly involved and approached to assist with fundraising activities.

## 5. Newsletters

This question deals with the fact that parents receive newsletters frequently from the school. Schools use newsletters to inform parents about various programmes taking place at the school. Information contained in newsletters can include learner achievements, educator or parent training programmes, scheduled parent meetings, fundraising activities, school tours, enrichment programmes offered at the school, co-curricular activities, award ceremonies, and staffing issues.

**Table 5 Parents receive newsletters frequently from the school.**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Parent 1</b>	<b>Parent 2</b>	<b>Parent 3</b>	<b>Parent 4</b>	<b>Parent 5</b>	<b>Parent 6</b>	<b>Parent 7</b>	<b>Average scale</b>	<b>Average Response</b>
<b>Rating</b>	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	<b>5</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

Parents responded positively with a 5-point average scale, indicating that they strongly agree with the statement. Two parents scored a 4-point rating which indicates that they agree with the statement. The result of this statement indicates that the parents are well informed about activities taking place and what is happening at the school.

## 6. Parent meetings

Schools are obliged to have regular meetings, at least one meeting per quarter. This question seeks to find out if schools adhere to this stipulation by having one parent meeting per quarter. Learners' academic performance is one of the highlights of these meetings. It gives parents the opportunity to gauge their children's academic performance and work in collaboration with the school to improve their children's performance. This is where they can come up with strategies or offer their assistance to the school to improve the overall academic performance of the school.

**Table 6 Parent meeting are held once a quarter**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Parent 1</b>	<b>Parent 2</b>	<b>Parent 3</b>	<b>Parent 4</b>	<b>Parent 5</b>	<b>Parent 6</b>	<b>Parent 7</b>	<b>Average scale</b>	<b>Average Response</b>
<b>Rating</b>	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

It is clear from the parents' 5-point score rating that the school adheres to government regulations of having one parent meeting per quarter. They strongly agree with the statement. The question however remains if parents attend these meetings in order to be informed of what is happening at the school.

## 7. Parent's role in the school.

Question 7 sought to gauge if parents have a clear understanding of their role at the school in terms of lending support to their children or teachers, and in what activities can they be involved. This kind of information is normally contained in a parental involvement policy or any other document that stipulates what the expectations of the school are with regard to parental involvement.

**Table 7 Parents understand their role at the school**

Respondents	Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3	Parent 4	Parent 5	Parent 6	Parent 7	Average scale	Average Response
Rating	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

It is clear from the parents’ response that they understand their role at the school. All seven parents rated this question with a 5-point score, which indicates that they strongly agree with the statement.

**8. Administrative and support staff**

The support provided by the administrative and support staff given to parents also contributes to parents’ level of involvement at the school. They are crucial in assisting teachers to deliver quality education and getting information to the parents. A good relationship between parents and support staff will lead to improved parent involvement and ultimately to a healthy climate where parents are keen to come to the school. This question attempts to see if the administrative and support staff are very supportive of parents when they visit the school.

**Table 8 The administrative and support staff are very supportive when visiting the school.**

Respondents	Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3	Parent 4	Parent 5	Parent 6	Parent 7	Average scale	Average Response
Rating	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

Based on the 5-point average score, there was a a strongly agree rating, rated by all seven parents, it is clear that they are well supported by the administrative and support staff. The statement also includes the attitude of the supportive and how they receive parents when visiting the school.

## 9. Training courses

Continuous training is crucial in the development of parents in order to improve their skills or knowledge. A parent who is well trained and who possesses the necessary skills and curriculum knowledge will be able to help their children with their school work. This question attempts to establish if parents are offered various training courses to upskill their knowledge on curriculum or governance matters. Training does not have to be done by the Western Cape Education Department but can also take place in-house which can be offered by the school.

**Table 9 Parents are offered various training courses to upskill their knowledge of curriculum/governance matters.**

Respondents	Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3	Parent 4	Parent 5	Parent 6	Parent 7	Average scale	Average Response
Rating	3	5	3	1	1	1	1	3	Are not sure

Four parents scored a 1-point rating, a strongly disagree rating. Only parent 2 scored a 5-point rating which represents a strongly agree rating. Parent 1 and parent 3 were not sure and scored a 3-point rating. The average 3-point rating scale indicates that parents are not sure, which is an indication that the statement is either well supported or not.

## 10. Access to the principal

This question addresses the issue of parents being able to gain access to the principal without an appointment. Parents should be able to see the principal without an appointment, especially on issues regarding their children's academic performance. This will lead to an increase in parental involvement because parents will see the principal as a caring person and someone who is willing to listen to them.

**Table 10 Parents are allowed to gain access to the principal without an appointment.**

Respondents	Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3	Parent 4	Parent 5	Parent 6	Parent 7	Average scale	Average Response
Rating	4	1	5	2	2	1	3	3	Are not sure

The scoring of the parents in the table indicates that there is no consensus amongst parents with regards to them gaining access to the principal without an appointment. This resulted in a 3-point average score which indicates that they are not sure if they can see the principal without an appointment.

## 11. School Climate

Question 11 tries to establish if the school climate encourages parents to be involved in school activities. A conducive and welcoming environment will lead to an increase in parental involvement. School climate encompasses teachers' and principals' attitudes when parents visit the school. It also includes the tone in which communication is sent to parents when they are requested to visit the school. Another aspect is the inclusion of parents in school activities and their input in the decision-making processes at the school. The attitude and behaviour of the support staff towards parents when visiting the school also impact the environment created to involve parents in school activities.

**Table 11 The school climate encourages parents to be involved in school activities**

Respondents	Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3	Parent 4	Parent 5	Parent 6	Parent 7	Average scale	Average Response
Rating	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

Six parents gave a 5-point rating to this question which indicates that they strongly agree with the statement. Only parent 5 gave a 3-point rating which indicates that he/she is not sure about the statement. There is an overall feeling that the climate at the school encourages parents to be involved in school activities.

## 12. Communication from the school

This is the last question of Section A and it seeks to find out if all communication received from the school by parents is clear and easy to understand. If communication is clear and precise, parents will know what to expect when they visit the school. Parents will not hesitate to visit the school because they know exactly why they are contacted and why they must come to school. Communication should be easy for parents to understand and in a language that they are able to read and are able to respond to if the need arises.

**Table 12 All communication received from the school is clear and easy to understand.**

Respondents	Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3	Parent 4	Parent 5	Parent 6	Parent 7	Average scale	Average Response
Rating	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

Six parents strongly agree that all communication received from the school is clear and easy to understand. Only parent 5 rated lower with a 4-point rating which that he/she agrees with the statement. This is a positive result for the school because when communication is clear and unambiguous parental involvement at the school level will increase.

## **SECTION B OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

This section of the questionnaire consists of three multiple-choice questions and two open-ended questions. The multiple-choice questions allowed participants to select more than one answer from the possible answers provided. The questions dealt with methods of communication by the school, frequency of grade meetings, and activities in which participants would offer assistance to the school. The two open-ended questions allowed participants the opportunity to express their views on which factors they thought hindered parental involvement as well as their views on what school management can do to improve parental involvement at the school. Their responses are presented in the tables that follow. The letter “P”, which refers to “parent” is used as a descriptor to identify the participant.

### **13. Methods of communication**

Schools use various methods to communicate with parents to inform them about their children’s progress, scheduled meeting, fundraising activities, sporting events, or any other school-related issues. The responses from the respondents are listed below with the scores of each communication method.

**Table 13 Which methods of communication do the school use to communicate with parents?**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Newsletter</b>	<b>SMS System</b>	<b>E-mail</b>	<b>Telephone calls</b>	<b>Homework book notes</b>	<b>Fax</b>		<b>Individual letters</b>	<b>WhatsApp</b>
<b>P1</b>	√	√		√	√				√
<b>P2</b>	√			√	√				√
<b>P3</b>	√				√				√
<b>P4</b>	√				√				√
<b>P5</b>	√				√				√
<b>P6</b>	√			√					√
<b>P7</b>	√			√	√			√	√
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>

Newsletters and WhatsApp messages are the most popular methods of communication used by the school as selected by the respondents. All seven respondents selected these two communication methods used to inform parents about events or educational matters at the school. Six parents selected homework notebooks as a method used to communicate with parents followed by telephone calls which obtained four selections. The SMS system and individual letters only got one selection each. The school does not use e-mails or faxes as a method to communicate with parents according to the options selected by the participants.

#### **14. Grade meetings**

Grade meetings are opportunities that the school can use to discuss the child's academic performance, discipline issues, or support programmes available if the child is not performing well. It is a strategy that school management can use to improve

parental involvement if implemented successfully. The responses from the respondents are illustrated below with a score for each category.

**Table 14 How many times are grade meetings held to discuss learners' performance?**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Once a year</b>	<b>Twice a year</b>	<b>Three times a year</b>	<b>Four times a year</b>	<b>On request of the teacher</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b>P1</b>			√		√	
<b>P2</b>	√				√	
<b>P3</b>			√		√	
<b>P4</b>					√	
<b>P5</b>					√	
<b>P6</b>	√					
<b>P7</b>	√					
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>

The responses from the parents indicate that grade meetings are mostly arranged at the request of the teacher. Three parents indicated that grade meetings are held once a year and two parents indicated that it is held twice a year.

### **15. Assistance to the school**

This question seeks to determine in which activities parents are willing to assist the school. Assistance can be in the form of fundraising, sports, volunteering, reading projects, repairs, or any other form in which the parent is willing to assist.

**Table 15 In which activities would you offer assistance to the school?**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Fundraising</b>	<b>Sports</b>	<b>Volunteering</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Repairs</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>P1</b>	√	√				
<b>P2</b>	√	√		√	√	
<b>P3</b>	√		√	√		
<b>P4</b>	√		√			
<b>P5</b>	√	√	√			
<b>P6</b>	√	√				
<b>P7</b>	√			√		
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

All seven parents indicated that they are willing to assist in fundraising activities followed by sports assistance as indicated by four parents. Both volunteering and reading obtained three scoring points from the parents whereas only one parent indicated that he/she will assist with repairs or general maintenance.

### **WRITTEN RESPONSES FROM PARENTS**

Section B of the questionnaire contained two open-ended questions which allowed the seven randomly selected parents to express their views and perceptions openly. All seven participants gave consent that their exact words could be used in the study. Most of the responses from participants are in Afrikaans but are clarified in English for the purpose of the study. Members' checks were conducted with the respondents to verify their responses. Note that sentences or phrases from participants are their exact words and might be grammatically incorrect.

The responses from the respondents to each question are presented listed below.

**16. What in your view are the four most important factors why parents are not involved in school activities or their children's education?**

**Respondent 1**

- *Lack of communication*
- *Because of no transport*
- *Mistuse of funraising money*
- *Poor teacher skills*

**Respondent 2**

- *Vervoer (Transport)*
- *Wersomstandighede (Working conditions)*
- *Het nie iemand om die kind te kyk nie. No one to babysit children)*
- *Vergadering (Meeting)*

The respondent mentioned transport, working conditions, and no one to look after the baby.

**Respondent 3**

- *Because most parents are working*
- *Newsletter are not in time*
- *Most parents are not willing to be part of school activities*
- *Sometimes the price of fundraising are to high*

**Respondent 4**

- *Werks omstandighede (Working conditions)*
- *Atmosfeer is nie na wense nie (Atmosphere is not desired)*

- *Kry nie uitnodiging van die onderwysers nie (Do not receive invitations from educators)*
- *Vervoer is nie altyd daar (Transport is not always available)*

The participant mentioned the following factors as reasons for the non-involvement of parents.

The school climate is not conducive, the parent does not receive invitations from the teacher, unavailability of transport, and working conditions

### **Respondent 5**

- *Staan vroeg op so ek is moeg, kos voorberei, Vervoer (Parent are tired because they wake up early in the morning to prepare food. Transport)*
- *Kinders gee nie die nuusbrieffies nie (Children forget to give newsletters)*
- *Soms ontgaan dit die ouers (Parents forget)*

Responses are that the parent has to get up early, is tired, has to prepare food and has transport problems. The child forgets to give the parent the newsletter and the parent forgets sometimes about the meeting.

### **Respondent 6**

- *Daar is niemand om na die kind te kyk nie. (No-one to babysit children)*
- *Soms vergeet ek die briefie. (Parents forget the invitation)*
- *Werkomstandighede (kom laat huis toe). (Working conditions, arrive late at home)*

Responses indicate that the participant does not have someone to look after the baby, that he/she forgets about the letter and is arriving late from work.

## **Respondent 7**

- *Miskommunikasie (Miscommunication)*
- *Tekort aan fondse (Shortage of funds)*
- *Geen / Min belangstelling (No / little interest)*
- *Vervoer probleme (Transport issues)*

Factors mentioned by the participant are little or no interest from the parent, transport problems, communication issues, and financial problems.

The most common factors raised by the participants are transport issues, working conditions, parents not receiving the newsletters, parents forgetting about the newsletters, children not informing parents or not giving the newsletters, parents not having someone to look after their babies, and invitations or newsletter not being issued on time. Parental involvement can improve if the school management and teachers devise strategies to address the issues raised by the participants.

## **4.4 Responses from SGB parents**

The responses of the parents serving on the School Governing Body are presented below. They completed the same questionnaire which were completed by the seven randomly selected parents.

### **1. Parent's willingness to participate**

Parental involvement can be influenced by parents' willingness to participate in school activities. An increase in the willingness of parents to participate in school activities will have a positive response to parental involvement. This question seeks to find out their perception of parents' willingness to participate in school activities.

**Table 16 Parents are willing to participate in school activities.**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Parent 1</b>	<b>Parent 2</b>	<b>Parent 3</b>	<b>Parent 4</b>	<b>Parent 5</b>	<b>Average scale</b>	<b>Average Response</b>
<b>Rating</b>	5	5	5	5	5	5	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

All five parent members indicated that they are willing to participate in school activities and scored a 5-point rating. They strongly agree with the statement which is an indication that the school can rely on their involvement when school activities are held.

**2. Parents are keen to volunteer when asked to assist teachers.**

School management welcomes the assistance of parents who would like to volunteer at the school. It gives the teachers and school management the opportunity to interact about the children’s progress or programmes available to support the child at home. Below are the results from the respondents as to what they think about parents’ assisting with voluntary work at the selected school.

**Table 17 Parents are keen to volunteer when asked to assist teachers.**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Parent 1</b>	<b>Parent 2</b>	<b>Parent 3</b>	<b>Parent 4</b>	<b>Parent 5</b>	<b>Average scale</b>	<b>Average Response</b>
<b>Rating</b>	5	5	4	4	3	5	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

Two parents strongly agree with the statement and two parents agree with the statement. One parent is not sure whether parents are keen to volunteer when asked to assist teachers.

### 3. Parents regularly attend parent meetings

The organising and leading of parent meetings are the responsibility of the SGB. The success of parent meetings is measured by the attendance of parents at these meetings. If many parents attend the scheduled meetings, the school has then achieved its goal to inform parents about its various programmes or activities. The responses from the respondents are illustrated below which indicate the rating to the statement.

**Table 18 Parents regularly attend parent meetings**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Parent 1</b>	<b>Parent 2</b>	<b>Parent 3</b>	<b>Parent 4</b>	<b>Parent 5</b>	<b>Average scale</b>	<b>Average Response</b>
<b>Rating</b>	5	3	4	4	2	<b>4</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Respondents responded differently to the statement with only one parent giving a 5-point rating, indicating that he/she strongly agrees with the statement. Two parents gave a 4-point rating to the statement which means that they agree with the statement. One parent disagrees with the statement and is of the opinion that parents do not attend meetings regularly. The average scale is a 4-point rating indicating that respondents agree with the statement.

### 4. Parents have the necessary skills to assist in fundraising activities

Parents need certain skills to assist the school with fundraising activities. These can include helping with the advertising of activities, selling, making of some items or assisting with a braai or bazaars. This statement tries to find out if the parents serving on the SGB have the necessary skills to assist the school with fundraising activities.

**Table 19 Parents have the necessary skills to assist in fundraising activities**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Parent 1</b>	<b>Parent 2</b>	<b>Parent 3</b>	<b>Parent 4</b>	<b>Parent 5</b>	<b>Average scale</b>	<b>Average Response</b>
<b>Rating</b>	5	3	4	3	4	4	<i>Agree</i>

The results from the respondents show that parents have different opinions about the statement. One parent gave a 5-point rating which indicates that he/she strongly agree with the statement and two parents scored a 4-point which indicates that they agree with the statement. Two parents are not sure about the statement and subsequently scored a 3-point rating.

**5. Parents receive newsletters frequently from the school.**

Schools communicate mostly with parents through the issuing of newsletters to inform them about activities or educational programmes that are taking place at the school. The statement seeks to find out how many times the school sends newsletters to the parents to inform them about school activities.

**Table 20 Parents receive newsletters frequently from the school.**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Parent 1</b>	<b>Parent 2</b>	<b>Parent 3</b>	<b>Parent 4</b>	<b>Parent 5</b>	<b>Average scale</b>	<b>Average Response</b>
<b>Rating</b>	5	5	5	5	5	5	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

All five parents strongly agree with the statement and scored a 5-point rating which indicates that they receive newsletters frequently from the school. This is an indication that parents get the information on parent meetings, budget meetings, learner performance, or any other school-related matters.

## 6. Parent meetings are held once a quarter.

The School Governing Body is compelled by legislation to hold quarterly meetings. The minimum number of meetings per quarter is one, but SGBs are allowed to have more than one meeting per quarter. The results of the respondents are depicted below as well as the average rating of the statement.

**Table 21 Parent meetings are held once a quarter.**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Parent 1</b>	<b>Parent 2</b>	<b>Parent 3</b>	<b>Parent 4</b>	<b>Parent 5</b>	<b>Average scale</b>	<b>Average Response</b>
<b>Rating</b>	5	5	5	5	5	<b>5</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

All five parents scored a 5-point rating which indicates that they strongly agree with the statement. Parent attendance at the meeting is not guaranteed although meetings are held once a quarter.

## 7. Parents understand their role at the school.

When parents' roles and responsibilities are clearly spelled out and explained to them, they will not visit the school unnecessarily or interfere in the school programme. Parents can be informed in writing through newsletters or by adopting a Parental Involvement Policy that is drafted by the SGB. The statement tries to find out if parents understand their role at the school.

**Table 22 Parents understand their role at the school.**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Parent 1</b>	<b>Parent 2</b>	<b>Parent 3</b>	<b>Parent 4</b>	<b>Parent 5</b>	<b>Average scale</b>	<b>Average Response</b>
<b>Rating</b>	0	5	5	3	4	<b>4</b>	<b>Agree</b>

The statement obtained a 4-point average rating from the parents indicating that they agree with the statement. Two parents strongly agree with the statement whilst one parent agrees with the statement and another parent is not sure whether to support or disagree with the statement.

**8. The administrative and support staff are very supportive when visiting the school.**

Administrative and support staff are crucial in the teaching and learning process and in fostering good relationships with parents. They receive parents when they visit the school and should be supportive in assisting them when they visit the school. The results of the respondents are illustrated below in terms of the support of administrative and support staff to parents when visiting the school.

**Table 23 The administrative and support staff are very supportive when visiting the school.**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Parent 1</b>	<b>Parent 2</b>	<b>Parent 3</b>	<b>Parent 4</b>	<b>Parent 5</b>	<b>Average scale</b>	<b>Average Response</b>
<b>Rating</b>	5	5	5	5	5	<b>5</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

All parents strongly agree with the statement and scored a 5-point rating. This is an indication that they are well received and assisted by the administrative and support staff when visiting the school to discuss school-related issues with the principal or teachers.

**9. Parents are offered various training courses to upskill their knowledge on curriculum/governance matters.**

The Western Cape Education Department offers various training courses to SGBs to improve and upskill their governance knowledge as they are responsible for the governance of the school. This statement seeks to determine if parents on the SGB are aware of these courses offered by WCED at the school level.

**Table 24 Parents are offered various training courses to upskill their knowledge on curriculum/governance matters.**

Respondents	Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3	Parent 4	Parent 5	Average scale	Average Response
Rating	5	3	5	3	1	4	Agree

It is evident from the ratings that parents were not in agreement when they answered the statement. Two parents strongly agree that they are offered training courses to upskill their curriculum or governance knowledge whilst two parents are not sure about the statement. One parent strongly disagrees with the statement.

**10. Parents are allowed to gain access to the principal without an appointment.**

Many principals have diaries to diarise important dates and appointments in order to honour these commitments. However, it sometimes happens that parents need to see the principal urgently and did not make an appointment to see him/her. The parents might have valid reasons why they were unable to make an appointment and, therefore,

expect the principal to fit them into his busy schedule. This statement seeks to determine if parents are allowed to gain access to the principal without an appointment. Below are the responses from the respondents.

**Table 25 Parents are allowed to gain access to the principal without an appointment.**

Respondents	Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3	Parent 4	Parent 5	Average scale	Average Response
Rating	5	5	5	5	4	5	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

Four parents strongly agree and indicated that they are allowed to gain access to the principal without an appointment. The statement obtained a 5-point average rating although one parent rated the statement with a 4-point rating.

**11. The school climate encourages parents to be involved in school activities.**

Parental involvement will increase when the school climate is welcoming towards parents when they are invited to take part in school activities. Parents will then assist in fundraising, sporting events, bazaars, curriculum activities, and other school-related functions. This statement is testing whether the school climate encourage parents to be involved in school activities.

**Table 26 The school climate encourages parents to be involved in school activities.**

Respondents	Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3	Parent 4	Parent 5	Average scale	Average Response
Rating	5	5	5	5	4	5	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

Parents strongly agree with the statement and gave it an average of 5 points. Four parents strongly agree with the statement and gave it a 5-point rating whilst one parent agrees with the statement and gave it a 4-point rating. It indicates that the school climate encourages them to be involved in school activities.

**12. All communication received from the school is clear and easy to understand.**

If notices or invites are clear and easy to understand, parents will know exactly what is expected from them by school management and teachers. The results of how the parents view this statement are illustrated below.

**Table 27 All communication received from the school is clear and easy to understand.**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Parent 1</b>	<b>Parent 2</b>	<b>Parent 3</b>	<b>Parent 4</b>	<b>Parent 5</b>	<b>Average scale</b>	<b>Average Response</b>
<b>Rating</b>	5	5	5	5	0	<b>4</b>	<b>Agree</b>

It is clear from the rating given by four parents that they strongly agree that the communication from the school is clear and easy to understand. However, one parent did not rate the statement and this resulted in an average 4-point rating.

**WRITTEN RESPONSES FROM SGB PARENTS**

Section B of the questionnaire contained two open-ended questions which allowed parents serving on the School Governing Body to express their views and perceptions openly. Four parents gave consent that their exact words could be used in the study whereas one parent (respondent 2) did not give any indication. In the absence of no consent given, the researcher decided not to use the words or sentences of the respondent. Most of the responses from participants are in Afrikaans but are clarified in

English for the purpose of the study. Members' checks were conducted with the respondents to verify their responses.

The responses from the respondents are presented listed below.

**16. What in your view are the four most important factors why parents are not involved in school activities or their children's education?**

**Respondent 1**

- *Lack of involvement in child's schooling*
- *The school need to have more programs to make parents aware of the activities which their kids are involved in*
- *Parent school day needed where parents visit the classroom and spend time with the kids to see how the children behave on a daily basis*

**Respondent 3**

- *Ouers is nie ingelig oor hoe betrokke hulle kan wees. (Parents were not informed how to be involved)*
- *Ouers wil nie betrokke raak as gevolg van hulle klas hulle lag. (Parents do not want to be involved because they are regarded as inferior)*
- *Ouers baie keer te besig. (Parents are busy)*
- *Omstandighede (Circumstances)*

The responses are as follows except for the last response which is not clear as it has many interpretations.

- Parents are not informed how they can be involved.
- Parents do not want to be involved because they feel inferior.
- Parents are sometimes too busy

**Respondent 4**

- *Die tyd wat vergaderings gereël word pas nie baie van die ouers nie. (Meeting times do not suit them)*

- *Ouers word somtyds nie inform deur die kind wat die brief huistoe bring nie. (Parents are sometimes not informed by their children about the meeting invitations)*

The responses are as follows:

- The time of the meetings does not suit many parents.
- Learners do not inform their parents that they have received a letter from the school.

### **Respondent 5**

- *Most parents are illetarate.*
- *Underprivilidge background.*
- *Alcohol habits, do not believe in any hope for the future.*
- *Lack of interest in the child education*

The issues raised by parents serving on the SGB have to do with parents not being informed by their children about school activities, the times when meetings are scheduled do not suit parents, parents not being informed how they can be involved, literacy levels of parents, alcohol abuse and parent do not have hope for the children's future.

### **4.5. Responses from teachers**

The teachers completed a different questionnaire which contains closed-ended and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions in Section A allowed the teachers to rate each statement on a 5-point Likert scale. The questions test parents' involvement in homework, respect for teachers, their interference in teaching and learning, and their response to invitations to visit the school. The results from the respondents are presented and explained below.

### 1. Parents interfere in teachers' lessons and work schedules.

The statement tests if parents are interfering in the lessons and work schedules of teachers. Interference can involve suggesting to teachers how to do their work or doubting the skills of teachers.

**Table 28 Parents interfere in teachers' lessons and work schedules.**

Respondents	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Average scale	Average Response
Rating	2	2	2	4	3	<i>Are not sure</i>

The results from the respondents show that one parent agrees with the statement and three parents disagree. The average scale of 3 points indicates that the teachers are not sure about the statement.

### 2. Parents have respect for teachers

The notion is that when parents respect teachers, they will be eager to come to school and discuss their children's progress. They will also be eager to assist their children at home because of the mutual respect that they have for each other. The statement seeks to find out if parents respect teachers at the selected school. Their responses are illustrated below.

**Table 29 Parents have respect for teachers**

Respondents	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Average scale	Average Response
Rating	2	3	3	3	3	<i>Are not sure</i>

Three respondents are not sure if the parents respect teachers, whereas one parent disagrees with the statement. The average scale of 3-points indicates that the respondents are not sure whether they support or disagree with the statement.

### **3. Parents help learners at home with their homework**

Learners get homework on a daily basis and parents are expected to assist them at home to improve their academic performance. Teachers normally make use of a homework book and request parents to sign their children’s homework book as proof that they have assisted them at home. The aforementioned statement is posed to determine if parents help their children at home. The respondents’ results are captured below.

**Table 30 Parents help learners at home with their homework**

Respondents	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Average scale	Average Response
Rating	1	2	3	3	3	<i>Are not sure</i>

Two respondents are not sure whether to support or disagree with the statement whilst one respondent strongly disagrees, and another respondent disagrees. It is clear from the results that none of the respondents supports the statement.

**4. Parents sign their homework books.**

This statement tests if parents are signing their children’s homework books. The results are illustrated below.

**Table 31 Parents sign their homework books.**

Respondents	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Average scale	Average Response
Rating	1	2	4	2	3	<i>Are not sure</i>

Only one respondent agrees with the statement, two respondents disagree and one respondent strongly disagrees. This shows that they have mixed perceptions about parents signing their children’s homework books.

**5. Parents respond to invitations regarding their children’s educational challenges.**

When learners experience learning difficulties, school management and teachers invite parents to discuss their children’s educational progress and explain which support programmes are available to assist learners with their challenges. Below are the responses from the respondents.

**Table 32 Parents respond to invitations regarding their children’s educational challenges.**

Respondents	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Average scale	Average Response
Rating	2	3	2	3	3	<i>Are not sure</i>

Two respondents are not sure whether to support or disagree with the statement whilst two respondents disagree.

**6. Parents are eager to attend grade meetings to discuss their children’s performance.**

Grade meetings are held to inform parents about their children’s academic performance, behaviour or any other issues teachers want to discuss with parents. Parents who are normally involved in their children’s education would be eager to attend this type of meetings to listen to how they can help their children in order to succeed in their schoolwork. This statement tries to find out if teachers know how eager parents are to attend grade meetings.

**Table 33 Parents are eager to attend grade meetings to discuss their children’s performance.**

Respondents	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Average scale	Average Response
Rating	2	4	2	2	3	<i>Are not sure</i>

One respondent agrees that parents are eager to attend grade meetings to discuss their children’s performance, whilst three respondents disagree with the statement. The average rating is that parents are not sure if parents are eager to attend grade meetings to discuss their children’s performance.

**7. Parents enquire out of their own will about their children’s education or progress.**

Parents who enquire out of their own will about their children’s education want their children to succeed in life and in their schooling careers. This statement tries to establish if teachers agree whether parents enquire out of their own will about their children’s education.

**Table 34 Parents enquire out of their own will about their children’s education or progress.**

Respondents	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Average scale	Average Response
Rating	2	2	2	2	2	<i>Disagree</i>

All four respondents disagree with the statement and gave a 2-point rating to the statement.

**8. Parents are willing/eager to be involved in any school-related activities.**

School-related activities are broad and can include academic activities as well as fundraising or sporting activities. This statement involves all activities arranged by the school and the statement tests the teachers’ perception of parents’ willingness to attend to this kind of activities.

**Table 35 Parents are willing/eager to be involved in any school-related activities.**

Respondents	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Average scale	Average Response
Rating	2	2	2	2	2	<i>Disagree</i>

All four respondents gave a 2-point rating which indicates that they disagree with the statement.

**9. Parents believe that teachers are solely responsible for their children’s education.**

Teachers are not the only people who are responsible for a child’s education. Parents play an integral role in the education of their children and should assist school management and teachers to fully develop and educate their children, The aforementioned statement seeks to draw on teachers’ perception on parents’ belief that teachers are solely responsible for educating their children.

**Table 36 Parents believe that teachers are solely responsible for their children’s education.**

Respondents	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Average scale	Average Response
Rating	4	4	3	4	2	<i>Agree</i>

Three respondents rated the statement with a 4-point score which indicates that they agree with the statement. Only one respondent is not sure whether he/she supports or disagrees with the statement.

## WRITTEN RESPONSES FROM TEACHERS

This is Section B of the questionnaire and contains three open-ended questions where respondents were given the opportunity to express their views on the questions. Two respondents (respondents 1 and 4) indicated that their exact words could be used in both questions ten, eleven, and twelve of the study, whilst two respondents (respondents 2 and 3) did not give consent to use their exact words. To certify that the respondents' responses remain unchanged, their sentences, phrases or words are unedited and may have linguistic errors.

**10. Do parents offer the following assistance to you as a teacher, i.e., supervising, helping with excursions, general classroom assistance, or sports? If yes, explain their involvement. If not, explain what the possible reasons are for not being involved.**

### **Respondent 1**

*No, many of the parents are working or grandparents are taking care of our learners and limited time. Many feel they do not have the expertise to be involved. The main reason however is monetary value. No work no = no pay and vice versa.*

### **Respondent 4**

*No, due to certain socio-economic circumstances within our school community, parents are not always willing to help if there is no monetary reward or stipend involved. They are of the notion that educators are paid for jobs, which does not require their assistance whatsoever.*

Noted from the two responses, it is evident that parents are only willing to offer assistance if they are being paid to help.

**11. Which method(s) of communication do you use to contact parents and how effective is it?**

**Respondent 1**

*By letter mostly. When the letter reaches the parent they respond, usually within 10 working days or more. There are cases where the letter never reaches the parents or parents completely ignores the purpose of the correspondence. WhatsApp messages and phone calls are most effective, especially calling. However, many times the contacting number will be out dated.*

**Respondent 4**

*Newsletters, word or mouth and past SMS notifier. I believe that by going out in the community has a better success rate as parents feel the urgency when educators approach them personally. SMS does work however parents change cellnrs frequently.*

Letters sent to parents are a common method of communication, according to the responses from the two respondents. However, it also mentioned that the letters might not reach the parents and this will affect parental involvement negatively. The changing of cellular phone numbers also has a bearing on parental involvement.

**12. What in your opinion, are the four factors that mostly influence parents not to be involved in their children's education?**

**Respondent 1**

*Lack of education: they do not see the need to invest into their learners (childrens) education. Also if they cannot read or write how will they be able to help the children.*

*Time: (our parents, many 'blue collar' jobs, meaning long hours and minimum wage that is usually physical labour.*

*Not interested: The reason is becoming very common because teenagers are raising children and their perspective on roles and responsibilities vastly differ.*

*Too many children and addictions: Many of our parents have 3+ children and addicted to alcohol.*

#### **Respondent 4**

*Parents feel that teachers are solely responsible for education of learners.*

*Current experience leads them to feel or think that education has no benefit and that it is merely a means to protect social grants.*

*Some parents feel somewhat inferior to educators and therefore retract themselves.*

*Parents view education as a right and not a privilege, therefore treats it as such.*

Most of the issues mentioned by the two respondents are socio-economic issues over which the school has no control. However, school management needs to devise strategies to work around these issues in order to ensure that parents react to invitations. School management and teachers need to find ways to inform parents that their input and opinions matter when meetings are held. They need to be made aware that education is important in their children's lives and not merely a means to receive social grants.

#### **4.6. Responses from the principal**

The principal completed eight open-ended questions which allowed him the opportunity to express his views on the level of parental involvement at the school. The open-ended questions include questions on the existence of a Parental Involvement Policy, how it is implemented, and monitoring of discussions with parents and strategies implemented by the principal to encourage parents to be involved in school activities.

The unedited responses to each question are stated below.

**1. Does your school have a Parental Involvement Policy and how is it implemented?**

*Yes, been revised yearly with positive inputs of parents' objectives and outcomes been discussed to reach common goal to stay informed and involved. The outline of policy been discussed with stakeholders to share common view.*

**2. What kind of activities are available for parents to be involved at the school?**

*Extra-co-curricular activities. Parents as of sub committees/forums for fundraising, integrated community forums. Part of church outreach to learners. School uniform drive to create unity and establishing clothing bank.*

**3. In which activities are parents mostly involved, and why do you say so?**

*Committees where behaviour patterns and tendencies been discussed. Sporting activities where they act as coaches or assisting coaches coz parents like to associate in a competitive way and to promote the school where they enrol their children.*

**4. How do you as a principal, ensure that the School Governing Body and teachers implement the Parental Involvement Policy at your school? In the absence of a Parental Involvement Policy, how do you ensure that the School Governing Body and teachers implement the plans or ideas that you have discussed regarding parental involvement?**

*Put it as an agenda point on parent meeting and held regular discussions as well as staff meetings.*

**5. How do you monitor meetings / discussions that took place between teachers and parents?**

*Meetings been monitored by means of minutes kept. Differences been debate and vote in favour of majority vision. Mediate when tension arise where points of discussion been fired up.*

**6. What do you, as a principal, do to encourage parents to participate in school activities?**

*Random talks and discussions. Tea parties with parents to invite them to share their vision. Send invites to individual parents who share central point of interest.*

**7. What measures are put in place to follow up on non-attendance of parents at meetings or when they are invited to school?**

*Do homevisits randomly. Sent notices out which needs to be signed for acceptance. Rsvp invites to arrange prior the meeting.*

**8. What do you regard as the most challenging factors that contribute to the low levels of parental involvement at the school?**

*Lack of interest.*

*Socio-economic challenges*

*Improper notification (7 days prior - Follow up)*

*Communication gap*

*Sources to invitations – learners not giving notices.*

*Bias relations – past history and personal issues*

It is evident from the principal's responses that parents are involved at the school and offer their support. However, he acknowledges that there are certain challenges which inter alia, include socio-economic issues, parents not receiving invitations, and communication challenges between the school and parents.

#### **4.7. Document analysis**

The following documents which consisted of quarterly newsletters, invitations to parents with regards to absenteeism, learner progress, and parent meeting attendance register were analysed and are discussed below.

### *Newsletters*

The newsletter issued in the first quarter contained information on learner attendance during the Covid-19 pandemic and the challenges faced during the pandemic. Reference was also made to the attendance of the first parents' meeting, behavioural problems encountered by teachers, and Grade R enrolment for the 2023 academic year. Parents were informed about the required documentation to submit during the enrolment process of Grade R learners. They were also reminded about the reopening of schools in the second quarter and were urged to ensure that learners attend school regularly.

The newsletter issued in the second quarter contained information on the wearing of masks which were no more mandatory, truancy, drug abuse, lack of parental involvement in the homework of learners, and learner attitude towards teachers. Recognition was given to two learners who excelled in netball at the provincial netball games, and one learner who excelled in Karate and obtained a silver medal.

### *Invitations*

The school uses a standard letter to invite parents to discuss learner progress, behavioural issues, or truancy. The letter stipulates clearly the purpose of the meeting and what consequences the learner may have if the parent does not honour the invitation. The letter issued to parents with regard to learner attendance indicates that learners will be deregistered if parents do not respond to the notice. However, no date was given as to when the parent must visit the school. This has the potential risk of the parent not honouring the appointment as no specific date was indicated.

The letter of support issued to the parent, with regards to a learner who struggles academically, clearly stipulated the learner's academic challenges. This information gives the parent an idea of what the child is capable of and what he/she struggles with. One can assume that these issues and action plan were discussed with the parent.

### *Parent Meeting*

Three quarterly parent meetings were held, one meeting per quarter, as per departmental requirements. The notices issued to parents contained the time, date and venue of the meeting. It is noted that the notices are issued between 2 to 4 days before the actual meeting date. This might result in parents not attending the parent meetings due to short notice. No agenda or discussion points are indicated on the notice. This may have a negative effect on parent attendance because they might feel that the meeting is not important since they do not know what will be discussed.

### *Attendance register*

One hundred and thirty-eight parents attended the last meeting (meeting held in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter) based on the attendance register provided by the school. This equates to 21.2% of the number of parents who attended the last parent meeting. The fact that the meeting notice does not include an agenda or discussion points, might be one of the reasons for the low level of attendance, as stated earlier.

## **4.8. Conclusion**

This chapter covered the level of involvement of parents at the school, parents' willingness to participate, parents' skills to assist in fundraising activities and whether they are granted access to the principal without an appointment. These aspects were answered by Section A of the questionnaires completed by parents on the SGB, randomly selected parents, and teachers. Section B of the questionnaire offered participants the opportunity to express their views or perceptions on parents' level of involvement at the school as well as factors that hinder them from not being involved in school activities.

The open-ended questions answered by the principal offered the opportunity to collect data on the existence of a Parental Involvement Policy, reasons for non-involvement by parents, strategies imposed by the principal to ensure that the Parental Involvement Policy is implemented or decisions taken by the school management as well as strategies used by the principal to encourage parents to participate in school activities.

It is encouraging to note that the responses, views or perceptions from the parents and teachers are corresponding and that there is a correlation between the answers provided. Responses from the participants also reveal that the research design produced substantial accurate and reliable data. The data was analysed and interpreted and allowed me to make preliminary conclusions. All attempts were made to eliminate data corruption by keeping all written responses and views from participants completely objective and unbiased and impartial. Responses from participants were copy-typed as it was recorded on the questionnaires with little or no linguistic or grammatical corrections.

An in-depth discussion, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further study follows in the Chapter Five.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

### **5.1. Introduction**

This final chapter outlines the summary, findings, limitations, recommendations, and suggestions for further study. The chapter draws from the results presented in the previous chapter and provides some in-depth discussions and recommendations to respond to the research problem. It also links the findings of the study to each research question and determines how each sub-question is answered or not.

### **5.2. Summary**

The study was conducted to establish the nature of parents' involvement in their children's education and what hinders them from being involved in their children's education at a public school in the Eden and Central Karoo District. The objective was to determine what factors in the parent's context enhance or limit their involvement in their children's education and their level of involvement in their children's schooling.

The study was directed by the following research question which had to be answered:

*What is the nature and the influencers of parental involvement in education in a public school in the Eden and Central Karoo District?*

The following objectives were achieved by answering the research question.

- Understanding parents' involvement or non-involvement in their children's education and schooling.
- Understanding what factors in the parents' contexts enhance or limits their involvement in their children's education in the school; and,
- Understanding what institutional factors enhance or limit the parents' involvement in their children's education.

The study employed a case study design to establish the nature and influencers of parental involvement in education in a public school in the Eden and Central Karoo

District. Purposive sampling was used to select the five parents serving on the School Governing Body and the principal of the selected school. Purposive sampling was used to select the seven parents and the four teachers who participated in the study. Questionnaires, open-ended questions, and document analysis were used to collect data from the participants.

The participants were knowledgeable and capable of answering the questionnaire that was designed to address the problem statement. It must be noted that the participants are not representative of all parents, teachers and principals in the Central Karoo District. This should, however, not trivialize the relevance and importance of the findings drawn from the study.

The responses from both groups of parents suggest that they are willing to participate in the school activities of the selected school. However, the responses from the teachers indicate an inconclusive result which is not supportive of the parent's perception of their willingness to participate in school activities. The principal's responses support the willingness of parents to participate in school activities.

### **5.3. Findings and conclusions**

#### **5.3.1. Section A of the questionnaire in relation to the research question**

The findings and conclusions were derived from the responses of all three groups of participants from the questionnaires and open-ended questions. According to Section A of the questionnaire, both groups of parents agreed with the statements on the 5-point Likert scale, with 7 parents strongly agreeing and 1 parent agreeing. Only one parent was not sure about the statements.

The responses of the parents therefore answered the following sub-questions of the research question:

- *What are parents' understanding of parental involvement in children's education?*
- *What are parents' perceptions of their involvement in their children's education?*

The positive responses were based on the following questions of the questionnaire:

1. Parents are willing to participate in school activities.
2. Parents are keen to volunteer when asked to assist teachers
3. Parents have the necessary skills to assist in fundraising.
4. Parents receive newsletters frequently from the school.
5. Parent meetings are held once a quarter.
6. Parents understand their role at the school.

Parents who serve on the SGB responded positively to the Likert scale, consisting of a 7 “strongly agree” response, and a 5 “agree” response. The statements tested inter alia, parents’ willingness to participate in school activities, volunteering, attendance at parent meetings, parents’ role at the school, school climate, and unambiguity of communication sent to parents.

Section A teacher responses were neither positive nor negative, resulting in an overall unsure score. Two teachers disagreed with the statements and only one parent agreed. The purpose of the findings was to determine if the following sub-question of the research questions was answered:

- *What are parents’ perceptions of their involvement in their children’s education?*

The responses from the teachers resulted in an unsure answer which does not necessarily answer the research question. The finding therefore, did not support nor did it oppose the objective of the research question.

It is evident from the responses from the parents that they support the statements in Section A of the questionnaire that they are involved in the education of their children.

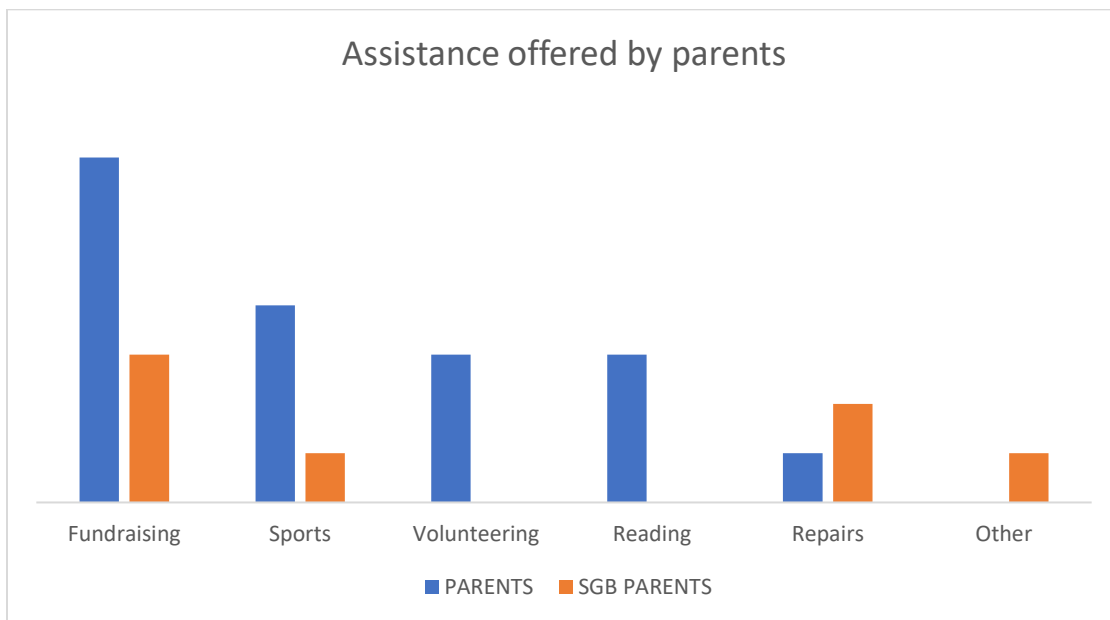
The second part of Section A established the type of involvement parents offer to the school and their responses are presented below. The findings answered the following sub-question of the research question:

- *In what ways are parents involved, or not, in their children’s education and schooling?*

PARENTS					
FUN	SPORT	VOL	READ	REP	OTHER
7	4	3	3	1	0

SGB PARENTS RESPONSE					
3	1	0	0	2	1



All seven randomly selected parents are more involved in assisting with fundraising compared with the parents serving on the SGB. Parents serving on the SGB might argue that they are responsible for governance issues and, therefore, do not see the need to assist with fundraising. Sports assistance is the second type of involvement parents are involved in. Only one parent serving on the SGB indicated that he or she assists with sports at the school. Volunteering and reading are the third most popular forms of assistance parents offer. The parents might have rated these types of

involvement higher if assistance to improve academic performance was tested. Parents on the SGB are involved in offering their skills in assisting with repairs which are done at the school. This is likely because they are serving on the maintenance committee of the school and have more insight as to what the role of the maintenance committee is.

It is clear from the findings that parents are involved in school activities. This result clearly supported the research question. The school needs to pave the way to use parents' skills to their optimum in school programmes or activities and increase the levels of parental involvement.

On the following statement related to homework, invitations to parents, and grade meetings, teachers scored a 3-point (are not sure) on the Likert scale.

- Parents help learners at home with their homework.
- Parents sign their children's homework books.
- Parents respond to invitations regarding their children's educational challenges.

The result from the scoring is that teachers do not have a mechanism in place to verify if parents are helping learners at home. It is also an indication that they do not follow up on homework or do not bother to ask learners if their parents assisted them at home. Parents are not aware that they should sign homework books or that the homework books are not checked for parents' signatures. There is no system in place to verify if parents responded to invitations issued to them. This is very concerning as it gives the impression that the teachers do not care whether parents are involved in their children's education or not.

### **5.3.2. Section B of the questionnaire in relation to the research question**

Section B of the questionnaire sought to determine what factors contribute to the low level of parental involvement at the selected school. The open-ended questions provided context to the research problem and are supported by the responses from the participants. This section provided credence to the objective regarding which factors in the parent's context limit or enhance their involvement in their children's education.

Epstein and Salinas (2004:2) classified the six types of parental involvement under the following headings: *Parenting*: where the school helps families to establish home

environments to support children as students. *Communication*: involves establishing two-way communication about school programmes and children's progress.

*Volunteering*: involves recruiting and organizing parental help and support at school, home or other locations. *Learning at home*: includes information and ideas on how parents can help their children at home. *Decision-making*: having parents serving on PTA/PTO as representatives and leaders of school committees. *Collaboration with the community*: includes the identifying and integration of resources and services from the community to improve school programmes.

Epstein and Salinas's (2004:2) classification of the types of parental involvement is an appropriate guide to encourage parents to become involved in their children's education. It allows parents to experience how the school operates, what type of support is given to struggling learners, insight into the curriculum and the progress of their children, and the opportunity to offer their skills and expertise to improve education at the school. Parents are also offered the opportunity to govern the school by being elected as members of the SGB.

The headings used by Epstein and Salinas (2004:2) could not be used as they would give skewed findings which would result in incorrect conclusions. However, the 5-point scales together with the written responses to the open-ended questions allowed me to present credible findings and recommendations that address the research problem.

The findings and recommendations revolved around the experiences of the participants, the research question, the objectives of the study and the responses to the open-ended questions in Section B.

**a) Parents' responses in relation to the research question.**

The findings below describe the relevance of the responses to the open-ended questions and how they answer the following sub-question of the research question.

- *What are the factors in the parents' contexts that enhance or limit their involvement in their children's education in the school?*

Parent's responses to the written questions can be grouped under the following headings:

- a) Transport: Four parents indicated that they have transport problems to attend school activities. They either do not have their own transport or the school does not provide transport for parents to attend school activities.
- b) Working conditions: Four parents mentioned that their working conditions do not allow them to attend school activities or be involved in their children's education. One parent indicated that he or she has to get up early in the morning, prepare meals, and is tired when it comes to attending school activities. Coming late from work was another reason for not being able to attend school activities.
- c) Communication: Parents indicated that they do not receive invitations from teachers, that newsletters are not issued on time, children do not give the newsletters to their parents, and in some cases, parents forget about the invite.
- d) Other factors mentioned by parents include: The school atmosphere is not welcoming, they do not have someone to babysit the little ones, parents are not willing to participate in school activities, and products sold at fundraising activities are not affordable.

Parents serving on the School Governing Body provided the following responses to the open-ended questions.

- a) Working conditions do not allow parents to attend school activities. Meetings are scheduled when parents are not available and clash with their work time.
- b) There is a lack of interest by parents in their children's education and schooling. The school does not inform parents about how they can be involved in school

activities. Parents regard themselves as inferior to teachers and as a result, are not involved, coupled with teachers' negative attitudes towards parents.

- c) Parents' literacy levels hamper them from being involved.
- d) Communication: Children do not inform parents about the newsletters or forget to give the invitation to their parents.
- e) Alcohol abuse and parents not being hopeful about the future.

It is evident from the findings that communication, transport and working conditions are the most common factors that limit parents from being involved.

Question 17 of Section B allowed parents to provide suggestions to school management to improve parental involvement, which is discussed below.

Transport: Parents suggested that the school makes transport available for them to attend school activities.

Communication: Communicate more regularly with parents. Parents suggested that teachers should make personal contact with the parents to inform them about school activities instead of sending an SMS or letters. Based on the safety of teachers and the risks posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, it was not requested of teachers to visit parents at home, hence the reason why teachers communicated through SMS or sent letters to parents.

Relationships: Build better relationships with parents by including them in decision-making, and arranging parent-teacher days and information sessions with parents. Parents suggested that teachers should visit them at home to familiarise themselves with the conditions and circumstances of parents. This request is not enforceable on teachers and should be considered with caution by the school management.

Curriculum: Parents suggest that the school should hold sessions where parents are taught how to help learners at home as well as intervention strategies.

## **b) Teachers' responses in relation to the research question**

The two teachers who granted permission to use their responses identified the following factors limiting parents from being involved in their children's education in relation the research question.

What is the nature and the influencers of parental involvement in education in a public school in the Eden and Central Karoo District?

- a) Education level: One teacher mentioned that parents cannot help their children at home because they cannot read or write. Parents do not see the need to invest in their children's education. This notion is supported by the other teacher who indicated that parents' experience makes them feel that education has no benefit and that children are only attending school to receive social grants.
- b) Working conditions: Parents are limited because of their long working hours and are performing mostly physical labour.
- c) Young parents: Parents are teenagers themselves and are too young to raise children and as a result of that they do not understand the role of parents being involved in their children's education.
- d) Alcohol abuse: Parents are addicted to alcohol and raise more than 3 children which can be challenging to be involved in school activities.
- e) Parents' attitude: Parents believe that teachers are solely responsible for educating their children. It was also mentioned that some parents feel inferior to teachers and, as a result, retract themselves from being involved in school activities.

The teachers' response relating to "Parents' attitude" answered the following sub-question of the research question:

- *What are parents' perceptions of their involvement in their children's education?*

It is noted that the above-mentioned finding supported the study.

It is worth mentioning that there is a correlation between the factors identified by both parents and teachers regarding the influencers limiting parents from being involved in their children's education and schooling which answers the research question and responded positively to the objective of the study.

### **c) Principal's response**

The principal's sentiments are discussed below.

- a) Lack of interest: Although the principal did not expatiate on the matter, one would argue that parents are not interested in becoming in any way involved in their children's education. This sentiment was also identified by parents and teachers as a limiting factor.
- b) Socio-economic challenges: Once again, this factor was not explained in detail, and it could include a variety of issues like alcohol abuse, unemployment, teenage pregnancies, drug abuse, neglect, and domestic violence. Some of these issues were also raised by the parents and teachers as influencers in children's education.
- c) Communication gap: The principal agrees that there is no proper communication between the school and parents. He further indicated that children do not give notices to parents, as was also mentioned by parents.
- d) Personal issues: The principal mentioned that there might be personal issues between parents and management and as a result parents do not want to be involved in school activities.

The factors identified by the principal are not different from what the parents and teachers identified and can, therefore, be regarded as the common reasons why parental involvement at the school is at a low level. This result answers the research problem of what factors contribute to the low levels of parental involvement.

### **5.3.3. Document analysis in relation to the research question**

The findings from the responses answered the following sub-question of the research question:

- *What institutional factors enhance or hinder the parents' involvement in their children's education?*

The information in the newsletters contained the problems experienced by the school concerning parental involvement. The issues raised were drug abuse, lack of parental involvement in homework, and learner attitude towards teachers. These issues corroborate the responses from parents and teachers. It answered the above-mentioned research sub-question and also supported the research question and objectives of the study.

Invitations issued to parents are clear and concise, and parents know what will be discussed when visiting the school. However, the date is omitted in the invitation which has the potential of the parent not visiting the school to honour the invitation. The teacher, on the other hand, might forget to follow up on the invitation resulting in the issue raised never being addressed.

Parents meeting notices are not issued in advance to give parents enough time to make arrangements to attend the meetings. Agenda points are not included in the notices which might contribute to the low level of attendance at parent meetings. Findings about the invitations and parent meetings also answered the research question positively.

## **5.4. Conclusion**

The study has concluded that communication-related issues are the major institutional factor contributing to the low level of parental involvement. It was identified by all groups of participants and should be addressed at the institutional level. Various forms of communication are used by the school which include newsletters, invitations to parents, and homework book notes to inform parents about school activities. However, the findings suggest that these are not effective.

Parents' working conditions and the lack of transport are the most common factors identified by the participants which influence parental involvement at the school. Parents

argued that they work late and cannot attend school activities, or they have to leave home early to go to work. The fact that they do not have their own transport limits them from attending meetings or any other school activities.

The study established that the literacy levels of parents limit them from being involved in school activities, and they are unable to help children with homework. This results in parents not attending school activities or parent meetings because they cannot read or write.

Lastly, the participants identified various socio-economic challenges which include alcohol and drug abuse, young mothers, unemployment, and grandparents raising learners. The school management has unfortunately no control over these challenges but must nonetheless strive to put measures in place to control them.

It is clear from the research findings that the literature in the study corroborates the results obtained from the participants. This in return supports the hypothesis and answers the research question and its objectives.

## **5.5. Recommendations**

The following recommendations are suggested based on the findings of the study.

- a) Notices of parent meetings should be issued at least seven days in advance to parents to avoid a low attendance rate. Reminders can be sent two days before the meeting.
- b) Notices of meetings sent to parents must include discussion points and timeframes of each discussion point to use meeting times to its optimum.
- c) Parents can be provided at the beginning of the year with a year programme that contains all the important dates and events of the school.
- d) Invitations issued to parents should have a definite date when parents must visit the school. Teachers should follow up when parents do not respond to invitations issued to them.
- e) Transport should be made available to parents when they attend school activities and this should be communicated in the notices or newsletters.

- f) Teachers can record voice notes and send them through WhatsApp to parents who cannot read to inform them about school activities or homework.
- g) Evidence letters can be issued to parents, as proof that they visited the school, to give to their employer when they honour invitations. The principal or school management can personally contact employers at the request of the parent, this will indicate to the parent that the school cares about them and their children.

### **5.6. Limitations and recommendation for further study**

Despite the fact that the questionnaire was limited in its orbit of selecting only one participating school, it opens the opportunity to include more schools in the Central Karoo District from the surrounding towns in a follow-up study where the same questionnaire could be used to extract responses. In the event that such a study is conducted, a comparison can be made on whether parental involvement at the other schools differs from the findings of the present research.

Improvement in parental involvement patterns in the Central Karoo District can be recorded to provide acumen into factors limiting parental involvement at public schools in the Central Karoo District. Current research data to date is limited regarding factors limiting parental involvement in children's education in the Central Karoo District. Parents, teachers and school management can work together to improve parent's involvement in the education of their children.

The research study provided enough evidence about the importance of stakeholder collaboration in school management. Against this backdrop, a study could be conducted to assess teachers' perceptions and experiences of parents' involvement in teaching and learning.

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**APPENDICES**  
**Collection Instrument**  
**APPENDIX A**

Questionnaire (Section A)                      - **PARENTS**

Please indicate (tick, cross or encircle) your response to the following statements on the scale by selecting the appropriate number that reflects your opinion.

- 5 indicates that you **strongly agree**.  
 4 indicates that you **agree**.  
 3 indicates that you **are not sure**.  
 2 indicates that you **disagree**.  
 1 indicates that you **strongly disagree**.

1.	Parents are willing to participate in school activities.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Parents are keen to volunteer when asked to assist teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Parents regularly attend parent meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Parents have the necessary skills to assist in fundraising activities.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Parents receive newsletters frequently from the school.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Parent meetings are held once a quarter.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Parents understand their role at the school.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	The administrative and support staff are very supportive when visiting the school.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Parents are offered various training courses to upskill their knowledge on curriculum / governance matters.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Parents are allowed to gain access to the principal without an appointment.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	The school climate encourages parents to be involved in school activities.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	All communication received from the school are clear and easy to understand.	1	2	3	4	5

Questionnaire (Section B)

Please tick (✓) the appropriate boxes. You can select more than one box.

13.	Which methods of communication does the school use to communicate with parents?	Newsletter	
		SMS system	
		e-mail	
		Telephone calls	
		Homework book notes	
		Fax	
		Individual letters	
		Whatsapp	

14.	How many times are grade meetings held to discuss learners' performance?	Once a year.	
		Twice a year.	
		Three times a year.	
		Four times a year.	
		On request of the teacher or parent.	
		Never.	

15.	In which activities would you offer assistance to the school?	Fundraising	
		Sport	
		Volunteering in class.	
		Reading project	
		Repairs / General maintenance	
		Other. (Name or describe)	

16. What in your view are the FOUR (4) most important factors why parents are not involved in school activities or their children's education?

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17. What, in your opinion, should school management do in order to improve parental involvement at the school?

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## **APPENDIX B**

Questionnaire (Section A)

**- TEACHERS**

Please indicate (tick, cross or encircle) your response to the following statements on the scale by selecting the appropriate number that reflects your opinion.

5 indicates that you **strongly agree**.

4 indicates that you **agree**.

3 indicates that you **are not sure**.

2 indicates that you **disagree**.

1 indicates that you **strongly disagree**.

1.	Parents interfere in teachers' lessons and work schedule.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Parents have respect for teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Parents help learners at home with their homework.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Parents sign their children's homework books.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Parents respond to invitations regarding their children's educational challenges.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Parents are eager to attend grade meetings to discuss their children's performance.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Parents enquire out of their own will about their children's education or progress.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Parents are willing/eager to be involved in any school related activities.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Parents believe that teachers are solely responsible for their children's education.	1	2	3	4	5

Section B

Answer the following statements to the best of your ability.

10.

Do parents offer the following assistance to you as a teacher, i.e., supervising, helping with excursions, general classroom assistance or sports? If yes, explain their involvement. If no, explain what the possible reasons are for not being involved.

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11.

Which method(s) of communication do you use to contact parents and how effective is it?

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12.

What, in your opinion, are the FOUR (4) factors that mostly influence parents not be involved in their children's education?

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**APPENDIX C**

Open-ended questions

**- PRINCIPAL**

1. Does your school have a Parental Involvement Policy and how is it implemented?

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2. What kind of activities are available for parents to be involved in the school?

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3. In which activities are parents mostly involved, and why do you say so?

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4. How do you, as a principal, ensure that the School Governing Body and teachers implement the Parental Policy at your school? In the absence of a Parental Policy, how do you ensure that the School Governing Body and teachers implement the plans or ideas that you have discussed regarding parental involvement?

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5. How do you monitor meetings / discussions that took place between teachers and parents?

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6. What do you, as a principal, do to encourage parents to participate in school activities?

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7. What measures are put in place to follow up on non-attendance of parents at meetings or when they are invited to the school?

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8. What would you regard as the most challenging factors that contribute to the low levels of parental involvement at the school? Mention at least FIVE.

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## Letter sent to the principal

Cape Peninsula University of Technology  
Education Faculty  
P.O. Box 652  
Cape Town  
8000

Mr. ....  
Principal  
.....Primary School

### Questionnaire and interview regarding parental involvement

Dear Mr. ....

I kindly need your assistance.

I would like to conduct a questionnaire as part of my research for an MEd dissertation. The data collection instruments concern the nature and influences of parental involvement at a public school. I think that the findings of the study will benefit all stakeholders involved in the education of children.

The instruments are not difficult to complete and would not take long.

I will appreciate it if you will be able to assist me in the study by allowing me to seek the help of the parents on your SGB, seven parents randomly selected, four teachers, and yourself as principal. The parents and teachers will complete two different questionnaires and the principal will also complete a different questionnaire.

I request that you grant me time to discuss in person, any questions that you might have regarding the study.

Attached is a copy of the questionnaires and interview questions which you can peruse on your own time.

I respectfully await your response.

Yours sincerely

Pieter Johannes Sam  
Student nr. 190037296  
Cape Peninsula University of Technology

## **Invitation to Parents**

### Questionnaires

Dear Sir/Madam

I hereby request your assistance.

I am conducting a questionnaire as part of my research for an MEd dissertation and request you to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire entails the nature and influences of parental involvement at a public school.

The questionnaire will be completely confidential and you are therefore requested not to write your name on the questionnaire.

I shall be grateful if you could kindly complete the questionnaire at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your time and valuable input.

Kind regards.

Pieter Johannes Sam  
Student: CPUT

Contact details:  
Tel. (work): 023 414 2729  
Cell: 0786895014  
e-mail: [sampieterj@gmail.com](mailto:sampieterj@gmail.com)