

**PERCEPTIONS OF FEMALE PRINCIPAL AND FEMALE TEACHERS  
REGARDING THE EXTENT OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN  
SCHOOL SYSTEMS**

by

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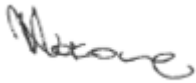
## ABSTRACT

This case study investigates the perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems. The research aims and objectives were to identify some of the perceptions of the female principal and female teachers at school, and to recommend possible ways that they can use. A qualitative research approach was employed in this study in order to collect relevant data in a natural school setting. The researcher employed the purposeful sampling technique to select the participants in which five participants, comprising of a school principal and four teachers, were interviewed regarding their perceptions on parental involvement in school systems. The researcher employed three data collection instruments in this study: semi structured interviews, open-ended questionnaires and observations. Research results were analyzed, and research findings and recommendations arrived at how the participants perceive parental involvement within school systems. The study recommends that the teachers need to inform the parents what is expected of them at school and their role in the education of their children. There must be a constant communication between the parents and the teachers. The study also recommends that female principals should consider engaging in regular discussions with the parents on the progress of their children and do home-visits in order to discuss the learners' progress with their parents where possible. Finally, the study recommends that parents should consider drafting a time-table schedule that will remind them about school meetings.

**Key words:** female principals, female teachers, parental involvement, perceptions, school systems.

## DECLARATION

I, Victoria Mahlape Mokone with student number \_\_\_\_\_ do hereby declare that this research dissertation submitted to the Central University of Technology, Free State Master of Education (Research) on "*Perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement in school systems*" is my own work and I conform that this work has not been submitted before to any other institution by myself or any other person in fulfillment of the requirements for the attainment of any qualification and that all the sources that I have used and cited have shown and acknowledged by means of complete references.



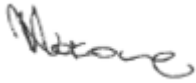
Mahlape Victoria Mokone

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Date

## CERTIFICATION

I, Victoria Mahlape Mokone, hereby certify that I applied for ethical clearance from the Central University of Technology, Free State, I applied for permission at the Department of Education and I submitted the consent forms at the school to the participants to undertake Master of Education degree studies under the supervision of Professor Alfred Henry Makura and co-supervisor Dr Tebogo Matlho. The title of my dissertation is: "Perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement in school systems at Lejweleputswa district of the Free State Province".



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# CHAPTER ONE

## THE INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

This study investigates the perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement in school systems. School systems are put in place to either encourage parental involvement or create barriers. The system is further influenced by perceptions principal and teachers hold and in the case of this study it is female principal and female teachers. The school system is a broad term and this study has limited itself to look at procedures, practices, structures, policies and arrangements, which are deemed more relevant to the aim of this study.

Therefore, this chapter discusses the background to the study focusing on the perceptions of female principal and female teachers, and the statement of the problem, aim of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, and the purpose of the study. The chapter also outlines the significance of the study, definitions of key terms, literature review, theoretical framework, assumptions, research methodology, delimitation, limitations, chapters outline and conclusion.

### 1.2 Background to the Study

Educators aim to create a relationship with parents to support the learners in teaching and learning. Schools have requested for and have anticipated the involvement of families in schools throughout the development of the public schooling system. During the researcher's time at the selected school, she realized that most parents cared about their children's happiness. Barbour, Barbour and Scully (2007:33) state that, within the modern family, culture and modern society are the most important social setting for educating a child. Thus, the level and type of involvement that is anticipated from parents has transformed over the years.

One of the areas in which parent involvement is expected is in the education of their children and the school system. The concern with parental involvement and school systems in education is notable in the various rhetoric supporting it and significant variation in the authenticity of its practice. The South African Schools Act (Act 84, 1996) gives parental involvement a juristically character by stipulating that when the schools make suggestions these should be in the context of given Code of Conduct, implementing the mission and vision of the school, and making decisions on admission of learners and religious adherences.

The study assumes that the gap between rhetoric and reality in parental involvement and school systems arises from the effect of factors at the parent and family, child, parent–teacher and societal levels, which act as barriers to the progress of effective parental involvement in schools. The South African Schools Act (SASA) (1996: 2-14) states that parents are obliged to participate in the governance of the school. The parents must be part of the school governance committee in order to exercise their responsibilities. The family and parents exert influence on the child as they are the first and most important educators of their children as soon as they are born. Thus, the home is where most learning begins. Parents make a significant influence on their children’s learning from early childhood through to secondary school. Decker, Decker and Brown (2007:1) in their studies and research on parental involvement, note that parental involvement benefits the learners, teachers and the parents, and assert that the need for parental involvement has increased to the extent that schools must to reach out to all the stakeholders in order to create and nurture supportive networks that will assist children to succeed.

The wide change in parents’ activities parents in support of their children indicates the need to define the parental actions that increase the learner’s academic success. A minority of parents, who appear not to care are at times overwhelmed by stressful life-events and financial issues. Some of these non-cooperating parents would be possessing negative ideas and limited knowledge about schooling to the extent it further becomes difficult for them to overcome worries and nervousness about the school and teachers. Nonetheless, Epstein (2001) suggests that parents who are informed and involved in their children’s school can influence positively on their child’s attitude and performance. Epstein’s (2011) research also shows that parental

involvement can have a positive influence on a student's academic work at all grade levels, hence the argument that schools and families are partners in the education of their children. Bray (2001) adds that both schools and families share the common goal of seeking to assist children so that they can develop to their full potential. On the contrary, Van Wyk (2010) in (Manilal, 2014: 1), argues that parental involvement, as happening here in South Africa, does not lead to improved classroom practice. In addition, researchers have shown that, parents do not attend meetings nor participate in other school activities, and that they do not supervise their children's homework (Ammermuller and Wobman, 2005: 579; Msila, 2012: 303; van der Berg, 2008: 148).

Mncube (2010) asserts that there is a great deal of interest in various characteristics of parental involvement in school activities in developed countries such as England and the United States of America (USA). This researcher concurs with the Mncube, (2010) assertion in the context of South Africa, for the Lejweleputswa area, where the researcher used to do her practical, seems to have insignificant or no parental involvement in school activities. As a result, the researcher looked at whether the school gives parents the opportunity to be involved, and to determine the kind of systematic strategies used to encourage parental involvement. Research confirms that parents throughout the world play a role in the education of their children for various reasons, meaning that they want what's best for their children and they want to see them succeed (Narain, 2005). At the same time, Narain (2005) argues that the South African practices of parental involvement are quite different from the rest of the world due to historical, political, social and economic factors with experiences having to be classified according to the different race groups in South Africa.

The involvement of parents in the education of their children is very helpful. This was supported by various research emphasizing that, the students will progress and this will assist both parents and teachers, in a way that they will be able to monitor the academics of the child (Mashishi, 1994; Mthembu, 1999; Epstein & Van Voorhuis, 2001; Mabasa & Temane, 2002; Mbatha, 2005; Lemmer, 2007; Khumalo, 2008; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009). The above-referenced researchers also acknowledge that some parents have difficulties regarding how to get involved in their children's education. Political changes that occurred in South Africa since February 1990, have

as noted by Van der Westhuizen and Mosoge (2001: 90), have resulted in more people being interested in educational activities at schools. This was continuing to be a step in the right direction. Engelbrecht, Kriegler and Booyens (1996: 88) assert that, the single most important way to improve education is to strengthen parental involvement. Nevertheless, research studies have shown that parents-education partnership, which predominantly relate to parental involvement, continues to be a critical topic as schools still experience problems face limited success in attempts at finding the best parental involvement, hence this study.

The reality that parental involvement, as noted by Epstein (2011), has a positive influence on student's academic work at all grade levels renders lack of parental involvement in schools a cause for concern that cannot be ignored. This point is supported by the researcher's observation of the frustrations showed by the educators in their discussions on the influence of parental involvement in school systems. Researchers such as, Henderson, Mapp, Johnson and Davies (2007:1), state that partnerships among schools, families and community groups are not a luxury they are a necessity.

Borkhorst-Heng (2008) emphasise that parental involvement comes in various forms and will differ as a child moves through primary and secondary school. In addition, Borkhorst-Heng refers to Epstein's (2002) classic six-type model that captures the potential scope of parental involvement based on the tenets that: (1) the basic obligations of parents as care-providers; (2) schools communicating with parents about school programmes; (3) parents volunteering at school; (4) parental involvement in home learning; (5) the parent as the decision-maker; and (6) collaborating with the community. It is therefore evident, from Epstein's (2002) model that a two-way partnership between schools and parents yields support to schools that seeks the common goal of improved student learning.

Furthermore, other scholars, such as Dervarics and O'Brien (2011), affirm the eminence of Epstein's ideas on parents' involvement in the education of their children and label the scholar as "an expert of parent involvement." Epstein identified six main ways in which parents get involved in education of their children and these were improved to a dozen of conceptualizations by Hill and Tyson (2009). These means

include ensuring daily attendance of the learner; attending parent teacher conferences and talking to other parents at school, frequently talking to the child about school; and checking whether the child has done homework. The other means are: balancing homework and school activities; having a variety of reading materials in the house; balancing school work and time with friends; having a set timetable for homework; attending activities at school; regulating the amount of time the child watches television; reviewing the child's weekly plan; and regularly talking with the child's teachers.

Finally, it should be noted that the concept of parental involvement is not new. For years the paradigms have been removed with regards to involvement, and in the 21st century, active parents are the vital factor of education by teachers and administrators. Thus, this study focuses on the perceptions of female principal and teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems.

### **1.3 The Statement of the Research Problem**

Parental involvement and school systems in South Africa might not be clear. The reality, however, is that positive parental involvement should lead to learner's better-quality academic performance and socio-emotional development (Henderson and Mapps, 2002: 25; Jeynes, 2011: 34). The researcher observed that there is less parental involvement in school systems in the education of learners in the Free State province. Thus, in the opinion of the researcher, a negative impact on children's learning ensues. Parental involvement is an important trait of children's schooling, which should be looked at in more detail because it is mandated by the government. Nonetheless, various characteristics of parent involvement that have not yet been fully explored. For instance, available research on parental involvement focused on early childhood classrooms, middle school, and high school classrooms, with researchers establishing that parent involvement typically decreased as children got older (Lazar & Slostad, 1999).

Furthermore, parental Involvement in the South African schooling system is mainly in the field of school governance. The South African Schools Act of 1996 (SASA)



mandates the establishment of school governing bodies (SGBs), comprising parents, educators and non-educator members of staff. Mncube (2009) in a study on parent participation in SGBs states that the involvement is an important ingredient in building democracy in the schooling system as well as in the wider society of South Africa. In addition, the requirement that parents form the majority on an SGB places them in powerful positions of authority that enable them to influence fundamental issues such as school budget, school and language policy, discipline, and the appointment and promotion of teaching and administrative staff. Mathonsi (2001: 1) also argues that the underpinning philosophy of the South African School Act of 1996 (SASA) is that schools are encouraged to become self-managed and self-reliant. The principal is also no longer expected to carry the burden of managing the school alone. Finally, Gernetzky (2012:5) emphasizes that, the Minister of Basic Education in South Africa, Mrs. Angie Motshekga asserts that “the school principals are required to implement strategic plans that will improve academic performance, parental participation in governance.”

It is thus clear that, while the government recognizes the importance of SGBs and parental involvement at all school levels and their school systems, the parental participation in South Africa is limited and characterized by challenges, challenges where the parents might be unavailable to assist their children with their academics. The systems that the schools use to invite the parents might not be appropriate for the parents, because some parents are not familiar with the use of technology, the language that the school use other than their mother tongue. Therefore, the problem that this study addresses are the perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement in school systems.

#### **1.4 Aim of the Study**

The study aimed to investigate the perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement in school systems.

## **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

**1.5.1 To establish how female teachers and the female principal perceive parental involvement and school systems.**

**1.5.2 To determine school systems that act as barriers to parental involvement.**

**1.5.3 To determine the level of parental participation in the schooling of their children.**

**1.5.4. To determine the role of parents in the schooling of their children.**

## **1.6 Research Questions**

Therefore, the main research question is:

What are the perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement in school systems in a selected high school within the Lejweleputswa District of the Free State Province in South Africa?

In addition, the following four sub-questions were posed:

1. What are the perceptions of female teachers and female principal regarding parental involvement in a high school within the Lejweleputswa District?
2. Which school systems act as barriers to parental involvement?
3. What is the level of parental participation in the schooling of their children?
4. What is the role of the parents in the schooling of their children?

## **1.7 The Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of the female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parent involvement and school systems in one high school within the Lejweleputswa District. In addition, the study aims to understand both the female principal and female teachers' perceptions on parent involvement at school and home. This study examines the research literature on the perceptions of

female principal and teachers regarding parental involvement with the focus of high school level. The study also examines the definitions of parental involvement, specifies the results of this and discusses the key areas of the argument.

## **1.8 The Significance of the Study**

The study's significance lies in the fact that it might specify that parental involvement can be used as an approach to improve learner performance and to look at which school systems can be aligned to improve parental involvement in schools. The study might also specify why parents are non-participants in the education of their children. This study can also show how the female principal and female teachers perceive the extent of parental involvement as an encouragement in learner performance.

Parents need to realize the importance of parental involvement as an approach that can improve their children's academic performance. The study is expected to find out how parental involvement can be used as an approach to improve learner performance. This is because parents are significant stakeholders in the education of the children, and the crucial success of the children depends entirely in them (Narain, 2005). There is a possibility that some parents' lower education levels may affect their involvement while others may not even know what is anticipated from them. As a result, it makes sense to capacitate such parents for them to understand their roles and responsibilities as parents. Therefore, this study sought an insight on how the female principal and teachers perceive the extent of parental involvement and school systems. It is anticipated that the outcome of this study will provide a valued understanding on how female principals and teachers perceive the extent of parental involvement in schools.

## **1.9 Definition of Key Terms**

The following section defines operational terms used in the study.

### **1.9.1 Parental involvement**

According to Eita (2007:12), parental involvement entails cooperation, sharing and support of teaching and learning for the learners' scholastic success. Other researchers such as, Mncube (2010) define the term "parental involvement" as the different forms of contribution in schoolwork, an understanding of the collaboration between parenting skills and learner success in schooling, and a commitment to constant communication with educators about learner progress.

It involves a father or mother (biological or surrogate) of a child or any adult who is responsible for the welfare and education of a child (Education Act {Zimbabwe}, 1987). The above definition is not limited to the biological parent. As a result, throughout the existing research report, the use of the term parent can be reflected as referring to any adult of the above persons. Therefore, it is the responsibility of an educator to cooperate with whosoever has accepted to play the role of a parent.

### **1.9.2. Parent**

The South African Schools Act (RSA 1996:4) refers to the term of a parent as:

- A. The parent or guardian of the learner;
- B. The person who is legally entitled to custody of a learner; or
- C. The person who undertakes to fulfil the obligation of a person referred above, towards the learner's education at school.

- A parent is a mother or father and one of their jobs is to parent you (Vocabulary .com Dictionary).
- A parent is someone who has begotten offspring, or one who occupies the role of mother or father. (Encyclopedia Britannica)

### **1.9.3. Female principal**

- A principal is the person who heads a school and is also known as head teacher/mistress in some countries.
- A principal holds a position of presiding rank, especially the head of an elementary school, middle school, or high school (The free dictionary by Farlex).

### **1.9.4. Educator.**

An educator is a trained professional who assists others to acquire knowledge, competences or values.

- According to Aspects of the Law of Education, an educator is any person who educates or trains other persons or provides professional therapy at any school, technical college or college of education.
- An educator can be defined as a person who renders professional services, performs education management services, provides educational auxiliary services provided in a department of education whose employment is regulated by the Educators 'Employment Act, 1994, and any person registered with the council.
- An educator is someone who specialised in the theories and methods of education (Collins English dictionary).

### **1.9.5. School systems**

Van Schalkwyk (1982) points out that the school systems refers to all the institutions in which real education takes place. The term "school" embraces the different educational institutions such as schools, colleges and universities. Thus, it refers to all educational institutions, which provide the educational needs of people. In addition, a system is a group of units working together or an interdependent group of units that form an integrated whole. Every system is delineated by its spatial and temporal boundaries, surrounded and influenced by its environment, described by its structure and purpose, and expressed in its functioning. A policy is a considered system of

principles used to control decisions and achieve coherent outcomes. A policy is a statement of intent that is implemented as a procedure or protocol. An organization's governance body is responsible for the adoption of policies. In the South African education system, parental involvement is significantly important in the sense that it cooperates with school governance bodies and improves the quality of education in schools.

#### **1.9.6. School governing body (SGB)**

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

#### **1.10. Literature Review**

Parental involvement is a significant issue that motivate children's education in a positive way. According to Ismail and Abdullah (2013), parents' involvement in school management increases the work satisfaction of principals, parents and students. This is because parental involvement possesses a high influence, which provides a space for teachers, parents and community members or students to express themselves on then school decision-making processes. The female principal and female teachers, considered in this study, have a role in encouraging parental involvement programs in schools. The support could be in the form of observing the importance of parental involvement, barriers that affect parents from being involved, and identifying the benefits of parental involvement.

However, this may be underestimated and misunderstood, owing to limited support by both stakeholders.

The National Education Policy Amendment Act (No: 103 of 1996) improved the Act's stipulations on parental involvement. The Act endorsed the image of and improved the

authority and obligation of the school committee to allow parents to have a greater say in the education of their children. It also reviewed the role of the principal to the extent that they are no longer regarded as secretaries. This study examines the perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems.

### **1.10.1 South African Policy Framework Regarding Parental Involvement in Schools**

Prior to the multi-racial democratic dispensation in South Africa, parents were less involved in the schooling activities of their children (Mncube, 2005). The advent of democracy in 1994 witnessed the South African government's introduction of policies that stipulate the need and parameters of parents' involvement in the schooling affairs. The South African Constitution, Act (No. 108 of 1996) advocates for the promotion of principles of democracy and human rights and that schools must work with all stakeholders, parents included. Further policy documents such as National Curriculum Statements (NCS), White Paper 2 (1996), and South African Schools Act (SASA) (1996) were constituted due to this constitutional declaration.

The South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996 was passed by South African parliament in order to address the inequities and discriminatory practices, which, were used in the schools before 1994. Section 24 (1) of the South African Schools Act, stipulates that parents must assist in the governing body of a school. This Act states that a number of parent members must be involved in one or more than the joint total of other members of a governing body who have the voting rights (Clause 23(1):18). The clause includes the principal in his or her official capacity as a member of the governing body. It also obliges the parents to participate in schooling activities.

The South African government further states that for change to take place in schools, parents need to be part of their children's education. The White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education, 1995) underline that parents have the responsibility to introduce education of their children at home. Ndlovu, (2011:np) notes that parents need to be part of the formal education set up in order for them to understand the social, moral, economic and ethical issues of the South Africans

society. Ndlovu, (2011:np) argues further that the South African Constitution specifies that people need to be treated equally and that is why schools are obligated to treat parents as equals. Thus, the government expects parents to participate in and understand the running of the school systems.

The Nelson Mandela Foundation, (2005: np) emphasises that many schools in the rural location be regarded as an important factor in South African education. Van Wyk and Lemmer, (2009: np) state that, there exist challenges related to parents staying away from schools and educators not welcoming parents in schools. The Department of Education (1996; Section 19) of South African Schools Act stipulates that principals have the responsibility to assist and support all the stakeholders, particularly parents, in performing their functions. Section 16 of the South African Schools Act notes further that, the principal must table their plans for school improvement at governing body meetings in order to keep parents up to date about schooling. Sanders and Sheldon (2009: np) conducted research on parental involvement in education and discovered the importance of the role of a strong positive bond between home and school in the development and education of children. Ndlovu (2011: np) also argues that parental involvement in teaching and learning in South Africa reveals that the family is the backbone in a child's education.

### **1.10.2 Theoretical framework**

Theories that advocate for involvement are used in this study since the study focuses on the ways in which the participants discussed the involvement of parents in the education of learners. The use of overlapping spheres of influence theory advocated by Epstein (1998) was considered suitable for this study. Epstein (1998) categorises three major overlapping spheres of influence, which are the family, school and community with the child at the centre of all three spheres.



### 1.10.3 Epstein's typology of parental involvement

Epstein's framework of six major types of involvement that fall within the areas of overlapping spheres evolved from studies and the work of educators in schools. Epstein (1997) briefly describes the six types of parent involvement as follows:

Type 1: Parenting: the school helps all families establish home environments that support children as learners. The schools' provision of support to families for their parenting task develops parents' skills, knowledge and confidence about their parenting as the child proceeds through the school.

Type 2: Communication: the school designs effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication. Communication should include information on school programmes and children's progress, verbal and non-verbal communication, open door policies, and it should allow for feedback from the parents.

Type 3: Volunteering: the school unite the parent in order to assist and support their children in teaching and learning. This includes the intended programme in which are parent recruited as volunteers who are trained and organised for a variety of activities aimed at meeting the needs of the school.

Type 4: Learning at home: the school provides the parents with information and ideas decisions of how to assist their children at home with their homework and other curriculum -related activities, decisions and planning.

Type 5: Decision-making: the school recruits and trains parents and include them in decisions regarding the school. This type of involvement includes the participation of parent's representatives in the school governing body.

Type 6: Collaborating with the community: the school identifies and integrates resources and services from the community to strengthen school programmes, family practices, and learner learning and development.

Epstein's (2001) focus on the importance of parent involvement goes beyond the usual ideas and argues further that the principles affirming involvement should go beyond school and home, and invite a partnership between homes, schools and communities.

Her studies concentrate mainly on schools and family relationships. They also focus on how the partnership between schools, families and communities improves academic quality and student success. Her research findings lead to four conclusions about parental involvement and these are, student success should drive involvement, involvement should be present throughout the entirety of a child's education, involvement is a process, and that parent involvement is not a substitute for quality education programs offered by schools. Nonetheless, parental involvement is still in use as the South African and global parents are expected to assist their children to improve their academic life in schools and at home, hence this study.

#### **1.10.4 Conceptualization of parental involvement**

Various studies explain parental involvement in different ways. Parental involvement can be defined as social relations that are imbued with norms of trust, obligation or reciprocity (Coleman 1988; McNeal 1999). Mncube (2010: 234) states that the concept involves the awareness of an accomplishment in schoolwork and understanding the interaction between parenting skills and learners' success in school and a commitment to consistent communication with educators about learners' progress. Parental involvement requires parents' participation in school- teacher activities such as attending parent-teacher meetings, volunteering at school, assisting their children with homework, and inspiring their children to better and achieve good credits at school. Borkhorst-Heng (2008: np) asserts that parental involvement comes in various forms and will differ as a child moves through primary and secondary school.

Georgion (2007: 60) asserts that parental involvement has five dimensions, which include parenting, helping with homework, communicating with the school, volunteering at school, and participating in school decision making. Parental involvement also includes from involvement as governors at schools, assisting in the classroom or during lunch breaks, reading to the child at home, teaching songs or nursery verses and assisting with homework (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2008: 3). Hill and Tyson (2009:np) underscore that, although there is a growing body of literature focusing on parental involvement in education during middle

school to date, no efficient research has been carried out to determine the types of involvement that have the strongest connection with achievement.

Parental involvement is viewed as an intervention of supporting learner's academic achievement and parents partaking in the school-inaugurated functions. Makgopa and Mokhele (2013) note that parents devote their time, attention and resources in their children with the belief of a return on investment, which is that their children will perform better in school. McNeal (1999) states that parental involvement includes three broad domains, parent-child relations, parent-school relations, and parent-parent relations. In all three cases, it is generally expected that parents devote time with their children, school personnel, or with other parents in the hope that their involvement will yield a tangible return.

Finally, Bridgemohan (2002:1) and Jeynes (2010:749) note that 'parental involvement' means different things to different individuals. They postulate further that the degree of parental involvement varies in different phases of education. Thus, the study of parental involvement is complex owing to the range of activities undertaken, the differing perspectives held by the parties involved and the disparate nature of the work.

#### **1.10.5 The perception on parental involvement by female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement in school systems**

According to Ndlovu (2011), principals need to expose parents to more workshops with special focus on what parents can do to support their children. In addition, the principal's role is to assist parents understand the policy on parental involvement in schools and eradicate misperceptions. Msila (2010) asserts that, for principals can promote parental involvement in education by participating in several programmes meant to improve their roles, especially short workshops organized by the Department of Education. Mncube (2009) argues further that principals may be aware that parents are unable to ask questions about their performance as professionals but should acknowledge that parents, irrespective of their level of education, want the best education for their children and expect teachers to perform and deliver results.

### **1.10.6 Barriers to parental involvement**

Barriers, in this case, refer to all the factors that prevent parents from becoming involved in the education of their children. Such barriers might be the procedure that the school system uses to invite the parents or the structure they use to approach the parents. Parental involvement in education is provoked by several factors, including the socio-economic status (SES). Another barrier that might prevent parental involvement is the way the teachers behave or act towards parents. Mncube, (2009:91) states another barrier wherein parents in rural schools' parents are often not afforded the opportunity to play their full role in the governance of a school, with decisions usually taken by the SMT (School Management Committee) rather than the SGB (School Governing Body).

### **1.10.7 What schools can do**

This study has documented the positive effects of parental involvement for children, less is known about how to elicit productive participation and which practices schools should use to maximize their investment in family and school connections. One study by the U.S. Department of Education that sought to found out how schools should encourage parental participation asserts that, parental involvement is more influential than family attributes like marital status, family size, level of parents' education, student grade level, or even socioeconomic status in predicting whether parents get involved. As a result, parental involvement increases when the administration and staff of a school communicate a genuine desire to involve parents and considers their needs. The cooperation also becomes more successful when schools accommodate parents' work schedules by arranging meetings at times when parents can be available.

### **1.10.8 What parents can do**

Parents are their children's greatest advocates. Parents' readiness to contact teachers on regular basis about their children's progress is the first step to becoming involved in their children's education. Parents who possess good information about their children's performance can continue to influence their children's progress in direct and indirect ways. Both parents can become directly involved in their children's education

in various ways. These include supervising the child's homework time, setting a time each day for homework to be done, inspecting the child's work for inclusiveness and understanding, restraining time spent with friends and watching television, giving support for educators to attend essential leadership programs, and providing educators with ideas that improve the education system. Finally, parents must take the lead when it comes to opportunities for involvement in school management.

### **1.11. Assumptions**

The study draws on several assumptions. As a result, it was assumed that:

1. The respondents, mainly secondary school, teachers, and principal will deliver a truthful and honest reply to the questions in the study.
2. The respondents would be enthusiastic to contribute and give their opinions considering the complex nature of the topic of the study.
3. The schools have alternative strategies in place to introduce new ways of dealing with parental involvement in their school.

### **1.12. Research Methodology**

A qualitative research design was adopted, based on the careful consideration of the principles of the aim and objectives of this study. According to Niewenhuis (2007: 56) the interpretive paradigm informed the study, because its importance is on how human beings make meaning of the phenomena in their environment. This study followed an interpretivist approach, because of the aim of this study, which was to investigate the perceptions of female teacher and female principal regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems. According to Holloway and Wheeler (1996: np) the use of interpretive paradigm necessitates the use of qualitative research approaches, hence the researcher's decision to use this method.

### **1.12.1. Research paradigm**

The interpretive paradigm was used to contextualize the study within the qualitative paradigm. This means that the research paradigm governs the research process of this study. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:133) state that numerous forms of data are collected and examined from various angles in qualitative research in order to construct a rich and expressive picture of a complex and multi-faceted situation. The rationale of interpretative research is to understand people's experiences, for the interpretive paradigm asserts that all knowledge is perspective-bound and limited. The interpretive research consists of assumptions and that recognizes the paradigmatic character of research in the human sciences. According to Terre Blanche the research process has three major dimensions: 1<sup>st</sup> ontology, 2<sup>nd</sup> epistemology and 3<sup>rd</sup> methodology. Finally, the study expresses the assumption of the interpretivist researcher in attempting to understand human experiences. As a result, the study takes place in a normal setting where the participants make their living.

### **1.12.2. Research Design**

Nieuwenhuis (2007: 70) asserts that, a research design is a plan or strategy that outlines the fundamental philosophical assumption behind the selection of respondents, the data gathering methods to be used and data analysis to be done in a given study. The selection of research design is based on the researcher's assumptions, research skills and research practices, and the impact on the way on how he/she collects data (Nieuwenhuis; 2007: 70). McMillan and Schumacher (2006:119) assert that a research design is a plan for picking subjects, research sites and data collection procedures to answer research question(s). Holloway and Wheeler (1996) also point out that, the use of an interpretive paradigm heads to the use of qualitative research approaches, hence, the reality that this study focused on sampled female teachers and female principal highlights the importance of the quality and involvedness of information provided.

The research design for this study, as already hinted above, is an interpretive case study that is analyzed using qualitative methods. The researcher considered that this is one of the designs that may be used to employ in interpretivist studies. In addition, questionnaires were identified for use in the engagements with the participants and to observe their levels of satisfaction in the course at the end of the case study. Participants' observation, face-to-face interviews and focus-group interviews were used as data collection methods. The validation for each of the data collection methods used in the study was discussed. The researcher also validates the trustworthiness of the research, its accurate criteria for qualitative research and several methods that contain peer reviews and representation that are employed later.

### **1.12.3. The Sampling Procedure**

Kumar (2014:229) emphasized that, sampling procedure is the process of selecting a few from a bigger group as the basis for measuring the frequency of an unknown piece of informative, situated, or outermost regarding the bigger group. In connection with this study, the sampling frame involves one high school, female teachers, and female principal of that school. Thus, the study's sample consists of one high school, which the researcher considered as having parental involvement and school systems. The selected high school's four female teachers and one female principal were sampled.

The researcher also identified an appropriate sampling method for the study. Swain; (2017: 130) defines a sampling technique as the method used to collect a sample from the sampling frame. Siririka, (2007:34) points out that sampling is "the procedure a researcher uses to select people, places, or things to study". The researcher used a non-probability sampling technique that coheres with qualitative research. In addition, purposive sampling was employed in this study to select the female teachers and female principal in the selected high school located in the Lejweleputswa District of the Free State Province. The method, purposive sampling, was employed to enable the researcher to make use of all the data efficiently. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:325-326) purposeful sampling constitutes the selection of information-rich cases. The sampling procedure is a process whereby the researcher divides the

population into consistent strata and then selects individuals from each division by purposive sampling in proportion to the total number that describes the division. As a result, the participants were assembled on the judgment of who has the best quality in answering the specific questions of the research.

#### **1.12.4. The Research Instruments**

Interviews and questionnaire were used as instruments for collecting data in the study. The interview technique was chosen for data collection because it permits the researcher to engage with female teachers and female principal in a way that enables the participants to freely express their feelings. The interviews enable the researcher to examine some rapid data on answers assumed and this resistance of interviews enables a researcher to collect as much data as possible.

The questionnaire was the major instrument used in this study to secure despondence to certain questions. The questionnaire used in this study sought to obtain data on perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems. The researcher prepared it after reading reference materials and related literature focusing on parental involvement and school system issues. Open-ended questions were used to give the respondents the chance to give their responses and suggestions.

#### **1.12.5. Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher first requested permission from Department of Education (DoE) to conduct the research. Bhattacharjee (2012: 78) stated that the researcher read the actual words said by the respondent and observed and recorded the behaviour displayed by the responded. The researcher personally administered the interviews. Questionnaires were personally distributed by the researcher to the female principal and female teachers to complete. Participants were given a covering letter containing a suitable explanation regarding the purpose of the study, and its importance the participants' involvement. Confidentiality of the information to be provided by the participants was ensured.



### **1.12.6. Data Analysis Techniques**

According to Nieuwenhuis (2007: 99) qualitative data analysis is associated with an interpretative philosophy aims at investigating the meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data. The researcher recorded each interview with the participants and the content had to be in written form for the researcher to it. The data that was collected was structured to address the main research questions of this study. This data was analysed using thematic content. Neuman (2006:322) describes data analysis as a technique used to gather and analyse the content of a text. It also involves going through words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas or any message to establish patterns, meanings and identify common themes that appear from the data.

### **1.13. Delimitation of the Study**

The study was carried out at a selected high school in the Lejweleputswa District of education situated in the Welkom area of the Free State Province in South Africa. The demographic statistics was designated to regulate on the perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems.

### **1.14. Limitation of the Study**

Orodho (2012) notes that limitation is a feature of any given study, which the researcher has no control over that the researcher knows may affect the consequences of the study in an unfavourable way. The limitations encountered include the unwillingness of some participants to divulge some information due to fear. The researcher guaranteed the participants of the confidentiality of their identity and that of their school. The research was done in one division of Free State Province due to restricted time and financial constraints. Because of time, as a result, only two qualitatively positioned types of data collection instruments, interviews and questionnaires, were used.

## **1.15. Chapter Outline**

### **CHAPTER 1**

#### **1.15.1. Background information**

This chapter introduced the background to the research, and summaries the statement of the problem, aims and objectives of the study as well as the research questions and purpose of the study. The chapter also states the significance of the study, define key terms and briefly describes the literature review, assumptions, research methodology, research paradigm, research design, sampling procedure, research instrument, data collection procedure, data analysis technique, delimitation and limitation of the study.

### **CHAPTER 2**

#### **1.15.2. Literature review**

This chapter reviews books, articles, and policy documents, such as the South African School Act 84 of 1996 and the Constitution of South Africa that are relevant to the research topic. This chapter also reviews the definitions of parental involvement and school systems.

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **1.15.3. Research methodology**

This chapter focuses on the process that the researcher followed to collect data for this study. The researcher identifies the qualitative research methodology for use here and provides the justification. The chapter also outlines the two research instruments, a questionnaire, and interviews, used in this study to collect data.

### **CHAPTER 4**

#### **1.15.4. Research findings and analysis**

This chapter presents the study's findings. It focuses on the post-test results and considers the background to parents' involvement and school systems, as well as socioeconomic their status in the discussion on the study findings.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **1.15.5. Conclusion and recommendations**

This chapter summarizes the study and presents the conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

### **1.16. Conclusion**

The researcher introduced the study and research processes, methods and concepts related to her focus on the perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school system, a case study of one high school in Lejweleputswa District, Free State. It is clear in this chapter that, the researcher's inspiration on the perceptions of parental involvement and school systems is perceived as a strong predictor of learner success. The researcher outlined the chapter of the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Introduction

Parental involvement is a significant issue that positively motivates children's education. Schools are aware of the significance of parental involvement and thus encourage families to become more involved. In addition, parental involvement and related school systems can improve the school community's experience of the school environment. It has a potential to provide space for teachers, parents, and other stakeholders to express themselves in school decision-making processes (Ismail and Abdullah; 2013). As a result, there is a need to understand what is meant by parental involvement and school systems.

Therefore, this chapter reviews the existing debates about parental involvement and school systems, types of parental involvement and school systems, and parental involvement in South African schools and school systems. It acknowledges that parents are the child's primary teachers and a helpful resource. In addition, the school systems in place at schools are noted as central to determining whether parents are fully involved or not and thus show apathy at the schools where their children attend. Finally, once the system in the school fails to allow children's involvement, it forces the children to question the value of their participation, hence this study. The next section discusses Epstein's typology of parental involvement.

#### 2.2 Conceptualization of Parental Involvement and School Systems

Parental involvement can be defined as social relations that are imbued with norms of trust, obligation or reciprocity (Coleman 1988; McNeal 1999). McNeal (1999) asserts that parental involvement includes three broad domains, which are parent-child relations, parent-school relations, and parent-parent relations. In all three cases, it is mostly assumed that parents invest time with their children, school personnel, or other parents with the expectation that their involvement will yield a tangible return.

The meticulous form of the expected return is not always clear; however, it can include better educational expectations, improved role performance (i.e., better attendance, increased homework done and reduced delinquency), and increased achievement.

Parental involvement involves the parents' involvement in schoolteacher- activities such as attending parent-teacher meetings, volunteering at school, assisting their children with homework, and encouraging their children to better up their school achievement. Makgopa and Mokhele (2013: 220) describe parental involvement as a combination of supporting learner's academic achievement and participating in school-initiated functions. Borkhorst-Heng (2008: np) contends that parental involvement comes in various forms and will differ as a child moves through primary and secondary school.

Georgion (2007: 60) postulates that parental involvement has five dimensions, which are parenting, helping with homework, communicating with the school, volunteering at school, and participating in school decision making. Parental involvement can be in the form of acting school as governors, assisting in the classroom or during lunch breaks, reading to the child at home, teaching songs or nursery verses and assisting with homework (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2008: 3). Thus, parents devote their time, attention and resources in their children, in conjunction with the school, under the hope that their children will perform better in school.

According to Bridgemohan (2002:1) and Jeynes (2010:749), 'parental involvement' means different things to different individuals and the degree of parental involvement in different phases of education also varies. The study of parental involvement is complex, given the range of activities undertaken, the differing perspectives held by the parties involved, and the disparate nature of much of the work. Thus, Clinton and Hattie, (2013:324) point out that parental involvement refers to both parents' desire to know about the performance of a learner in schools and their role in communicating with their children with the aim of having a healthy relationship with them. In addition, parental involvement is centered on the parents' directly participation in the schooling of their children, which is based on knowing the learning process of their children, what is needed and not needed, and the expected duties as the parents.

School systems, as discussed in chapter one by the researcher, it is a broad term and this study has limited itself to look at procedures, practices, structures, strategies and arrangements deemed more relevant to the aim of this study. Policies and procedures are designed to guide and regulate all major decisions and actions, and all activities take place within the boundaries set by the school. Procedures are the explicit approaches used to express policies in achieved in day-to-day processes of the school. Therefore, both policies and procedures ensure that a point of view set by the school is translated into steps that have compatible outcome.

Derrick Meador (June 28, 2018) asserts that, writing policy and procedures for schools is a part of an administrator's job. Derrick opines that school policies and procedures are fundamentally documents that govern the way a school district and school buildings are operated. As a result, it is crucial that the school policies and procedures be current and up-to-date. In addition, these should be revised when necessary with new policies and procedures written when needed. Finally, schools should have policies and procedures in place to support staff in their management of situations that might involve violence, threatening behavior, or abuse.

### **2.3 Epstein's Typology of Parental Involvement**

The theoretical model of overlap and shared responsibility in the spheres of influence is based on the practices of six types of involvement (Epstein, 1995:701). These categories include parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community. In addition, Epstein and Sheldon (2005:7) assert that each practice that is implemented avails opportunities for varied interactions of teachers, parents, pupils and others across contexts. Finally, each type poses specific challenges that must be met in order to include all families and is likely to lead to different outcomes for pupils, parents, and for teaching practices and the school climate.

Epstein and Sanders (2006:87) opine that each type poses specific challenges that must be met to involve all families including those whose first language is not English, single-parent families, low-income families, and other families with whom schools

traditionally have had limited interaction due to the systems put in place. They also specify that the exertion of the six types of involvement lead to different results and challenges for learners, families, schools, and the community. In addition, Olsen and Fuller (2008: 131) assert that each school must be aware of the local needs of its families and children while designing its own parental involvement programme as part of the broader school systems. Thus, secondary school educators must take the responsibility to develop school systems that reach all families in order to keep the families involved despite the increasing age of the child (Epstein 2008:9).

Some schools emphasize on separate responsibilities for families and schools, that is, the important incompatibility, competition, and conflict between them. According to Epstein (1987: 121), educators direct school bureaucracies and family organizations and parents, respectively, as they are the best fulfil their different roles independently. The diverse goal of parents and teachers is attained when teachers, as part of the school systems, keep a professional distance from and different standards for children in their classrooms, in contrast with parents who develop personal relationships with and individual expectations for their children at home. The shared responsibilities of the school and home emphasize the coordination, cooperation and balancing nature of schools and families, and encourages collaboration between the two (Epstein 1987: 121).

### **2.3.1 Types of parental involvement**

Below are the six major types of involvement that fall within the areas of overlap in the spheres of influence model. Each category of involvement may be measured by hundreds of practices that schools may select to develop their programmes. The framework might have more or less overlap and shared responsibility provisional on whether many or few practices in these six types of involvement are working or not. In addition, the framework depends on whether each practice that is applied opens opportunities for mixed relations of educators, parents, learners, and others across settings. The six types, defined briefly below, clarify how schools can work with

families and communities in order to help them become or stay knowledgeable and involved in children's education at home and at schools (Epstein, 2001:43).

### **2.3.1.1 Communicating**

Refers to how best to plan and conduct an effective school-to-home and home-to-school communication about school plans and their children's progress. The two-way process enables a mutual understanding between the parents and the educators, which enables the exchanging of information and sharing of meaning in general. Epstein (2001:44) stated that a two-way communication between home and school may involve information about special school programmes, services for students and families and reports of student progress. Types of communication like (d6 connect App, WhatsApp school group) keep parents up to date with school matters by sending newsletters or progress reports. Hence, communication involves the opening channels so that parents can successfully reach and contact school officials. Communication includes writing and talking, as well as nonverbal communication (such as facial expressions, body language, or gestures), visual communication (the use of images or pictures, such as painting, photography, video, or film) and electronic communication (telephone calls, electronic mail, cable television, or satellite broadcasts). Epstein's (2011) emphasized that communication between stakeholders becomes more efficient when the intersection of communication channel choice is as big as possible.

### **2.3.1.2 Volunteering**

Principals can contribute greatly by asking community volunteers with variable degrees of proficiency to work in the school. Glanz (2006:40) argues that special tutors, persons with power to assist with lunching duty responsibilities, and individuals to who help with office work may be useful. Adding to the similar type of parent involvement, Epstein (2001:44) points out that this type of involvement has to do with enlightening recruitment, training, work, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and viewers at the school or in other locations to support learners and school programmes.



Wilson (2000: p 215) emphasized that volunteering is any activity in which time is given freely to help another person, group, or organization. In the context of this study, volunteering relates to employing and organising help and support from parents for school programmes and students' activities. Volunteering is also renowned for skills development and often promotes goodness or the human quality of life. Petersen (2011:122) emphasizes that there are various levels of volunteerism in schools. At the simplest level, families can volunteer their time at home, helping their children with their homework, literacy skills, or other extra-mural activities. The second level of involvement covers participation in school utilities, such as home-learning, attending school, functions, and parent meetings. The third level includes parents volunteering their time in programmes at school that include "food schemes" where they assist with preparing and dishing food to learners during lunch and supervising the classrooms to determine whether they are clean and assist in monitoring students during recess. Finally, families can volunteer their time to join the local parent-teacher organization, be present at parents' meetings, or contribute as a joint decision-maker as part of the school council.

### **2.3.1.3 *Learning at home***

It relates to providing ideas and information to parents about how they can best help their children with their homework, with curricular related decisions and activities, and on how to assess their children to determine whether their progress in school is up to standard. Principals who argue parents to be involved in their children's work at home influence learner achievement positively. Thus, Glanz (2006: 41) underscores that workshops may be held to equip parents with skills on how to assist children with their homework and projects, and that these should be repeated often to involve as many families as possible.

#### **2.3.1.4 Decision-making**

Refers to including the parents in decisions in all aspects of the school and developing parents as leaders and representatives. Decision-making can be based on the selection of the SGB member amongst the parents. Parents who are involved at this level are known to support their children's interests. According to Peterson (2011:128), a shared decision-making is a site-based management or school-based management, and it has been a prevalent structure in many schools. Thus, the above-noted inclusive process often enables parents to contribute to parent-teacher suggestions, suggested councils and committees.

#### **2.3.1.5 Collaborating with the community**

The collaboration involves the identification and linking of the communities' services and resources to support and reinforce the schools, students, and their families. Communication in this capacity contains home to community, school to community and home to school to community. Petersen (2011:128-129) argue that businesses, cultural institutions, health and social service interventions, and other community groups have resources and expertise that can reinforce education and encourage partnerships with educators. Thus, this type of involvement seeks to assist schools, students, and families.

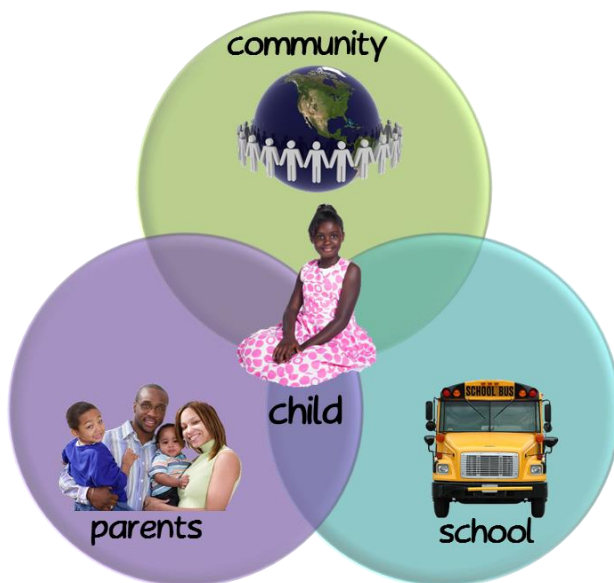
#### **2.3.1.6 Parenting**

Parenting consists of the basic responsibilities of families such as providing housing, health care, food, clothing, and safety, and generating home that is conducive to children's learning. According to Cox-Petersen (2011:116), the goal of positive parenting includes providing a healthy and safe environment that enables children to contribute to society. Educators also have a responsibility to support families in their roles related to parenting. The biotic state or wellbeing of the child is assured by assigning the educator with caring supervisory in loco parentis. Therefore, the educator recognizes that they are responsible for the physical safety of the learner compared, inter alia, with the obligatory contingency planning at schools (Oosthuizen; 2009:124-125).

### 2.3.2 Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence

Figure 2.1. shows the overlapping spheres of influence in Epstein's model, which is stated as parental involvement. The three main players, which are the school, family, and community, create a partnership that has the child as their central focus.

Figure 2.1. The overlapping spheres of influence



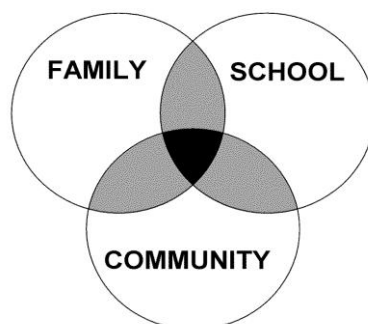
Epstein (2001:np) advocated the theory of overlapping spheres of influence, which argues that the most effective families and schools have overlapping common goals and missions concerning children. The model of overlapping spheres of influence recognizes that, although some practices of families and schools are directed individually, others reflect the common responsibilities of parents and teachers. The educators or parents who observe separate responsibilities and emphasize particular skills of educators and parents create a gulf between both the family and school spheres. At the same time educators and parents who highlight their shared responsibilities push the spheres of family and school influence together, increase communication between the parents and the schools, and create school-like families and family –like schools.

The community, which is the third sphere of influence, can also make school-like opportunities, events and programs that reinforce, identify and reward learners for good progress, creativity, and excellence. The model assumes that the child is the reason behind the collaboration between the home and the school. As a result, the model concentrates on the key role of the child, as a learner in the relations between the families and the schools, parents, and educators and even with the community. Learners are key to progressive school and family partnerships. Therefore, locating the learner in the center of the overlapping spheres of influences makes learners the main actors in their education, development, and success in schools.

The model includes both external and internal structures in that children are influenced by their families, schools, and communities. The internal structure of the overlapping spheres of influence model reveals the communications that may occur because of the collaboration between families, schools, and communities. A learner or child is more likely to improve his\her grades when school systems allow parents and educators to communicate directly and work towards common goals, such as inspiring a child's interest in reading, practicing an instrument for the school concert, or participation in any extra- mural activity. Finally, children can depend on their parents' support system and feel more self-confident in creating and pursuing their goals.

### 2.3.3 External model

Figure 2.2 Overlapping Spheres of Influence – External above model.



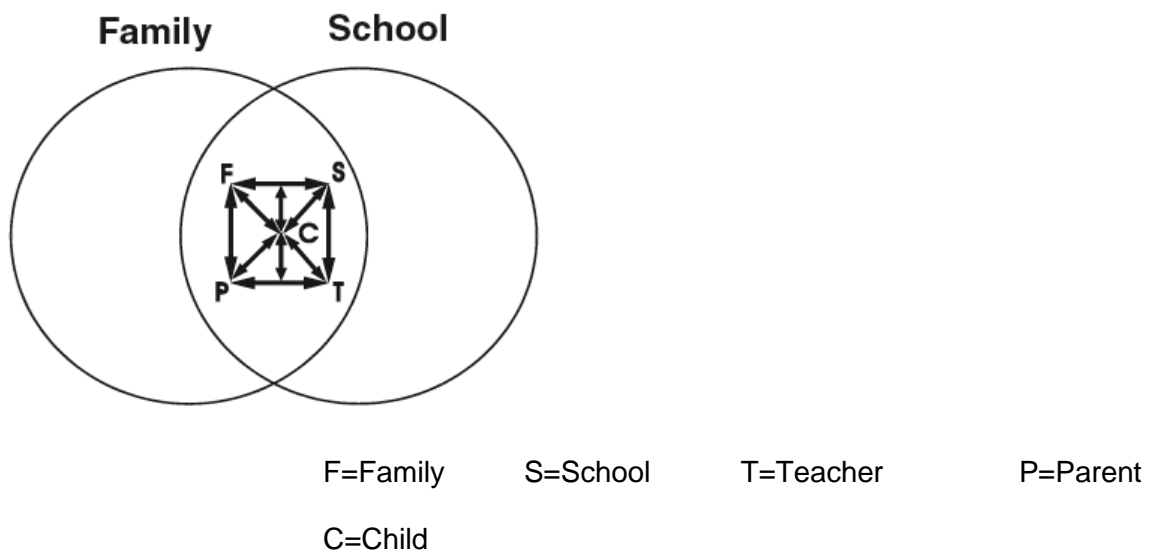
The external model recognises that these three main services in which children learn and grow can be drawn together or pushed apart. Here, schools, families and

communities conduct some educative practices separately, while others are piloted jointly in order to strengthen children’s learning (Epstein, Sanders, Salinas, & Simons, 1997).

### 2.2.3. The internal model

Figure 2.3 above on page 32 Overlapping Spheres of Influence – Internal model

Figure 1



Parental involvement the internal model of the interaction of the three spheres of influence displays the complex and essential interpersonal relations and patterns of influence that occur between individual and home, at schools, at home and in the community. These social relationships may be ordained and studied at an intuitional level and individual level. The relationship between school systems or parents and community groups can be characterized and studied within the model.

Hence, Epstein (2001:29) asserts, in relation to the model of overlapping spheres that, mutual interests of families and schools can be successfully promoted by frequent cooperative efforts and clear, close communication between parents and educators through policies and a comprehensive programme outlining the types of parental involvement and school systems.

## **2.4 Perceptions of Female Principal and Female Teachers Regarding the Extent of Parental Involvement in School Systems**

Parental involvement is currently attached much importance and yet various schools seem ignore it. There are many benefits that parents can realise by staying involved with their children's education, however, those parents living in poverty are less likely to participate in school events or their children's education (Van Velsor & Orozco, 2007). Some parents may willingly not participate, or have no wish to be involved, while others may want to be involved but cannot be due to the nature of systems put in place. Finally, teachers' perceptions regarding parents and families seems to be partially involved and it can be influenced by demographic factors such as parent's education, socio economic status or marital status.

According to Ndlovu (2011), principals need to expose parents to more workshops that focus on what parents can do to support their children. In addition, the principal's role is to enable parents understand the policy on parental involvement in schools and eradicate misperceptions. Duma (2013) states that, some principals love to have parents intricately involved in the governance of their schools, while others feel that too much participation in the governance of schools violates their sense of professionalism.

Msila (2010) asserts further that for principals must promote enthusiastic all stakeholders' involvement in education, and as such, the principals need to participate in school systems that improve their roles, especially short workshops organized by the Department of Education. Duma (2013) in a study on principals' views on parents' participation in the governance of rural schools reported that parents' involvement in school governance was effective in instilling discipline among students, ensuring that students attend school and in the maintenance of school facilities. At the same time, educators' perceptions on parents and families' involvement indicate that it seems to be partial and this could be the result of factors such as parent's education, socio economic status or marital status.

A parent's non-involvement limits the chances of possibilities that the child is engaging in what he or she is supposed to do at school or at home. The same parent's non-involvement makes the teacher's job more difficult. This could be a result of job demands, working two jobs to make ends meet and owing to the reality that they would want to catch up on sleep, run errands, pay bills, or care for dependants at home such as elderly parents, when free. The Department of Education (2004: Chaka: 2008; Mncube, 2009) argues that principals may be aware that parents are unable to ask questions about their performance as professionals; they should acknowledge that parents, irrespective of their level of education, want the best education for their children and expect teachers to perform and deliver results. This is because schools at times fail to create strong links between homes and schools or an environment where parents feel welcomed in schools more particularly low-income learners. According to Lemmer (2007:220) this situation is made worse by the fact that some parents are unable to read and write and can only communicate in their mother tongue, which in turn makes it difficult for them to assist their children with homework.

In some instances, parents' inferior feelings undermine their involvement with the school, participation in athletics events, or helping their children with schoolwork at home. Bakker (2007:14) indicates that, teachers' positive perceptions of different kinds of parental involvement that will help students do well in school are communication, participation, supervision, parenting and discipline. Educators want parents to deliver the structure for homework including rewards and punishment, a place to work, and a time of the day when this work should be done. Bakker (2007:214) emphasizes that parents need to monitor their children's homework to make sure that it is completed and aid when it is needed. If parents are uninvolved, teachers find themselves in a predicament situation in terms of handling reports and learner progress. The non-involvement could be the result of various barriers. The main barriers to parental involvement in schools include the school environment, school culture, time constraints, changing demographics and employment patterns, the lack of support from the parents, and language and communication breakdown between home and school. Both parents and teachers must be involved with communication between home and school standing out as key because it enables discussions on the behaviour of the learner's problems and needs.

#### **2.4.1 School systems, which act as barriers to parental involvement.**

Barriers in this study refer to all those factors which prevent parents from becoming involved in the education of their children for their pedagogic success. Mncube (2009:91) states that rural parents are not afforded the opportunity to play their full role in the governance of schools in their areas, with decisions usually taken by the SMT (School Management Committee) rather than the SGB (School Governing Body). The main barriers to parental involvement and school systems include school culture and school climate, time constraint, language usage by the educators, changing demographics and employment patterns, the lack of teacher preparation on how to involve parents in their children's schooling, and nature of the school atmosphere. These barriers are a great impediment considering that communication between home and school is the key because both parties need to have continuous discussions on the behavior of the learner, problems and needs. Mestry and Grobler (2007: 177) ascertain that many parents come across with obstacles to involvement in school governance due to negative or poor communication from schools. The ability to communicate successfully must therefore be high on the priority list of schools if they want to increase parental involvement and school systems. Schools might have some misunderstandings, resistances, and problems because people do not get communication on time, or because they interpret it mistakenly. As a result, there is a need for a rigorous effort to articulate messages clearly and completely without hidden meanings. De Pree in Mestry and Grobler (2007: 178) ascertain that good communication is important in organizations because it produces a common bond of interdependence and mutual interest among interlocking contributors. The most difficult barrier for parents relates to language and especially the use of English. Here, parents who cannot speak in fluent English are most likely to find it difficult to be involved with school activities or volunteer opportunities due to the language barrier. In addition to the language barrier, some parents have a belief that, their cultures do not encourage them to become too involved in school and feel that doing so is disrespectful (Van Velsor & Orozco, 2007).

The way the teachers behave or act towards parents may also serve as a barrier to effective involvement. The time spent, attitude and tone of discussion by educators in their interaction with parents determines whether parents can or cannot participate in



school activities. Teachers need time to plan parent activities and schools must think through about the educational level, language, and culture and home situations of the students' parents. Most imperative, schools need to establish a welcoming climate and an open-door policy so that any parent who has questions can feel self-assured that they will be welcomed and given the help. In addition, many South African parents do not consider it their role to be openly involved in educational decision making, hence other forms of participation must be acknowledged and valued. For instance, parents' involvement in the social activities of the school must be honoured as a significant involvement.

Section 20 of the South African Schools Act, no. 84 of 1996, states that SGBs can regulate the school's admission policy as well as its curriculum and language policy. (DOE, 1997: 7) The mixing of racial groups in schools permits the inclusion of any of the 11 official languages in South Africa. The use of only the English language as a medium in verbal and written communication has a negative result on the involvement of some parents, since they cannot express themselves confidently and they do not understand written communication in a language other than their mother tongue.

It should also be noted that some school systems act as barriers. These barriers are outlined in the subsections below.

#### **2.4.1.1 Communication as a barrier and school systems**

Communication is a two-way discussion seeking to reach a common understanding. In the case of the school system, communication will involve the exchange of ideas between teachers, the principal and parents in an attempt at to reach a common consensus.

Mestry and Grobler (2007: 178) found that schools in South Africa do not communicate efficiently nor regularly with parents about learners' academic progress. In addition to this limited communication, there exists, according to Dumas (2008: 620), negative communication, which frightens the parents, even if they were willing to participate. In my opinion, this kind of situation delays the learners' academic progress and affects the likely improvement of parents' involvement in a negative way.

Furthermore, the reality is that negative communication makes parents feel inferior to communicate with the management. Jasso (2007: 11) ideas resonate with my observation as noted in the statement that, some schools in the USA create unfriendly environments that discourage parental involvement. Poor communication also increases low face-to-face communication with the parents (McDermott and Rothenberg; 2000: 2). Thus, there is need for communication forms that enable the school to reach the parents. These methods include communication via social media platforms such as WhatsApp and the school Facebook page, and SMS and letters. The channels, which are easy to access, can be used to invite parents to assist their children in their schooling. Ultimately, schools have to develop communication policies that will encourage parents to visit the school in order for them to assist in their children's academic progress.

#### **2.4.1.2 School systems and time constraint**

Both the parents and the school need to have time to monitor the progress of the learner and the matters that affect the learner at school. However, the parents must have time to review their children's academics, which is not always the case as it is hard because they do not always have time to attend school meetings (Modisaotsile, 2012: 3). The parents need to have time to attend matters related to their children's future because any failure to avail themselves at school meetings inconveniences the teachers and affects the school management. Mncube (2007: 16) states that some schools organise meetings in the evening, which makes it difficult for parents to attend because some of the parents stay far and cannot afford the transport costs while some parents knock off late at work and find it difficult to attend the late meetings. Therefore, the school needs to develop programs that cater for the parents with challenges over attending some meetings. One of the solutions is to assist the parents who stay far or who knock off late from work with alternative meetings where they meet and discuss important issues relating to their children or the school activities.

Parental involvement and a positive school system results in various benefits. According to Bojuwoye and Narain (2008:np) argue that parental involvement can be in the form of a parent's visit to their child's school, attendance of meetings or volunteering. In addition, communication with school personnel and attending school

meetings of parent-teacher associations constitutes involvement that helps the children to achieve academic activities at home and school (Jeynes, 2012; Mncube, 2010), Makgopa and Mokhele, (2013) argue that parents' attending of school-initiated functions creates high aspirations, attitudes, and beliefs with regard to their children's education. Finally, Sapungan and Sapungan, (2014:45) argue that when parents take responsibility, it becomes part of their nature and it becomes possible for them to do their work according to their or given schedule, which is the quality of being organised.

#### **2.4.1.3 Language differentials as a barrier and school systems**

Language connects two or more people and is the method of human communication. It can be spoken or written and consists the use of words in an organized and conventional way. The researcher's view is that a message must be conveyed in a language that understood by both the sender and the receiver. This reality of a mutual exchange of messages between sender and receive should also apply in school systems. Mncube (2009: 8) notes that parents and teachers are less likely to find each other when teachers use a foreign language during the school governing body and parents' meetings. The use of foreign languages serves as a barrier to effective communication and co-operation between parents and schools (Singh, 2004: 304). Therefore, schoolteachers need to curb the language-based barrier by using a language that parents can understand.

#### **2.4.2 Strategies to improve parental involvement and school systems.**

Gonzalez-Mena (2011: np) explains parental involvement as a combination of parent commitment and active participation to the school and child. Anyikwa and Obidike (2012: np) describe parental involvement as the participation and support of parents at school and in the home, which directly and positively impacts the educational performance of their children. According to Chan (1995; 19), "parental involvement is not something that is 'done' to parents, it is relatively what parents and the school do collectively and collaboratively to ensure suitable and effective policy making and implementation, discipline, funding, facilities and staffing for the success of children." This calls for various strategies that the schools can use to get the parents involved in their children's learning. Communication is the glue that holds the school community

together. The ability to communicate allows the stakeholders to form and maintain personal relationships.

Various strategies can be used to encourage community participation in their children's learning. These include using traditional means such as announcements, flyers and radio stations and non-traditional methods such as the use of phone calls, social media and sending of emails. According to Kwatubana and Makhalemele (2015:317) some schools use recruitment procedures that are not sound and as a result fail to motivate parental involvement in school activities. The same study also notes that some schools in the Free State decided to use a raffle to select parents to act as food handlers and be part of the school. In the opinion of the researcher, the same strategy and its procedures can work well in situations where the school wants to eradicate discrimination by choosing individuals based on their status in the community. The stakeholders need to have strategies that they can use to strengthen their communication within the school community, so that they can have an effective communication. Lack of communication/ miscommunication or overcommunication can divide the school community and lead to unhealthy relationships.

Furthermore, Luneburg and Irby (2002:np) argue that there is need for strategies that help parents decide on how they can be involved in the school, receive support from the school, and how the partnership between the school, family, and community can enhance student achievement. In addition, schools should know that there is no one-size-fits-all model for school-parent partnerships and thus, should select models that imitate site-based goals for the revitalization of and student success. Finally, parents differ on their beliefs about roles to play in the education of their child (Jasso, 2007; Ritblatt, Beatty, Cronan & Ochoa, 2002). However, Wehlburg (1996:np) states that parental involvement has a positive effect on the accomplishment of students' academics and that all parents should be viewed as possessing resources that can contribute to increased student learning.

Some schools make effort to involve parents to the extent that, they encourage parental involvement regardless of the barriers, such as unemployment, poverty, and sicknesses, which would be in existence (Shezi, 2012). The school and parents should try to communicate with each other through letters, notices, and announcements so

that they can work together. Some of the parents use old style methods (letters) in their communication. Kwatubana and Makhalemele (2015:317) argue that, some schools are not familiar with the use of sound recruitment strategies that motivate parental involvement in school activities. In addition, Lemmer (2007:221) observes that the language of communication is important because sending information to families whose home language is not English in their own home language breaks the language barrier and makes the parents reachable.

The use of effective strategies to encourage parental involvement will enable the parents to notice the importance of being involved in their children's learning. The effective strategies also enable the parents to see the benefits that are likely to be achieved in the future. Lemmer and van Wyk (2004) found that some schools use a diary to establish a relationship between the home and school. Lemmer (2009:np) also notes that in some schools, home visits are done by teachers to find out more about the learner's background and in that way support relations with parents. Okeke (2014:np) agrees that home visits are a good way of forming home-school relationships because they allow teachers and parents to get closer and work together in dealing with needs or difficulties that the learner may experience. In some school's parental involvement is welcomed to a degree as educators are troubled about parents getting overly involved and overstepping their limits (Lewis & Naidoo, 2004). Nevertheless, Lewis and Naidoo (2004: np) underscore that parents need to contribute in school governance, while the South African Schools act (Act No: 84 of 1996) does the same in its stipulation that parents must serve on the school governing body (RSA, 1996b).

The traditional views governing the school and parent relationship need transformation. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2010:214) reveal that schools traditionally viewed parents as 'clients', which implied that parents delegated their educational responsibility wholly to educators who acted on their behalf in educational matters. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:153) also assert, in another study that, teachers are in an exceptional position to help children to cope with the effects of family break-up and to provide guidance to parents. This is essentially the reason why both have established strategies that schools can use to help children and parents' cope. These strategies include the creation of a school policy that deals will with parent-teacher

interviews and parent evenings after work so that working parents can attend. Another strategy involves asking parents when they enroll their children at school to disclose fully any home disruptions that may affect the child's academic progress. Finally, the changes anticipated in South African education as per the White Paper on Education and Training (SA, 1995:22), highlight the importance of parent and community involvement in education. Hence, Bridgemohan (2005: 10) asserts that schools and the education departments are faced with a huge task of involving parents in the education of their children and yet there are no clear policies to guide them.

Suggestions are made concerning policies on parental involvement in school systems. Epstein and Dauber (1993: 61) suggest that schools should have a policy on how to involve parents in schools and how to work with their children on schoolwork at home. It is significant to involve parents in the discussions made at each level of their children's improvement and to include their suggestions into approaches and policies that affect their children without triggering a sense of intimidation in these parents. The following suggestions are given in the guidelines for parent's participation policy. Boyer (1991: 33) states that the policies must be well planned and must "build bridges between home and school". In addition, a policy including parents in school events must have a positive effect on the school environment and make parents realize that their support and involvement is needed at school (Perkins-Gough 2008: 89).

Nevertheless, parental involvement can only be effective after the implementation of certain things in the decision-making process. Parents must be assisted to acquire suitable skills and knowledge that enables participation in the decision-making process. These skills should help the teachers to analyze information, plan, transfer, communicate and find solutions in collaboration with others. According to the South African School Act no. 84 of 1996, most of the participants of the school governing body should be parents. Baloyi (2006:21) ascertains this through the citation of the White Paper (1995a:21-23) and its focus that "the principles of democratic governance should progressively be reflected in every level of the system, by the involvement in discussion and appropriate forms of decision-making of elected representatives of the main stake holders, interested group and role players."

Finally, there is need to create an inviting atmosphere in order to achieve a positive home-school partnership. This can be achieved after realizing that the strength of the school lies in the contribution and change that families bring to the school. This means that diversity should not be ignored and be the basis on which all learners and parents are welcomed into the school. The school atmosphere consists of elements that are mostly unseen and hidden but perceived and strongly felt by visitors entering the school. The school atmosphere may include observations, perceptions or feelings the parents may experience from the moment they enter through the school gates until they leave the school premises. Eason-Watkin (in Blankstein, 2004: 172) ascertain that in many discussions she had with parents and members of the community, the parents felt that most schools did not want them to participate, nor be part of the school. Cotton (2001: 7) also states that there is an observed lack of welcoming of parents by teachers and administrators. Nonetheless, the following principles will go a long way towards building relationships with families and communities: common understanding and empathy, making parents feel welcome, involving parents in the curriculum, enabling parents to act as a support system for the school and engaging in community outreach (Blankstein 2004: 169-174).

National Education Policy (Act 27 of 1996) highlights that parental choices, responsibilities, and strategies have been developed to encourage parental participation at home - school to effectively bridge the gap between home and school. This is despite the fact that it is the duty of the educator to prepare learners with the strategies to involve their parents. It would also be interesting to learn whether such an understanding by the teachers is shared by all the other stakeholders involved in children's education across South Africa. Lemmer (2007), Mncube (2009), Simango (2006), Gurian (2008), Erlendsdottir (2010), and Berthelsen and Walker (2008) argued that parental involvement in school activities has a positive impact on the academic performance of their children, because it decreases the non-school attendance and learners are eager to learn when that have support of their parents.



## **2.5 School Systems, Which Encourage / Promote Parental Involvement**

### **2.5.1 Role of the principal and teachers**

The principal is in a unique position to influence the employment of managerial principles. The primary tasks of school principal are to make and maintain positive, and healthy teaching and learning environments for everyone in the school.

A positive school culture is the heart of enhancement and growth in any building. Principals need to build a positive school culture that promotes learning and engagement for students. The roles and responsibilities of a school principal are important, but a positive school culture is very important. As such, a positive school culture is the fundamental reason why the other components of successful schools can be able to flourish. Therefore, the principal must focus on making a positive school culture by visiting each teacher before classes start, greeting learners as they enter the school premises, and provide mutual planning time for teachers that develop both the students' and learners' capacity for learning and success.

The role of a teacher is to use classroom presentations in order to help students learn and apply concepts such as math, and English. Teachers design curriculum to assist learners to master a variety of subjects. Teachers arrange lessons and manage the classroom, meet with parents, and work closely with school staff. All teachers are classroom managers whose task is to reinforce applicable behavior, appraise student learning and make inclusive learning environments. The workday for a teacher begins before learners arrive and might not end until late in the evening. In addition to teaching and guiding learners during the day, teachers must develop learner outcomes for lessons and send progress reports to parents.

### **2.5.2 School climate as a school system**

Freiberg and Stein (1999: 11) explain school climate as the core of the school and the value of a school that brings about a healthy learning place where learners' and parents' dreams and determinations are tended while teachers are motivated to function at their best and everybody is appreciated and feels involved. Freiberg and



Stein (1999:11) state further that a school climate is “the heart and soul” of a school. This perception of a school leads a child, a teacher and staff associate to love school and look forward to being there each school day.

In addition, a school climate is defined by Hoy and Miskel (2001: 189-190) as “a combination of beliefs, values and attitudes of learners and staff members, principals and parents, level of liberation, styles of leadership and job satisfaction.” Thus, a school climate consists of all principles that are seen and unseen in the school environment. Some of the principles that might be seen, or which are visible can include fundamentals such as communication, relationships, and school policy, while the fundamentals that cannot be seen or that are hidden include feelings, attitude and atmosphere of the school.

## **2.6 Parental Involvement and School Systems**

Epstein (1987b:5-6) states that state polices, guidelines and bylaws for educational programmes have a huge influence on the degree and type of parental involvement practiced by schools. Parents and school management can work together to improve the academic performance of learners for as long as the parents are involved in the discussions of the school policies. As a result, the school management, as pointed out by Sapungan and Sapungan (2014:45) needs to argue the parents to get involved and contribute towards helping the school achieve its missions and goals.

Research and studies carried out throughout the world demonstrates that children with parents that are directly involved in the learning process have a significant advantage at school. Llamas and Tuazon (2016:59) emphasize that, parents become content when the education system needs their involvement in school activities. Foskett and Lumby (2003:101) further assert this concept in their assertion that parents represent a key community group with whom schools maintain a relationship, whether close or distant, and in most systems are recognized as the principal external relationship that a school or college must manage. Kgaffe (2001:24) states the fact that parental involvement differs from one country to the next and as such, it is imperative to know that strategies on parental involvement employed by each country will also differ. Thus, this section focuses on parental involvement in different countries. The final

focus is on South Africa and this is made aware of Shezi's (2012) emphasis that parental involvement, in some South African schools, is very insignificant if at all in existence, and that of the inability of the Bill of Rights' (RSA, 1996a) proclamation that everyone is equal and yet legislation does not recognize parental involvement amongst schools.

## 2.7

### 2.7.1 International trends

Baloyi (2003:15) asserts that the concept of parental involvement has been in operation globally since the 1960s in countries such as the USA, United Kingdom and Australia. Gertler, Patrinos and Rubio-Codina (2006:1) state that the USA, United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada have decentralized administrative responsibilities and levels of authority to the school level as a form of educational reform. The USA's current educational changes include the legislation, which encourages parents and community involvement in school policies. British educational policies call for partnership between parents and teachers (Reay 2005:23). Reay (2005:25) notes that England declared parental involvement in 1994 as an important part of a school 's development plan. Thus, as noted by Foskett and Lumby (2003:102), systems in which parental choice dominates have achieved the most radical shifts in power towards parents. In addition, tis decentralization has been gaining increasing support in developing countries.

The policymakers and school practitioners acknowledged parental involvement 's importance to the success of school programs. Parental involvement was included in the state and national policies and assigned at local levels in the USA (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). The America 2000 Act, delegating parent involvement, was signed into law in 1994 by President Clinton, (Coleman 1991). Although the policy delegated for the inclusion of parents in the development of education curriculums that bridged several decades for students, no policy was more specific than the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Section 1118, regarding the role that families should play in education. This policy linked the growth of parent involvement policy with the acceptance of federal funding more concisely than any other policy regarding this issue (Webster, 2004). In addition, the concern about the increasing

roles for schools to manage beyond education prompted policymakers to commission a policy paper on the involvement of parents in education.

Kgaffe (2001:24) also reveals that a study of parental involvement among rural communities in the Republic of China indicates little or no parent participation in education due to factors such as change in family structure and the type of government in China. China's state political ideology interferes in everything that the people do to the extent that the state has increased control over all difficulties relating to life in general including education. Vong (2008: 155) asserts that, parents must make some sacrifices even if it comes to a point of falling into poverty, to ensure that they assist their children to improve on their academics.

The levels and forms of parental involvement differ globally. Anderson and Minke, (2007: np) state that the level of involvement varies amongst the various types of people in America. Some parents are more involved at school whereas others are more involved at home. Huntsinger and Jose, (2009) assert that parents of European descent in America (European American) are more involved in volunteering activities than o other groups, such as the Chinese Americans who display interest in their children's education at home. In addition, Huntsinger and Jose, (2009) point out that Chinese parents help with homework, monitor home activities and orientate their children's lives towards academic tasks. Other researchers such as Huntsinger and Jose), (2009) observe that education is important to the Chinese irrespective of whether the Chinese parents are privileged or underprivileged and that they view the child's performance as a reflection on the family.

It should be underscored that parental involvement in education remains a significant matter globally. Conteh and Kawashima, (2008) assert that countries such as England have encouraged parental involvement through policies. England strategized on how to involve parents in the education process through their 1997 White Paper 'Excellence in Schools' (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). This strategy involves providing information to parents, permitting parents to be heard and encouraging parent-school partnerships (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). In another case, Liu and Chien, (1998: 214) observe that the education system in the Republic of China has

been influenced by its population and the 1979 introduction of the one-child policy such that every child is expected to succeed in their academics. The Chinese researcher, Vong, (2008: 155), observes in support that every child in the Chinese family has the potential to succeed despite the different capabilities that each person has for them to succeed. Ironically, Western educators always preach about the fact that the children's capabilities are not the same, but success is important to every child. Cao, Bishop and Forgasz, (2006: 88) also state that a child's failure brings humiliation to the family and in some cases these children are disowned by the parents or the parents are reported in the Chinese society for their negligence.

### **2.7.2 Africa**

Foskett and Lumby (2003:107) assert that the education systems of the less developed nations of sub-Saharan Africa is marked by a delegation of the responsibility to manage down to the school level partly because of belief in the notion of the significance of connecting schools and communities. Community involvement in the direct management of schools is resilient in many of the countries of east Africa, such as Uganda and Tanzania. As a result, the region's parents are made aware of policies, procedures, aims and expectations of the school. This involvement is important because schools need good communication between parents and teachers to ensure good results with its lack leading to various problems and wrong expectations from both parents and teachers.

The situation in Kenya is marked by state intervention to improve access to education and low parental involvement. Since independence, in 1963, the Kenyan government devoted itself to the establishment of education to all its citizens in order to eradicate illiteracy, poverty, ignorance and diseases (Republic of Kenya, 2001:73). Parents must meet the costs of book acquisitions and activity funds, uniforms, and other private costs such as transport and meals for their children. In addition, schools are expected to rely entirely on the parents' contribution for the maintenance of non-teaching staff (Republic of Kenya, 2007:117). The government introduced Free Primary Education (FPE) in all Kenyan public primary schools in 2003 with Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, (2005: 62) supporting this move to reduce the financial burden on parents. Nonetheless, there is a general lack of community and parental participation in the development of Kenyan education in general (Republic of Kenya, 2001:9).

Communication between schools and parents is occasionally on friendly basis since most schools ask parents to come only when their children have discipline issues or are performing poorly. Therefore, Kenyan schools should realize that increasing extensive parental involvement and supporting parents' rights to be involved in the education of their children results in ongoing benefits.

Parental involvement in Ghana also seems to be variable in nature. Some parents are apathetic to and lack interest in participating in their children's education (Pryor & Ampiah, 2003). Chant and Jones (2005) state the need to underscore the importance of schooling in Ghana and this in turn may influence parental involvement in education. Single parents are less expected to be involved in their children's education than married parents (Chowa, Ansong & Osei-Akoto, 2012). Sottie (2011) also points out that single parents in Ghana are not involved in their children's education because of their economic status. Nonetheless, Sottie (2011) asserts that parents have little time to give to participate in their children's education because they would be busy earning an income and dealing with their personal problems.

Finally, a study carried out in Nigeria shows that some parents were involved in their children's education whereas others were not (Olatoye & Agbatogun, 2009). Researchers, such as Olatoye and Agbatogun (2009) state that parents of children at private schools were more involved as compared to those whose children attend public schools. Olatoye and Agbatogun (2009) also point this discrepancy in involvement and attribute it to factors such as variations in the school fees, parental educational qualifications, and social economic status. Thus, the indication is that wealthy parents in Nigeria are more involved in their children's education compared to the parents of a lower socio-economic status.

### **2.7.3 Southern African Development Community (SADC)**

The nature of parental involvement in children's education and school systems in the region differs with each member nation. In Lesotho, the ownership and control of

schools, which is shared between the church, the private sector, communities and government, impacts on parental involvement and school systems. The Lesotho Education Act (Act no.10 of 1995/6) introduced the idea of school governing bodies (SGBs) in the country's primary and high school. Education in Lesotho is regarded as a "three –legged pot", meaning that it is a partnership between the community, state and church, which owns the highest percentage of schools. However, most of the parents in Lesotho primary schools seems not to understand how they should be involved in their children's learning. This reduced parents to observers than participants in an education system that would mold their children. Although they were ignorant of professional matters, parents provided financial support and labor force in building schools. Hence, parents have nevertheless always been actively involved in enhancing their children's educational progress.

Furthermore, the Zimbabwe government created a strategy intended on securing parental involvement. The strategy included providing parents with information, giving them a voice, and encouraging parental partnerships in schools. The creation of such partnership served to fulfil the various policy mandates for parental involvement in the education of their children. Parents are also involved in their children's academic work through attending consultation days to find out from the teachers how their children are performing in class. These parent teacher conferences provide a two-way communication between teachers and parents, where teachers inform parents about their children's performance while parents provide teachers with information on pupils' life outside the school. The school systems also permit parents and teachers to ask questions, discuss common concerns in helping pupils and plan together programs for improving pupils' learning and development. Finally, various schools in Zimbabwe use teacher-parent conferences in conjunction with termly reports.

#### **2.7.4 South Africa**

The importance of parental involvement and school systems resonated through literature, however, parental involvement in South Africa is still a problem (Okeke, 2014). Mestry and Grobler (2007) state that limited parental involvement is evidenced by the parent's poor attendance of meetings, poor matric results, and lack of interest

in learners' schoolwork and homework. This might indicate that parents intentionally distance themselves from their children's education. Mncube (2007) notes further that schools in underprivileged areas usually lack parental involvement.

The need for the involvement of parents in South Africa arises from a number of factors. The introduction of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) brought the need for better parental involvement in public education (Sing, Mbokodi & Msila, 2004:301; Mestry & Grobler, 2007:176). Singh et al. (2004:301) argue that the biased system anticipates parents to play a vital role in education. The anticipation is that parents should be actively involved in the schooling of their children in one way or the other. For most parents the initial task has been to know the new curriculum and get involved in the governing bodies of schools. Some parents of lower socio-economic status were, however, not involved in school-based activities (Bojuwoye and Narain 2008). This non-involvement is considered by Ballen and Moles (in Mestry & Grobler, 2007:177) as arising from the reality that parents from the poorest sectors of society are locked in the problematic struggle to survive as they live in inadequate housing, are badly paid.

Calabrese and Crozier in Mestry and Grobler, (2007:177) argue that parents' working conditions are not the solitary reason for their lack of involvement. According to Mestry and Grobler (2007:177) some barriers to effective parental involvement are negative communication from the schools and inadequate training for teachers on how to reach out to parents. Parents trust that they are not welcome in schools and report a high degree of unfriendliness and hostility towards them (Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems, 2003:88, Mestry & Grobler, 2007:177), hence the non-involvement.

The low level of meaningful contact between the school and parents, especially black parents, has led to some teachers and principals to acknowledge that such parents lack an interest in their children's education and that they do not want to work with the schools (Michael, Wolhuter & Van Wyk, 2012:71). Mbokodi, (2008) points out further that some poor parents cannot prioritize the education of their children due to the social and economic pressure they have to face daily and thus poverty accounts for a lack of parental involvement in some South African schools.

## 2.8 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed literature that is related to the study. It also defined parental involvement and school systems and considered both the strategies of parental involvement and barriers to parental involvement, as per the literature reviewed. The researcher also examined the nature of parental involvement and school systems within the International, African, SADC and South African settings.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This section presents the methodology used in the study. Punch and Oancea (2014: 34) define methodology as a type of theory about the design, methods, and procedures, which involve philosophical tools and sight. Thus, this chapter presents the study capacity and techniques used to collect data from the field, as well as an outline of research paradigm, research approach, research design, study population and sample size, sampling procedure, research instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis technique and ethical issues.

#### 3.2 Research Paradigm

According to Barker (2003:312), a "paradigm" is defined as method of collecting and interpreting data. Terhoeven (2009:45) states that a paradigm can be defined as a world view that includes certain philosophical assumptions about the nature of knowledge. Rossman and Rallis (2017: 27) also state that the notion paradigm captures the idea that definitions of science are the products of mutual understanding of worldviews, complete and a complex way of seeing, and sets assumptions about the world and action within it. Patton (1990:479) agrees with the afore-mentioned assertion as reflected in the statement that a paradigm is "a world view, a universal perspective, and a way of breaking down the account of the hypothesis people have about what is essential and what makes the world work." Finally, a paradigm is a theoretical orientation (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007).

This study's focus seeks to analyse the teachers' and principal's views and thus suggests an interpretive paradigm. The interpretive paradigm was used in this study to contextualise it within the qualitative paradigm. This means that the research

paradigm governs the research process of this study. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:133) note that qualitative research involves the collection of numerous forms of data and their examination from various angles, in order to construct a rich and expressive picture of a multi-faceted situation. Interpretivism is largely associated with Max Weber (Crotty 1998) and Alfred Schutz (Pring, 2000). The rationale of interpretative research is to understand people's experiences. The research takes place in settings where the participants make their normal living. The purpose of the study expresses the assumptions of the interpretivist researcher in attempting to understand human experiences. In addition, assumptions of the multiple realities also inform the research process (Wagner, Kawulich & Garner 2012:56).

The interpretive paradigm draws on the belief that there are trivial social dynamics that are poorly assisted by the rationality of the scientific method. The scientific method intends at determining laws and principles of general validity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:323). The interpretive paradigm is supported by observation and interpretation; hence, the researcher will observe and collect data, and interpret it to make meaning by drawing implications or judging the match between the data and abstract patterns. Therefore, the interpretive paradigm challenges the researcher to understand the phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them.

According to the interpretive paradigm, all knowledge is perspective-bound and limited. The interpretive research works on assumptions. It is an approach to human sciences research that recognizes the paradigmatic character of the research. As a result, interpretive approaches give the research greater room to address issues of guidance and influence, and to ask questions such as 'why' and 'how' particular technological paths are created.

Furthermore, the interpretive paradigm is motivated by the belief that there are important social dynamics that are poorly served by the logic and rationality of the scientific method. The scientific method aims at discovering laws and principles of general validity (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:323) while the interpretive tradition has no 'correct' or 'incorrect' theories (Walsham 1993). Rather, the approaches should be refereed according to how 'interesting' they are; Hence, interpretive researchers can only claim that the theories presented are interesting to them and assume them to be

interesting to those involved in the same capacities. As a result, Walsham (1995) presents three dissimilar procedures of theory in interpretive case studies: theory guiding the design and collection of data; theory as an iterative process of data collection and analysis; and theory as a conclusion of a case study.

Finally, interpretive research does not predefine dependent and independent variables, but focuses on the full difficulty of human sense making as the situation appears. Denzin and Lincoln (2008: p.29) state that qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive methods, always seeking better ways to make more understandable the worlds of experiences they have studied. Interpretive researchers start with individuals and try to understand their explanations of the world surrounding them. Finally, Denzin and Lincoln (2008: 9) compare the researcher to a bricoleur and state that the “interpretive bricoleur understands that research is an interactive process shaped by his own personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity, and by those of the people in the setting”.

### **3.2.1 Interpretive paradigm**

Piaw (2012:05) asserts that interpretive paradigm identifies the attributes of a small group of participants. The study sought to examine how the school management perceive parental involvement and school systems. As a result, the researcher used the interpretive research method in order to engage with the research participants and understand how they perceived parental involvement and school systems in their school. According to Maree (2016) interpretative paradigm involves the importance of individuals or communities assigned to their experience in that particular settings. The interpretive paradigm is appropriate for this research study, because it would provide the researcher with an in-depth notion of the experiences of those participating in the study.

### **3.3 The Research Approaches**

Naicker (2013:np) asserts that the nature of any given study usually determines the choice of research methodology. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), qualitative research determines the natural flow of processes and events and how

participants would interpret them using data generation strategies that are non-interfering. A qualitative research method was used in this study because the researcher sought to explore the social behaviour of the participants. Qualitative research emphasizes on gaining meaning and increasing the readers' understanding of the phenomenon beneath the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Thus, parents might know when to become involved in their children's education, and yet teachers' expectations on parental involvement might not be known. The researcher had to understand what the participants perceived to be the barriers to parental involvement and what they assumed would be needed to break down the barriers and improve parental involvement in their children's education.

Qualitative researchers do not want distance between themselves and their participants but want the opportunity to connect with them at a human level. Denzin and Lincoln (2005:np) also point out that "qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the word [and that] qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them." Creswell (2009:175-176) mentioned the characteristics of qualitative research, which are natural setting, the researcher as key instrument, multiple sources of data, inductive data analysis, participants' meanings, emergent design, a theoretical lens, and interpretive and holistic account. Creswell (2003: 181-182) states further that, settings permit the researcher to work closely involved on the actual experiences of the participants. As a result, the researcher engaged with both the female principal and female teachers, communicated with these participants in collaborative and humanistic, as she carried out here study in a quiet contented setting at a high school in the Lejweleputswa District, which resulted in an effective feedback.

Qualitative research looks deep into the quality of social life. It finds the study within some particular settings and a correct application of the approach improves theory, evaluate programs, and develop involvements.

The qualitative case study method was used since it involves the collection of wide data in order to produce an in-depth understanding of the individual being studied.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 12) define qualitative research as an inquiry in which researchers collect data in face-to-face situations by interacting with selected persons in their settings. The qualitative research describes and analyses people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts, and perceptions. Qualitative research designs highlight the gathering of data on naturally going on phenomena and can be classified as interactive or non-interactive. This research falls in the category of qualitative designs that are classified as interactive.

Finally, qualitative research is always value-bound, and it can never be value free. Qualitative inquirers believe that it is impossible to develop a meaningful understanding of human experience without taking the interplay of both the inquirers' and the participants' values and beliefs into account.

### **3.4 Research Design**

The researcher embraced the qualitative approach for this study, which as noted by Makura (2009:06) falls under the interpretive paradigm. This research was conducted by means of a case study design. According to (Swanborn 2010, p. 13) a case study is "the study of a social phenomenon" and a method in which social data is structured in order to view a social reality (Best & Kahn 2003). Nieuwenhuis (2007: 70) also notes that a research design is a plan or strategy, which moves from the fundamental philosophical assumption to specifying the selection of respondents, data gathering methods to be used and data analysis to be done. Mouton (1996: 175) defines a research design as an exposition or plan of how the researcher plans to execute a formulated research problem. Thus, the objectives of the research design are to plan, structure and execute the relevant project in such a way that the validity of the findings are maximised.

Furthermore, the purpose of a research design is to provide a plan, a blueprint to specify the control mechanisms used in the study (Brink 1994: 100). This blueprint, as noted by Mason (2002:25), is based on the ongoing data collection and analysis. According to Creswell (1994:2) the research design in the qualitative setting refers to the complete process of research from conceptualising a problem to writing the

narrative. The goal of this study was to provide parents with more information about the female principals' perceptions and the female teachers' regarding the extent of parent involvement and school systems and increase awareness of the barriers to parental involvement. Therefore, this study provided both the researcher and participants with a better understanding of the nature of parental involvement in school systems occur and the barriers thereof.

This study employed a causal reasonable design, which is also referred to as an ex post facto design and "after the fact" (Ary 2012). The research design for this study is qualitative approach and it determines to what degree, do the difference exist between an independent variable and a dependent variable (Kaplan and Maxwell 1994). Thus, the studies were conducted after the discrepancy in the variable of interest has been resolved in the natural course of proceedings. In addition, parental involvement in school systems survey results was based on the female principal and female teachers.

Questionnaires were used to assess participants and to regulate their levels of satisfaction at the end of the case study. Participants' observation and face-to-face interviews were used as data collection methods. The validation for each of the data collection methods used in the study was discussed. A further discussion was held to confirm the reliability of the research, better criteria for qualitative research, and several methods that consist of peer reviews were recommended and later employed.

This research considers that both barriers to parental involvement in school systems and approaches to deal with them are context-based. This made the interpretive technique preferable because it considers the importance of context in relation to meaning. It assumes that all human action is significant and must be interpreted and understood within the framework of social practices. In keeping with the interpretive tradition, this researcher sought to understand individuals' interpretations of the world around them (Cohen and Manion, 1994:37) in relation to their involvement in their children's education at high school level. According to the interpretive paradigm, all information is perspective-bound and restricted.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:119) characterize research design as a strategy for selecting participants, research locations and data collection procedures to reply the research question(s). It reveals which individuals are better suited to assist and when, where and under which circumstances will they be studied. This study is a pragmatic investigation, based on epistemological theory that respects experience as the foundation or source of knowledge. Walsham (1993:np) the epistemological stance on interpretive approaches is that knowledge of reality is gained only through social constructions such as language, shared meanings, tools, documents.

Finally, the researcher answers the pragmatic research question by obtaining direct, observable information from the world, rather than by theorizing reasoning, or arguing from first principles (Punch, 2009:2). It summarises the procedures for conducting the study including when, from whom, and under what conditions the data will be obtained. Mouton (2003) indicates that a research design addresses the key question namely: What type of study will be undertaken in order to provide acceptable answers to the research problem or questions. Some researchers, who advocate the interpretive approach, assert that social phenomena must be understood in the social contexts in which they are constructed and reproduced through their activities (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). In other words, the understanding of social action must contain the meaning that social actors give to their actions (performance).

### **3.5 Ethnography and Phenomenology**

Ethnographic approach occurs when “the researcher studies the whole social group in its expected setting by closely investigating the group’s ways of life with the aim of telling and understanding patterns and behavior, values and practices” (Bloomberg and Volpe 2007:32). In this study, the researcher studies the female principal, particularly her actions in the school and on the teachers under her. The researcher sought to investigate the perceptions of female teachers and female principal regarding parental involvement and school systems. The primary objective of phenomenological study is to clarify the meaning, structure, and the essence of the lived experience of a person or group of people, around a specific phenomenon (Christenses, Johnson, and Tuner 2010). Any way participants can define their lived phenomenon, can be used to collect data in a phenomenological study. Hence, the



research sought to establish the barriers that prevent parents from being involved in the schooling of their children, and how the school management perceive parental involvement and school systems.

### **3.6 The Population and Sample**

#### **3.6.1 Population**

The population of this study consisted of fifty-five (55) teachers in one high school in Lejweleputswa District Free State Province, where the researcher conducted her study at. Bertram and Christiansen (2014:59) suggested that, population is used to mean the total number of individuals or groups that would be involved in a study and to which the study findings are to be generalized". The population is minor when compared to the universe. It consists of individuals with qualities that spur curiosity in the researcher and their study. According to Walliman (2011: 94) population is a collective term used to describe the total quality of things and uses of the type, which is the subject of the study. Ngechu (2004) assert that population is a well-defined or set of people or group of things that are being studied. Population represents the universe of components from which the sample is selected (Bryman & Bell, 2007:17).

#### **3.6.2 Sample**

The researcher's selection of one female principal and four female teachers was guided by the guidelines outlined by McMillan and Schumacher (2006). These are the purpose of the study, the focus of the study, the availability of the informants, the redundancy of the data, and the possibility of submitting the obtained sample size to peer review. On the other hand, a sample is a small portion of a target population designated using organised procedure for study (Wiersam 2008). It consists a group of people from a population or cosmos that is said to be demonstrative of that population or cosmos. In addition, whatever is reasonable in this group of people or sample, would be viewed within a similar sample from the same population (Strydom 2005: 193).



Finally, a sample should be illustrative of the individualities in a population. This means that the designated sample should have the same individualities of the population and these features should be relevant to the research topic at hand (Strydom 2005: 195). The sample of this research consists of four female teachers and one female principal at one high school in the Welkom area.

### **3.7 The Sampling Procedure**

There are various definitions for sampling. Neuman (2006:219) classifies sampling as a minor set of cases that a researcher picks from a larger pool and she makes simpler in relation to the population. Kumar (2014: 229) states that sampling is the method of selecting a few from a bigger group as the basis of assessing the frequency of an unknown piece of information concerning the bigger group. Sampling procedure is demarcated into probability and non-probability sampling methods. In probability sampling there are several types of sampling designs, which contain simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling and random digit dialing sampling (Neuman, 2006:227). In addition, non-probability sampling covers several sampling designs, which include random or convenience sampling, quota sampling, purposive sampling, snowball sampling, divergent case sampling, sequential sampling and hypothetical sampling (Neuman, 2006:220). The study employed purposive sampling to select the female teachers and female principal from the selected high school in Lejweleputswa District.

Purposive sampling is a method whereby a researcher divides the population into a standardized layer and then selects individuals from each division by purposive sampling in quantity to the total number that defines the division. Siririka (2007:34) notes that sampling is “the procedure a researcher uses to select people, places, or things to study”. In addition, purposeful sampling constitutes the selection of information-rich cases (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:325-326; Merriam, 2009:77; Patton 2002:230; Johnson & Christensen 2000:175). At the same time Harry, Sturges and Klingner (2005) contend that a researcher accomplishes an advanced analysis of data with a small sample size and reduces too much when there is a remarkable cooperation between quality and quantity. One can also learn some important things

from almost any case (Stake 2000). Therefore, the researcher regards the possibility and opportunity to learn from a small sample of four schools.

The strata include the females only, the researcher involved the females in her study because she wanted to shift away from patriarchal society. This allowed the researcher to select the cases to be included in the sample based on her decision of the female participants' typicality. This is an inclusive of sampling by case, which is a process where the researcher haphazardly chooses cases that will in all probability return the information that is required. The goals and objectives applicable to the parties was communicated by the researcher. The consent forms were sent to the educators and the female principal clarifying the goal and objectives of the study. They were also required to sign a consent form affirming that they are willing to participate in the study.

### **3.8 The Research Instruments**

Research instruments are those tools, such as questionnaires, tests, interview schedules and checklists used to assemble data (Seaman 1991:42). Polit and Hungler (1997:466) note that a questionnaire is "a method of gathering information from respondents about attitudes, knowledge, beliefs and feelings". The questionnaires were designed to gather information about the perceptions of the female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems.

The researcher used Interviews to collect data in this study. This technique was chosen as the other form of data collection because it permitted the researcher to engage with the educators and at the same time allowed the educators to freely express their feelings. The interviews also permitted the researcher to investigate and have an instant response assumed by the participants during their interviews and this elasticity of interviews made it thinkable for the researcher to collect as much information as possible.

The questionnaires were the major instrument used in this study. These questionnaires were prepared by reading reference materials about the parental involvement issues. The questionnaire was arranged in such a way that the

participants will be able to answer them easily. The questionnaires used sought to obtain information on perceptions of female principal and the female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems. Finally, the study used open-ended questionnaires to give the respondents the chance to give their responses and suggestions.

### **3.8.1 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire, selected as the data collection instrument in this study, is a written self-report form planned to bring about information that can be gained through the written answers from the study participants. The information gained through a questionnaire is parallel to that obtained via an interview, but the questions may be disposed of for having less depth (Burns & Grove 1993:368). The researcher also left open the possibility to verify interpretations with participants (Corbin & Straus, 2007:30). This was imperative because non-verbal behaviors are easily misinterpreted, especially cross-culturally (Patton, 2002:291).

The collection of data was carried out with the support of questionnaires. The objective here was to assess the perceptions of female principal in school systems and the female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement. The questionnaires were decided upon because of the following:

1. They confirmed a high response rate as they were disseminated to the participants to complete and were collected by the researcher. (Burns & Grove 1993:368)
2. They prerequisite less time and energy to administer them. (Burns & Grove 1993:368)
3. They offered a probability of privacy because participants' names were not essential on the completed questionnaires. (Burns & Grove 1993:368)
4. There was less opportunity for bias as they were presented in a consistent manner. (Burns & Grove 1993:368)
5. Most of the items in the questionnaires were closed, which made it easier to compare the responses to each item. (Burns & Grove 1993:368)

Finally, the use of questionnaires resulted from their suggestion that they are likely to encourage a measure of fairness, validity and reliability. Questionnaires were personally circulated to the participating school by the researcher. The close-ended part of the questionnaire has its own advantages, such as time consuming and the participants can complete the questionnaires during their own time at work or at home. The researcher used observation with interviews and questionnaires jointly (Burns & Grove 1993:368). Nonetheless, the researcher did not give meaning to action/interaction based on observation without first confirming the meaning with the participants.

### **3.8.2 Interviews**

Demarrias (2004: p.55) defines an interview as a “process in which a researcher and participants engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study”. An interview is also a person-to-person interaction that is held face to face or otherwise between two or more individuals with a specific purpose in mind (Kumar 2014: 176). The main purpose of an interview is to acquire an exceptional kind of data with the researcher seeking to find out what is “in and on someone else’s mind” (Patton, 202, p. 341). For the purpose of this study, the researcher will conduct an interview that requires face-to-face conversations with the participants regarding the study problem outlined in chapter 1. In this study, female principals and their subordinate teachers are the only people interviewed because of their level of knowledge. A Semi structured interview was used for this study. Turney and Rob (1991; 134) assert that, each participant will be asked the same questions in the same method and order in a semi structured interview and this will protect the validity and reliability of the study. Finally, researcher motivated all the respondents to participate in the study interview by informing them how valuable their responses to this study were and thus needed.

### 3.8.3 Structured interview

The researcher decided which of the accessible tools would be the most suitable for examining the subject of this study that, the literature review, interviews and questionnaires would be used to acquire the essential data for analysis. A structured interview was used for the female principal and female teachers to collect responses on approaches. Structured interviews were arranged using thematic content analysis to form part of the data for this study. The researcher used the identified themes as a basis for reasoning, planning, observation and the formulation of syntheses and conclusions to develop in the perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems.

The researcher employed the structured interviews in this study as a research instrument in order to attain exact answers. Structured interviews achieve this through the way in which they offer some arrangement and guidance to the interviewer (Harding 2013:31). Harding (2013:30) noted that, structured interviews create data through standardized interview schedules, and asking questions to be asked to each of the participants and asking questions in a precise order.

An interview is flexible and adjustable and involves direct communication between the participants and the researcher (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993:254). Kiewiets (2005:27) notes further that the interview method has advantages and is selected for the following reasons: (1) it decreases interview bias and leads to easier analysis; (2) it is context reliant and free from the impact of the interviewer such that a more neutral view of the social world of the participants emerges; and (3) It is completed individually. Thus, the researcher visited the school and explain the purpose of her research and requested the permission of interviewees prior to the piloting of the interview to use a tape recorder. The interviews with the female principal and female teachers of one high school were conducted during their lunch hours. Finally, the interviews were conducted in the English language, but for more simplicity, the dialect language (Sesotho) was also used.

### 3.8.4 Observation

Observation, in the arguments of Marshall and Rossman (2006:107), necessitates “the organized noting and recording of events, behaviors and artefacts in a social setting chosen for the study”. It holds muted cues, facial expressions, gestures, tones of voice and other non-verbalized social communications “which advocate the delicate meanings of language” (Hoberg 1999:103). According to Kumar (2012:141) non-participating observation contains a researcher that does not get intricate in the proceedings of the group. In this study, the researcher remained an inactive observer, while listening and watching on how the participants interact and drawing my own conclusions. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:350) argue that, observations are customs that a researcher can see and hear what is taking place in a natural research site. Research observation was employed in this study to determine the complex relation in a natural social setting and so it is (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:99). Corbin and Strauss (2008:29) state that observations are important because “it is not unfamiliar for persons to say they are doing one thing but in reality, they are doing something else”. Kumar (2012:140) contend that observations are significantly systematic and selective, in way of watching and listening to a communication while it is taking place. This study employed an observational technique as a non-participant. Maree (2016) emphasized that, the researcher gets into a situation focusing primarily on her role as observer in the situation and remains impassive and does not influence the dynamics of the setting.

Corbin and Straus (2008:30) state that people may also not be deliberately aware of or be able to articulate “the subtleties of what goes on in communications between themselves and others”. The researcher did not give the meaning to the collaboration based on observation, without first authorizing the meaning with participants. Finally, the researcher joined the observation with interviews and questionnaires for her study, because, as indicated by Patton (2002:291) it is important because non-verbal behaviors are easily misinterpreted, especially cross-culturally. According to Marshall and Rossman (2006:107) observation entails the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviours and artefacts (objects) in a social setting chosen for the study. It holds muted cues, facial expressions, gestures, tones of voice and other non-verbalised social interactions which suggest the understated meanings of language

(Hoberg, 1999:103). Marshall and Rossman,(2006:99) argued that observation is used to determine the difficult relations in natural settings, and observation is a fundamental method in all qualitative inquiry. Corbin & Strauss (2008:29) designate, observations are important because it is not unusual for persons to say they are doing one thing, but realistically, they are doing something else.

### **3.9 Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection procedures are the different techniques used to collect significant information used to analyses and interpret information. The researcher adhered to certain ethical protocol measures in respect with the Central University of Technology's ethical protocols before carrying on with the study and collecting data. The researcher first required permission from Department of Education (DoE) to conduct the research, from one high school, one female principal and eight female teachers. The researcher personally administered the interviews.

The researcher distributed the questionnaires personally to the female principal and female teachers for completion. The researcher issued covering letter enclosing appropriate explanation of the purpose of the study, and its importance to the study participants. Confidentiality of the information to be provided by the participants was ensured. Permission to conduct interviews for research purposes was required from the female principal well in advance and essential appointments made. This sought to ensure that the research activities would not interfere with teaching and learning in the schools, and that there was a mutual agreement between the researcher and the school principal, regarding the time and place where the scheduled interview would be conducted. The female principal requested that the interviews be conducted in her office to ensure that the interview would not be interrupted by certain barriers.

Data was collected through the arrangement of open-ended questionnaires, non-participative observations, and structured face to face interviews with certain female teachers and female principal of Lejweleputswa district. The researcher delivered the open-ended questionnaires to the participants with the participants requesting 72 hours before the researcher could collect the questionnaires. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont (2002:174) state that administrating questionnaires in this method



it allows the participants to finish the questionnaires on their own time. Administering of the questionnaires by hand typically saves time and offers an opportunity for the researcher to intermingle with the respondents, something that the researcher did as noted in her talking to the study's participants. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990: 20) data collection procedures, is when the researcher follows certain methods that will allow him or her to interview or use questionnaire method to obtain the required information with the involvement of the study participants. The participants were expected to specify their level of involvement and provide suggestions on how parental involvement and school systems can be improved. The interviews were audio taped.

### **3.10 Data Analysis Technique**

This segment looks at how each of the research questions were answered by means of data gathered from the piloted from interviews, open-ended questionnaires and observational techniques. Data analysis is the process of searching and positioning the interview transcripts and field notes methodically. Researchers (Savin-Baden & Major 2013:434; Mouton ,2011:108) contend that data analysis is a continuous process, which involves the breaking-up of data into its appropriate themes. Bogdan and Biklen (2007:159) assert that data interpretation refers to developing ideas about findings and relating them to literature and the broader concepts or concerns. Maree (2013:99) avows that qualitative data analyses documents through a variation of methods and procedures whereby researchers remove some form of explanation and understanding from the qualitative data collected from the participants and conditions that they are examining. Therefore, analysis includes working with the data, arranging, breaking it into convenient units, coding, making, and searching for patterns. This study employed the interpretive research approach. This study employed interpretive research approach, which according to Maree (2013:103) interpretive approaches aimed at including the use of specific data analysis approaches aimed at understanding how participants make meaning of a phenomenon under study.

The researcher recorded each interview with the participants, in order to study the content fully and be able transcribe it into written form. Transcriptions of audio-taped interviews and handwritten field notes were made with notes added for nonverbal information (e.g., gestures, laughter) that may have given additional meaning. The



recorded data was organised through themes and designed to address the main research questions of this study. The recorded data was analysed using thematic content analysis, which contains classifying mutual themes that appear from the data.

It should be underscored that a qualitative researcher must participate in active analytic processes throughout the research in order to make findings that transform raw data into new knowledge. Qualitative research usually produces huge data (Patton, 2002:440). The data must be organized. The sorting out of the data includes physically organizing and segmentation of the data. Bergh and van Wyk in Hoberg (1999:64) they argued that the sorting of data also, involves dividing data into meaningful segments, “which is already part of data analysis”. In addition, the early stages of data analysis occur concurrently with data gathering, because when the researcher gather data, willingly or unwillingly, she is investigating the participants (Rossman & Rallis 2003). Data collection, analysis and recording must not to be considered in segregation, relatively as combined procedures that are ongoing (Creswell, 2007:150-151; Marshall & Rossman, 2006:155). In other words, data collection and data analysis transpire simultaneously right from the first interview or observation, the researcher reveals on the meaning of what she has heard and/or seen, “developing guesses (working hypothesis) about what it means and seeking to confirm or disconfirm those guesses in successive interviews or observations” (Ary et al, 1996:481). This is inductive data analysis (proceeding from data to hypothesis to theory).

The data analysis comprises reducing data into summary (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003). In addition, data analysis is a procedure that involves bringing together what has been seen, heard, and read, so that the researcher can make a sense of it (Mahlangu 2008: 95). A researcher working with data must define it, make explanations, and try to bring up some suggestions to create some theories and link the study with other studies. This is achieved through categorizing, synthesizing, searching for patterns in and interpreting the data collected. McMillian & Schumacher (2010:367) argues that data analysis involves a relatively systematic process of coding, categorizing, and interpreting data to provide explanations of a single phenomenon of interest.

The researcher felt she was getting familiar with the notes, transcripts, and observations, because there was so much to absorb as she worked through the huge amount of collected data. The researcher started making notes of similarities and differences within “the female principal and female teacher’s arguments,” compelling the researcher to notice facts of the data. Finally, the researcher considered the integrity and validity of the study and worked maintaining the expected confidentiality with the data. In addition, the researcher became delayed in analyzing the data, deleting its meaning, and linking it to the study phenomenon, the researcher was required to go back to the guiding questions and the initial chapters of the study as presented below.

### **3.10.1 What are the perceptions of the female teachers and female principal on parental involvement and school systems?**

The first research question was attempted through the investigation of the data from individual interviews with the partaking school female teachers and female principal. The researcher conducted the interviews in order to investigate on how the school management perceive parental involvement and school systems, the perceptions of female teachers and female principal regarding extend of parental involvement and school systems in the Lejweleputswa District.

### **3.10.2 Which school systems act as barriers to parental involvement?**

The second research question was measured through the engagement of open-ended questionnaires. The questionnaires were explicit to make sure that the participants could answer freely and openly. Four female teachers and one principal completed the questionnaire. The questionnaire sought to reveal the school systems that act as barriers to parental involvement.

### **3.10.3 Which strategies do the teachers use to invite the parents?**

The third research question was addressed through the employment of observations, individual interviews, and questionnaires. The researcher observed how the school management approached the parents in the school premises who would be making queries about some issues related to the academics of their children, and the strategies that employed when they invited the parents in their natural school setting.

### **3.10.4 What is the role of the parents in the schooling of their children?**

The fourth research question sought to establish, the perceptions of female teachers and the female principal on the role of parents in the schooling of their children in Lejweleputswa District. The researcher attended to the research question by means of questionnaires and individual interviews.

## **3.11 Ethical Issues**

According to Savin-Baden and Major (2013:322) the ethical review process seeks answer questions about whether the lived experiences of others were better understood by gathering narratives of their life stories. This researcher sought to investigate the perceptions of female teachers and the female principal regarding the extent of parental involvement in school systems. According to (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 196) ethics are normally considered to deal with principles about what is right or wrong, good or bad.

The ethical measures considered in this study were the following:

### **3.11.1 Informed consent and voluntary participation**

The researcher provided the female principal and female teacher participants with a letter to show the purpose of this study. Participants were provided with adequate information about the study to allow them to choose whether to participate or not and complete the consent forms. The participants in this study were informed that their

participation would be voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

The participation of human beings in research investigations requested that care be pragmatic in order to protect the rights of the participants. Neuman (2003:116-118) asserts that, the researchers have an ethical and competent responsibility to be ethical and objective, even when research subjects are unknowledgeable of or indifferent about ethics. The researcher respects human dignity by not giving away the identity of the respondents. The researcher circulated the questionnaires to the respondents in addition to interviewing them. The participants were informed that they had a choice regarding whether or not to participate in the research, as they were not being forced to participate.

### **3.11.2 Anonymity and confidentiality**

The confidentiality of participants was guaranteed during the interview, the researcher gave the participants the assurance that, their identity will not be revealed nor their school identity in either way but would remain confidential (Bless, 2009: 143 & Wagner, 2012: 70). According to (McMillan & Schumacher, 2011) the researcher is ethically responsible for protecting the rights and well-being of the subjects who participate in the study. The researcher saved the recordings and transcripts strictly private. In addition, the names, and personalities of the participants of this study and the research sites were not exposed in the reviling of the findings. Encryptions were used to hide the names of participants and they were addressed as participants from school A. The encryptions were used to make sure that any person who reads the research report finds it difficult to link the response to a specific participant. This ensured that the personal details of participants remain anonymous.

The researcher also warranted all the participants of their anonymity and other ethical rights. The researchers aim to guarantee to the participants that the data they provide cannot be traced back to them in reports, presentations, and other forms of promulgation. Thus, pseudonyms were assigned to the female principal and female teachers participating in the study. That is, the participants were given s false names with the female principal named (Mme Nkele) and female teachers (Mme Dikeledi, Ntswaki, Matlakala and Njari). (N.B: Mme in Southern Sotho language is title for a

woman, an equivalent of Ms. or Mrs. but not Miss). Hence, the researcher strove to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of participants, which is essential to ethical research practice in social research.

Finally, the study participants were notified that their involvement is voluntary, and they can decide to leave the study at any time. This was done after they had been provided with all the information regarding the research and expressed their willingness to voluntarily participate in the research. The participants were also assured that the evidence obtained from this study would only be used for the purpose of the study.

### **3.12 Conclusion**

The chapter noted that the researcher implemented the qualitative approach in this study. The aim for using the qualitative approach was that it is a reliable method to use when conducting interviews, since it prevents the researcher from manipulating participants and produces the anticipated responses. The chapter also considered the study' sampling methods that included the female principal and female teachers of one high school, in order to gain the views of all stakeholders in the educational system. Furthermore, the researcher provided a detailed explanation of the methodological procedures used in the study and methods used to collect and analyses data. Finally, the chapter also outlined the researchers' role in maintaining confidentiality and anonymity during the study.

The following chapter focuses on the presentation, analysis, and discussion of the data.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data and analyses as well as interpret it in line with the research questions. These research questions revolve around the female teachers' and female principal understanding of parental involvement in school systems and the problems faced by female the selected principal and female teachers. The purpose of the study was to investigate the perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems.

#### 4.2 Data Presentation and Analysis

The study investigated the perceptions of the female teachers and female principal regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems from the Lejweleputswa District in the Free State Province of South Africa. The presentation and analyses of the data is structured under each of the study's four research questions. Jakuja (2009:75) clarifies that analysis emphasizes upon identifying recurrent themes across transcripts.

This study adopted the Epstein's six types of parental involvement Model as the theoretical framework. The study's interviews were conducted at a selected school in the Lejweleputswa District with one female principal and four female teachers. English was used as the medium of communication for both participants, however, the researcher used Sesotho after some participants requested to use their home language during interview. The researcher used the services of a translator, Ms. Mofokeng, during the interview who translated interview concerns into Setswana and Sesotho for the participants. The researcher translated their responses in English during interview.

The researcher gave a description on how data was captured using the research instruments and how it was analysed in this chapter. Data analyses consist of how the participants answered the four research questions using the reasonable approach.

According to Harding (2013:57) a researcher engaging the deductive approach needs to consider how the different sections of the interview transcripts would give rise to answering the research questions. The arrangement of data was constructed on the research questions as presented in chapter 1. The first research question set out to establish how the female teachers and female principal perceive parental involvement and school systems in one high school of Lejweleputswa District. The second research question sought to determine the school systems that act as barriers to parental involvement. The third research question focused on school systems that teachers use to invite the parents. The fourth research question sought to establish the role of parents in the schooling of their children. Data was captured using the research questionnaires which was done by the female principal and female teachers. Records were taken throughout the researcher's observations and the interview sessions with female principal and female teachers while interviews were recorded on the recording tape. Data that was assembled from the responses was analyzed as discussed in this chapter. It should be taken in consideration that, in chapter 3, under ethical consideration, the researcher stated that she would use pseudonyms in order to protect and hide the individualities of the study sample. Thus, Nkele, was assigned to the female principal, while the names, Matlakala, Njari, Ntswaki and Dikeledi was assigned to the female teachers, and these are referred to in the chapters focus on data presentation and analysis.

The researcher separated the data that was collected into related themes and looked for similarities and differences. Neuman (2006:322) describes data analysis as a technique for gathering and analysing the content of the text. This section then focuses on how each of the research questions were answered using data assembled from the directed individual interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and observational procedures, as well as how the study data was analysed.

#### **4.2.1 Research question 1: What are the perceptions of female teachers and female principal regarding parental involvement in high schools of the Lejweleputswa District?**

The first research question was answered through the analysis of data gathered from individual interviews with the participating school female teachers and female principal. The researcher conducted the interviews in order to investigate on both how the school management perceive parental involvement and school systems, and the perceptions of female teachers and female principal regarding the extent of parental involvement in school systems in the Lejweleputswa District.

The female principal and female teachers' perceptions are discussed under the following themes: 4.2.1.1 inadequate participation by parents, 4.2.1.2. lack of support from the parents

##### **4.2.1.1 *Inadequate participation by parents in school systems***

The female principal in the study held parental involvement and school systems highly and was of the view that it is a helpful and useful notion. Her responses affirmed that the involvement of parents in their children's and school activities is essential. Thus, Mme Nkele stated that parental involvement in school systems *"referred more to home-based involvement than school-based involvement."* The principal, Mme Nkele, noted further that, *"she views it as knowledge and awareness that education is important for the parents supporting their children and providing that education to them so that it gives their children a bright future and progress well... And she regularly visits the classrooms of the learners to see how teaching and learning takes place..."*

The female principal also expressed that the most unpleasant problem they experienced related to parental non-cooperation. She noted that parents would be invited to the school to discuss their children's problems, behaviour and progress but would not respond to any of the letters sent to them. Her views were confirmed by Mme Ntswaki, a female educator, as noted in her statement that, *"there is no parental involvement and encouragement from the parents, there is no home-schooling for their children, they are depending on us as teachers...when learners are given some*



*activities to be done at home, some of this learners come to school without doing their home-work..”*

Therefore, this approach makes it impossible for the involvement practice to be effective for the educators because some of the problems faced by learners need the parents to be involved and assist the educators. However, this may arise from other factors, as noted in Mme Dikeledi’s view *that*, “some of the parents are uneducated, hence they can’t assist with some activities given to their children and most learners are staying with their grandparents who can’t barely read nor write....”

The researcher gathers from the above analysis that children who stay with their grandparents rarely get assistances during their home-activates. This is indeed a negative observation, for learners who observe that there is a mutual collaboration between the schools and the parents can participate in their schooling effectively. The teachers’ responses are instructive here as noted below:

Mme Ntswaki, indicated that *“parents are needed to assist them so that the learners can be able to progress to the next grades but if the parents are uninvolved how will they know that their children are struggling, and they need their help and they are not doing justice to their work...”*

In addition, the principal, Mme Nkele concurred with Mme Ntswaki as noted in the statement that, *“parents are needed in school to assist them regarding issues that involve them as parents,’ every time when parents are called they do not respond and they make things difficult for us because some of the things need them as parents....”*

Thus, Mme Nkele underscored that parents need to work together with teachers and help their children to improve the quality of their education. The female teachers emphasized that, they need the parents to do home schooling to educate their children regarding their roles and responsibilities as parents. This indicates that, it is not easier for the educators to handle the problems of the learners alone as they need moral support from the parents and the community. Hence, the researcher’s observation that parental involvement in can be in a school context or home context, and it makes a good partnership between the schools, parents, and communities.

Ultimately, the data analysis revealed that it is not easy for female educators to cope with difficult learners, who at times commit misconduct in the school premises, in a context where the parents are unable to avail themselves when summoned to the school by the educators. The data also revealed that the participants have been in the field of education for some years, which suggests that they are able to set up a balance between them and the parents so that they can reach a common goal for the children and try to have responsibilities. A good partnership between the learners, parents, and teachers develops good home to school and school to home communication. In addition, the parents' assistance through involvement in education in any situation can result in positive changes in homes, communities, and the wider society (Republic of South Africa 2010; Scott & Sylva, 2004; UNICEF, 2009). Thus, there must be a firm and positive communication between the parents and the educators as this enables them to share some common goals for the schooling of their learners. The parents and the educators must be willing to share some responsibilities according to their school systems, for them to meet the required standard of their involvement in school. Their participation will create a solid relationship needed in helping their children to succeed in school and their future.

#### **4.2.1.2 Lack of support from the parents**

Lack of support from parents and negligence in teaching and learning creates barriers to learning. Teaching practice aims at identifying and addressing issues related to learners' academics, so that their diverse needs are accommodated within the inclusive curriculum (Mweli 2009:75). Mme Nkele *noted* in support that , *'at times you get different difficulties in class from different learners in different perspectives, where you end up needing the support from the parent so that as the community and parents to the child / learners we can come up with one common goal.....'*

In addition, Mme Nkele said that, *"at times as a female principal people do not want to work with you because they question your position as the leader of the school, and they won't cooperate even for the sake of their children and show a moral support..."*

With this principal's concern arises also data's indication that women school leadership is supportive and possesses good communication skills. The reality is that, school systems that employ females inspire parental involvement than create barriers in their search for means to enhance and develop resilient pedagogies. Makura (2011) emphasizes that such positive leadership and management styles of women they mainly emanate from Europe, Australia, and the Americas. Nonetheless, the parents or the community must communicate with the educator of the learner even the principal irrespective of gender in leadership.

Parental support is indeed significant in the children's lives. The parental support can be shared amongst the teachers, learners, and the community. Nonetheless, parental support enables parents to know the grade of their children and to assisting them in tackling tasks in their course of study throughout the period of study. On the contrary, lack of parental support in o the schooling of their children limits the parents' chances to be updated with the running of the schooling and the kinds of extra-mural activities that their children would be taking part in. Secondly, the parents must assist their children in applying to higher institutions, see to it that their children are accommodated and safe and have the desire to guide their children on making better career choices (Simon 2004:192). Lastly, the parents must also take part in acknowledging the work of their children in school and assist where they struggle. The above observations from the study's data concur with current research as noted by Garcia and Thornton (2014:1) who show that the involvement of family in learning helps to increase the student performance, reduce absenteeism, and restore parents' self-reliance in their children's education.

Furthermore, female teachers complained about the lack of both parental involvement and support in the teaching and learning of their children. The participants indicated that some parents are always busy to visit the school, come and watch their children participate in sports against other schools, or to come and see and support the potential that the learner have in certain skills. This is confirmed by Mme Ntswaki in her response that, *“parents don't show any support in terms of their children's academics, but they only show support to their children when they fail or repeat their*

*grades.*” However, research praises parental involvement as evident in Kwatubana and Makhalemele’s (2015:315) emphasis that parents’ involvement in the education of their children is a good thing because it increases the children’s academic performance and the learners become more focused in their schoolwork owing to the support from their parents. In addition, Makura (2008) locates educational leadership in the activities that influence the educators towards reaching the success of educational goals at an educational institution.

Interestingly, lack of parental support can lead to a variety of anti-social behavior that could result in intervention by the law. Parents need to support their children, physically and psychologically. Bojuwoye (2009: 462) notes that the more the parents lack support that is needed by their children in their education in school the more the parents are said to be neglecting their duties towards their children’s schooling. This condition of lack of parental support and its potential negative consequences is confirmed in the teachers’ responses. For instance, Mme Dikeledi indicated that, *“if parents lack support for their children’s academics, then they are not doing justice to their children, because the same children end up being naughty.”* In addition, Mme Nkele pointed out that, *“if there is no parental involvement, the learners will end up being dropouts, because no one will be interested in their academic progress. [However] parents do not want to be held responsible for the behavior of their children, not only misbehavior but also academic performance.”* Thus, parents are their children's greatest advocates and their readiness to contact teachers on regular basis about their children's progress is possibly the first step to becoming involved in their children's education and working towards preventing any future anti-social behavior.

The information provided by participants from the study while the researcher was collecting data leads to the conclusion that, the amount of support for the female principal and the teachers received from the parents is not enough. Instead, Simon (2004: 192) explains that good parenting consists of various areas, chief among them being that parents must know the choice of the career that their children wish to follow after completing their high school. A further observation by the researcher is that if the parents and the community’s lack of support and involvement in the schooling of their children is based on the gender of leadership, their children will suffer, and the

condition is not likely to change because things will be the same whether a female or male runs the school.

#### **4.2.2 Research question 2: Which school systems act as barriers to parental involvement?**

The second research question was examined using open-ended questionnaires. The questionnaires, completed by four female teachers and one principal, were explicit in order to enable the participants to answer the questions freely and openly. The questionnaire sought to reveal the school systems that act as barriers to parental involvement. Data obtained from the educators' questionnaire shows that there are several barriers to parental involvement.

Barriers in this segment refer to all those factors, which prevent parents from becoming involved in the education of their children. There are main barriers to parental involvement in schools include the school environment, school culture and climate, time constraints, changing demographics and employment patterns, and the lack of teacher preparation on involving parents in their children's schooling, and the nature of the school atmosphere and school climate.

The data showed that there existed barriers that prevent the parents from availing themselves at school premises. Female principal and female teachers of one high school from Lejweleputswa District contented b with some barriers that prevented parents from availing themselves to school. These barriers, which were sorted into themes, are discussed in the next section.

School systems that act as barriers are discussed under the following themes: 4.3.1.1. time as barrier to parental involvement and school systems, 4.3.1.2. Language as barrier to parental involvement and school systems, 4.2.1.3. Poor communication between school and home

##### **4.2.2.1 *Time constraint as barrier to parental involvement in school systems***

The data obtained from the female principal's questionnaire revealed that the school is faced with several barriers. One of these relates to time constraints, whereby parents are unable to sacrifice their time to visit school or avail themselves in school

meetings. This is confirmed by Mme Nkele's statement that, "*some parents are working, this delays them from responding or attending when summoned to school... [over] learner behavior, naughty or misbehaving learners, parents shy away from coming to school... another factor; parents' attitude towards the school... the parents don't have time to visit the school at all.*" The principal also noted that distance and choice of days to hold meetings play a significant role. Thus, Mme Nkele observed that, "*it is not easy for us as educators to have all parents at the meeting, because some are staying far from the school... but when I as the principal calls for meetings, I prefer to call meetings on Sunday mornings for the parents to attend that meeting...*"

Parents devote their time, attention, and resources in their children with the belief of a return, which is that their children will perform better in school (Makgopa and Mokhele 2013:220). McNeal (1999) states that parental involvement includes three broad domains, parent-child relations, parent-school relations, and parent-parent relations. It is generally expected, in all three cases that parents devote time with their children, school personnel, or other parents with the hope that their involvement will yield a tangible return. Nonetheless, the female teachers stated that, the only time that parents can afford, is when their children are being punished or send to detention. Mme Njari responded by saying "... *Parents don't have time to check the progress of their children and to visit the school.*" Mme Njari, indicated that "*the parents are unavailable or have some excuses claiming that the school requests meetings late and that time is not appropriate for them to visit the school.*" In addition, Mme Ntswaki supported the statement by Mme Njari in her claim that, "*if you as a teacher have a quarrel with a learner, the parent will have time to avail themselves, but in terms of the learners' schooling they don't, they claim that it is our job to see that their children are learning, they don't have time.*"

Koone and Harper (2005: 56) stated that, parents often complain about inconvenient meeting times, which affects the child' progress and the school management's resources. Both the school management and the parents play an important role in improving the child's academic progress. Hence, it is important for the two parties to have time and discuss learners' performance. Both parties are expected to make time and come up with strategies regarding the things that make the learner fail or progress.

Modisaotsile (2012: 3) stated that, both parties I never has the time as expected, because parents do not have time and are always busy to consult the educators.

Therefore, the above statements made by the principal and the teachers show that time is a real barrier in the school. In addition, the unavailability of the parents when summoned to discuss certain issues concerning their children, affects the school programme. The data also revealed that, time is a vital factor for educators and parents. Teachers need time to plan and form parent activities, which also means that administrators must provide training and time on how to work with parents if they are to increase parents' involvement.

#### **4.2.2.2 Language differentials as a barrier to parental involvement and school systems**

The use of only English as a medium of instruction in verbal and written communication appears to be a challenge to some parents as they cannot express themselves confidently and do not understand written communication in a language other than their mother dialect. Thus, parents become discouraged because of their incapacity to express themselves and might not involve themselves in school activities. This observation is evident in the teachers' responses. Mme Ntswaki stated that, *"the most common barrier that hinders the parents to avail themselves or to be involved in their children 'schooling, is the use of language... some parents don't want to be approached by using English, they feel as if you undermine them, some of us we don't know Sotho or Xhosa, so we prefer English to communicate."* In addition, Mme Njari stated that, *"we try our best to meet the parents half way with the language we use during our sessions, but the parents will claim that , during that session, they did not understand nothing, bearing in mind that our school , we have different cultures, hence we use English as a medium of language..."*

Therefore, Mme Njari's statement underscores that language usage during parent-teacher meetings is a barrier. Educators and parents play an important role in improving learner's educational performance and as such both parties need to find time to discuss all educational matters that affect the learner's performance both in school and at home using a language that is accessible to both.



#### **4.2.2.3 Poor communication between school and home**

The researcher mentioned in the previous chapter that she used (Sesotho) to interview the participants, even though the interview was conducted in the English as medium of language. This underscores the need for improved communication between the school and parents. The research data showed that poor communication by female teachers and female principal is a barrier to parental involvement and school systems. Thus, Mme Nkele stated that, *“we try to communicate with parents from all the angles of communication, but we don’t receive any feedback from them.”* The principal also confirmed that they use different languages in attempting to communicate with parents. As a result, Mme Nkele claimed that, *“we do send messages in English, but they translate the same message in Xhosa and Sesotho.”* Nevertheless, the researcher is of the view that teachers and the principal and parents are guilty of not communicating with each other owing to poor communication. Thus, the progress of the child must be discussed using appropriate communication, whether verbal or non- verbal.

The data also showed that inadequate communication was the major reason for the lack of parental involvement. The inadequacy lay in the lack of clear, straightforward, and helpful information from the teachers to parents. Female teachers, however, felt that parents do not communicate about significant issues that concern their children. Some parents might regard themselves not educated, claiming that the school should be the one to handle their children. Mme Ntswaki noted that, *“we know that some parents of the children we teach are not educated enough to be able to help their children with their school activities written in English, but their assistance will be highly appreciated here at school...if they communicate with us, so that we can be able to assist where needed.”* Furthermore, the Epstein’s model argues that children learn more at home when there is a two-way communication between the home and school regarding the support needed by children or learners (Epstein and Sheldon 2006). Hence, the educators must communicate with families about school programs and learner progress and must create two-way communication channels between school and home.



The two-way communication between the parents and the school has to be civil, respectful and warm so that the parents can feel appreciated. The school must also try not to give parents the impression that their meetings are platforms where they discuss the misbehavior of their children. Finally, most of the parents have cell phones and as such they can access the teachers.

The data showed that although female teachers and female principal appear to have accepted that the parents have no communication at all with them, they still try to engage with the parents. Both the principal and teachers use different communication strategies in order to create a home-school learning culture and improve the academics of the learners. Thus, the educators of the school under study were of the view that their turnaround strategy will work for them and parents, as noted in Mme Nkele's statement that, *"we encourage parents to inform us if they have changed their cell phone numbers, so that we can get hold of them or they get hold of us, so that we can communicate about issues concerning the child."*

Furthermore, home visits are essential. These visits will serve to help families of pupils understand the school environment and enable schools to understand the families. Epstein (1997) outlines the six types of parent involvement within the areas of overlapping spheres, which include communication as one of the overlapping spheres of influence. In addition, Epstein (1996) explained type 2: communication where the school designs effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication. Communication should include features such as WhatsApp, school Facebook page etc to deliver information on school programmes and children's progress to parents and this communication should allow for feedback from the parents. Communication between stakeholders at times is not possible for them to reach a common agreement, and there are certain barriers that distract the communication process in a negative way. Barriers such as psychosocial barrier in communication comprehend awareness of reality. Both stakeholders and school community need to understand one another's approach and intellectual capacity. During communication both stakeholders, should consider avoiding the insolence of insignificances when communicating, it is important to understand various perceptions of a situation.

The researcher asserts that the problem could be because the culture of the school tends to resemble white, middle class cultural values, resources and communication methods that are alien to some communities (Haack 2007:30). This poses a negative influence on parental involvement and school systems relating to parents from other cultures. Communication to home and school should be open and stress free. Tam and Chan (2009:81) assert that open communication between parents and teachers can assist parents to feel at ease about receiving the help needed with their children's academic work. Tam and Chan, (2009:81) emphasize that communication should not only be about negative things that occurred at school but also about special things or positive things that happened in class.

Data obtained from the female principal and female teachers' questionnaires indicated that, positive communication is best used when there are problems that need the parents' input for the learners who have committed misconduct at school. The female participants believe that communication is the way they understand parental involvement. The participants also believe that communication can be used to involve parents in schools. The findings also reveal that, where there is adequate communication, there is an assurance that both parents and teachers will have a close working relationship.

The need to communicate should be underscored. The responses suggest that the need to communicate could be the result of not knowing the importance of communication. According to Pate and Andrews (2006) the importance of communication is captured when parental involvement involves commitment and interaction with the educators about the learners' progress. Thus, schoolteachers thought that apart from memos and notes, a newsletter could be used. Nevertheless, barriers, as explained by the female principal and female teachers' questionnaires occurred, as tabulated, and arranged in Table 4.1.

The data reflected in Table 4.1 is instructive. The table shows that a majority of the participating female teachers and the female principal raised time as one of their barrier. It is the responsibility of the parents to find time to meet with the educator of the learner. If there is no parental meeting coming up soon, parents have to ask if they can make an appointment for a brief conversation.

Table 1

**4.1. Strategies for encouraging parental involvement in school system.**

Barriers	Frequency <i>N</i> = 6	Response percentage
Time as a barrier to parental involvement and school systems	5	96%
Language as a barrier to parental involvement and school systems	5	96%
There is a poor communication between school and home	6	100%

**4.3 Research Question 3: Which Strategies Does the School Use To Invite The Parents?**

Various strategies can be used by the schools to get the parents involved in their children's learning. These can, be done through working with the community, using traditional means such as announcements, flyers and radio stations, and the use of non-traditional methods such as phone calls and sending of emails. According to Kwatubana and Makhalemele (2015:317), some schools do not use sound recruitment procedures that motivate parental involvement in school activities. Furthermore, in the same study, some schools in the Free State decided to use a raffle to select parents that would be food handlers and be part of the school governance. Such strategies for encouraging parental involvement and school systems are discussed under the following themes: 4.4.4.1. Handwritten notes and other media, 4.4.4.2. There must be regular meetings with the parents.

4.3.1

**4.3.1.1 *Handwritten notes and other media as strategies for encouraging parental involvement and school systems.***

Data revealed that, the educators make use of handwritten notes and other media such as WhatsApp, the school Facebook page and emails to the parents. It was also evident that mailing a note to the parents can be the most inconvenient process because some parents do not have email accounts. Mme Nkele confirmed these communication these communication strategies thus, “*we mostly use letters that we*

*give to the learners in case we want to invite the parents on parental meetings... we are at the moment in the process of engaging SMS bulk systems to the school, so that we should be able to reach all the parents at school. ... and we have also asked them to give us their new cellphone numbers if there are those who got new cellphones, so that we can be able to reach them through the school WhatsApp group and Facebook page.”* These strategies meet with various levels of success, as noted by Mme Nkele in a further statement that, *“there are those parents who promptly respond when we have called them, we hope that we are going to see an improvement in the sense that in the parent’s meetings we only invite those parents whose learners/ children are showing no improvement into their academic activities.”*

Therefore, the female principal underscored some of the strategies they use to encourage parental involvement and school systems towards attendance of workshops and regular meetings with the parents. Nevertheless, the study data showed that, written communication is a permanent instrument that entails careful consideration regarding format and content. The goal is to establish a concise, exact information so that parents will be able to read and understand the written communication (LETTERS). Thus, an effective school keep parents up to date through regular two-way communication.

Shezi (2012: np) argued that, some schools make a sensible effort to involve parents. These schools encouraged parental involvement regardless of the barriers, such as unemployment, poverty, and sicknesses, existing in their communities. The school and parents need to communicate through letters, notices, and announcements so that they can work together and make sure that the message can travel fast to the parents. The study data, while acknowledging attempts the sensible means used to connect the with parents notes various factors that determine effectiveness of these efforts and strategies. For instance, Mme Nkele stated that, *“here and there the effectiveness depend on the attitude of the child and the discipline of the child, sometimes you find that you give the letter to “ehhhhhh...” learner to give the parents but they don’t do as they were requested and the letter did not reach the parents and we will be wondering as to why the parents are not responding when the parent is summoned to school.”* She also mentioned that *“they sometimes make use of the billboard outside*

*where we put on the poster that invite parents, sometimes if it is urgent, we make use of the rock the community radio station.”*

The study's data also revealed that the school used various means, such as WhatsApp, school Facebook page, SMS, and letters, to communicate with parents. These means, which include letters, notices, and announcements, enable both the school and parents to work together and ensures that the communication does not break down. The researcher also observed that the principal has established a regular schedule to invite parents and make sure that they can be involved. It was also observed that the principal and teachers usually set aside a small amount of time each day and use all feasible means to communicate regularly with parents, using suitable communications such as Letters by mail, Telephone and Face-to-face. The female principal emphasized that, they involve the parents to bring ideas that will bring the school forward, and yet not all parents avail themselves for such things that can and will build the future of their children.

Letters are convenient for the parents and thus used as a form invitation to school. Data collected from the female principal and female teachers' questionnaire emphasizes the importance of feedback after the parents have been issued some letters to avail themselves to school. Finally, the data from both the female participants' questionnaire indicates that they always make a point that every parent receive a letter with the school logo and with some important highlighted matters regarding the school matters which might have an influence on the future of the school.

#### **4.3.1.2 Regular meetings with the parents**

Parent-teacher meeting focus on the child's learning and progress. These meetings offer significant time for a parent to meet with their child's teacher(s) a one- to- one setting. Mme Nkele stated that, *“one –on- one meeting with the parents either on behavioral problems displayed by the learner will assist a lot on how to deal or punish the learner.”* This type of meeting motivates the child because they can see that their parents do care about their education. Therefore, conducting effective parent-teacher

meetings can increase the parent's involvement in the child's learning and it can help to promote positive outcomes for the parent, teacher, learners, and the school.

Some parents do not visit the school as often as they are needed. The study shows that, the teachers do not only want to meet with parents whose children are misbehaving at school only, but with each and every parent whose child is a learner in that school, so that they can discuss matters related to school. In addition, the principal specified that sometimes they emphasize the human aspect, so that they can accommodate the parents and their children. The researcher is of the opinion that the school principal should maintain a balance between the parents and the educators.

#### **4.3.1.3 School climate, which is inviting to parents.**

The school climate is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures. A sustainable, positive school climate fosters youth development and learning that is productive, contributive, and satisfying in a democratic society. Cooper (2003:35-36) notes that a school climate encompasses people's perceptions on their working environment regarding caring and kindness. Furthermore, a school climate is of the people's understanding on the amount of kindness they share with each other and hospitality they receive as they work together in school. Therefore, a school climate is perceived based on how the staff, learners and community influence their behavior.

A school climate embraces the perceptions on safety and relationships with teachers, learners, parents and administrators, which t people have. In the researcher's opinion school climate is seen as norms, values, and opportunities that support people to feel socially, emotionally, and physically safe, and a setting where people are involved and respected. Students, families, and educators work together to develop, live and contribute to a shared school vision. Educators model and encourage an attitude that highlights the benefits of, and fulfillment from, learning. Therefore, each person interjects to the procedures of the school and the care of the physical setting.

Based on data collected, it really shows that the methods the school use to invite the parents is convenient for the parents to avail themselves to the school. Mme Nkele stated that, *“we have policies known as open-door policy that assist us welcome the parents when we have invited them to school.”* This indicates that a positive school climate relates to the development of teachers’ beliefs that they can positively move the student learning. In addition, Mme Matlakala stated that, *“we as the school we have a policy, which is, when the parents are invited to school there must be a welcoming climate for the parents must feel appreciated.”* Hence, a school climate, which is part of school systems in this study, refers to the trait and character of school life. It is also the heart and soul of the school, that dynamic of a school that leads a child, a teacher, and a manager to love the school and to look forward to being there each school day. Finally, a positive school climate, as the one described above by Mme Nkele, helps individuals to feel socially, emotionally, and physically safe in schools.

Data from this study also revealed that a welcoming school atmosphere assures the invited parents that there will be a positive communication between the parents and the school management. As the female principal stated earlier, *“if the parents avail themselves to meetings when they are summoned, there will be an improvement between the school, learners and the parents.”* As a result, the researcher argues that the method or the approach that the school under study used to invite the parents is effective in that all the parents were able to receive an invitation and to give feedback regarding their availability based on the invitation.

#### **4.4 Research Question 4: What is the role of parents in the schooling of their children?**

The discussion on the role parents in the schooling of their children falls under the following themes: 4.5.1.1 parents’ involvement in school management and governance, and 4.5.1.2. parental participation in the schooling of their children.



#### **4.4.1.1 Parents involved in school management governance.**

There is need for parental involvement in school governance. The reality, however, is that there is little parental involvement and school systems presently occur at public schools where various aspects favor the implementation of a programme of parental involvement and school systems. The study's data highlights the need for parents' involvement. Mme Nkele stated that, *'Parents should have a say/ voice in the education of their children and also the parents must have a supporting role in the management of the school to alleviate behavioral and social factors from factoring into the school premises. "In addition, Mme Nkele acknowledges the positives of parental involvement as noted in her statement that, 'Parental involvement is very important, ehhhhhh...., there is a turnaround... there should be that turnaround if the parents are involved in the schooling of the child"'*.

In the past, interaction between the home and the school was often hostile and unpleasant. This is because schools would summon parents after a learner's failure to meet the school's expectations, while parents contacted the school only when they experienced problems with the learner's education. Educators want parents to deliver structures, including rewards and punishment, which they use in order to assist their children with their homework Stern (2003: 47) and Epstein and Dauber (1993: 61) point out that parents also want to be involved in the drafting of school policies and to have input on how the school should run. According to (Epstein, 1996, Safran, 1996) the role of parents in their children's education is an important factor in educational success and school improvement. Muller (2009: np) states that, "Family-school and community partnerships are re-defining the boundaries and functions of education.

They enlarge parental and community capacity; they create conditions in which children learn more effectively. In these ways they take education beyond the school gates." Parent's role in their children's learning develops as their children grow and yet the reality that parents are their children's learning models remains constant. The attitudes of the parents about education can motivate their children and show them how to take charge of their own educational journey. Parents are their children's first teachers in the exploration of nature, development of early reading, cooking and



counting by doing all these things together. Therefore, the parents' guidance will assist the children to establish their time and to learn new things in and out of school.

Parental involvement and school systems programmes should think about the different parental circumstances in adapting strategies for parental involvement and school systems to the needs of all parents. This is evident in the study data as noted in Mme Nkele's statement regarding how parents in school management and governance collaborate, *"we usually , ahhh, always in contact with the parents 'learners who are misbehaving and we neglect those learners who are towing the line, so that they can be familiar with our school policies and procedures."* At the same time participation and observation are key as noted by Mme Nkele that, *"they involve the parents in school management... so that they can be able to observe what the school is in need of and how can the parents offer their assistance."*

According to (South Africa, 1996, section 29(2); Namibia, 2001, section 19 (4) a parent can be a chairperson of the school governing body for as long as that parent is not employed to that school. The Acts clearly indicate that parents must be part of their children's schooling and seek to encourage them to be part of the school systems and on how the policies of schools should run. According to Epstein (2009:np), it is very important to include parents in developing, reviewing, and improving school policies that affect learners at the school in order to get the parents involved in the running of the school. The involvement of parents in the school management of governance offers both parties a say on how the education of the child. Molepo (2000:73) suggests that the three stakeholders (parents, educators, and learners) have to be empowered to work like a three-legged pot, simply because one party is absent others would not work. Hence, the stakeholders must appreciate the importance of one another.

The notion of SGBs as part of education through democratization is relatively new in South Africa. The establishment of the SGBs indicates that the government has accepted parents' rights and responsibilities in the education of their children. The rights and responsibilities of the parents might not be enough or might decrease if parents are excluded from participating in the education of their children. SASA (1996: preamble) states that SGB members and parents and community members are both exercising their civic rights and responsibilities at the grass roots level and advancing

the democratic transformation of society by opening up schools and redressing the legacy of the past. The South African Schools Act of no 84 of 1996 (SASA) places some tasks on parent governors in South Africa. According to Hayes (2012:567) parental role in education does not only consist of having direct involvement in schools as it also involves indirect or hidden behaviors such as discussing school, parent, and family issues, while also assigning educational expectations. Therefore, the role of the parents in education is to assist their children with their homework, pay school fees, purchase learning resources, and communicate with the school. Other roles are observed when a parent attends school activity, engages in parent-child discussions for higher education studies, and listens to adolescent thinking.

#### **4.4.1.2 The level of parents' participation in the schooling of their children**

The role of parents in the education of their children is extremely significant and it must focus on issues that improve the student's learning activities. The reality in most cases is that those children whose parents are more active in participating in their school life study tend to do much better than those parents, who ignore school visits. The researcher points out this view because, of the big number of parents, who do not wish to be involved in their children's school life. The principal's responses confirmed this non-involvement in school activities, or an involvement that is non-student-based issues in here statement that, *"In most cases, other parents' role in their children schooling has nothing to do with how their children progress academically. [...] They come to school to reprimand the teachers and inform them on how to do their work as educators of their children."* On the contrary, parents who engage positively with the schoolteachers and participate in school activities tend to witness their children progressing to another level or grade. Shumane (2009:32) states that "parents can make a significant contribution to school activities, especially in those activities that fall outside the expertise of education but also where such a parent is an expert." Therefore, parents have a moral duty to support their children through every stage of their periods in their schoolwork. In addition, those parents who do not participate should, as Mme Nkele's states in study the data, *"attend workshops so that they can know their role, they must also have some activities that involve them as parents."*

Bull, Brooking and Campbell (2008) state that the home learning environment develops the child's social progress and an important contributing factor to the educational outcomes of the child at all stages of the learning curve. The level of parents' involvement in the schooling of their children needs to function in a way that agrees the school activities and expectations. Hill and Taylor (2004; Pomerantz, Moorman and Litwick (2007) states that the role of parents in the school environment should differ from their role when they are at home and that the two roles complement each other. That is, parents can participate in their children's extra-mural school activities and attend meetings with their children's teachers regarding their progress.

The indication from above is that parents should ask the educators about the role that they should play. This will help both parties to solve problems in partnership. Female educators indicated that, the parents must know their role in the schooling of their children and not neglect their duties. The data shows that Mme Ntswaki was of the view stated that, *“the level of the parents in the schooling of their children is not sufficient, because they don't even avail themselves to check the progress of their children or how they cope at school.”* In addition, Mme Ntswaki pointed out that, *“the parents must see that their children are properly doing their schoolwork, eh, their children are always at school at the right time, so that the child is doing his or her schoolwork.”*

At the basic level of involvement, parents need to ensure that their children attend school and should encourage positive feelings about school within these children. Parents need to create a communication channel that will support their children. The level of parents' involvement in the schooling of their children should operate in a way that is agreed upon by the school management. In that manner, there will be a functional amount of respect and collaboration and collaboration between both parties creates mutual trust and the belief that the children are completing their tasks given to them by their educators.

Data from the study revealed that parental Involvement is fundamental to learner success. Teachers inform parents about what would be happening in the child's life that pertains to the child's school performance. At the same time, parents should get involved in school governance activities such as the school's decision-making,

formulation of policies and in developing parent leaders and representatives. School management governance and decision-making has not been as precisely assessed as parental involvement in the schooling of the parents' children and their progress. Nevertheless, school governance is essential and can be used effectively to create significant procedures, control the behaviour and ensure relevant and long-term continuity in school. Weeto (1997: 17) emphasized that, parents are legally the primary educators of their children and have a duty to perform duties such as monitoring their children's work and involved in their children's extra-mural activities. Finally, parents are placed in powerful positions, such as the school governing body, so that they can make an impact in the school budget and when making of policies.

The National Education Policy outlines what is expected from teachers, parents, and principals about the education of the learners both, at school and home. It also classifies school governance as a structure for an operational school functioning. Msila (2004: 301) points out that the South African Schools Act (1996) provides formal power in education to parents as well as communities. The SASA generates the belief for parents to be meaningful partners in school governance (Msila 2004: 301). Therefore, parental involvement in the development of a child's education and overall development is one of the essential indicators of the achievements set by the national educational acts. It is also through this involvement that children recognize and appreciate the significance of a solid education.

The responses of the female principal and female teachers noted that their understanding of parental involvement and school systems was expansive. Both gave significant responses regarding the different parts of parental involvement activities. There, however, exists a lack of common understanding and appreciation of parental involvement in the school systems of governance. As a result, the parents have to be the first educators in their children's education and be able to notice what the school is in need of. Parents must also assist the school, ensure that they do not work on commitments that disadvantage learners or their children. Finally, the researcher is of the opinion that parents' understanding of the reality of things would put them in a better place to assist the school principal and staff to improve in all school areas where there may be lack. This also means that parents must participate in school activities

and in school systems governance in a way that seeks to achieve the democratic changes of education at all levels.

Parental involvement and school systems should enable both parents and teacher to get involved in any aspect of their children in schooling. Both should also assist parents to improve the academic performance of their children. Parents can be significant because parental involvement in the education of the child, such as assisting school projects financially and attending meetings, is essential. There are different tasks aimed at improving the child's development that parents need to support. Hence, Katz & Bauch, (1999: 3) asserts that the active involvement of parents' community in the school is one of the essential ingredients of the successful schooling of the child.

#### **4.5. Data Discussion**

Data revealed that the school management tries as much as possible to invite the parents to school. The female educators indicated that they welcome parents' visits to the school so that they can discuss certain issues concerning school finance or any change that needs to take place at school. Data also revealed that several attributes undermine parental involvement and school systems. These attributes include inadequate participation of parents, lack of support from the parents, involvement of parents in the school management of governance, parental participation in the schooling of their children, school systems that act as barriers to parental involvement and strategies that encourage parental involvement and school systems.

The school has a supporting environment that is conducive to learning and teaching. The researcher observed that the school buildings and security gate were safe and secured for the learners. The school appears like an excelling school in terms of learning and teaching. If the community as whole work together, they will be able to improve parental involvement and school systems. The parents have to work together with the school when invited. Preetika and Priti (2013:40) assert that the principals' views regarding the lack of parent involvement is a problem for principals as they need the support of parents.

Data drawn from the interviewees, questionnaires, researcher's observations and the researcher's own point of view showed that the female teachers and female principal perceive parental involvement and school systems as the strategies and the means of communication to involve the parents in order to address issues related to their children at school. The involvement facilitates communication over the children's academic performance, the role that the parents must play in the schooling of their children and the barriers that undermine the ability of parents to avail themselves. Data also showed that, parental involvement and school systems are important aspects in schools, especially when it involves both parties to the schooling of the child \ learner.

Stouffer (in Monadjem 2003:356) argues that schools need to send out regular newsletters to parents to enable both parties to monitor the progress of the learner on a daily or weekly basis. According to Epstein (1986:288) the school management's communication with the parents regarding issues that include school activities builds the parents' confidence and desire to gain knowledge on how to help their children. The gained confidence also encourages the parents to make suggestions and contributions freely on matters related to school activities. The schoolteachers' communication with the parents, irrespective of whether the communication is in the form of a letter, WhatsApp or face-to-face communication should be polite, respectful, and friendly. In addition, a welcoming atmosphere must be available for the parents because a warm experience at the school makes them feel appreciated and cherished. Therefore, parents invited to school meetings should be aware that they are there to account for their children's behavior and not to judge educators for not doing their work or justice to their children.

According to Makgopa and Mokhele (2013: 220) parental involvement is a mixture of supporting learner's academic achievement and contributing in school-initiated functions. Bakker (2007:214) emphasizes that parents need to monitor their children's homework and aid when needed. The non-involvement of parents creates challenges for teachers because there are some queries, especially reports and learner progress, which need parents. Ndlovu (2011: np) asserts that the principals need to expose parents to more workshops with special focus on what parents can do to support their children. He also added that, the principal's role is to make sure that parents

understand the policy on parental involvement in schools and eradicate misperceptions. Msila (2010:np) stated that principals need to participate in a number of programmes meant to improve their roles, especially short workshops organized by the Department of Education, as these will promote the involvement of all stakeholders.

Bakker (2007:14) indicated that, teachers' positive perceptions of different kinds of parental involvement should be accompanied by techniques, such as communication, participation, supervision, parenting and discipline, which will help students to do well in school. It is the parents' responsibility to know which grade their child is in, what the child does in terms of activities and assessments at school and to try to repeat the education at home. The parents have to know the educator of the child and volunteer to assist where their assistance is needed. Finally, the parents' level of involvement must be enough to enable them to meet the needs of their children. These views concurred with the revelations evident in the study data. The data revealed that the parents were able to provide their children with good information about their academic performance, and that parents can continue in both direct and indirect ways to influence the child's progress. Hence, these home- schooling efforts by the parents will assist in improving the learners' success.

Parents can become directly involved in children's education by supervising f their children's work at home, setting a time each day for homework to be done, inspecting the children's work for inclusiveness, and understanding, and controlling the time that their children spent with friends and while watching television. Parents need to take a lead and become involved within school management and governance. Zedan (2011: np) argues that the parents are the most important aspects on the lives of the children. Epstein (2002) states six types of involvement action as a structure for classifying the responsibilities, and the duties that are performed by school management, family, and community members. The first model, 1. parenting, focuses on how the parents and schoolteachers need to assist each other regarding parenting skills, family support, and in understanding the development of the child to support learning. Therefore, parents have the right time to speak to the educator of the child and ask what they can do to help in their interaction with the educator regarding their children's problems.



Literature indeed underscores the importance of parental involvement in working towards the success of the children. Gonzalez-Mena (2011: np) defines the term parental involvement as a coalition of commitment and an active participation on the part of the parent to the school and child. Anyikwa and Obidike (2012: np) assert that parental involvement involves the participation and support of parents at school and at home. This means that their involvement will bring out positive outcomes that will influence the educational performance of their children. Williams and Ullman, (2002:np) also underline that parental involvement requires parents to be active co-partners in their own children's learning and to be well informed about the schooling of their children and how they progress. Chan (1995;19) asserts that "parental involvement is not something that is 'done' to parents", rather it is a collegial work between the school (educators) and home(parents) to ensure that the school systems are effective and employ discipline between the school and home for the success of their children in schooling.

Further research highlights the importance of parental involvement. Morrison (2007: np) notes that parents' involvement is very crucial in their children's learning and brings positive outcomes in their schooling. Kindiki (2009: np) also states that adequate parental involvement in the children's education ensures an increase in the learner's academic achievement. Interestingly, parents sometimes do not recognize their children's education problems because of their attitude to both the child and school. Such parents usually feel that it is the educators' responsibility to cater for their children. Instead, parents should try and check the work of their children and re-do that learning lesson done in class and practice it with their children as an extra help. This concurs with Epstein's model, which underscores that learners learn more when home, school, and community work together to support the learning of the children or learners (Epstein and Sheldon 2006).

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the analyses and interpretation of the study. It focused on the research questions, perceptions of parental involvement and school systems, and the problems that the educators and the principals experience when the parents are not



involved. This chapter concludes that female teachers and female principal of one high school in the Lejweleputswa District perceive parental involvement and school systems as a way of assisting one another between in attempts at making the learners' progress well academically.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the summary, conclusions and recommendations drawn from data analysis as presented in the previous chapter. The intention is to shed further light on the perceptions of female teachers and a female principal regarding the extent of parental involvement in school systems.

#### 5.2 Summary

This section summarizes the study on perceptions of female teachers and female principal regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems. This study investigated the perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems. As noted in the background in Chapter 1, school systems put in place or practised by schools encourage parental involvement or create barriers. The school system is a broad term but, in this study, it is limited to procedures, practices, structures, policies and arrangements which are deemed more relevant to the aim of this study. Nonetheless, the focus in this study was on the involvement of families in Lejweleputswa public schooling systems. The nearby town, Welkom, is a typical town where initially people were thriving because of the mines. The mines have closed down, business has dried up and many people are unemployed, thus affecting parental involvement in the district school systems.

The South African Schools Act (Act 84, 1996) bestow parental involvement as a juristic character. This study investigated the perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems as per the 1996 Act. There are reasons that make parents not get involved in their child's education. One of the reasons is the teacher- learner relationship in the classroom. Collaboration between schools, parents and learners builds a good relationship that leads to the achievement of common goals in teaching and learning and home-school

learning. Parental involvement in school systems assists the parents to realize the potential of their children academically. Parents should be involved in the schooling of their children in all aspects and give both the teacher and the learner the support they need. Some parents in Lejweleputswa District are illiterate or semi-illiterate. As a result, they view themselves inferior to be part of the school management governance. This calls for the need for the parents to be familiar with the policies, strategies and procedures of the school.

It is clear that an absence of parental involvement in the education of the learners indicates a lack of school systems. Parental non-involvement makes it difficult for the school to play both roles of a parent and a teacher. Some parents need to be encouraged to get involved in their children's academics and the school management needs to understand that their socioeconomic level of parents is not equal. Positive parental involvement leads to learner's better-quality academic performance and socio-emotional development (Henderson and Mapps, 2002: 25; Jeynes, 2011: 34). Thus, the researcher observed that there is less parental involvement in school systems in the education of learners in the Free State province, which has a negative impact on children's learning. Instead, parental involvement is an important aspect of children's schooling that should be looked at in more detail because it is mandated by the government through the South African Schools Act of 1996 (SASA) that mandates the establishment of school governing bodies (SGBs), hence this research.

Chapter 2 reviewed literature focusing on parental involvement and school systems, and parental involvement in South African schools and school systems. The review also indicated some barriers that exist in the parental involvement. At the same time, school principals view parental involvement as desirable and necessary for a successful school climate. Duma (2013) stated that, some principals love to have parents intricately involved in the governance of their schools, while others feel that too much participation in the governance of schools violated their sense of professionalism. Teachers want parents to deliver the structure for homework including rewards and punishment. Georgiou (2010) argued that child's achievement in school is linked to the attributing behavior of parents.

The chapter also reviewed the nature and significance of school systems. Existing school systems determine whether parents of new children can get fully involved or not and only show apathy in their relationship with teachers and principal. A system that does not allow parental involvement in schools forces the affected parents to question the value of their participation. Olsen and Fuller (2008: 131) assert that each school must be aware of the local needs of its families and children while designing its own parental involvement programme as part of the broader school systems. Some parents may not participate, or have no wish at all to be involved, while others may want to be involved but would be unable to get involved or participate in their children's academics due to the systems put in place. Epstein (2009) argues that the building and maintenance of the necessary relationships between schools and families requires a concentrated effort, especially when families and schools do not have the means, time, or background knowledge to participate fully and frequently. Bakker (2007:214) also emphasizes that that parents need to monitor their children's homework to make sure it is completed and aid when needed, and hence the need for them to work well with the schools. Finally, it was noted, from the review that, educators in secondary schools must take responsibility for developing school systems that reach all families in order to keep all families involved in spite of the increasing age of the child (Epstein 2008:9).

This study also addressed the issue of parental apathy and how school systems. Mncube (2009) argues that principals should acknowledge that parents, irrespective of their level of education, want the best education for their children and expect teachers to perform and deliver good results. Nevertheless, there are main barriers to parental involvement and school systems. These include the school culture and school climate, time constraints, and exclusionary language usage by the educators. These barriers are compounded by the changing demographics and employment patterns or lack thereof. Epstein and Sanders (2006:87) opine that each barrier poses specific challenges that must be resolved to involve all families and that this is likely to lead to different results for all stakeholders.

The review underscored the importance of communication as a two-way process of reaching a common understanding, where teachers, principal and parents exchange ideas and arrive at a common consensus. All parties need to have time to monitor the

progress of the learner and address matters that affect the learner at school. At the same time, language connects two or more people and is the method of human communication, either in spoken or written form, consisting of the use of words in an organized and conventional way that links parents and the teachers and principal. However, some parents do not have time to review their children's' academics nor the time to attend school meetings thus undermining the possibility of meaningful and two-way communication (Modisaotsile 2012: 3).

Chapter 3 the focused on the research design, sampling procedure, research instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis technique. The chapter identified and justified the interpretive paradigm, which was adopted for this study. It was noted that the researcher used the interpretive paradigm because she wanted to gain more insight on the perceptions of the female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems. It was evident that the research paradigm governs the research process of this study. The researcher adopted the qualitative research method. The chapter also pointed out the case study method, which was used here, which, as noted by Heck (2005), is related with the interpretivist approach where the emphasis is on making sense or on the social construction of reality. Finally, the chapter pointed out the intention to use purposive sampling in this study in selecting the female teachers and female principal from this one high school.

Chapter 3 also focused on the study population, which consists of the female principal and female teachers, from one high school in the Lejweleputswa District, Free State Province. Bertram and Christiansen (2014:59) emphasized that population is used to mean the total number of individuals or groups that could be involved in a study. The sample for this study consisted of one female principal and four female teachers. The participants were selected for their information-rich possibility, in respect of the issue of parental involvement.

The data collection methods and instruments are also identified in this chapter. The questionnaire was a major instrument used in this study. An open-ended questionnaire, which participants completed it during their own time, was used to gather views from the respondents. The researcher adheres to the ethical protocols in

line with the Central University of Technology's ethical protocols before carrying out the study. The researcher initially required permission from Department of Education (DoE) to conduct the research, from one high school, one female principal and four female teachers.

Nevertheless, were the researcher distributed questionnaires to the female principal and female teachers. Participants were given a covering letter containing an appropriate description of the purpose of the study, the importance of the participants' contributions and the importance of the study. Interviews were also used to collect data as a follow up to the questionnaires. This technique was chosen because it permitted the researcher to cooperate with the educators. In addition, the researcher recorded each interview with the participants in order to fully study the content. Confidentiality of the participants' data ensured. The study used thematic content analysis, which consist of classifying common themes that appear from the data. The researcher made some written notes to study similarities and differences within the female principal and female teacher's arguments.

In chapter 4, data presented, analysed and interpreted the gathered data in line with the declared research questions. These research questions revolved around the understanding of parental involvement and school systems by female teachers and female principal. The responses show that female teachers and the female principal were of the view d that, there is a lack of parental involvement and inadequate participation in the school systems. The reason was that the parents are depending on teachers to do monitor their children and take care of their responsibilities. The participants believed there is no home-schooling for children, because the learners come to school with unfinished homework or the homework is not done at all. The data also show that there is a lack of parental support regarding their schooling. The explanation was that parents do not attend or support their children's extra-mural activities, seem not interested in any of the sports their children were taking part in at school. The participants believed that, some parents are always busy to visit the school and monitor the progress of their children. Glanz (2006: 41) emphasized that there must be workshops that parents have to attend to equip them with skills that will assist their children with their homework and projects.

The study has indicated that, there are numerous barriers to parental involvement, with the major being time constraint. Both parties are expected to make time and come up with strategies regarding the things that make the learner fail or drop this or her progress. Language differentials, the participants indicated that the use of other languages than the parents' own language is a barrier, because the parents feel inferior to express themselves to school. According to Dumas (2008:620) negative communication frightens the parents, even if they were willing to participate. The use of English as a medium of instruction in verbal and written communication appears to prevent some parents from expressing themselves. Parents are discouraged because of their incapacity to express themselves and therefore they might not involve themselves in school activities. According to Van Velsor and Orozco (2007) language can be a barrier, while some parents have a belief that, their cultures do not encourage them to be become too involved in school and feel to do so is disrespectful.

The study showed that there are numerous ways, which can be used to make e parents participate in school activities. These include handwritten notes and other media communication platforms, a such as, Facebook, WhatsApp, local municipality radio station, and the invitation to school meetings. The participants believed that the methods they use to invite the parents were convenient and would reach the parents effectively. e. The reason given was that some parents have cellular phones and as such could access messages through e-mails, WhatsApp and the school Facebook page. However, parents still failed to avail themselves or respond to the messages for their availability. The other reason that was given was that parents have radios in their household and as such the message could reach them, although they could argue that that they would not have heard any announcements through the municipality radio station.

The study revealed that the role of the parents is to encourage and support their children in teaching and learning activities at home. Weeto (1997: 17) emphasized that parents are legally the primary educators of their children and have a duty to perform duties such as monitoring their children's work and supporting them during children's extra-mural activities.

The chapter also noted that, parents are active participants in their children's education, especially in those subjects where they are struggling with. The reason was that the learners come to school with unfinished home-work or not done at all (Hill and Taylor 2004). Pomerantz, Moorman and Litwick (2007) argued that the role of the parents in the school environment differ from their role when they are at home and emphasize that both roles complement each other.

This section looked at the consolidated summary on the basis of the results. However, the next section makes compelling conclusions based on the results.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The study made the following key conclusions based on the research questions.

#### **5.3.1 Research question 1: What are the perceptions of female teachers and female principal regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems at one high school of Lejweleputswa District?**

The female teachers and female principal believe that parental involvement and school systems are at a very low level in their school. Their view is based on the observation that parents do not respond to invitations summoning them to school meetings. Parental involvement is an important aspect for the development of children, in a sense that, the school seems to perform better when the parents are involved. Their involvement appears to create a bond between the parents, teachers, and children. This conclusion is confirmed in literature as noted by Makgopa and Mokhele (2013: 220) that parental involvement involves supporting of learner's academic success and partaking of parents in school-initiated functions.

The female teachers indicated that, children benefit from the guidance of their parents in the context of their education. The female teachers believed that they are motivated to participate in the schooling of the learners. However, the study found out that the female teachers thought that there is little or no parental involvement. Some parents of the Lejweleputswa District did not participate in their children's schooling at all. These parents had neglected their duties in the teaching and learning of their children.



However, the Teachers believed that parental involvement creates an environment for effective teaching and learning atmosphere for learners and stimulates their progress and passion for learning. The teachers also believed in the positive effects of parental involvement and school systems on learner achievement.

### **5.3.1.1 *Inadequate parental involvement in school systems***

Data collected from the study showed that, parents have been inadequately participating in their children's' teaching and learning. Participants believe that some parents show no support to their children during their schooling because they believe that the person who supposed to reprimanding their children is the educator. This indicates that some parents do not even know the educator of the child nor the grade of their child but are quick to respond when the child is being suspended at school due to misconduct. Thus, parents need to be encouraged to involve themselves in their children's education and to know the educator of the child.

### **5.3.1.2 *Lack of support from the parents***

Data collected from the study showed that failure by parents to get involved means that they will not know what their children would be doing at and whether are attending school. Data also reveals that, lack of support from parents may result in many challenges, for instance, children of parents who work a lot or far away from home often misbehave or perform poorly at school because of the limited and far-away support structure.

## **5.3.2 Research question 2: Which school systems act as barriers to parental involvement?**

The study concludes that time constraint, language differentials, poor communication and school climate act as barriers that prevent some parents of the Lejweleputswa District to avail themselves at schools to support the process of teaching and learning.

Female teachers believe that these inherent barriers prevent parents from availing themselves for school activities.

### **5.3.2.1 Time constraints**

Data revealed that the schoolteachers, parents, and community are expected to find time to discuss the educational matters that affect learner's performance. A further observation was that time is a real problem. Both the parents and the teachers were unavailable, and this would affect learners and their schoolwork. Households with both parents who are working found it challenging to fit instructional volunteering into their busy schedules. However, some parents took their time off from work to occasionally volunteer at school.

### **5.3.2.2 Language differentials**

Data from the study showed that language differential hinders parental involvement in schools. The teachers indicated that language is a barrier to parental involvement in school activities. The reason given was that some parents are illiterate or semi-illiterate, and it is difficult for them to express themselves in any language other than their own. Another reason was that parents felt shy to give out their opinions during meetings due to their failure in school. Their failure does not allow them to create a platform at school to voice out or give out some opinions regarding issues concerning the school. This conclusion concurs with literature such as Brink and Chandler (1993:56) who note that some parents will not have much desire to return to a place that only served to remind them of their own failures.

### **5.3.2.3 Poor communication between school and home**

The data showed that communication plays a central role in facilitating involvement of parents in the activities of the schools. The female teachers highlighted that there is no precise channel of communication between the school and home. This affects the schooling of children and the relationship between both parties. The study revealed that, when parents have low literacy skills, communication via emails and letters,

rather than phone calls, becomes a barrier. Communication gap makes both stakeholders to be strangers to each other instead of partners in the education of their children. Magara (2005) stated that, in emerging countries like Uganda, there is a communication gap between schools and homes, and this miscommunication affect teaching and learning process. Communication is the glue that holds the school community together. The ability to communicate allows the stakeholders to form and maintain healthy relationships from home-to-school. Lack of communication/miscommunication or over communication can divide the school community and it can lead to unhealthy relationships. Importance of communication cannot be overemphasized especially in South African, where language is a sensitive issue with power dynamics, and cultural dynamics and access or lack thereof to means of communication.

Communication from school should also happen through examination reports where parents are expected to sign their children's reports to show that they would have seen their children's progress. A female teacher explained that parents are supposed to sign report books after examinations "to show that they have agreed with the reports." Therefore, communication is viewed, from the participants' responses, as a way of interacting with the parents on certain issues that concern them regarding their children's academics or school-related issues. The findings indicate that communication is important for the success of any planned objectives at any workplace. The study showed that the noninvolvement of parents leaves teachers in a predicament situation over various queries that need parents' consent and assistance. Effective communication is very important towards the creation of strong home- school partnerships. Data revealed that, the educators make use of handwritten notes and other media such as WhatsApp, the school Facebook page and emails to the parents. It was also evident that mailing a note to the parents can be the most inconvenient procedure because some parents do not have email accounts. The female principal emphasized some of the strategies they use to strengthen the communication with the school community, they encourage the attendance of workshops and regular meetings with the parents. The data showed that, written communication is a permanent device that necessitates careful reflection regarding arrangement and content. The goal is to establish a concise, exact information so that parents will be able to read and understand the written communication (LETTERS).

### **5.3.3 Research question 3: which strategies are used by the school to invite the parents?**

The study showed that the school, particularly the female teachers and female principal, use handwritten notes and other media as strategies to invite parents to attend meetings.

#### **5.3.3.1 *Handwritten notes and media platforms as strategies for encouraging parental involvement and school systems.***

The study showed that the teachers use convenient methods to invite parents to the school. Some parents did not respond to or honour invitations. The female participants said that they even argue with parents over changes of contact details, as they are important in getting hold of them for school engagements. The study showed that parents can access the invitations via different forms of communication such as SMS, WhatsApp, school Facebook page, or local municipality radio station. Although the study found that the effectiveness of the invitation relies upon the availability of the parents when they are invited to school, it was evident that parents have the right to be at school and support their children to progress academically. The participating female teacher emphasized that they use multiple approaches to get hold of the parents when they invite them. The female principal used the Lejweleputswa radio station to assist them in inviting the parents to school. Thus. These strategies conveniently enable parents to receive and respond to the invitations.

#### **5.3.3.2 *Regular meetings with the parents***

The data from this study showed that the female teachers used the convenient approach to invite parents. Every invitation includes the date, time and venue of the meeting, as a result, the parents must know the whereabouts of the meeting. The invitation prepares the parents prior so that they will accept or decline it. The study also revealed that regular meetings with the parents prepare them to assist their children at home.

### **5.3.3.3 School climate**

The school climate refers to the quality and atmosphere of school life. It is defined as the heart and soul of the school that leads a child, a teacher and school management to love the school and to look forward to being there each and every day. Available literature, such as Alexandra Loukas (2007), notes in concurrence that, it is difficult to determine a complete definition of school climate, researchers agree that climate is a multidimensional construct that includes physical, social and academic dimensions. The study has shown that when a welcoming school environment encourages the parents to avail themselves willingly. The participants were of the view that the behavior of the individuals within a school affect the school climate. The behavior of parents, teachers and learners represents the school climate and determines how they interact with each other and the school. Findings from this study show that the school climate has everything to do with the atmosphere and tone found in a particular school. The participants pointed out that parents disliked being looked down and wanted to be respected and shown that their support is valued. The participants also thought that the establishment of an open climate in the school might improve parental participation. The study also showed that a positive school climate entails the kind of motivation that is influenced by the progress of a healthy relationship between the school, parents, learners, and the community.

### **5.3.4 Research question 4: What is the role of the parents in the schooling of their children?**

Data from the empirical study showed that parents play a role in the schooling of their children.

#### **5.3.4.1 Parental involvement in school management and governance**

The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996, (SASA) parents must be enthusiastically involved in school governance through participation in the School Governing Body (SGB). Data shows that the involvement of parents within the school management and governance is vital in that, the parents can see and know the running of the school and actively involved in promoting the culture of learning. School management must always involve the community in the extramural activities that

involves their children and be considered as part of the School Governing Body (SGB's).

The parents' lack of interest in the school management and governance may possibly be due to their low educational level. The teachers expected the parents to play several roles in assisting their children to perform better in the classroom. The teachers also expected parents to create conditions at home that are appropriate for their children's learning. The parents are also expected to prepare their children to be ready for the classroom situation so that the teachers can do their job well.

#### **5.3.4.2 *The level of parents' participation in the schooling of their children***

The findings of the study showed that the level of parental involvement is insufficient. The female teachers believed that some parents shifted their duties to them as teachers. They pointed out that some parents thought that their participation in the schooling children was not necessary towards their children's progress. Hence, some parents come to school to reprimand the teachers and inform them on how to do their work as educators of their children instead of participating in the school's meetings and governance structures.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

This presents some recommendations based on the findings of the study.

#### **5.4.1.1 *Recommendations to female teachers***

The study recommends that, the female teachers should consider discussing some barriers that prevent the parents from visit the school. These barriers include language differentials during communication, as such, the teachers should consider developing communication channels that they will use to communicate with the parents. In mitigating time constraints, the teacher should create a meeting schedule timetable that will accommodate parents who are available during the day and for those who are available in the afternoon.

The study recommends that the language used should accommodate the parents when they visit the school. Schools should have an action team, including teachers and the parents with children from different classes in the school tasked with drawing up of guidelines as well as the implementing of such as policy (Epstein, 1995:708). The teachers should consider communicating more often with the parents, sending frequent and progressive communication for main events requiring assistance and making volunteering signup easy. The class teachers should consider distributing events calendars and opening the signup right at the beginning of the school year, which will make things much easier for parents to plan their schedule. Finally, the study recommends that there must be constant and consistent communication between the teachers and the parents for their involvement to have the desired effect.

#### **5.4.1.2 Recommendations to female principal**

The study recommends that the female principal must make time to inform the parents about the progress of their children and carry out home- visits in order to discuss the learners' progress with their parents where possible. The suggestion here is that whoever sees the necessity to communicate on the child's progress must make the initiative to open the conversation to make sure that the child is assisted as soon as possible. The study recommends that the female principal must grant the parents some opportunities to lay their concerns and there must be a two-way communication between the two stakeholders as way of encouraging parental attendance at and participation in school meetings. The female principal stated that, they show human affirming attitudes to the parents, try to meet with them, and use billboards, letters and even telephone communication to send messages to the parents. These efforts, as noted by the principal, were failing in calling parents to the school. Therefore, this study recommends that, the female principal should consider reminding parents about the role that they need to play in the schooling of their children. The female principal should also try to draft a plan to meet with the parents, learners and the class teachers to discuss the progress of the child and strategies to go forward. The female principals could also consider on how to motivate the parents and assure them about the goals that their children need to accomplish in future.

### **5.4.1.3 Recommendations to the parents**

The study recommends that, parents should know the role that they need to play in the schooling of their children. The findings show that some parents are unable or to visit the school when they are summoned for school meetings. The study recommends that the parent should consider drafting a timetable schedule that will remind them about the school meetings. Parents should also try to be adequately involved in their children's academics and not shift their responsibilities to other people. The school should also consider accommodating parents and use their mother's tongue or use the interpreter. Finally, parents may need to show some involvement in their children schooling by creating appropriate advice for them, talking to their children about their dreams and schooling activities, and informing their children about their hopes in them.

A further set of recommendations draw on the obligations expected of parents as the country's laws. It is mandatory that every parent receive regular reports, in writing, on the academic progress of the child, the learner's general behaviour and conduct of the learner this aspect as highlighted by (Department of Education, 1997). The opportunity that was made by the Department of Education (DoE) seeks to ensure that the Parents monitor the progress of their children's and check whether their reports are satisfactory. Therefore, parents can be able to build a partnership with the school and the teachers as per the Education Act's stipulations and guarantee the learner success (Mahlangu 2014:175).

## **5.5. Chapter Conclusion**

This chapter highlighted the summary, conclusions and recommendations drawn from the study findings. The study findings lead to the conclusion that female teachers and female principals from Lejweleputswa District are faced with challenges on parental involvement and school systems. The study strongly recommended that schools should consider encouraging home-school learning between the parents and the teachers. Finally, parents should also be actively involved in their children's academic activities and education in general. Ultimately, the study noted the importance of



female principal and female teachers' perceptions on parental involvement and school systems.

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# APPENDIX 1



## RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL

Date: 06 July 2018

1.1.1 This is to confirm that ethical clearance has been provided by the Faculty Research and Innovation Committee in view of the CUT Research Ethics and Integrity Framework, 2016 with reference number **[FRG 25/18/2]**.

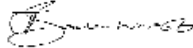
Applicant's Name	Victoria Mokone
Student number	21009056
Supervisor Name for Student Project (where applicable)	Supervisor: Prof. A Makura
Level of Qualification for Student Project (where applicable)	Master of Education (M.Ed)
Title of research project	Perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school system: case study of one high school in Lejweleputswa District.

The following special conditions were set:

Ethical measures as outlined in the proposal and which have been endorsed by the Faculty Research and Innovation Committee have to be adhered to.

We wish you success with your research project.

Regards



Prof JW Badenhorst  
(Ethics committee representative: Research with humans)

## APPENDIX 2



Central University of  
Technology, Free State

Central University of Technology, Free State

Faculty of Humanities

1 Park Road

Bloemfontein

9300

09 July 2018

Free State Department of Education

Private Bag X 20565

Bloemfontein

9300

Dear Madam

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON THE TOPIC:  
PERCEPTIONS OF FEMALE PRINCIPALS AND FEMALE TEACHERS REGARDING THE  
EXTENT OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND SCHOOL SYSTEMS: A CASE STUDY OF  
ONE HIGH SCHOOL IN LEJWELEPUTSWA DISTRICT.**

This letter serves to seek permission to conduct research at one of the secondary schools in Lejweleputswa District.

I am a student studying towards M.Ed. degree in the faculty of Humanities at the Central University of Technology, Free State. As part of the requirements of this degree. I will have to submit a dissertation. I have chosen to do my dissertation on the topic stated above.

The main aim of the study is to investigate the perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems.

The study will be guided by the critical emancipatory research values such as respect, equity, social justice, peace and hope. I will adhere to ethical considerations ensuring that personal information of the participants remains confidential all times.

Participants in this study are one female principal and eight female teachers. Consent letters will be issued to participants. I also request to use any other material that could assist me to obtain and analyze data.

The information that will be provided will be used for research purpose only.

Thank you.

Yours faithful

M.V. Mokone

.....

Student number 210090561

Cell number: 076 698 2750

.....

Dr T Matlho (CO-SUPERVISOR)

Contact number: 051 507 3326



## APPENDIX-3

Enquiries: KK Molahuni  
Re: Research Permission: MV Mokone  
Tel: 051 491 9283 / 9221 / 082 454 1519  
Email: K.Molahuni@fseducation.gov.za



MV MOKONE  
1268 Cawe Street  
Motsethabong  
WELKOM, 9463

Dear Ms Mokone

### APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

1. This letter serves as an acknowledgement of receipt of your request to conduct research in the Free State Department of Education.  
**Research Topic:** Perceptions of female principals and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school system: case study of one high school in Lejweleputswa District.  
**Schools:** Lebogang Secondary School in Lejweleputswa.  
**Target Population:** 1 Female principal and 8 female teachers.
2. **Period of research:** From the date of signature of this letter until 30 September 2018. Please note the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year nor during normal school hours.
3. Should you fall behind your schedule by three months to complete your research project in the approved period, you will need to apply for an extension.
4. The approval is subject to the following conditions:
  - 4.1 The collection of data should not interfere with the normal tuition time or teaching process.
  - 4.2 A bound copy of the research document or a CD, should be submitted to the Free State Department of Education, Room 319, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Old CNA Building, Charlotte Maxeke Street, Bloemfontein.
  - 4.3 You will be expected, on completion of your research study to make a presentation to the relevant stakeholders in the Department.
  - 4.4 The ethics documents must be adhered to in the discourse of your study in our department.
5. Please note that costs relating to all the conditions mentioned above are your own responsibility.

Yours sincerely

  
DR JEM SEKOLANYANE  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

DATE: 17/08/2018

RESEARCH APPLICATION MOKONE MV PERMISSION DATED 22 JULY 2018  
Strategic Planning, Policy & Research Directorate  
Private Bag X20565, Bloemfontein, 9000 - Room 319, Old CNA Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Charlotte Maxeke Street, Bloemfontein  
Tel: (051) 491 9283 / 9221 Fax: (086) 6678 678

## APPENDIX 4

Enquiries: KK Motshumi  
Ref: Notification of research: MV Mokone  
Tel. 051 404 9221 / 079 503 4943  
Email: K. Motshumi@fseducation.gov.za



The District Director  
Lejweleputswa

Dear Ms Zonke

### NOTIFICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH PROJECT IN YOUR DISTRICT BY M V MOKONE

1. The above mentioned candidate was granted permission to conduct research in your district as follows:

**Research Topic:** Perceptions of female principals and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school system: case study of one high school in Lejweleputswa District.

**Schools:** Lebogang Secondary School in Lejweleputswa.

**Target Population:** 1 Female principal and 8 female teachers.

**Period:** From date of signature to 30 September 2018. Please note the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth / academic quarter of the year nor during normal school hours.

2. **Research benefits:** Based on the outcomes of the study, female teachers and female principals will be able to check how their perceptions can have an effect on following guidelines from the National, Provincial and District level and also whether the school systems they are using are appropriate to invite the parents.
3. Logistical procedures were met, in particular ethical considerations for conducting research in the Free State Department of Education.
4. Strategic Planning, Policy and Research Directorate will make the necessary arrangements for the researchers to present the findings and recommendations to the relevant officials in the district.

Yours sincerely

  
DR JEM SEKOLANYANE  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

DATE: 17/08/2018

RESEARCH APPLICATION MV MOKONE NOTIFICATION EDITED 15 AUG 2018.

Strategic Planning, Research & Policy Directorate

Private Bag X20565, Bloemfontein, 9300 - Old CNA Building, Room 318, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Charlotte Mxexke Street, Bloemfontein

Tel: (051) 404 9283 / 9221 Fax: (086) 6678 678

## APPENDIX 5



Central University of Technology, Free State  
Faculty of Humanities  
1 Park Road  
Bloemfontein  
9300  
03 July 2018

### **Request for permission to conduct a research at school from Lejweleputswa district of Free State province**

Dear Madam

I, Victoria Mahlape Mokone, I am currently enrolled at Central University of Technology where I am pursuing my Master's degree of Education, my research topic is: perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems. The research forms part of research methodology and aims to collect relevant data. I request permission to interview you and four of your subordinate's staff and to complete my questionnaire. I also request permission to make some observations during my visit at your school. I promise not to interfere with your normal school activities, I will request the teachers to interview after school hours. I promise to uphold all ethical protocol: your identity will remain anonymous when reporting on the results, if at any time during the period of the research you wish to withdraw, you can do so and you are not obliged to answer any questions you do not wish to.

Thank you

Yours faithfully

Ms Victoria Mokone 

Email address: [m.v.mokone58@gmail.com](mailto:m.v.mokone58@gmail.com)

For more information, kindly contact me on 076 698 2750 or my supervisor (Prof AH Makura) 072 102 1538 and my co-supervisor (Dr T Matlho) 083 593 4202.

## APPENDIX 6

From: I. Manase (PhD UKZN)

Department of English

University of the Free State

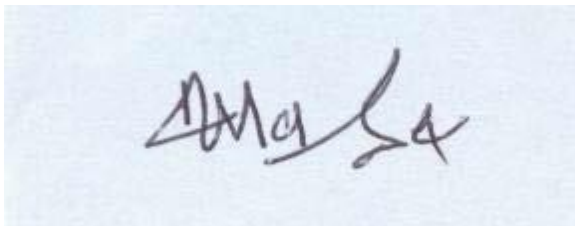
Bloemfontein

Date: 30 September 2019

Confirmation of proofreading and editing of Ms. Mahlape Victoria Mokone's Master of Education dissertation titled: "Perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems"

This serves to confirm that I have proofread and edited Ms. Mahlape Victoria Mokone's above-mentioned Master of Education dissertation. The suggested sentence and language construction changes have been attended to, and as such, the dissertation can now be submitted for examination.

Sincerely,



Email: [irimanase@gmail.com](mailto:irimanase@gmail.com) / [Manasel@ufs.ac.za](mailto:Manasel@ufs.ac.za)

## APPENDIX 7

The principal  
Lephola Secondary School  
No: 8218 NkoaneRoad  
Lasvegas, Thabong  
Welkom  
9460

M.V.Mokone  
No: 6 President Brand  
Huis Technikon  
Bloemfontein  
9300

Dear Ms Mokone

This letter serves as a go ahead to your request regarding your research at our school.

Please feel free to consult any person at our school. We look forward working with you as you pursue your Master's degree in Education.

Yours sincerely

.....  
Principal

## APPENDIX 8



### CONSENT FORM

#### THE FEMALE PRINCIPAL

Perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems.

This is to confirm that I .....( Name and surname) understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project. I therefore consent to participating in the research project entitled: Perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

Signature.....

Date .....

Contact number.....

Thank you!!

## APPENDIX 9



Central University of  
Technology, Free State

### CONSENT FORM

#### THE FEMALE TEACHERS

Perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems.

This is to confirm that I .....( Name and surname) understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project. I therefore consent to participating in the research project entitled: Perceptions of female principal and female teachers regarding the extent of parental involvement and school systems.

I understand that iam at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

Signature.....

Date .....

Contact number.....

Thank you!!

## APPENDIX 10



Central University of  
Technology, Free State

### Questionnaire guide for female principal

1. What do believe is the notion of parental involvement?

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2. In your opinion, is the level of parent involvement and school system at your school satisfactory?

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3. Which school systems do you apply when inviting the parents to school?

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4. Have you ever prepare workshop for teachers and parents on parental Involvement?

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5. What kind of school systems are in place for your school?

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6. Are those school systems which are in place allow the parents to be involved in their children's education?

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7. Through your practice what type of parental involvement is there in the parents in their children's education?

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8. What strategies can be used to improve effective parental involvement in their children's education?

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9. Which school systems act as a barriers to parent involvement?

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10. How do you plan to change that school system that act as a barrier in your school?

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## APPENDIX 11



Central University of  
Technology, Free State

### **Interview guide for female principal**

1. What kind of school systems do you use in your school to invite parents?
2. The same school systems you use in your school to invite parents, are they effective for their invitation?
3. How would you explain the communication between the school and the parents?
4. What is your perception regarding parental involvement and school systems?
5. How do you handle the barriers that affect parental involvement?
6. How do you view the parent's role in the schooling of the child?

## APPENDIX 12



Central University of  
Technology, Free State

### Questionnaire guide for female teachers

1. How do you define parental involvement?

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2. What kind of school systems do you use when inviting the parents to school?

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3. Do the kinds of school systems you use to invite the parents work for you?

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4. What are your perceptions regarding parental involvement?

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5. Do your school systems allow parents to be involved?

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6. What strategies can be used to enhance effective parental involvement?

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7. What kind of school systems act as a barrier to parental involvement?

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8. Which school systems are in place in your school?

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9. Is there any area on parental involvement we have not covered which you consider important?

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10. What is the role of the parents in the education of their children?

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## APPENDIX 13



### **Interview guide for female teachers**

1. What is your perception regarding parental involvement and school systems?
2. How do you view the parent's role in the schooling of their children?
3. What do you see as barriers to parental involvement in your school?
4. How do the school deal with such barriers?
5. Which school systems do you use to invite the parents?