

**Exploring how principals promote parental involvement in secondary schools: A
case study of three secondary schools in the Umbumbulu Circuit.**

By

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in the school of education in the discipline Educational leadership, Management
and policy**

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ABSTRACT

This study is partly responding to an uproar from the public generally and the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZNDoE), in particular, that in most schools within the province, there is a lack of parental involvement whilst serious problems in many schools persist. Many schools in KwaZulu-Natal province are experiencing problems which have eventually resulted in poor quality education. This study explored how principals promoted parental involvement in secondary schools. The promotion of parental involvement in the affairs of the school is one of the responsibilities of the school principal. In view of this expectation by the government and the Department of Education, this study therefore, was underpinned by an assumption that principals are promoting parental involvement in schools. The study sought to get an insight into what principals did in order to promote parental involvement. It also attempted to find out what principals regarded as the benefits of promoting parental involvement in schools, and what they consider as barriers.

The studied schools were drawn from three different South African social contexts of semi-urban and rural areas. This study adopted an interpretivist qualitative case study approach comprising three secondary schools. I chose interpretive research paradigm because it allowed me to interact closely with participants to gain insight and form clear understanding.

The findings showed that participating schools were, to a large degree, successful in promoting parental involvement in the affairs of the school, despite some obstacles which persisted. The findings revealed that socio-economic issues such as unemployment, poverty, HIV/AIDS pandemic, poor communication between the schools and parents, educators who seem to be unwelcoming to parental involvement, low level of education of parents, reluctance of some parents to involve themselves in school affairs, were the main barriers to effective parental involvement.

DECLARATION

I, Noah Jonathan Shezi, declare that

- i. The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, and is my original work.
- ii. This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- iii. This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other Information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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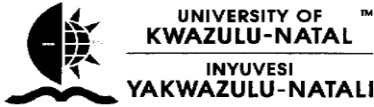
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This dissertation is submitted with/without my approval.

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ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



17 July 2012

Mr Noah Jonathan Shezi 211542812
School of Education

Dear Mr Shezi

Protocol reference number: HSS/0500/012M
Project title: Exploring how principals promote parental involvement in school: A case study of three secondary schools in Umbumbulu Circuit.

EXPEDITED APPROVAL

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

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Inspiring Greatness



DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my late parents, **Alzinah Nozizwe (uMaHlela) and Solomon Mzikayifani Shezi**, who made me what I am and who I am, and I say “Ngiyabonga” (Thank you). I also want to dedicate this dissertation to my late lovely daughter **Mbalenhle Phumzile Shezi**, for her inspiration and undying love and support.

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ABBREVIATIONS/ ACRONYMS

| | |
|-------|---|
| SGB | School Governing Bodies |
| HOD | Head of Departments |
| SASA | South African Schools Act |
| DBE | Department of Basic Education |
| PFMA | Public Financial Management Act |
| NCS | National Curriculum Statement |
| SACE | South African Council OF Educators |
| SADTU | South African Democratic Teachers Union |
| USA | United State of America |
| SAPS | South African Police Services |
| CPF | Community Policing Forum |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1. Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to report on all processes that were followed in conducting a study which sought to explore how principals promoted parental involvement in secondary schools in the Umbumbulu Circuit in KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa. The study also sought to identify the benefit of promoting parental involvement in schools, and lastly to highlight what principals consider as barriers to parental involvement in the schools. This chapter begins by providing the background to the study, followed by the research problem, focus and purpose of the study, the rationale, the research questions and the significance of the study. Key concepts underpinning the study are discussed next, followed by conceptual framework, literature review, as well as research design and methodology. The chapter ends with the presentation of the structure of the study.

1.1. Background to the study

There has been an uproar from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education that in most schools within the Province, there is a lack of parental involvement whilst there are serious problems in many schools (Maphanga, 2006). Many schools in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province are experiencing problems which eventually resulted in poor quality education. Furthermore, Maphanga (2006) states that, schools are supposed to work in collaboration with all stakeholders, especially parents, in order for them to make complementary or shared contributions towards the learning and development of their children. In addition, Section 24(1) of the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), stipulates that parents must serve in the School Governing Body (SGB) of a school. This Act provides a legislative framework that promotes democratic participation of the parents by giving them a profound role to play in their children's education.

According to the Schools Act, the SGB is mandated to make sure that schools run according to the policies which govern them. The inclusion of parents in the SGB was the step forward to give parents more powers to have a say in the running of the school (Maphanga, 2006). The issue on how principals promote the involvement of parents in secondary school had to take a

centre stage for the benefit of learners. Umbumbulu area comprises predominantly illiterate people owing to their low socio- economic status. That may be the main reason why there is minimal or in some institutions, no parental involvement at all. Faction fights in the early 80s and political unrests in the early 90s are generally believed to have also contributed towards a lack of serious commitment of parents to the education of children.

Mncube (2010) claims that there is a great deal of interest in various aspects of parental involvement in schools' activities in developed countries such as England and the United States of America (USA). However, my contention is that, in the context of South Africa, this is not the case, for Umbumbulu area where I work. There seems to be minimal or no parental involvement in school activities. Globally parents play a small role in education of their children due to variety of reasons (Narain, 2005). In addition, Narain (2005) further argues that the South African experiences of parental involvement are unique and quite different from the rest of the world due to historical, political, social and economic factors. Experiences have to be classified according to the different race groups in South Africa.

Parental involvement in education has well documented benefits for students, parents and teachers (Mashishi, 1994; Mthembu, 1999; Epstein & Van Voorhuis, 2001; Mabasa & Temane, 2002; Mbatha, 2005; Lemmer, 2007; Khumalo, 2008; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009). However, these researchers also agree that some parents have difficulty in being involved in their children's education. Furthermore, they caution that we should not pretend that involving parents in the school is an easy task. In addition they highlight difficulties such as a lack of information or an understanding about the potential benefit of participation in school activities. However, both parents and teachers often experience common barriers to parental involvement such as limited knowledge and skills about parental involvement (Kim, 2009).

1.2 Statement of the problem

This study sought to explore how principals promoted parental involvement in the selected secondary schools in Umbumbulu Circuit. It also sought to gain an insight into the manner in which parental involvement in the affairs of schools was promoted, as well as the benefit of promoting parental involvement in schools. It sought to identify what was considered as barriers

of non-participation of parents in schools. This also emanated from my experience as a principal, who had observed a lack of parental involvement in a number of schools. Principals and other professional bodies were complaining about the attitude of other parents who did not participate in the education of their children at all. Researchers like Epstein (2008) also recognise the non- participation of parents in school affairs, yet research evidence shows that there are benefits for active involvement of parents in the education of their children.

1.3 Purpose and focus of the study

The focus of this study was on the manner in which principals promoted parental involvement in the selected secondary schools in Umbumbulu Circuit. I wanted to gain an insight into the promotion of parental involvement in the affairs of the school as this was one of the responsibilities of the school principal (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2003). In view of this expectation by the government and the Department of Education, this study is based on the assumption that principals are promoting parental involvement in schools. To this end, the study sought to get an insight into what principals do in order to promote parental involvement. In addition, the study attempted to find out what it is that principals in the study regarded as the benefits of promoting parental involvement in schools, and what they considered as barriers to parental involvement in schools.

1.4 Rationale

The rationale for conducting this study stems from my experience and observations as a principal for more than ten years. I have observed that in some schools, parents are reluctant to get involved in school matters. Some parents do not attend grade meetings as well as mass general meeting of parents. Some parents do not check their children's workbooks and homework in schools. There seems to be a poor communication between the schools and parents. Notwithstanding, this problem is not prevalent in all schools in the area; other parents have demonstrated a keen interest in their children's education.

According to Maphanga (2006), there is scarceness of literature regarding school principals' promoting black parental involvement in schools here in South Africa and specifically in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Most of the research on parental involvement in schools has been

conducted in many countries such as Mexico, Korea, USA, and very few in South Africa (Carrim & Tshoane, 2000; McPherson, 2000; Karlsson, 2002; Lemmer and Van Wyk, 2004; Narain, 2005; Maphanga, 2006; Mncube, 2010). Drawing from my experiences and the gap in literature, I therefore wanted to explore how principals of schools promoted black parental involvement in secondary schools.

1.5 Key Research questions

Since parental involvement is very crucial in the education of children, this study is therefore aimed at finding answers to the following critical research questions with regard to how principals promoted parental involvement in schools in Umbumbulu Circuit in KwaZulu- Natal.

- How do principals promote parental involvement in secondary schools in Umbumbulu Circuit?
- What do principals regard as the benefits of promoting parental involvement in secondary schools?
- What do principals consider as barriers to parental involvement in secondary schools?

1.6 Significance of the study

Parents are very important stakeholders in the education of the children, and the ultimate success of the children depends entirely in them (Narain, 2005). Perhaps it is because some parents are poorly educated and they do not know what is expected from them. It thus makes sense to capacitate them effectively so as to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities as parents. However, there are no research studies on capacitating parents on how to be effectively involved in the education of their children. Therefore, this study sought to get an insight on how principals promoted parental involvement in schools. It is anticipated that the outcome of this study will provide valuable insight in exploring how principals promote parental involvement in schools.

1.7 Key Concepts

After presenting the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose and focus of

the study, critical questions, rationale and the significance of the study, it is essential that key concepts underpinning this study are also presented. These key concepts are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

1.7.1 Parent

A Parent is any adult whose role is to guide and accompany the child towards responsible adulthood. According to the South African Schools Act (RSA 1996, p. 4) the term parent refers to:

- a. The natural parent of a learner
- b. The guardian of a learner
- c. A person legally entitled to custody (physical control) of a learner
- d. A person who undertakes to act as a parent of a learner for the purpose of the learner's education at school.

The above definition is not limited to the biological parent; therefore, throughout the current research report, the use of the term, parent can be considered as referring to any adult of the above persons. Consequently it is the responsibility of an educator to cooperate with whosoever has undertaken to play the role of a parent.

1.7.2 Parental involvement

According to Mncube (2010) the term “parental involvement” refers to different forms of participation in school work, an understanding of the interaction between parenting skills and learner success in schooling, and a commitment to consistent communication with educators about learner progress (Jackson & Davis, 2000).

1.8 Theoretical framework

Theories about the promotion of parental involvement were used in this study, since the study focused on the ways in which the participants negotiated the involvement of parents in the education of learners. The use of overlapping spheres of influence theory advocated by Epstein

(1998) was deemed to be appropriate for this study. Epstein (1998) identifies three major overlapping spheres or environment, the family, the school and the community, and at the centre of all three spheres, is the child.

1.9 Literature review

Epstein (2008) states that principals can promote parental involvement by inviting parents to come to school for a meeting, discussing the child's needs, upon returning to school at the beginning of the school year, by reminding the parents through correspondence, or calling them to ensure that the parents attend. Wagaman (2009) further states that parents can be motivated to attend meetings when the teachers raffles of a gift certificates or they are asked to bring in a snack, the fact that others are relying on the parents to show up will help to motivate them to attend.

Maphanga (2006) reveals that many parents encounter obstacles to participating in their children's education. Barriers in education that were reported by the parents and educators included differing ideas among parents and educators on what constituted involvement. These include a less welcoming atmosphere towards visiting school and classrooms, negative or neutral communication from schools, lack of parental education and parenting skills, time pressure, job pressure and language barrier, limited knowledge and skills about parent involvement restricted opportunities for cooperation (Kim, 2009; Mendz, 2010). Given these barriers many schools and families never realise the benefit of parental involvement.

1.10 Methodology

This research project utilised the qualitative approach to research and produced qualitative data that is mainly in the form of words (De Vos, 1998). The case study approach to data gathering and presentation was used because it allows a thorough understanding of one phenomenon while drawing on multiple sources of evidence to enable the understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). More discussion of the methodological issues is presented in Chapter Three.

1.11 The structure of the study

In this section, the structure of the whole dissertation is summarised.

1.11.1 Chapter One

This chapter provides an orientation to the study and gives the rationale for the study, the critical questions to be addressed, and the significance of the study, as well as, the conceptual framework.

1.11.2 Chapter Two

This chapter reviews literature on parental involvement and also provides an explanation of the theoretical frameworks underpinning the study.

1.11.3 Chapter Three

This chapter shifts the focus to research design and methodology that was used to gather information that helped answer the research questions.

1.11.4 Chapter Four

The chapter describes the presentation and the discussion of the data. This is done discussing the themes that emerged from the data analysis process.

1.11.5 Chapter Five

This chapter summarises the findings and makes recommendations to various stakeholders in education.

1.12 Conclusions

Chapter one has outlined the background of the study and covered the following areas; background of the study, statement of the problem, focus of the study, critical questions, significance of the study, clarification of terms and methodology. The next chapter deals with the literature review.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The chapter reviews literature on current debates on parental involvement and how principals promote parental involvement in schools. A theoretical framework relevant to understanding parental involvement is presented. The theoretical framework is also used as an analytic tool to make sense of the data generated. The chapter begins by presenting a conceptualisation of parental involvement, discussion of South African policy framework regarding parental involvement, research that has been conducted in the area of parental involvement and means of promoting parental involvement by the principals of schools. Furthermore, the benefits of and barriers to parental involvement are discussed. The chapter will conclude by discussing Bronfenbrenner's (1986) Social Ecological Theory, and overlapping sphere of influence Theory, advocated by Epstein (1998).

2.2. Conceptualisation of parental involvement

Parental involvement may be interpreted as parents' commitment to the education of their children, and the role they play in school management (Mestry, 2004). The definition of parental involvement according to the Department of Education in the United States (2004), is the participation of parents in regular, two-way and meaningful communication involving students' academic learning and other school activities including ensuring that parents play an integral role in assisting their children's learning; that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their children's education at school; that parents are partners in their children education and are included as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their children.

According to Maphanga (2006), parental involvement includes several different forms of participation in education. Parents can support their children's schooling by attending school functions, become more involved in helping their children to improve their school work, by providing encouragement, arranging for appropriate study time and space, modelling desired behaviour such as reading for pleasure, monitoring homework and actively tutoring their children at home. Narain (2005) asserts that outside the home, parents can serve as advocates

for the school. They can volunteer to help out with school activities or work in the classroom or they can take an active role in the governance and decision making necessary for planning, developing and providing an education for the community's children.

Across international studies, review of parental involvement was measured as participation in parent-teacher conferences or interactions, participation in school activities or functions, engagement in activities at home, including but not limited to homework, engagement in learners extra-curricular activities, assisting in the selection of learners course, keeping abreast of learners academic progress, reaction to academic grades, imparting parental values, and the level of parental control and autonomy of support in the home environment (Gonzalez-De Hass, 2005). Drawing from different definitions by different scholars, I regard parent involvement as formal and informal participation of parents in the academic affairs of their children in education in order to uplift quality education.

2.3 South African policy framework regarding parental involvement in schools

Prior to the democratic dispensation in South Africa, parents were less involved in the schooling activities of their children (Mncube, 2005). Through the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994, government introduced policies to get parents involved more in the schooling affairs. The South African Constitution, Act (No. 108 of 1996) aimed at promoting ideals of democracy and human rights, and that spoke to schools to work with all stakeholders, parents included. Arising from this were numerous policy documents such as National Curriculum Statements (NCS), White Paper 2 (1996), and South African Schools Act (SASA) (1996).

Section 24 (1) of the South African Schools Act, stipulates clearly, that parents must serve on the governing body of a school. This Act states that the number of parent members must comprise one more than the combined total of other members of a governing body who have the voting rights (Clause 23(1):18). It also comprised the principal in his or her official capacity as a member of the governing body. The Act mandates that parents participate in schooling activities. The Act also serves as an attempt to legislate the concept of participatory democracy, giving parents a more profound role to play in their children education.

The Department of Education (2002) clearly spells out the conditions which promote schools and parents partnership. Educators rely on the parents to have children in school, in time and the parents rely on the educator for pedagogy and guidance. In addition, Ndlovu, (2011) suggests that principals of schools have to involve parents in their programmes in order to achieve better education. The South African Government through South African Schools Act, National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and other policy initiatives, has invited parents to be meaningful partners with schools in collaboratively providing quality education.

The South African government states that for transformation 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) highlights that parents have the responsibility to initiate education of their children. The establishment of School Governing Bodies was meant to increase democracy and representation of school stake holders. Ramisur (2007) contends that the South African Schools Act holds that learners, parents and educators promote the acceptance and responsibility for the organisation, funding and governance of public schools in partnership with the state. This implies that parents must by law, participate in school activities. It also implies a shift in the traditional role parents used to play by being members in parent-teacher associations (Louw, 2004). Parents now have the capacity to determine what is in the best educational interest of the child. The schools are guided by the South African Constitution to do exactly what policies state.

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). Learners also need to be aware of the social, moral, economic and ethical issues that face South Africans. The partnership is in line with the mission of parents to educate their children in terms of the education demands on parental involvement in schools.

The South African Constitution specifies that people need to be treated equally and that is why schools are obligated to treat parents as equals (Ndlovu, 2011). It needs to be stated though, that anecdotal evidence shows that, at this stage of the South African education development, the involvement of parents in schools is not well developed and entrenched to be of benefit to everyone (Ndlovu 2011). There are still issues of parents staying away from schools and educators not welcoming parents in schools (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009). Even teachers organisations acknowledge the importance of teachers working together with parents to promote participation (Mashishi, 2001).

The South African Council for Educators (Republic of South Africa, 2000) stipulates that teachers should recognise the parents as partners in education, and promote harmonious relationship with them. They must keep parents adequately and timeously informed about the well-being and progress of the learners. Section 4 of the National Education policy Act (Republic of South Africa,1996b), states that community participation should be realised as one of the guiding principles in education and all interested parties must be involved in all aspects of the education system.

Principals have the responsibility to assist and support all stakeholders especially parents in performing their functions (Department of Education, 1996; Section 19) of South African Schools Act. Section 16 of the South African Schools Act states, that principal must table their plans for school improvement at governing body meetings, so as to keep parent abreast about schooling. By giving more power to parents, quality education will improve and children will achieve better at school (Khumalo, 2008). Many researchers have done good work in the field of parental involvement. Researchers like Sanders and Sheldon (2009) conducted a research on parental involvement in education revealed that the important role a strong positive bond between home and school can play in the development and education of children. The study also conducted by Ndlovu (2011) in South Africa on parental involvement in teaching and learning revealed that the family is seen as the backbone in the child's education.

2.4 Parental involvement in the democratic governance of schools

The South African Schools Act stipulates that all public schools in South Africa must have democratically elected governing bodies comprised the principal (in her or his official capacity), representatives of educators; non-teaching staff; parents and learners; in the case of secondary schools. In this case, principals are tasked with the implementation of democratic values such as tolerance, rational decision, and collective decision making in schools through their leadership roles. In democratic governance, principals also have the responsibility of ensuring a maximum participation of all stakeholders especially parents in school affairs.

School principals have a responsibility of exercising leadership that promotes participation by all stakeholders of the school in order to promote democracy which is the key goal of education in South Africa (Department of Education, 2007). Mncube (2009) states that a democratic school is one that allows all stakeholders to participate in deliberations dealing

with the school governance, where they are prepared to live in a democracy, through the acquisition of suitable knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour. Mncube (2010) further states that such skills, values and behaviour are obtained through active democratic involvement of all stakeholders. This study is informed by the theoretical frameworks of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of human development and overlapping spheres of influence theory.

2.5 Theories that frame the study.

There are key theories that have to be discussed in relation to parental involvement. This is mainly because this study is about the ways in which the principals of selected schools negotiated and facilitated the involvement of parents in education of learners. The use of Bronfenbrenner's (1986) ecological systems model of human development and overlapping spheres of influence theory advocated by Epstein (1998) will be appropriate for this study.

2.5.1 Social Ecological Theory.

Bronfenbrenner's (1986) ecological systems model is the idea that the developing person exists within a complex ecological context consisting of five socially organised interlocking subsystems; the micro, meso, macro, exo, and chronosystems. The microsystem refers to the interaction between the child and the immediate environment, which includes the family and the school. The mesosystem represent the linkages between two or more immediate settings containing the child, such as the interaction between home and school (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This theory will work well with this study because children look upon the community or society for guidance for their future education. Berk (2000) describes the mesosystem as a layer that provides the connection between the child's teacher and his/her parents. The third level, the exosystem, refers to settings beyond the person such as the parent's workplace. The macro system refers to the social forces and cultural values which shape all the other systems; the chronosystem refers to the influence of change that takes place over time on the other systems (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). I used this theoretical framework because it emphasises the link both with the school and family. The model emphasises the interconnectedness both within and between the various subsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Within the micro system, the parent and the teacher interact within the school context in the interest of the child, both bringing their relevant experience with

them. In the exosystem and macro system teacher and parent are influenced by more distant environments, such as the demand of the workplace which may determine the time which teacher and the parent involvement and customary practices and expectations shaping parents involvement (Keyes, 2002). The interconnectedness for home/ school communication, in particular are open, bi-directional communication between the child's school , home and community setting exercise an important positive influence on the child's development and academic success. There should be a two way communication and common understanding between the above mentioned institutions for the development of a child.

2.5.2 Overlapping sphere of influence theory



Fig. 1. Epstein Overlapping Spheres of Influence: Joyce L. Epstein.

Epstein (1998) developed her theory of overlapping sphere of influence from Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. Epstein (1998) identifies three major overlapping spheres or environment, the family, the school and the community at the centre of all three spheres is the child (Refer to Fig.1. above). I found that these two models, that is, Bronfenbrenner's social ecological theories and overlapping sphere of influence by Epstein (1998), are relevant for a study of this nature which examines the schools and parents possibilities for collaboration in supporting the learner's educational growth.

Epstein's (1998) theory of overlapping spheres of influence of families and schools proposes that the work of the family and the school overlaps and that they share goals and missions. The model includes both external and internal structures. The external model recognises that these three major services in which children learn and grow can be drawn

together or pushed apart. Some educative practices are conducted separately by schools, families and communities. Some are conducted jointly in order to strengthen children's learning (Epstein, Sanders, Salinas, & Simons, 1997). The internal model of interaction of schools, families and communities shows when and how complex and essential interpersonal relations and patterns of influences occur between individuals at home, at schools and in the community.

These social relationships can take place at an institutional level or at an individual level (Epstein, 1995). I decided to use both Bronfenbrenner's theory and overlapping sphere of influence theory because they both speak to the family as the primary educational place for a child but not separable from the school and community. These theories specify that you cannot separate home, school and a child. What is important at home can also be significant at school. The theory of overlapping spheres of influence, assumes that the mutual interest of families and schools can be successfully promoted by policies and programmes of schools with a focus to teachers (Epstein, 1998). Where teachers make parent involvement part of their regular teaching practice, parents increase their interactions with children at home; they feel more positive about their abilities to help their children and achievement (Epstein, 2001). However, most parents still need help to know how to be productively involved in their children's education at each grade level.

School programmes and teacher practices to organise family and school relations are needed to encourage already active parents and to assist those families who would not become involved on their own. Epstein's theory laid the basis for her widely used model of six types of parent's involvement. The six types are identified as follows; parenting; home-school environment; volunteering; learning at home; decision making; and collaborating with the community (Epstein, 1998). Each type of involvement poses specific challenges for its successful design and implementation and each type of levels to different outcomes for learners, parents and teachers (Epstein, 1998):- Type I, refers to parenting obligations for the child's, health, safety, and preparedness for school and for providing positive home conditions that support educational progress.

Type II, refers to the obligations of schools to communicate with families regarding school progress and student progress (such as communications through memos, notices, report cards and conferences with parents. Type III, refers to parent's participation in volunteering at

school (such as assisting teachers) and in participating in school activities and events (such as students' performance, sports and other events). Type IV, refers to parental involvement in students' learning at home to parent –child – initiated requests for help, and the teachers ideas about parents involvement in home learning activities. Type V, refers to parental involvement in decision-making activities at school. Type VI, refers to school and parent collaborations with communities and other community agencies that enhance the learning opportunities of children (such as programmes for after school care) (Epstein, 1998, p.89). The bottom line is that children must be studied in the context of the family environment. Both theories also emphasise the significance of working collaboratively which is suitable for this study.

2.6 Research done on parental involvement

Internationally there is a significant amount of literature on parental involvement in school activities. Such literature comprises research in different contexts like parental involvement in learners' performance, parental involvement in teaching and learning, and parental involvement in government (Harber, 2004; Reay & Vincent, 2005; Kyrakides, 2005; Epstein, 2005; Moggach, 2006; Smith & Driessen, 2007; Epstein, 2008). However, not much has yet been written about parental involvement in South Africa with the exception of the writings of authors like (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004; Mncube, 2004; Mncube, 2005; Narain, 2005; Maphanga, 2006; Mncube, 2007; Mncube, 2008; Mncube, 2009; Bandlour, 2009; Mncube, 2010). As it can be noted, one scholar seems to have dominated this area, that is, Mncube. Bandlour (2009) argues that parental involvement has recently become a common feature within the broader discourse in South Africa. The role of parental involvement is thus receiving a greater interest.

The study which was conducted in Conbrentum Trust School in Namibia by Erlendsottir (2010) on the effect of parental involvement in education revealed that parents recognise the importance of staying involved with their children's education. In Erlendsottir's (2010) study most parents considered themselves to have a good relationship with their children's teachers and the school. Homework was considered, by each parent in this study, to be important; consequently, they all assisted their children with homework. The main findings were that all parents who were interviewed were highly involved with their children's education. They had high expectations of their children's education and their future. The qualitative approach was adopted in this study. Hence the study on how principals promote parental involvement in schools has not received sufficient attention as it should. That being the case, in this study

more attention is given to how principals promote parental involvement in schools.

The study which was conducted in Australia by Zedan (2011) revealed that parents were one of the most influential factors on the lives of their children. They had the ability to shape, sustain and to develop the pupils who will be active, interested, diligent, creative and tolerant through their positive involvement in the learning process and educational activities. On the other hand, parents were also capable of repressing and destroying the motivation and ability of their children through neglect and indifference to their achievements. Surveys were used in this study as they were designed to obtain information about the performance, attitudes, habits and interest of a particular group of people, that is, the parents of school going age children.

The study which was also conducted in America by Bradley (2010) revealed that there has been a renewed focus on improving the instruction of children at the risk of not learning to read well and ways to effectively involve their parents to enhance their children's reading achievements. The goal of the study was to examine the relationship between school, family and community partnerships and the reading achievement of African American males. The study identified parental involvement activities that significantly influenced the reading achievement of the African American male learners. The study utilised qualitative research method to generate data from the participants. Hence, the study on how principals promote parental involvement has also not received adequate attention. However, in this study, more attention is given to how principals promote parental involvement in schools.

The study conducted in South Africa by Ndlovu (2011) on parental involvement in teaching and learning revealed that the family was seen as the backbone in the child's education. When parents take initiative in the education of their children, children perform better (Ndlovu, 2011). Parental involvement in the affairs of schools is crucial as it has been for the past decades. The findings of the study was that parental involvement is strongly linked to socio-economic conditions within which various communities and schools are situated and continues to influence and shape the extent to which parents are able to play meaningful roles in supporting the provision of quality education. The study adopted an interpretivist, qualitative case study approach. Drawing from the aforementioned study conducted by Ndlovu (2011), this study explores in detail the input by principals in promoting the involvement of parents in schools.

South African researchers like Lewis and Naidoo (2004), Heystek (2003), Heystek and Lauw

(1999) emphasise the need for parents to be actively involved in school governance for the best promotion of parental involvement in education. It is evident that the need for parental involvement in school governance appears to provide the impetus for the introduction of a fresh perspective on education in South Africa. Research done by Mabasa and Themane (2002), Bhengu, (2005 & 2007) and Khumalo, (2008) demonstrates the value of parent-education collaboration as an important requirement for effective home-school partnership. Christenson and Sheridan (2001) further state that schools, communities and parents must cooperate and work collaboratively to improve the learning experience of all children. It should be the desire of each and every parent to want to see his or her child achieve in school and this can be done with the assistance of parents. The child must understand that the intents of both parent and educator are similar (Epstein, 2008). Children cannot function in isolation from the family or the school.

My focus area is how principals promote parental involvement in secondary schools. Parental involvement in school activities include many issues such as learner achievements, learner discipline, provision of assistance with homework, collecting of progress report cards, fundraising projects, safety and security, and so on. Maphanga (2006) shares the view that parents are the first and primary educators of a child's development which occurs concurrently at home and at school. When the child goes to school, that is where the parents take the education on board so that they both work together with educators as partners to develop the learner. Drawing from the aforementioned focus area of this study, there is a great need for parental involvement in the school affairs of their children. The principals also need to play active roles in promoting the involvement of parents (Narain, 2005). The principal's role can lead to quality education in our country.

2.7 Role of principals in promoting parental involvement in schools.

The principal as the leader of the school has the power and influence to motivate and educate parents to be actively involved in schools. According to Epstein (2009), ample research evidence suggests that most parents want their children to succeed in school and in order for them to be good partners in their education; they yearn to obtain more information from schools. Epstein (2008) states that principals have a responsibility to promote parental involvement in schools. Narain (2005) asserts that parental involvement in South Africa is unique and different from the rest of the world due to historical, political, social and economic factors. According to Park, Byun and Kim (2011), the context of the school can provide

valuable insights into how principals can promote parental involvement. Epstein (2008) further states that principals can promote parental involvement by inviting parents to come to the school for a meeting, discussing the child's needs, upon returning to school at the beginning of the school year, by reminding the parents through correspondence, or calling them to ensure the parents attend. .

Mncube (2009) contends that principals are viewed as professional managers of schools ensuring that all duties are carried out adequately, setting the tone in meetings and bearing responsibly for interpreting education policies and ensuring that they are well implemented. Furthermore, principals have the responsibility of ensuring the maximum participation of all stakeholders. In addition, principals can contribute greatly to school governance since they are usually at an advantage in terms of their familiarity with official regulations, provincial directives and knowledge of educational reform measures. Most research conducted by Mncube, (2005; 2007; 2008; 2009; 2010) suggests that principals are the key elements in promoting parental involvement in schools.

According to Govender (2004), the basic premise of the home-school relationship is that parents must recognise the obligation to complement the work of the school by active involvement, and that schools should recognise parents as equal educators of their children. Only when this level of understanding occurs between the school and home, can a genuine partnership be created, which then paves the way for constructive relationships. It is the principal's duty to create a genuine partnership to be effective in schools. Baffour (2006) states that every child is born to a home and that the first education of a child is received at home. According to Maphanga (2006) and Street (1997), parents are the first and primary educators of child development which occurs concurrently at home and at school. This is further argued by Epstein (2008) that parents become educators at home. Ngwenya (1996), cited in Narain (2005), states that home, child and the school form an alliance that creates a special climate that is desirable for effective education. If a child sees that his or her parents are enthusiastic about education, he or she is far more likely to view schooling in a positive light and be more receptive to learning. Therefore, principals should acknowledge that they have much to gain through drawing in the parents' unique knowledge of their own children and experiences as primary educators at home so as to give children the best possible education.

Lemmer (2007) states that schooling is an extension of the child's up-bringing at home. However, it seems that parents are of the opinion that the school is the first and only place

responsible for the education of their children. Lemmer (2007) further states that it is important that parents and schools work together to make sure that the children complete the school work as this increases the likelihood that the child will do what is required of him or her to stay abreast with the learning taking place in class. Parents and schools should work closely together, thereby creating school-like family and family-like school (Epstein 2008). Principals with powers vested in them have the responsibilities to create an environment conducive to learning and also promote the involvement of parents in education.

Narain (2005) and Maphanga (2006) both argue that involving parents in the life of the learners in schools has a positive influence on the children. The home-school partnership is identified as a critical factor in the academic success of school children. The principal of the school needs to provide parents with information that enlightens them to have interest in school functions. It is the responsibility of parents to see to it that there is a progress in their children's education (Ndlovu, 2011). It is also the responsibility of the principals to see to it that parents take initiatives in the schooling of their children. School principals can play a very important role to involve all stakeholders since it is his/her position to do so.

Lemmer and Van Wyk, (2004) classify types of parental involvement, namely parenting, communications, volunteering, home learning and decision-making. Educators or principals who work with parents understand their learners better, and are able to generate unique rather than routine solutions to classrooms problems and can reach a shared understanding with parents and learners (Epstein, 2005). Parents who are involved in school activities tend to develop a greater appreciation of their role in the schooling of their children (Van der Westhuizen & Van Vuuren, 2007). Parental involvement in education has also been associated with a variety of positive academic outcomes including higher grade point averages.

Msila (2010) argues that for principals to be actively promoting involvement in all stakeholders especially parents in education, principals need to participate in a number of programmes meant to improve their roles, especially short workshops organised by the Department of Education. Bush, (2007) avers that there is a widespread belief that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to school and learner outcomes.

Principals may be aware that parents are probably unable to ask questions about their performance as professionals; they should acknowledge that parents, regardless of their level of education, want the best education for their children and expect teachers to perform and

deliver results (Department of Education, 2004; Chaka, 2008; Mncube, 2009). Parents can play an important role if they are well-trained and are afforded sufficient opportunity to play a role. According to Van Deventer and Kruger (2003) cited in Jooste and White (2011), principals in the South African context need specific skills to promote parental involvement in schools. Such skills include planning, problem-solving, decision-making, organising, delegating, co-ordinating, controlling, school management, as well as, other skills that are required to establish harmonious relations at schools. These skills seem general and could be of relevance for educational managers everywhere.

Calitz, Fuglestad and Lillejord (2002) state that leadership is not a one man's task but that it needs the participation of all stakeholders involved. Parents have a big role to play in educating their children. The school principal has a responsibility to influence and energise the team he or she works with, that is, the educators, HODs, Deputy Principals and parents. Wallace (2001) suggests that principals play a significant role in involving parents in schools. Heystek (1999), cited in Ndlovu (2011), emphasises that the relationship between schools and parents should no longer be client based but partnership based. Coleman (2003) also suggests that all rely on the school principal's management style to promote or frustrate the involvement of the parents in the school. The promotion of the active participation of parents in the education of their children is a growing worldwide phenomenon and rests upon the shoulders of the principal.

Ndlovu (2011) reveals that principals need to expose parents to more workshops with special focus on what parents can do to support their children. Furthermore, the principal's role is to see to it that parents understand the policy on parental involvement in schools to eliminate confusions. Prew, (2009) cited in Heystek (2011), argue that the limited literacy rate of parents does not preclude them from being capable in school matters. There are numerous examples where parents who have limited literacy skills play a positive role in school matters which benefit and contribute to the improvement of education.

2.8 Benefits of parental involvement in schools

Strong partnership between the schools and the parents yields positive results for both the school and the learners. Studies of learners in secondary schools show a beneficial relationship between parental involvement and learner variables such as academic achievement, sense of well-being, attendance, learner attitudes, homework and educational aspirations (Gonzalez-De Hass, 2005; Koonce & Harper, 2005; Maphanga, 2006; Huang

& Masson, 2008). Maphanga (2006) contends that parental involvement is the most significant factor contributing to child's success in school. Parents and family members are the child's first educators. Their active involvement in school activities improves student achievement; increases school attendance, and decreases student dropout, delinquency and pregnancy rates (Patrikakou, Weissberg, Redding & Walberg, 2005; Maphanga, 2006). Parental involvement is therefore of prime importance for the success of learners in education. This sentiment is equally shared by Narain (2005).

In our society, great value is placed on the quality of education when determining how successful one can be. Research has demonstrated that parental involvement plays a large role in the success of students' academic outcomes (Driessen, Smit & Slegers, 2005). Ndlovu (2011) supports the view that parents have an obligation to support their children education in order for them to succeed and educators require the same support from parents in order to achieve better results. Furthermore, Ndlovu (2011) contends that parental involvement exerts a powerful influence on children's values and attitudes in their learning process at home and at school. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009) also support the view that practical involvement serves as a positive force on behalf of the children success.

According to Van der Westhuizen and Van Vuuren (2007), the common denominator in weak schools is weak leadership; once the leadership is weak parental involvement will be impossible. Furthermore, successful principals provide benefits for parents, educators and learners in schools. Taylor and Ryan, (2005) cited in Duma, Kapueja, and Khanyile (2010) contend that there is sufficient evidence to support the claim that successful schools are led by successful leaders. Parental involvement is a very important component of education, and one that is especially lacking in certain communities in South Africa (Lemmer, 2007). It is known that parental involvement increases school attendance and improves the social behaviour of learners, which might be the reason that it has been linked to an increase in self-esteem and academic achievement (Swap, 1987) cited in (Lemmer, 2007). Parents and educators both benefit from their partnership, since they can support each other to attain positive changes in their children's behaviour and in the school in general. Parents often possess skills and knowledge that can be valuable to schools, yet cooperation with parents is not an easy process (Lemmer, 2007). In a study by Huang and Masson (2008), the findings indicated strong positive correlations between parental involvement in their child's learning and academic achievements, better behaviours, accountability, social skills and attendance. Parental involvement has been linked with higher academic achievement in a number of

context; attitudes of students, homework preparedness and high goals for future education (Gonzalez-De Hass, William & Holbei, 2005).

Henderson and Mapp (2002) assert that students that earn higher grades enrol in higher education and their attitude towards schools becomes more positive if the family and school work together. Schools must make sure that they involve parents in order to obtain positive results. Van Wyk and Lemmer, (2009) argue that parents want the best education for their children and they can play a motivational role on their children wanting to follow their footsteps. Epstein (2009) states that the positive effect that parental involvement has on students' academic achievements appeared to be undeniable. Therefore, it should be a top priority for parents and schools to establish and maintain a strong partnership between schools and home.

Research done by Sanders and Sheldon (2009), Richardson (2009), Sheldon (2009), Herderson and Berlar (1994), recognised the important role that a strong, positive bond between home and school can play in the development and education of children. Research has also shown that successful students have strong academic support from the involved parents (Sheldon, 2009). Sanders and Sheldon (2009) maintain that schools become successful when a strong and positive relationship among students, parents and teachers has been established. All students are more likely to experience academic success if their home environment is supportive. The benefit for students and strong relationship between schools and home is based on the development of trust between parents and teachers. According to Glasgow and Whiteney (2009) the goal of parent involvement in their children education is to strengthen learning and development of children. It is beneficial for the students to have school and parents working together as a unity with the focus on student's success.

Researchers such as Mashishi (1994), Mthembu (1999), Mbatha (2005) and Bhengu (2007) have found that schools with the most successful parental involvement programmes are also successful in terms of learner achievements. Epstein (2009) contends that there are many reasons for developing and establishing a partnership between school and family. The main reason for such a partnership is to aid students in succeeding at school. Other reasons are, for example, to improve school climate and school programmes, to advance parental skills and leadership to assist parents to connect with others in the school, and to assist the teachers with their work. All those reasons emphasises the importance for parents to play an active role in

their children education and to keep a strong and positive relationship with schools.

Ndlovu (2011) asserts that it has been proven that children respond better when parents take initiative in their education. Furthermore, the family is seen as the backbone in the child's education, which means that when the parent take initiative in the education of their children, it is likely that the children will perform better at school. Ndlovu (2011) further states that parental involvement is strongly linked to socio-economic status which is strongly linked with learner's progress that is significant to parental involvement.

The research conducted in Scotland by Perth and Kinross Council (2007), revealed that parents are the first and the on-going educators of their children and can expect to receive information on what their child is learning at school and how they can be best supported. Effective communication and a sense of shared responsibility is the key to getting this right. De Pree (1989) states that good communication is the most vital component in organisations, as it creates a common bond of interdependence and mutual interest among interlocking contributors. Schools must make an effort to provide information to the parents about the school curriculum, administration, facilities and day-to-day running of the institution, and create time for parents to hold formal and informal dialogue with the staff (Mestry, 2004).

Maphanga (2006) states that parents have equal strength and expertise when compared to teachers, that they can contribute and receive services on an equal footing and can even share responsibilities and accountability with the professional staff in schools. When parents are involved in their children's education learners report more effort, concentration and attention. Learners are more inherently interested in learning and they experience higher perceived competence. According to Mncube (2010) listening to parents, encouraging their participation and giving them more power and responsibility improves the functioning of the school. Another study conducted in Kenya by Ngware (2008) revealed that when parents increase participation, school teachers and administrators will increase quality, both by improving teaching and by using resources more efficiently. Ngware (2008) further contends that principals do not ask parents to participate in decision-making meetings because they are perceived not to have confidence in policy issues and that they would complicate such meetings and school principals fear sharing information and power. Such principal's actions eventually lead to obstacles in the involvement of parents in schools.

2.8 Barriers or obstacles in parental involvement in schools.

South African education is faced with a challenge of lack of parental involvement in schools. This is due to a number of factors such as socio-economic factors and demographics. Research done by Mashishi (1994), Bhengu (2005), Khumalo (2008) and Mncube, (2009) demonstrate that parental involvement in rural areas in KwaZulu-Natal faces difficulties. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009) share similar views with these researchers that parental involvement in schools more especially in rural areas is not an easy task. Some of the difficulties highlighted by these scholars include the lack of information or understanding about potential benefits. Parents need to be aware of their responsibilities in terms of South African Schools Act, as well as how to exercise their mandate in terms of supporting learners in schooling.

Ndlovu (2011) affirms that there are still problems in parental involvement, and that without active parental involvement, learners are less likely to succeed in their effort to improve their education. Most researchers have indicated that some parents are very reluctant in involving themselves in education (Epstein, 1998 & 1999; Narain, 2005; Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005; Maphanga, 2006; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009; Ndlovu, 2011). Some researchers concluded that some parents do not feel welcome in schools; they want educators to continue with their professional work. Ndlovu (2011) further asserts that there are various reasons for parents not to participate in education of their children, and one of them is the poor relationship that exists between schools and parents.

Furthermore, there is a view that educators only want to involve parents when there are problems in the school and this may be the main contributory factor or barrier which frustrates parental involvement in schools. Some parents are not taking initiatives in supporting schools and educators are keeping away from parents and it looks as if there is a fence between educators and parents (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005; Bhengu, 2007). The partnership can also break down the barriers between educators and parents and confer the most positive results on learners achievement. According to Singh, Mbokodi and Masila (2004), parental involvement role is crucial in the enhancement of learner success. Parents who played little or no role in their children's education contributed to the poor performance of their children which eventually drops the quality of education in our country. Whilst this may be true, it does not necessarily mean that learners without parents will fail. In rural communities parents do not stay with their children because of various commitments, but there are learners who perform well.

In South African schools there is a perception that most parents do not participate meaningfully in their children's education. This view is supported by Mestry (2004) who asserts that there is poor attendance of parents at parents meeting, limited parental involvement in fundraising projects, low parent attendance at parent-teacher meetings, recalcitrance in paying school fees, inability to maintain proper control of learning support material issued to their children, and lack of interest in learners school work and homework. The Education White Paper 6 confirms that non-recognition and non-involvement of parents serve as barriers to quality education (Department of Education, 2001).

The study conducted by the Alliance Schools Initiatives (2004) suggested that many parents encounter obstacles to participating in their children's education. Some of the hurdles to effective parental involvement are negative communication from schools, and the insufficient training for teachers on how to reach out to parents. The lack of parental education and parental skills, the time and job pressures of parents and language barriers also have serious implications for positive parental involvement in schools (Koonce & Harper, 2005). Parents believe that they are not welcome in schools and reported a high degree of alienation and hostility towards the school. Lemmer (2011) states that effective parental involvement programmes depend primarily on the capabilities of the principal to work effectively with families in school based initiatives. Lemmer (2011) further states that teachers generally, received little preparation for parental involvement. Evans (2004), Graham-Grey, (2002) cited in Lemmer (2011), argue that regular home-school communication is fundamental to effective parent involvement in schooling. Parents and teachers need to share with and learn from each other during regular, open, two way communication in the interest of the child.

Maphanga (2006) further reveals that many parents encounter obstacles to participating in their children's education. Barriers in education reported by parents and educators include differing ideas among parents and educators on what constitutes involvement. These include a less welcoming atmosphere towards visiting schools and classrooms, negative or neutral communication from schools, lack of parental education and parenting skills, time pressure, job pressure and language barrier, limited knowledge and skills about parent involvement, restricted opportunities for cooperation (Kim, 2009; Mendz, 2010). Mncube (2005) further highlights a number of factors leading to the lack of parental involvement in schools, namely, unequal power relations, socio-economic status, different cultural expectations of diverse communities, lack of confidence and expertise caused by the absence or lack of training,

poor sharing of information, the rural -urban divide, language barriers, poor organisation and high turnover rate of governors.

This view is substantiated by the research undertaken by Perth and Kinross Council (2007), which contended that there is a variety of reasons as to why some parents have little or limited contact with a school. This can create barriers that stop them getting involved or supporting their children's education and learning. Barriers may include previous personal experience, additional support needs, the isolation of lone parents, shift or long working hours, lack of child care facilities and language differences. Schools and education should create opportunities for parents to be more involved in their children's learning and education to develop communication to improve the information school provide to parents (Smit, 2006).

Mncube (2009) argues that at some schools in South Africa, parents are not yet playing their full role as mandated by legislation. Parents at some rural schools are reluctant to participate in the decision-making processes of schools as a result of their low educational level or power struggles. In some former Model-C schools, on the other hand, lack of participation is related to the low education of parents in general, lack of education on parental involvement in school activities, the fear of academic victimisation of the children, language barrier and difficulty in attending meetings. These schools lately are attended by learners from the disadvantage background where their parents sometimes experience these barriers. Most research agrees that low socio-economic status is linked with lower rates of parental involvement. It is evident that there are discrepancies between low income families and levels of parental involvement (Smit, 2006). Given these barriers many schools and families never realise the benefit of parental involvement.

2.9 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed what South African researchers and those abroad have written about how principals promote parental involvement in schools. Most research shows that when parents are fully involved in their children's education results are positive. The next chapter is about research design and methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the literature review and theoretical framework that underpinned the study. This chapter outlines and explains the methodological processes and research methods that were used in generating the data that would answer research questions. The aim of the study was to explore how principals promoted parental involvement in three secondary schools in the Umbumbulu Circuit. The chapter describes and justifies the research methodology employed in the study. Firstly, the paradigm is described and justified. Secondly, the methodology that was used is explained as well as the methods of data generation and analysis. Thirdly, sampling method that was used in the study is discussed. Moreover, the data analysis will be explained, and lastly, ethical issues and trustworthiness in the study is explained.

3.2 Research Design and Methodology

The study adopted a case study design which is located within the qualitative research approaches. This case study design consisted of three secondary schools that were located in the same context, a rural area in Umbumbulu. The case study design was relevant for this research study because case studies are the most preferred approach within qualitative researches (Mertens & McLaughlin, 2004). Furthermore, case studies provide researchers with an opportunity to examine and present the descriptions of each phenomenon in detail within its context. The aim of the study is to understand what is real in its own uniqueness (Patton, 1999; Yin, 2003). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) assert that an intrinsic case study is where the researcher wants to understand a certain case better. I decided to use a qualitative methodology as this study is located within the interpretative research paradigm.

Qualitative methodology is a multi-perspective approach utilising different techniques and data generated methods aimed at describing, making sense of, interpreting and interaction in terms of the meaning that the subject is attached to it, (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Interpretivist approaches work as a systematic analysis of social meaningful action through direct and detailed observation of people in a natural setting (Nueman, 1994). According to

Denzin and Lincoln, (1992) qualitative research can be defined as a multi-method in focus involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter.

According to Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004), in interpretivist paradigm, there is no generalising but the generating of the meaning is the key. The positivist paradigm is complemented in the interpretivist paradigm since it reveals what I realised in the interpretivist paradigm that social realms are not the same as the natural sciences, and therefore can be researched differently. In the three secondary schools, meaning was generated through semi-structured individual interviews. I was more interested in the deeper understanding of how principals promoted parental involvement in the educational activities.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000 & 2007) assert that the strength of the interpretive paradigm lies in the fact that it provides the voices of the participants in their own voices and it is directly associated with qualitative research methodology. It was appropriate to use qualitative research methodology as this is an interpretive research paradigm.

3.3 Research Paradigm

I employed a qualitative research approach. According to Gorman and Clayton (1998), qualitative research is a process of inquiry that draws data from the context in which the events occur. This is done in an attempt to describe these occurrences as a means of determining the process in which events are embedded. I studied the phenomenon in its natural setting. The context in which human experiences are studied, must be natural, not the one that is artificial (Ary, 1990). The researcher was concerned with social process and with meaning. Most qualitative studies are conducted within a theoretical framework that focuses on social processes and the meaning, which participants attribute to social interactions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Cohen *et al.* (2007) also define qualitative research methodology as a systematic attempt to generate and use non-quantitative techniques which will facilitate understanding of everyday socio-cultural contexts of educational processes and institutions. Thus, the use of qualitative approach for gathering data for this study was in line with the views of Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), as well as, those of Sergiovanni (1996). Hence, this study sought to get an in depth understanding of how principals promoted parental involvement in secondary schools.

Interpretivist paradigm was used in this study because interpretivists attempt to understand peoples' social behaviour from the point of the participants that is context-dependent (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). Interpretive paradigm was appropriate for this study because I wanted to understand how principals promote parental involvement in schools. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) support the use of interpretivists in this setting when they claim that in interpretivist paradigm, lessons of experience and cultural ideology co-create each other and describe distinct phenomenological experiences that are intimately tied to cultural norms, beliefs and ideals. This provided me with a deep understanding of how principals promote parental involvement in secondary schools.

3.4 Selection of participants and sites

This section provides a detailed description of the process that was followed in selecting the participants and research sites for participation in the study.

3.4.1 Participants

The participating schools were selected from three different contexts, from rural and semi urban settlement schools. The reason for that was that I wanted to obtain a comprehensive picture from the three contexts regarding how principals promoted parental involvement in secondary schools. The historical background of these schools was also the main reason for their identification. Principals in these schools were promoted within the school, which means that they know the community better. Participants were chosen according to the roles they play in the schools.

3.4.2 The composition of the various participants and their gender

The following schematic representation illustrates the composition of the various participants and their gender after purposeful sampling was made.

| Schools | A | B | C | Totals |
|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|---------------|
| Principals | 1 Male | 1 Male | 1 Male | 3 |
| HODs | 1 Male | 1 Male | 1 Female | 3 |
| Teachers | 1 Female | 1 Female | 1 Female | 3 |
| Parents | 1 Female | 1 Male | 1 Female | 3 |
| Total | 4 | 4 | 4 | 12 |

Table 1: The composition of the various participants and their gender.

3.5 Sampling of schools for the research

In order to obtain rich data, I used both purposive and convenience sampling techniques to select schools. Purposive sampling means that the context and participants were selected because of certain defining characteristics that made them the holders of data needed for the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). In this study the particular schools were chosen on the basis that they belong in the Umbumbulu Circuit. I had a relationship with them, and thus could gain access to them, and also because of their reputation about how their principals promoted parental involvement. The sampling was convenient and cost effective in that all schools selected were close to the researcher in terms of their location, particularly because this study was self-funded by the researcher. Three secondary schools were selected, in the rural area at Umbumbulu Circuit in Umlazi District in the KwaZulu-Natal Province. Selecting these schools was appropriate because their status were the same in terms of parental involvement.

The sample comprised three school principals from these three secondary schools because they were the people who were supposed to be promoting parental involvement in schools context. Other participants were one HOD, one Post-level 1 educator, and one parent selected randomly from the SGB. The study had twelve participants in total, four from each school. Umbumbulu Circuit was selected due to its accessibility and the fact that my school was part of that circuit. According to Nuewenhuis (2007), qualitative research needs a smaller sample than quantitative research studies. I employed qualitative research because it is suitable for a manageable number of participants, it saves time and high costs are avoided.

Denzin and Lincoln (2002) show that qualitative research also uses various methods of generating data, and the use of multiple methods reflects and attempts to get an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon in question. In this study I used different methods of generating data in order to have in-depth understanding about how principals promote parental involvement in secondary schools.

3.6 Methods

To generate data in this study I used only one method, namely, the semi- structured interviews to solicit data from various categories of participants. More details are provided bellow.

3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used as an instrument for data generation. By this I mean questions that can be reorganised or rephrased to allow for further probing about the topic in question (Cohen, Manion & Morison, 2000). Henning, van Ransburg and Smit (2004) recommend the use of semi-structured interviews in qualitative research because they provide the researcher with flexibility to probe for details during the interview.

I chose semi-structured interview method because my purpose was to understand the participants' points of view rather than make generalisations about their behaviour, to gain insight into specific issues and to probe the areas from the participants' responses that I have no prior knowledge of. The questions for interviews were constructed according to the participants' post levels. During the interviews, there was a deep probing which resulted in additional questions being asked and this varied according to the participants' response to each question (Cohen, Manion & Morison, 2007).

Semi-structured interviews were used to generate information from the participants, that is, school principal, one HOD, one Post-level 1 educator and one parent. The advantages of the semi-structured interviews is that it enables probing and clarification of issues. Semi-structured interviews have the ability to gather descriptive data from a few participants who have the knowledge of the phenomenon (Cohen et al.2007). The aim is to obtain rich descriptive data to understand the participants' construction of their experiences and social reality (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). The interviews were conducted during school breaks and after school in different venues. The individual interview took about 45 minutes to one hour depending on how quick the respondent was in answering the questions.

Sideman (1998) asserts that an hour can be considered a standard unit of time for individual interviews. Furthermore, De Vos (2002) argues that the success of interview depends on the interviewer competence in asking questions. I was also aware that the study dealt with sensitive and personal issues which could have the possibilities of evoking emotions. All the interviews were audio recorded because when conduction interview, an interviewee is faced with multiple situations to pay attention to. Digital voice recorder allows a fuller record than notes taken during the interview (Smith, 1999). Interview on audio recorder may also be replayed as soon as necessary for complete and objective analysis at a later stage. In addition to the words, the tone

of voice and emotional impact of the response are preserved by the recorder instrument. Using the recorder allow for a complete and accurate recording of the participants exact words. Audio recording provided time for important aspects in a interview like the non-verbal behaviours, for example, facial expressions and gestures observed to be noted. Interviews were audio taped for replay and to validate the facts. Moreover, I assured the participants that the audio-tapes would be treated with the strictest confidentiality and would be used by me (the researcher) for the purpose of the research.

3.7 Recording the data

It is very important that information that is obtained during the research is recorded and that it is recorded accurately. The description of how data was generated through semi-structured interview is presented below;

Before interview session started, I asked for permission from the participants to use a digital voice recorder, which in my case, was an Olympus. Digital voice recorder is the instrument which is used to record verbal information. Secondly, I explained to the participants that recording the discussion was the only means to ensure accuracy of the content of our discussion and that it was not for any other purpose, and also that no other person would have access to the recorded information. All interviews were recorded using a battery-charged Olympus as a back-up. I also took notes whist interviews were in progress. Recording interviews was easy because I was able to focus on the discussions. Van Manen (1994) also emphasises that another way of generating data of personal experience is to have recorded conversations. Transcriptions were taken from digital voice recorder. The transcriptions are needed for repeated readings in the discourse analysis (Bueman & Parker, 1993). Reading and writing transcripts is helpful as it familiarises the transcribers with the data as s/he goes over and over reading and writing it.

Having an idea that transcriptions are extremely time consuming and difficult to do, for this study they were vital importance and they had to be done. Knowing that transcripts are expensive to develop but a vital commodity, they were written clearly and the sentences were in a double spacing in a page (Burman & Parker, 1993).

Coding represent the operations, by which data are broken down, conceptualised and put back together in new ways. The themes and sub-themes were highlighted and marked in different

colours and patterns using codes. These codes made looking at the many pages of transcripts easier and manageable.

3.8 Data Analysis

I used inductive data analysis to analyse the data after verifications of transcripts. When transcribing data, exact words uttered by the participants were used. I interrogated data through reading data to check if it makes sense. I transcribed the data verbatim and also generated data through observations that were not expressed verbally and they were arranged in categories and themes that emerged from data generated. Maree (2007) elaborates on the analysis that it means a close or systematic study or separation of a whole unit's part for study. After coding and re-coding of data, analysis commenced. Theoretical framework was used as a guide during the process of data analysis (Cohen *et al.*, 2000).

3.9 Trustworthiness in the study

Researchers who do case studies have the obligations to make their studies trustworthy and credible. Yin (2004) emphasises that it is significant that the researcher ensures trustworthiness in a study. One of the ways of ensuring trustworthiness of the findings is to use multiple data sources. In this study multiple data sources refer to different participants that provided information that assisted in answering the research questions. These data sources were principals, HODs, educators as well as parents. In fact, there are too many ways of ensuring trustworthiness of the findings. Different writers use or emphasise different methods to ensure that the findings of the study enjoys credibility among research community.

To ensure credibility in the study I went back to the sites with the transcripts to confirm what I have written with participants. Observing ethical conduct is one of the ways, which I believe, enhances credibility and dependability of the study. For example, I gave participants guarantees that what they told me in the interviews would remain with us. In that way they talked freely without any fear of victimisation (Mertens & McLaughlin, 2004). I did member-checking to confirm the data. This was done by asking each participant about the issues of parental involvement whether what I have been told is what they understand happening in the school and that corroborated the data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to credibility as the ability the researcher uses to produce findings that are convincing and believable. For example,

Mertens and McLaughlin (2004) assert that trustworthiness can be ensured by using member-checking technique to ascertain whether the participants agree with the recorded version of the interviews. I provided as much information on how principals promote parental involvement in school educational activities.

3.10 Ethical issues

The use of interviews as a data generation tool, also involves obtaining ethical clearance. Interviews concern interpersonal interaction and produces information that involves invasion of human private space, this results into a revelation of the human condition (Cohen *et al.*, 2011).

I wrote a letter to the provincial Department of Education seeking permission to interview principals in schools. Another letter was written to the participants seeking their consent to take part in the interview. It was important to ensure that participants took part in the study with confidence. To ensure this, I informed them that the information they would share with me would be kept highly confidential. The participants were assured that the information shared with them would not be used in a way that would reveal their identity. The participants were also given assurance that they would not be discussed by the researcher with anyone. Furthermore pseudo names were used when referring to the participants. This helped to protect their identity and privacy.

I explained in greater detail, the purpose of the study and how the information generated from them would be used. I further explained to them all their rights in the process including the right to withdraw from participating in the research at any time they felt they were no longer comfortable. Participants were treated fairly and with great respect. Data generated was made available to the participants so that they check if it reflected exactly what they wanted to say. Once everyone was satisfied with the data generated, data analysis commenced.

3.11 Coding of schools and participants

In research it is vital that identities of the participants are protected. One way of hiding the identities of participants is to use pseudonyms (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). The normal practice is to code for names of institutions and participants. The codes that I used are explained below.

3.11.1 The schools

The schools and various participants were coded to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. School-A refers to the school that was located in the semi-urban area in Umbumbulu Circuit. School-B refers to the school that was located in the deep rural area in Umbumbulu Circuit. School-C refers to the school that was located in the rural area in Umbumbulu Circuit.

3.11.2 Participants

The codes that were used for each participant are explained below.

3.11.3 Principals

Principal-A refers to the principal of School-A.
Principal-B refers to the principal of School-B
Principal-C refers to the principal of School-C.

3.11.4 Heads of Departments

HOD-A refers to the HOD from school-A.
HOD-B refers to the HOD from School-B.
HOD-C refers to the HOD from School-C.

3.11.5 Post level one educator

PL1-A refers to Post-level 1 educator from School-A.
PL1-B refers to Post-level 1 educator form School-B.
PL1-C refers to Post-level 1 educator from School-C.

3.11.6 Parents

Parent-A refers to the parent from School-A.
Parent-B refers to the parent from School-B.
Parent-C refers to the parent from School-C.

3. 12. Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the research paradigm, methodology and other elements of the research process such as sampling, trustworthiness of the study and ethical issues that were observed during the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

EMERGING STORIES FROM THE FIELD

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the research design and methodology that was employed in this study. This chapter provides a detailed discussion of emerging stories from the field that were produced through semi-structured interviews. The stories emerged from the data that was produced from the three case study sites, two of which were drawn from two rural areas and one from a semi-urban settlement. Because these case study sites were schools they were coded as **School-A**, **School-B** and **School-C** respectively, and they were all located in the Umbumbulu Circuit. These stories are presented in two formats; the first provides a detailed profile of each case study schools.

Profiling the schools, serves one main purpose, namely, that of providing the readers with a context from which the stories emerged. As part of profiling the schools, direct voices from the participants have been used in order to illuminate the context from the perspectives of the participants as insiders of the story. And the second section focuses on the themes that emerged after analysing the data on how principals promoted parental involvement in the studied schools. The themes are presented in an integrated fashion, using voices or extracts from participants from these sites to support my claims.

4.2 The profiles of three sites

The profiles of the three schools capture the key features that characterised each of the schools. An attempt has been made to ensure consistency in terms of the issues that are discussed across the three schools.

4.2.1 School-A

School-A was ranked Quintile 3, and is about 10 kilometres away from Isipingo, a small town in the south of Durban, and 24 kilometres from Durban. It is classified as a 'No-fee-School'. The 'No-fee-schools' policy was implemented in 2007 whereby parents whose children attend such schools do not pay fees; these schools are determined by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) at National level by looking at schools' socio-economic backgrounds. School-A was located in a semi-urban settlement and was surrounded by

the informal settlement and, a lot of modern houses owned by middle income earners. Social services facilities such as the police station and the health clinic were nearby. The school and the local community were endowed with basic infrastructure such as clean piped water supply, electricity and sanitation.

The school had 30 well maintained and fully furnished classrooms. In addition there were 4 special rooms comprising, a science laboratory, computer laboratory, resource centre, and a kitchen that was reportedly, built by the parents two years ago. Out of the 30 classrooms, 17 of them were donated by a local company as a result of the efforts of the principal and the SGB while 6 of these classrooms were recently built by the Department of Education due to the increased learner enrolment from 720 learners in 2010 to the current figure of 1400. The school had a staff complement of 43 educators, 36 of which were Post-level 1 educators. There was a principal (male), and two Deputy Principals (one male and one female). The four HODs were responsible for different departments such as Science, Commerce, Languages and Humanities. The HODs shared offices, but both Deputy Principals had their offices and the principal is having his main office.

Through the vision, initiative and innovative ideas of the principal, and working closely with the parents, the school has experienced tremendous infrastructural development from 17 classrooms in 2007 when the principal came to the school to the current 30 classrooms and special rooms. Commenting on such development in this school, the principal highlighted the following:

When I arrived in this school I interacted with all stakeholders positively. I promoted the positive participation in a very professional manner. This school is inviting now. All parents are willing to register their children without any fear (Principal-A).

The school and the community have also been faced with a number of problems such as drug abuse, teenage pregnancy and unemployment. These social problems had negative effects on school development. The principal has been remarkable in this community through his attempts to deal with the mentioned social ills. He has been actively involved in various structures in the community aimed at dealing with these problems; these include parents, Community Policing Forum (CPF) and the South African Police Services (SAPS). In

Appreciation of what the principal has been doing for the school and community, one of the parents linked to School-A responded as follows:

We need educated personnel in this community to educate our children about the moral values. Our children are disturbed by drugs and all sorts of bad things but we hope that the school will help in showing the way to our children before it is too late. We are very glad when we see how the principal work hand in glove with the community structures in order to fight some social problems. The principal is involving the SAPS and the CPF and social workers to educate, guide and give support to community (Parent-A).

It is evident that School-A has been characterised by the school actively engaging parents and members of the community in trying, not only to improve life within the school, but also to contribute to the betterment of the community in which the school is located.

4.2.2 School-B

The school belonged to Quintile-4, and was located in a rural area, 30 kilometres away from the Isipingo Central Business District (CBD), and 30 kilometres from the city of Durban. School-B and local community were also endowed with basic infrastructure such as electricity supply and clean piped water. This school, like School-A, was located close to social facilities like a police station and health clinic. Unlike many schools that are located in rural areas, the school and the community have been collaboratively working together in ensuring that effective teaching and learning situation occurs. Parents have been able to build 29 classrooms on their own.

The school had an enrolment of 1444 and a staff complement of 56 educators, 48 of which were Post-level 1 educators, the SMT comprise a principal (male), two deputies (one male and one female) and five HODs for different fields of studies, that is, Sciences, Commerce, Languages, Humanities and Technical drawings. Among the Post-level 1 educators, 33 were females and 15 were males. The school had two security guards during the day and also two security guards during the nights all paid by the Department of Education. The school was well fenced, well painted except the roof which looked old. There were two administrative clerks and four general workers (cleaners). Besides the 29 classrooms, the school also had a Science laboratory, Computer laboratory, Home Economics centre, Technical drawing and Art centre.

All these centres have a great contribution towards promoting teaching and learning, and have been achieved through the principal's vision and initiatives, working closely with parents. Commenting on the success of collaboration between the school and the parents the principal explained the following:

I realised that I cannot do things alone in a very big institution like this except to involve all stakeholders. I work hand in hand with the SGB, educators, parents and learners. Parents are the priorities when it comes to any move; they are the pillars of any change in this school. They received first-hand information about any development because they support the school with their children (Principal-B).

The school has increasingly gained reputation as a good performing one, to the extent that parents from neighbouring areas such as Umlazi, KwaMakhutha, Umlaas Road, Illovo and Lamontville Township have enrolled their children. Because of this reputation, enrolment has gone from 900 in 2008 to the current figure of 1444. Commenting on the high number of learners, the principal had this to say:

Parents cannot send their children where there is no progress, and the full commitment of all stakeholders is the results of this high number of learners. Parents have wide choice to choose the best school for their children. No parent can dump his/her own child just for the sake of schooling but they do their own research in terms the progress in a particular school. Good results are the main cause, since I was promoted to be the principal in this school things changed drastically. Parents developed the sense of owning the school through the promotion of their involvement. Buildings can also tell the story. The school has a good name in the whole community (Principal -B).

The steady improvement in the provision of effective learning experience and concomitant escalation in learner enrolment can be attributed to the new culture of collaboration between the school and parents; parental involvement in the vision and activities of the school has contributed towards the success experienced in the school. One example of the success of the collaboration is the fact that parents have agreed to pay at least R450 per learner per year to

supplement the school requirements. This was achieved through a consensus agreement that reached by the schools and the SGB, and this was successfully implemented as well.

4.2.3 School-C

School-C was located in a rural area under Sobonakhona-Makhanya Tribal Authority. It was about 17 kilometres away from Isipingo and 26 kilometres from Durban. It was classified as a Quintile 3 which belonged to the 'No-fee-schools' category. Unlike School-A and School-B respectively, social services such as police station and health care clinic were 8 and 9 kilometres away respectively. 'No-fee-schools' are determined by the National Government by looking at the school's socio-economic background. Traditional leaders (i.e. Inkosi and izinduna) played a prominent role in controlling the affairs of the community, as well as, for the school. Inkosi was someone in a specific tribe who has been chosen to administer the affairs of that particular tribe, and izinduna are elders in a specific tribe chosen by Inkosi to assist in the administration of their tribe. Basic infrastructure such as clean piped water, electricity, sanitation was available in the school and the community. In addition, water tanks were available to store water during the rainy seasons. The school had an enrolment of 810 learners and a staff complement of 24 educators of which 19 were Post-level 1 educator. The SMT comprises a principal (male) and a deputy principal (female). Four Head of departments and out of 19 Post-level 1 educators 10 were females and 9 were males.

The school had 18 classrooms, one library; one not well equipped Science laboratory, one very big staff room, and one classroom which was divided into four HODs as offices, one deputy principal's office and one main principal's office. It was reported that the principal and the SGB played a leading role in the provision of these development in the school as well as the positive involvement of parents which is part and parcel of the duty of the school principal. Commenting on his role in bringing about the development in the school the principal had this to say:

I think it is because I am a local element. I belong to this community, so the parents trust me. Parents of these learners were the past students of this school, although some of them were dropouts but they have the sense of ownership of the school. Over and above results are not bad which parents seeing as the progress in the community. In this community education is the priority. The involvement of parents

in all school activities resulted in a huge number of learners. This school is located near the public transport which makes things easier for learners. School buildings are also attractive which attract learners on the nearby (Principal-C).

Unlike School-A and School-B, School-C was not well fenced and safety and security is compromised. Consequently, vandalism was rife. The school survived because of the involvement of the community. There were no security personnel in this school. School property, educators and learners were not safe at all. This was emphasised by the principal who said:

I personally wrote many letters to the Department of Basic Education asking at least one security personnel for the school but in vain. The school is depending to the SAPS and CPS as well as the community members, but this school has a huge problem when it comes to safety and security (Principal-C).

4.3 Themes that emerged from the data generated.

The data generated from the three schools, through semi-structured interview were grouped into themes. Under themes there are various numbers of sub-themes i.e. the conceptualisation of parental involvement, parental involvement has many benefits, parental involvement improves learner achievements, parental involvement improves learner discipline, the promotion of parental involvement in school affairs varies and barriers in promoting parental involvement.

4.3.1 Conceptualisation of parental involvement.

In all three research sites when asked about what they thought “parental involvement” meant, the participants gave different explanations, which implied different understandings that existed. For instance, in School-A, the principal said, parental involvement referred to the amount of participation that parents have when it comes to the schooling of a child. He further said that parental involvement was the participation of parents in regular two-way and meaningful communication which involved learner academic learning and other school activities. In School-B, the principal referred to parental involvement as a direct effort provided by the parent in order to increase educational outcomes of their children. While these two principals seem to view parental involvement similar way, the principal of School-C emphasised collaboration rather than mere participation in the schools

activities. In this regard, this is what the principal of School-C had this to say:

Parental involvement means the collaboration of school, parents and the community in the education of their children Parental involvement refers to the variety of activities that allows parents to take part in children educational process at school and at home (Principal-C).

Views expressed by the principal of School-C were shared by a Post-level 1 educator of School-B who also emphasised collaboration between parents and the school as a critical point in characterising parental involvement. This is what she said:

Parental involvement is when the school involves parents in the academic matters of their children. In other words, it is the collaboration of parents, school and the community at large with the main objective of improving the quality education through mutual understanding and report (PL1-B).

Post- level 1 educators from School-B and School-C seemed to share similar sentiments when it comes to the understanding of parental involvement. This is due to the emphasis that they put on collaboration between parents and the school, which these educators believed, were of benefit to the learner.

Whilst Post-level 1 educator from School-A believes that:

Parental involvement has got nothing to do with academic achievements of students. Parents are there to support their children physically, morally and spiritually and school is there to support a child academically (PL1-A).

Commenting on parental involvement a parent from School-B had this to say:

According to my understanding parental involvement is the commitment of parents in the affairs of the school. For a child to grow and develop academically, parent need to participate fully (Parent-B).

When looking at the above comments about the understanding of the concept “parental involvement” it is evident that some of the meaning is similar and some are not similar. Let us take for instance the comment of a Post-level 1 educator from School-A, who made a completely different statement, in as far as the involvement of parent in the education of their children is concerned. In the researched schools it was clear that principals were promoting parental involvement, taking from their response when asked about what they

thought of parental involvement.

In the profiling of schools section, it becomes evident that School-A and School-B were strong in parental involvement. It was also clear that the development of each school had occurred within the context of strong collaboration between the principals and the parents. Principals of schools need to promote parental involvement in schools effectively because it assists in the academic behavioural performance of students. When parents work collaboratively with schools they assist in ensuring that effective practices are employed (Ndlovu, 2011). The assertion of parental involvement in schools given by Mestry (2004), states that parental involvement may be interpreted as parents commitments to the education of their children and the role they play in school management. Whilst across international studies, review of parental involvement is measured as participation in school activities or functions, engagement in activities at home including but not limited to homework (Gonzalez-De Hass, 2005).

4.3.2 Parents are the first educators of their children.

Parents are the first educators of their children and hence principals should promote their involvement in their schooling activities. This emerged when the participants were asked whether they believed that the principals needed to promote the involvement of parents in educational activities. This was emphasised by the principal of School-B who said:

A child is born from a family; therefore his/her parents are the first educators at home. Parents are also the first for the upbringing of a child. The positive involvement or participation of parents in the education of a child is of crucial importance. I personally make sure that I involve parents in all schooling activities. The information is cascaded through correspondence as well as through announcements to learners (Principal-B).

Similar sentiment emerged from the principal from School-A and a principal of School-C. They both concurred with the view that they promoted the involvement parents as they are the first and primary educators of their children. They agreed that information was cascaded through correspondence and announcements for the involvement of parents in school activities. One of the reasons that they put forward was that from birth, parents are responsible for the upbringing of their children. The principal of School-A further added that:

Parents are central figures since they are the natural and irreplaceable agents in the

education of their children (Principal-A).

Principals as the leaders of schools, have the power and influence to motivate, promote and educate parents to be actively involved in school affairs as parents are the first educators of their children. To support this view, the White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education, 1995) highlighted that parents have the responsibility to initiate education of their children. Furthermore, Baffour (2006) makes it clear that every child is born to a home and the first education of a child is received from home. Maphanga (2006) also confirms that parents are the first and primary educators of a child development which occurs concurrently at home and at school. The principals should therefore utilise this and thus promote the involvement of parents effectively in school affairs. The model of overlapping spheres which is guiding this study identifies three major spheres that is the family, the school and the community at the centre of all spheres is the child (Epstein 1996).

4.3.3 Educators, parents and a child form an alliance.

According to the data that emerged from the three researched schools educators, parents and a child form an alliance. Principals work in partnership with these stakeholders in promoting the involvement of parents in the education of their children. Parents, educators and a child need to work together for one common goal, which is the leading of a child into adulthood. All the participants agreed that principals should promote the involvement of parent in school affairs so as to promote quality education. This was confirmed by the principal of School-A who said the following:

The school survive because of three pillars i.e. parents, educators and learners, therefore in each and every activity these pillars work together. As a principal, I involve parents in all respect because without them schooling is impossible. The home, school and the child form an alliance which creates a special climate which is conducive for teaching and learning. Furthermore, schooling is an extension of the child's upbringing at home. However, it seems that parents are of the opinion that the school is the first and only place responsible for the education of their children (Principal-A).

This view is also shared by the principal of School-B who had this to say:

A strong school and home partnership is an important ingredient in any successful

school programme. When parents are involved in the partnership relationship, all stakeholders benefit (Principal-B).

The community, family and school also work collectively to mould a responsible human being, which is a child. This was emphasised by Narrain (2005) who confirms that the home, the child and the school form an alliance that creates a special climate that is desirable for effective education. The external model of overlapping sphere of influence recognises that the three major contexts in which children learn and grow are the family, school and the community (Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders & Simon, 1997, p. 3). Furthermore, Mewenzo (2010) states that Africans believe that raising the children is a school, home and community activity, therefore they believe in the saying that it takes a village to educate a child from birth. It is therefore a necessity that all community members are engaged and involved in educating and preparing the younger generation for the future.

4.4 Parental involvement has many benefits.

The following sub-theme emerged from what the participants said about the benefits of promoting parental involvement in secondary schools. That is, parental involvement improves learner's achievements and parental involvement improves learner's discipline.

4.4.1 Parental involvement improves learner's achievements

All the participants in the three sites agreed that when parents are 100% involved in the education of their children, a lot of improvement is achieved. They also believed that when principals promote the involvement of parents in school activities, learners learn more actively and easily if their parents are part of their learning activities. In School-B, they also believed that children do better in school and the school becomes a better place for all the children if their parents are there to show them direction. Commenting on this issue, the principal of School- B said the following:

I make sure that parents are well informed about the education of their children because, if parents are positively involved in the education of their children, there is an improvement in learning for all. Higher test scores or marks are good benefit of involvement of parents. Better school and class attendance if parents are closer. When it comes to homework all learners complete it with the help of their parents. Attitude and behaviour become very positive because their parents works hand in

hand with the school. Lastly learners are able to see the connection between the curriculum in the school and the skills that are required for the real world (Principal-B).

A similar sentiment was shared by the principal of School-A, who said that:

The school pass percentage improves drastically if parents are involved. Matric results are very impressive because parents are motivating their children to learn at home. Dropout rate, absenteeism and late coming are decreasing due to the involvement of parents. Involvement of parent is a very good reward towards the progress of the school Higher education intake is increasing due to good symbols obtained by students (Principal-A).

The principal of School-C emphasised that parents must feel that they are an important part of the school community, which will eventually improve the academic performance of their children at school. This sentiment was also shared by Haung and Masson (2008) who state clearly that parental involvement improves academic achievements, improves learner behaviour, attendance as well as social behaviour of learners at school. Theoretical framework guiding this study affirms that when teachers make parental involvement part of their regular teaching practice, parents increase their interactions with children at home, feel more positive about their abilities to help their children and achievements (Epstein, 1996).

4.4.2 Parental involvement improves learner discipline

Most of the participants were of the opinion that parental involvement improves learner discipline if parents are positively taking part in their educational activity. This sentiment was echoed by the principals, the HODs and the educators from School -A, who said that “*principal’s duty is also to promote the involvement of parents in the instilling of good discipline and behaviour to the children at school*”.

Commenting on this issue of discipline, the principal of School- A highlighted the following:

When a learner is misbehaving or doing wrong thing, I personally call his/ her parent so that the learner will see the seriousness of the matter. To call a parent to school is a punishment by itself. This kind of action works for me very well because no learner wants their parents to come to school time and again. I have also a correction book where the learner signs as well as the parent (Principal-A).

In highlighting this issue of discipline in schools, the principal of School-B also added that:

To promote the involvement of parents I personally call a parent of a learner who to punish his/her child. I know very well that corporal punishment is not allowed but there is no other way you can correct these learners. I also make sure that they sign the correctional book. Such action eventually helps the school to bring parents closer to the school (Principal-B).

The principal of School-C stated that he was promoted 20 years ago and it was easy to control learner discipline and behaviour. He attributed that to the fact that corporal punishment was allowed and frequently used as a means to maintain discipline among the learners. He further added that:

Corporal punishment was a major instrument to set the tone of the school. These days I have learnt new ways of setting the tone of the school in terms of discipline. I involved parents because a parent knows his/her child better at home. I know also that the upbringing of a child needs both the educator and a parent (Principal-C).

In view of the views expressed in the above extract and also in the literature cited in the previous sections, it is evident that principals need to promote parental involvement as parents are the custodians of discipline and respect of their children. Their duty is to raise their children with the norms and the values of the society. It is their duty to teach their children on how to behave in the community as well as at school. Principals also need to guide educators on how to nourish or to add their professional knowledge in terms of discipline and respect at school to the learners.

4.5 The promotion of parental involvement in school affairs is varied

The promotion of parental involvement in school affairs was varied in the three schools, and it took different forms. The five dominant forms of parental involvement were; parental involvement in homework, parental involvement in collecting progress report cards, parental involvement in fundraising, parental involvement in the safety and security of the school and parental involvement in attending meetings.

4.5.1 Parental involvement in homework

The three researched schools agreed that principals promoted parental involvement by encouraging teachers to give learners homework and assignments which have to be signed by the parents at home. In School-A, in School-B, as well as in School-C, it was noted that learners were helped by their grandparents, although there are reservations about some parents' level of education, which, many people feel, was not helpful in supporting their children's education. It was for them to clearly understand what was expected of them in terms of assisting their children with homework and assignments. The policy on parental involvement clearly states that parents will be work shopped on how to tackle learners' work. The principal in this regard was found to be executing his duty in terms of educating, informing and giving direction to the parents about how to monitor their children's work. The principal was also making sure that educators did justice when giving homework to learners, and that, they followed the homework policy effectively. Commenting about homework issue the principal of School-C said the following:

As a principal, I involve parents in many different ways. Through homework, parents work hand in hand with teachers in terms of assisting their children, although some of the parents are not educated but I inform them about the easy method of checking and signing work of their children given by teachers. I introduced the homework policies which help the school in terms of promoting involvement of parents in educational activities (Principal-C).

Same sentiments emerged from the Principal of School- B who emphasised the following:

I emphasised the point that parents are assisting their children in doing homework. I inform parents that they must check and append their signatures to homework and assignment to show their interest in the progress of schooling of their children, although, some parents are not well educated but they can do something to help educators (Principal-B).

The Principal of School-A had a slightly different view to the one expressed by the principals of School-B and School-C respectively. To him, principals had a responsibility of building capacity among parents so that they are able to participate in supporting their children with homework tasks.

In other words, the fact that some parents cannot read or write should not just be left

unattended to, but should be addressed. In responding to this homework issue he had this to say:

Principal and subject educators need to follow the parental involvement policy which states that they must educate, guide the parents in terms of how to tackle their children's school matters before they let parents to check and counter sign homework and assignment (Principal-A).

Maphanga (2006) clearly states that parents can support their children schooling by becoming more involved in helping their children to improve their school work, arranging for appropriate study time and space, monitoring homework and actively tutoring their children at home. Parental involvement in homework is in view with Epstein's (1996) Type IV Model, which refers to parental involvement in student learning at home to parent-child-initiated request for help and the teacher's ideas about parent's involvement in home learning activities.

4.5.2 Parental involvement in collecting progress report cards

In the researched sites principals promote the involvement of parents by inviting parents to collect progress report cards for their children. It is commonly accepted that such an action directly or indirectly, promotes the involvement of parents in the school affairs. In School-A and in School-B, specific dates were scheduled for parents to come and collect report cards, whereas in School-C, parents come once per quarter for the whole school. During this session, parents got ample opportunity to engage with educators in terms of the progress of their children. Commenting on the issue of progress report cards, the principal of School-B had this to say:

In order to promote the involvement of parents effectively I invite them to come and collect progress report cards. They are given to parents quarterly to enforce parental involvement in school affairs. It helps both educators and parents to interact about the development and academic achievements of their children.

I also issue the newsletter monthly informing parents about the latest development in school (Principal-B).

This same sentiment was shared by the principal of School-C who maintained that in order to promote the involvement of parents, parents needed to be part of children's progress. Commenting further to this issue of progress report cards, he had this to say:

I make sure that I write letters to each and every parent to make them aware of the importance of coming to school to collect their children's progress report. Such action gives them the opportunity to meet educators and not to get a surprise at the end of the year (Principal-C).

The same stance was shared by the principal of School-A, who added that:

This strategy helps me a lot in promoting the involvement of parents in the education of their children. Parents come in numbers to collect the progress report cards of their children although when I call them for general meeting they state a number of reasons (Principal-A).

This is in line with the requirements of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) which clearly states that at the end of each and every term or quarter, parents must be given report cards to verify the progress of their children. Principals are therefore obliged to promote the involvement of parents through issuing of report cards to parents. This initiative was supported by Ndlovu (2011) when commenting that it has been proven that children respond better when parents take initiatives in their education. Furthermore, the family is seen as the backbone in the child's education, which means that when parents take initiatives in the education of their children it is likely that the child will perform better at school. This study is also influenced by Epstein's (1996) Type II Model of involvement which refers to the obligation of the schools to communicate with families regarding school progress and student progress.

4.5.3 Parental involvement in the fundraising Projects of the school

In all three researched sites, it was clear that principals also promoted the involvement of parents through fundraising projects. They all knew the duties of the School Governing Body (SGB) sub-committees, which are the Finance Committee, which was chaired by the treasurer of the SGB. The principal with his professional knowledge, as well as an accounting officer, assisted the Finance Committee on the methods of doing fundraising at school. The principal of School-C had this to say:

I as a principal, use my financial management skills to help the Fundraising Committee in order to perform their duty effectively. I work shopped the committee on how to handle fee. Fundraising project helps, to supplement the Government subsidy

as well as school fee paid by parents. Parents are participating free lily because they know that such projects are for the school improvement. Parents also initiate other ways of doing fundraising for education of their children (Principal-C).

A similar sentiment was shared by the principal of School-B who had this to say:

I encouraged Fundraising Committee to involve parents with different skills in fundraising. Fundraising is done collectively with the parents. Civvies Day, Beauty contest, cake sales, and so on, are done as a fundraising instrument. Parents give their children money to be part of the fundraising project (Principal-B).

Public Finance Management Act, Act (No.1 of 1999) (PFMA), puts strong emphasis on the economical, effective and efficient utilisation of public funds with the intention of getting the real value for money. The principal as an accounting officer, when promoting parental involvement through fundraising, is actually implementing and promoting the PFMA. In order to promote parental involvement in other school activities is also supported by Epstein's, (1996) Type III Model which refers to parent participating in voluntary at school and participating in school activities.

4.5.4 Parental involvement in the Safety and security of the school

In School-A and in School-B, it was noted that the promotion of parental involvement by the principals in safety and security of the whole school was too tight compared to that of School-C. In School-A, there was one security personnel during the day and also one security personnel during the night who was employed by the School Governing Body.

In School- B, there were two security personnel who work during day and two that at night. In School- C, there were no security personnel except that the community was taking care of the school. Principals were doing their level best to promote the involvement of parents in the safety of the school. Commenting on this issue of safety and security the principal of School-C had this to say:

I informed parents in a parents meeting about the lack of safety and security at this school. Parents persuaded me to consult the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZN DoE). I personally wrote letters to the DBE requesting at one security personal but in vain, I don't know how they allocate securities because this school is becoming the ground of thugs (Principal-C).

School-A and School-B did not experience vandalism like School-C. Educators and learners in these two schools were not threatened nor did they fear any hijacking or day light robbery like in School- C. In these two schools, the promotion of parental involvement was too high. Commenting in this issue the principal of School- A had this to say:

I promote the involvement of parents in the school safety and security in a manner that parents are well informed about school state of affair in this regard. Regardless of two security personnel during the day and night, I work collaboratively with other stakeholders such as SAPS, CPF, Local Chief and Induna (Principal-A).

This sentiment was also shared by the Department of basic Education (DBE) and South African Police Services (SAPS) acknowledge that the prevention of crime and violence in schools is a shared mandate that calls for collaboration between the two departments. The partnerships between the DBE and SAPS support the objectives and priorities that drive the activities of both departments to reduce crime and violence in schools and communities. It is within the principal's power to institute or formulate the safe school committee in order to promote parental involvement effectively at school. The safe school committee is positioned to respond to the prevention, management, support and reduction of crime and violence in Schools as implied in the Constitution and further articulated in the South African Schools act 1996 (Act No 84 of 1996), and regulations for safety measures at all public schools.

4.5.5 Attending parental meetings as a means of promoting parental involvement in school matters

According to all the participants interviewed, principals were encouraging parents to attend parents meeting. This was based on the view that no school would survive without parental participation in the affairs of the schools. It is also evident through memorandum and announcements parents were always informed about their meetings. But seemingly they had similar problems of parents who were reluctant to attend parental meetings. Parents had different reasons why they did not want to attend meetings. Some of those reasons were that, they were not educated, and that sometimes they did not understand what was expected from them.

Others said that educators undermined them because they were illiterate. Commenting on the

reluctance of parents to attend meetings, the principal of School- C had this to say:

I personally inform parents through memorandums, notices and announcements to learners to remind their parents about the meetings. I also inform learners about how important the availability of their parents in meetings. But the attendance of parents in meetings is sometimes discouraging. They have a number of unexpected reasons of not attending meetings. This eventually becomes a barrier in the development of the school. Some learners are staying with grandparents who are very old to attend parent's meetings. Through my interaction as a principal with all stakeholders there is a progress in the promotion of parental involvement (Principal- C).

In School-A and in School-B, both principals commented that they communicated with parents through letters handed to their children four weeks before the meeting. They also reminded learners to remind their parents almost every morning in the assembly but the attendance was disappointing. It is regulated that principals must call parents meeting in order to make them part of the school. The principal of School-A had this to say:

Parents only come in numbers when they are called to collect report cards. They don't want to attend mass meetings. The principal is educating them through communiqué that he sent monthly to them about the importance of being part of the school (Principal-A).

Parents still felt that educators were experts in their field of education and therefore they needed to leave everything to the experts. Mncube (2009) argues that when parents shy away from schools, learners perform badly, but schools that support a strong comprehensive parental involvement are likely to perform better than those who do not. Parental level of education plays a major role when it comes to school meetings. A parent in School- B had this to say about attending meetings:

I like to attend meeting when the principal calls us but there are things that sometimes I don't understand because I cannot read and write that is why I just don't attend because I sometimes feel embarrassed (Parent-B).

4.6 Barriers in promoting parental involvement

Three researched sites were experiencing a number of barriers in terms of parental involvement but these barriers also varied. Some of the barriers were environmental

background, parental teachers' attitudes, physical barriers and parents with disabilities, socio-economic issues have negative impact in the promotion of parental involvement in the school affairs and problems in promoting parental involvement in the curriculum planning of the school.

4.6.1 The environmental background

The promotion of parental involvement by the principals was hindered by the environmental background. School-B was located in deep rural to school was very challenging. Long distances travelled by some parents were so discouraging to parents to participate in school matters. Other parents were expected to cross a river before they reach the school. In School-C, children were encouraged to look for job opportunities before they complete matric. Commenting on this issue of barriers, a parent of School- A had this to say:

We are trying our level best to motivate our children to go to school but we have problems of children who do not have mentors in this area, they dropout at school at an early stage and go to the cities for job seeking (Parent-A).

Another factor pronounced by parents in the researched sites which acted as a barrier in principals when promoting the involvement of parents in school affairs, was time factor. Most parents complained that they did not have enough time to help their children.

A parent from School-C had this to say:

As much as I like to support my child at home with homework and other school activity it is very challenging to provide as much support as I would like because of time issues. I have no enough time to devote to every child because I have many children doing different grades (Parent-A).

A similar sentiment was shared by a parent from School-C who said:

Time factor is a big challenge, I like to help them but as a father I am responsible for other family needs. I think teachers must not expect many things from us as parents because; I as a parent was not trained on how to assist my child (Parent-C).

Despite these utterances by the participants, it remains the principal's duty to promote the involvement of parents effectively. The principal informs the parents on how to assist their children in terms of what they are expected to do as parents.

4.6.2 Parental attitude as a barrier to parental involvement

According to the data from the three research sites, principals were experiencing huge challenge relating to parental attitudes regarding their involvement and assistance, which they felt, was beyond their call of duty. They said that it was the responsibility of the school and the teachers to educate their children during the hours while they were at school. Principals were also experiencing difficult situation in addressing such attitudes of some parents. Commenting to the issue of attitude of parents the principal of School-A had this to say:

As a principal I always inform parents that they are a very important stakeholder in this school. Their positive attitude towards all school activities is highly appreciated. I also inform them that they must own the school in the sense that it belongs to the community. I always intervene if there is a misunderstanding among stakeholders for the benefit of the school (Principal-A).

Some of the teachers also had a bad attitude towards parents. Some of them were not friendly to the parents at all. They did not warmly welcome parents when they come to school. Some of the parents were of the opinion that teachers were not as welcoming as they could be and certainly, did not encourage parents to be more involved. There was a sense among parents that some teachers were too busy and parents did not interfere. Commenting on the issue of teacher's attitude, principal of School- A had this to say:

I always encourage educators to welcome parents positively at school. I inform them about the Batho Pele principle which is very important if you are a civil servant. In fact not that all teachers in this school are unwelcome (Principal-A).

Same sentiments were shared by the principal of School-B and School-C who added that educators must work on their negative attitude about the parents because parents are very important in the success of the school. They further alluded that there were no schools without parents. Parents too must know that schools exist because they send their children to get education from these educators, and therefore, they both need to work cooperatively. Commenting on the attitudes of the teachers, the principal of School-B had this to say:

I make sure that I work shopped educators about how important is someone who always put a little smile when talking with the parent. I always tell my staffs that negative attitude destroy good partnership with stakeholders (Principal-B).

Commenting on this issue parent from School-A had this to say:

I like to pay a visit to school but sometimes I feel embarrassed when teachers are unwelcoming. My feeling is that teachers are too educated in such a way that they can't associate themselves with illiterate people (Parent-A).

Even though principals and parents may try to work together to provide the best possible education for their children, disagreements do occur. Conflict is part of the human condition and is inevitable. It is advisable that principals attempt to resolve disputes and principals have to be proactive in avoiding conflicts. Commenting on this issue the principal of School-A had this to say:

It is my duty to provide leadership that is progressive. I make sure that conflict are solve immediately to avoid bitter situation among the educators and parents (Principal-A).

4.6.3 Physical challenges and disabilities as barriers to parental involvement

In promoting the involvement of parents by the principals physical barriers and parents with disabilities were also major barriers in the three researched sites. Some parents also noted that they had to overcome physical barriers at school before they could get to buildings to speak to the teacher or principal to participate. They said that they found themselves behind closed doors or gates awaiting permission to enter. They also said it was difficult to find the main entrance to the school that should be used by visitors. Parents with disabilities experience difficulty because there was no area designated for wheel chair users. Therefore, it was a great barrier to enter the school premises. A principal of School-C had this to say:

This issue of parents with different challenges is major problem in our school. Our schools do not have facilities to accommodate these challenges. I am negotiating with the SGB and the DBE to assist the school in constructing these facilities (Principal-C).

Commenting on the same issue of parents with disabilities, a parent from School-C had this to say:

There are no sign board in this school to show us where the admin block is located. It gives me a difficult situation when I want to enter the school (Parent-C).

4.6.4 Socio-economic issues as a parental involvement

All the research sites were challenged by the socio-economic issues which affected the school operations and learner achievement. Some of these issues had implications for the extent to which parental involvement was successful. Principals were working day and night in helping the community to curb these challenges. Unemployment, poverty, hunger, illnesses and high illiteracy rate were cited as some of these socio-economic issues which affected parental involvement. It was also reported that some of the learners came to school hungry and that those who received government-grants and those that lived with their grandparents were very keen to come to school. The principal of School-A stated that he realised that the community was poverty-stricken and because of that he had recommended that the School Governing Body (SGB) had to apply for a feeding scheme, which they did. Learners benefited from the establishment of the feeding scheme in the school. In addition, members of the community complained about the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS pandemic in the area. They cited HIV/AIDS pandemic in the area as the main cause of high learner absenteeism in the school. It was suspected that HIV pandemic is the main contributory factor to the sickness problem.

Although the school was situated in this kind of community which had so many challenges, with the help of the principal in promoting the involvement of parents, the pass rate was very good. Commenting on this situation the principal in School- A had this to say:

Regardless of the socio-economic challenges in this school, I introduced good strategies for helping our learners. I requested all educators to adopt at least two or more learners to be a true loco parentis. Such strategy promotes the involvement of parents indirectly because every parent will have a contact with a teacher who is a mentor to his or her child (Principal-A).

It was noted that most of the parents in the researched schools were grandparents of the children who attended the school and also that biological parents of children in the school were living in towns and cities where they worked. Some of the parents were dropouts from the very same school who did not care about their children. Having learners under the care of grandparents was mentioned by many participants as not assisting the learners develop pedagogically. Commenting on this issue the principal of School-C had this to say:

Sometimes learners come to school having not done their homework and when you ask them why they will tell you that the grandmother was unable to help because she

could not understand the requirements of the school work. And when you follow up about the parents' where-about, the learner will tell you that the parents live in town where they are working. But when I arrived in this school I introduced a very good strategy of homework policy, where even grandparents are able to check or just append their signatures on children's work book (Principal-C).

In School-B, this issue was a bit worse than in School-A because School-B is in a deep rural area. It was stated that most of the parents in the school were the old aged, of which most of them were illiterate. Some of the parents were dropouts and some were young girls who were single parents. Similar socio-economic problems mentioned in School-A was hindering the involvement of parents in the school affairs. The principal was doing everything in his power to promote the involvement of parents in the school. Children without identity documents were common it was the main concern in School-A and School-B. Some parents were not well educated in terms of following the right procedure after the child birth. The principal of School- B had this to say about the socio-economic issues in the school:

The school is faced with serious challenges. I decided to do partnership with relevant stakeholders to fight against these challenges. Some parents are suffering from chronic diseases and some from HIV related sicknesses. This becomes a barrier to parental involvement. Level of parental income, occupation and education is also a barrier towards their involvement. Raping of young school girls and old grannies is common in this community because houses are scattered. Children without Identity documents are common because some parents are not well educated; they fail to follow the right procedure after child birth. The Community Policing Forum (CPF), South African Police Services (SAPS), Home Affairs, Social Development are the stakeholders work in conjunction with the school in order to eliminate these challenges, which will in turn promote the involvement of parents without any hassles (Principal-B).

In School-C, it was also noted that some of the learners came to school hungry and that those who received social-grants and that those that lived with their grandparents were very keen to come to school. The principal with his professional guidance assisted the community by working collaboratively with the SAPS, CPF, Department of social services, home affairs. The principal also stated that he realised that the community is poverty-stricken and he had recommended to the SGB that at least three days a week learners is given something to eat.

That is slice of bread and a cup of soup donated by parents. Commenting on this issue the HOD of School- C had this to say:

Since the principal is a local element, it is easy for him to consult the relevant community structures and parents to offer any help as well as to fight against the unaccepted behaviour in the school. The South African Police Services usually do a random searching at school. Our principal also invites other structures to come and address the learners on socio-economic issues at school (HOD-C).

In order for the principal to promote parental involvement effectively, all the research sites mentioned that there was an enormous contribution made by the principals in attempting to overcome these problems. The principal collaborated with relevant stakeholders to control the situation effectively.

4.6.5 Challenges in promoting parental involvement in curriculum planning of the school.

According to the data generated from the three research sites all principals were doing their level best in the promotion of parental involvement in the curriculum planning of the school, but there were some challenges. The data shows that there were inadequacies in terms of the capacities of parents to participate in curriculum issues. In School-A, for instance, the principal mentioned that the parent's inadequacies to contribute to the curriculum planning were due to illiteracy. The principal further explained that parents were not in a position to make effective contribution to support curriculum activities due to problems related to illiteracy among them. However, Mncube (2009) argues differently when it comes to illiterate parent's contribution in supporting curriculum delivery. He argues that the communities need not to be literate to contribute in the curriculum planning.

In School-B, it was reported that most parents in the school were also grand-parents of which most of them were illiterate. Some of the parents were young parents, single, and their level of education made it possible to contribute to the curriculum planning in the school. It was reported that they were not availing themselves and their little contribution was hampered by curriculum changes which made it difficult for them to cope. Commenting to this issue of curriculum the principal of School-A had this to say:

Although most parents are experiencing problems when it comes to curriculum planning but as a principal I make sure that I involved them in the form of giving

them necessary information (Principal-A).

In School-C, when asked about the challenges facing parents, most participants expressed that parents felt that they lacked knowledge of subject areas and the curriculum as a whole. This, they argued, made it difficult for them to offer any help. They also complained that they were not familiar with different methods and approaches that were currently being used compared to when they were still at school. They also felt that they lacked some skills or guidance about teaching methodology and what parents should do to help their children to learn at home at different stages.

Commenting further on this issue a parent from School-C had this to say:

Although I can read and write but education has changed drastically. I don't want to confuse my child with my old school of thought. I think I must let the teachers do their professional job (Parent-B).

The introduction of a new curriculum stipulates that parents, educators and the community are tasked with helping to determine how learners should be prepared for adult life including the world of work (Gauteng Department of Education, 1997, p.13). The researched schools parents' further expressed their opinion that they knew little of curriculum matters and were reluctant to come to involved. Moreover many parents in rural schools are generally known to be illiterate or semi-illiterate and perceive their involvement in curriculum matter as an encroachment in the professional terrain of educators. The principal of School-C further added that parental participation with regards to deciding about school curriculum seems to be a challenging task for schools. In fact many parents feel that this is a matter to be deliberated upon by educators.

4.7 Conclusion

The promotion of parental involvement by the principals in the three researched schools differed from school to school. All three researched schools principals were promoting the involvement of parents in the schools, but their participation levels differed due to a number of challenges that have been discussed in this chapter. In all schools, the response revolved around socio-economic issues as the most challenging factors. The high rate of learners supervised by grandparents was so high due to the fact that their biological parents were staying in the cities for job related issues. There were few parents who actually participated in the School Governing Body and who had awareness about what is required of them by

South African Schools Act (SASA) and the Department of Basic Education (DBE). The next chapter is about the findings in the research and some recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This is final chapter of the study. It presents analysis and findings as well as, recommendations based on how principals in three selected secondary schools promoted parental involvement. Data was generated through semi-structured interviews with the principals, HODs, Post-level1 educators and parents in the three research sites. As part of the analysis, this chapter also looks at the similarities between the principals, HODs, educators and parents in the three sites (School-A, School-B and School-C). I also looked at how the two theoretical frameworks, that is Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model of human development (1986) and the Overlapping sphere of influence theory advocated by Epstein (1998) and research questions relate to the findings of the study. Lastly, I have made a few recommendations.

5.2 Similarities and differences between the schools

Research schools were similar despite that they were located in a slightly different context and learners in these schools came from different background. By different background I mean that some learners came from rural areas and some came from semi-urban areas. It is evident from the data that was presented in **Chapter Four** that, these schools were similar because they shared common challenges as well as common benefits. In the three case study sites, 2 schools were ranked as Quintile 3, that is School-A and School-C, respectively and were "No-Fees-School, which was determined by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) at national level by looking at school socio-economic background. School-B was rated Quintile 4 as its socio-economic background was a little bit better compared to the other two researched schools. The issues of unemployment, poverty and HIV/AIDS related sicknesses were the main concern as a topic of discussion in these schools. They affected the promotion of parental involvement in the affairs of the school. I spoke to the principal of School-A in the semi-urban area and he was very quick to refer me to some of the challenges in the semi-urban areas as presented in **4.2.1 in Chapter Four**. An HOD in the same school concurred with the principal of School-A, in as far as challenges were concerned, and he further mentioned the day light robbery and rape of young school girls and senior citizens. Post-level 1 educators also shared the same sentiments in connection with challenges in the community. Post level 1 educator further added that most of the learners were orphans and they lived

with their grandparents, and some learners are heading their families since their biological parents are in big cities looking for better jobs, whereas some parents died due to HIV/AIDS related sicknesses.

In the schools in rural area, that is, School-B and School-C there were also issues of unemployment, poverty and HIV/AIDS related sicknesses. They had become serious challenges that affected the promotion of parental involvement in school affairs. However, despite these challenges the principal of School-B has succeeded in involving parents. For him, the trick for success was that, *“In order to understand the dynamics of this community’s challenges, one need to work closer to the community because social challenges affect the relationship between the school and home”*.

In School-C, the principal also shared the same sentiments when it comes to the challenges that affected the promotion of parental involvement in the school affairs. He further added that the use of drugs such as dagga and liquor by the community was a major challenge in the community, which eventually affected the promotion of parental involvement.

In the three case study sites, there was a lot of development taking place collaboratively with all stakeholders, including parents. For instance, there was infrastructural development such as electricity supply, clean piped water and sanitation. School buildings were well managed and good looking in all three sites except that the roof of School-B looks very old. Such development helped to create a climate conducive to teaching and learning, and this was an indication that principals promoted the involvement of parents in school affairs. High pass rate is an indication of good climate which is conducive to teaching and learning. The increase in learner enrolment in School-A, and in School-B, respectively indicates that parents were gaining confidence in the effectiveness of the school attributed to the new culture of collaboration between school and parents.

Epstein (1987) confirmed that the shared responsibilities of the school and home emphasise the coordination, cooperation, and complementary nature of schools and families and encourage collaboration between the two. In the three case studies, it is noted that security was not at the same level. School-A and School-B had a very tight security compared to School-C where it was lax. School-C was also a bit far from the police station compared to School-A and School-B respectively. The other two schools, that is, School-A and School-B were both fenced and there were security personnel who worked during the day and during the night and they were adequately compensated for the task they performed. The principal of

School-C confirmed that he informed parents in a parents meeting about the lack of safety and security at school, and he mentioned different incidents that had occurred in the school. He also stated that he wrote several letters to the Departmental official about this issue and they kept on giving him empty promises. In School-C Traditional leaders (i.e. Inkosi and izinduna) played a prominent role in controlling the safety and security affairs of the community as well as for the school. In this regard it shows that the involvement of parents is of great importance. Principals of the three researched sites were doing their level best to involve all stakeholders. This sentiment is shared by Maphanga (2006) that parental involvement includes several different forms of participation to education. The actual responses from other stakeholders in this regard are presented in **Chapter Four, 4.3.1.**

5.3 Similarities between principals

In the three sites, principals had similar things that kept the schools functioning well. There is evidence of communication between school and home through letters, notices and announcements. Parents were invited to the schools to view progress reports and communicate with class teachers and subject teachers. Principals of schools also shared similar sentiment in terms of parental involvement in homework, fundraising projects, and attending parent's general meetings. Principal's leadership styles in the three sites were similar. It is noted in all sites that parents were regarded as the first educators of their children as well as that school, home and a child form an alliance. Principals were also noting that there should be the cooperation, coordination and collaboration between all stakeholders to assist a child. In the three sites principals believed that parental involvement improves learner performance as well as learner discipline. Principals were experiencing similar barriers in parental involvements such as the environmental background, parental attitude as well as teacher's attitude towards parents, parents with disabilities experienced similar problems in the three sites, that is, socio-economic issues and curriculum planning.

In the three sites, it was noted that principals were making efforts to promote parental involvement in the school affairs. The principal has a responsibility to influence and energise the team he or she works with, that is, the Deputy Principal, the HODs, the educators and the parents. There was a communication system in place between the schools and parents. Principals sent letters, notices and announcements to parents to come and view the progress report every end of the term. This had led to the interaction between parents and class

teachers as well as subject teachers about the overall performance of a child. The principal of School-B confirmed that every month end, he issued a communiqué to parents informing them about the latest development in school. Clark (2007) argues that leadership is about getting things to change through inspiring and motivating the human resource in the organisation so as to operate effectively.

In the three sites it is evident that principals promoted parental involvement in areas such as supervising homework and taking note of where a child was struggling. For, instance, the principal of School-C commented that he used different ways in involving parents such as informing parents the easy method of checking and signing homework of their children given by teachers. This finding is in line with Haung and Massen, (2008) who state that, strong partnership between parents and school yield positive results for both the school and the learners

In the three sites, it is evident that, principals used different types of leadership and management styles to promote parental involvement. Democratic and participative leadership styles were dominant in the study. Democratic leadership style was commonly used due to the fact that everyone was allowed to voice his or her own opinion in as far as the promotion of parental involvement is concerned. For instance, the principal of School-B commented that *“I realised that I cannot do things alone in a very big institution like this except to involve all stakeholders.”* Participative leadership’s style used by the principals in three sites was also dominant where everyone has a right to participate effectively in the affairs of the school. This is what the principal of School-A said: *“When I arrived in this school, I interacted with all stakeholders positively”*. He further said that he promoted the positive participation in a very professional manner. This finding is supported by Mncube (2009) who state that principals are viewed as the professional management of schools ensuring that all duties are carried out adequately, setting the tone in meetings and responding for interpreting education policies and ensuring that they are well implemented.

Principals in the research sites possessed different academic and professional qualifications. Such as the principal of School- A and School-B had BEd Honours in Management and Administration, whereas the principal of School-C only had a Secondary Teachers Diploma (STD) and many courses offered by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to empower the school management personnel. Academic qualifications and short courses possessed by the principals made it easier for them to promote parental involvement in school affairs.

According to the data from the three sites all principals acknowledged that parents were the first educators of their children. This was further confirmed by the principal of School-A, who emphasised that parents were central figures since they were natural and irreplaceable agents in the education of their children. Principals of the research sites were unanimous in their belief that educators, parents and child formed an alliance. This feature is characteristic of Bronfenbrenner's (1986) ecological systems model which emphasises the interconnectedness of home, school and communities. This was also supported by the principal of School-B who commented that a strong school and home partnership was an important ingredient in any successful school programme, he further confirmed that when parents were involved in the partnership relationship, all stakeholders benefited.

The principals experienced similar difficulties with regards to parents with disabilities. It was evident that schools were not catering for parents with disabilities and hence experienced similar problems of not having area suitable for their conditions. In School-C the principal mentioned that he negotiated several times with the DBE, wrote letters to the NGO for assistance to construct suitable facilities for the physically challenged parents.

5.4 Similarities and differences between the parents studied

It has been mentioned several times in the research data in the three sites that parents formed an important component of their children's education. In School-B, parents agreed to pay R450 to supplement the state subsidy, this was because of affordability, whereas in School-A and School-C respectively, parents could not afford because of their schools status. Most parents were unemployed and those who were employed, constituted at least 10% of the three sites. Parents in these sites survived through social grants. When I interviewed parents in the three sites the issue of socio-economic problems such as poverty, unemployment, social evils and hunger kept on coming out. That gives strong evidence that parents in the three site communities had serious challenges. The bottom line in all the three sites parents wants their children to obtain a quality education, although most of them their level of education was compromised.

Parents came to observe their children's progress report cards when called by the principal. They also supported their children in checking homework and assignments. However, on the same vein, parents in all sites were reluctant to attend general meetings and they have several

excuses. Parent in School-B commented like this: *“I like to attend meeting when the principal calls us but there are things that sometimes I don’t understand because I cannot read or write that is why I just don’t attend because sometimes I feel embarrassed”*. Parents in the sites also complained about the teacher’s attitude that some teacher’s attitudes were not welcoming. Christenson and Sheridan (2001) confirm that schools communities and parents must cooperate and work collaboratively to improve the learning experience of all children.

5.5 Research questions restated

In presenting the findings, research questions have been stated. In addition to that, the extent to which each one of them has been addressed is presented as part of the discussion of the findings.

5.5.1 How do principals promote parental involvement in secondary schools in the Umbumbulu circuit?

According to the data, it is evident that principals were promoting the involvement of parents in the secondary schools. The construction of classrooms and kitchen in School-A was the results of the efforts of the principal in involving parents to work collaboratively. The three studied schools experienced social and economic problems, but principals displayed their noble profession by involving relevant stakeholders including parents to deal with these social evils. The increasing learner enrolment figures, year after year, symbolised the effects of successful promotion of parental involvement in the studied schools. It has become evident that the research schools were strong in parental involvement. It was also clear that the development of each school had occurred within the context of strong collaboration between principals and the parents. This issue is also supported by Bronfenbrenner’s (1986) ecological model which stresses interconnectedness of schools and families.

Principals involved the parents through notices, correspondence and announcements if they wanted to inform them about latest developments. The involvement of parents was also evident in homework, assignments, progress reports, learner discipline, fundraising projects as well as safety and security of the school. In the three research schools, principals were continuously encouraging parents to attend parents meeting. When talking about this issue, School-C principal responded like this, *“I personally inform parents through memorandums, notices and announcements to learners to remind their parents about the meeting.”*

More details on what various stakeholders say can be found in **4.3.3.5.5 Chapter Four** where

Principals' voices are expressed.

5.5.2 What do principals regard as benefits of promoting parental involvement in secondary schools?

In the three studied schools, it is unmistakable that there are a number of factors that were regarded by principals as benefits of promoting parental involvements in the secondary schools. The infrastructural developments in the studied schools were regarded as the main benefits in the school affairs. The increasing learner enrolment and good results, more especially in Grade 12, was also an encouraging benefit for the schools. In the three research sites, it was stated that parental involvement improved learners' achievements and learner discipline. School-A principal responded like this "*The school pass percentage improves drastically if parents are involved.*" Detailed responses from stakeholders in this regard are presented in **Chapter Four, 4.3.3** respectively.

When parents were called to school to access the progress report cards for their children, as well as, given the opportunity to assist their children with homework, that is also regarded as a benefit. The involvement of parents in the school fundraising projects, as well as, on the safety and security of the schools, were also regarded as the benefits in the school affairs. The studied schools invited parents to parents meeting, that is eventually a great benefit to parents who attends such meetings, although some parents were reluctant to attend meetings. Epstein (2008) confirm that principals can promote parental involvement by inviting parents to come to the school for a meeting, discussing the child's needs, upon returning to school at the beginning of the school year, by reminding the parents through correspondence, or calling them to ensure the parents attend.

5.5.3 What do principals consider as barriers to parental involvement in secondary schools?

It is apparent in the research schools that the promotion of parental involvement by the principals of schools did not happen without any barriers or obstacles. The reluctance of other parents to involve themselves in school affairs was a major issue and this was observed in all three sites. In School-C for example, the principal was struggling in terms of getting security personnel like in School-A and School-B. In School-C, that became a problem because

functionality of the school was compromised by the lack of security. The geographical situation of the schools was another barrier in the promotion of parental involvement in such a way that some schools were closer to the facilities like police stations and health services where some are afar.

Some parents had to travel long distances to reach the schools. In the three sites parental attitudes as well as teacher's attitudes was regarded as a barrier in terms of the progress in the schools. This statement is confirmed by the principal of School-A when he responded, "*As a principal I always inform parents that they are a very important stakeholder in this school.*" More responses from other stakeholders are presented in **Chapter Four, 4.6.6.2**. Principals in the research sites regarded physical challenges and disabilities as barriers to parental involvement. Principals also considered socio-economic issues as barriers in the promotion of parental involvements in schools. School-B principal commented like this, "*I decided to do partnership relevant stakeholders to fight against these challenges*". Detailed responses from stakeholders in this regard are presented in **Chapter Four, 4.3.6.4**. Due to the educational level of some parents, it is evident that the involvement of parents in curriculum planning was also a challenge. Therefore, principals in all sites considered curriculum planning as a barrier in the promotion of parental involvement. These findings are in line with Mncube's (2005) views who highlighted a number of factors that can lead to the lack of parental involvement in schools such as unequal power relations, socio-economic status, lack of confidence and expertise caused by the absence or lack of training and poor sharing of information.

5.6 Recommendations

There are a few recommendations that have been made and these are directed to principals of schools as they are the ones that are entrusted with the responsibility of promoting parental involvement in the affairs of the school.

5.6.1 Recommendations for school principals

The following recommendations for school principals are made:

- In order for the principals to promote parental involvement successfully, principals need to believe that parents are critical components in the life and education of their children, and that they need to play an active role in it.

- School principals need to embed their schools in the communities in which they are located. One of the ways of doing this is to immerse themselves in the life of the communities. Evidence from this study shows that the principal needs to participate fully in social issues of the community as one of the principals in this study did. Consistently disturbing issues like socio-economic situations, unemployment, poverty and HIV/AIDS pandemic, provide a platform for them to play a visible role in alleviating them.
- Principals must have strategies to let parents feel welcome at school. It will become easier for the parents to come closer to the school if the school shows that it cares about their situation. One of the ways to address this issue is for the principals to work with the teaching staff in correcting their attitudes towards parents, particularly, the so called illiterate ones.

5.7 Conclusion

The study has shown that the promotion of parental involvement by the principals of schools is very crucial. The reluctance of parents in involving themselves have shown that principal need to put more effort in dealing with this issue. The study has illustrated that principals do indeed want to promote partnering relationships with parents. Furthermore, the study has endorsed the view that schools can achieve success and excellence when parents, educators and learners work collaboratively. The socio-economic conditions, within which various communities and schools are situated, continue to influence and shape the extent to which parents are able to play meaningful roles in supporting the provision of quality education in South Africa.

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APPENDIX 1: LETTER TO KZN DoE REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Prince Mshiyeni Crescent
B B 1639
Umlazi
4031
20 June 2012

Attention:

The Superintendent-General (Dr N.S.P Sishi)
Department of Education
Province of KwaZulu-Natal
Private Bag 9137
Pietermaritzburg
3201

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Shezi Noah Jonathan, a Masters student in the School of Education and Development at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree fulfillment, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in five secondary schools under your jurisdiction in Umbumbulu circuit, Umlazi district. The schools are [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. The title of my study is: **Exploring how principals promote parental involvement in secondary schools: A case study of three secondary schools in Umbumbulu Circuit.**

This study aims to explore how secondary school principals promote the involvement of parents in the affairs of the school and what they regard as benefits of promoting parental involvement, and what they consider as barriers to parental involvement. The planned study will focus on secondary school principals one HOD, one educator and one parent per school. The study will use semi-structured interviews. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 45-60 minutes at the time convenient to them which will not disturb curricular activities. Each interview will be voice-recorded.

Responses will be treated with confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used instead of the actual names. Participants will be contacted well in advance for interviews, and they will be purposively selected to participate in this study. Participation will always remain voluntary which means that participants may withdraw from the study for any reason, anytime if they so wish without incurring any penalties.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact my supervisor, Dr TT Bhengu at 031-2603499. E-mail: bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za.

In addition, should you have any queries please feel free to contact me directly using the following contact details: Shezi Noah Jonathan, Cell: 0837357202

E-mail: shezinj@gmail.com

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance

Yours sincerely

Mr N.J. Shezi

APPENDIX 2: LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Prince Mshiyeni Crescent
B B 1639
Umlazi
4031

Attention: The Principal
Sample Secondary school
P.O. Umbumbulu
4015

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Noah Shezi, I am currently a Masters student in Education Leadership and Management Policy at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus. I am required to conduct research as part of my degree fulfilment. I have sought the necessary permission in advance from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (see copy attached). I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in your school. The title of my study is: **How principals promote parental involvement in secondary schools in the Umbumbulu circuit**. I would very much like to conduct research in your school because I believe that you can provide valuable insight in extending the boundaries of our knowledge on this topic.

The study aims to explore how principals promote parental involvement in secondary schools. The planned study will focus on school principals, HODs, educators and parents. Semi-structured open-ended individual interviews will be conducted with the participants. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 40-45 minutes and each interview will be voice-recorded. The interview will be held at the place that the participant is comfortable with. You will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to yourself. However, you will be asked to complete a consent form. In your interest, feedback will be given to you during and at the end of the study.

For further information on this research, please feel free to contact my Supervisor, Dr T.T. Bhengu who can be contacted on 031-2603499 at the faculty of Education and management. Email; bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za. My contact details; Shezi Noah Jonathan, Tel; 031-9093467(H), Cell; 083 735 7202, Email; shezinj@gmail.com.

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

N J SHEZI (Mr)

.....DETATCH AND
RETURN.....

CONSENT FORM

DECLARATION BY A PARTICIPANT

I.....(**full name of participant**) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **Exploring how principals promote parental involvement in secondary schools: Case studies of three school principals.**

I have been received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study.

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

Signature of Participant.....Date.....

Thanking you in advance

Mr Shezi N J.

APPENDIX 3 : LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENTS

Prince Mshiyeni Crescent
B B 1639
Umlazi
4031

Attention: The Head of Department
Sample Secondary school
P.O. Umbumbulu
4015

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Noah Shezi, I am currently a Masters student in Education Leadership and Management Policy at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus. I am required to conduct research as part of my degree fulfilment. I have sought the necessary permission in advance from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (see copy attached). I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in your school. The title of my study is: **How principals promote parental involvement in secondary schools in the Umbumbulu circuit**. I would very much like to conduct research in your school because I believe that you can provide valuable insight in extending the boundaries of our knowledge on this topic.

The study aims to explore how principals promote parental involvement in secondary schools. The planned study will focus on school principals, HODs, educators and parents. Semi-structured open-ended individual interviews will be conducted with the participants. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 30-35 minutes and each interview will be voice-recorded. The interview will be held at the place that the participant is comfortable with. You will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to yourself. However, you will be asked to complete a consent form. In your interest, feedback will be given to you during and at the end of the study.

For further information on this research, please feel free to contact my Supervisor, Dr T.T. Bhengu who can be contacted on 031-2603499 at the faculty of Education and management. Email; bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za. My contact details; Shezi Noah Jonathan, Tel; 031-9093467(H), Cell; 083 735 7202, Email; shezinj@gmail.com.

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

N J SHEZI(Mr)

.....DETACH AND
RETURN.....

CONSENT FORM

DECLARATION BY A PARTICIPANT

I.....(**full name of participant**) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **Exploring how principals promote parental involvement in secondary schools: Case studies of three school principals.**

I have been received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study.

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

Signature of Participant.....Date.....

Thanking you in advance

Mr Shezi N J.

APPENDIX 4: LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM THE EDUCATOR

Prince Mshiyeni Crescent
B B 1639
Umlazi
4031

Attention: The Educator
Sample Secondary school
P.O. Umbumbulu
4015

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Noah Shezi, I am currently a Masters student in Education Leadership and Management Policy at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus. I am required to conduct research as part of my degree fulfilment. I have sought the necessary permission in advance from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (see copy attached). I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in your school. The title of my study is: **How principals promote parental involvement in secondary schools in the Umbumbulu circuit**. I would very much like to conduct research in your school because I believe that you can provide valuable insight in extending the boundaries of our knowledge on this topic.

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For further information on this research, please feel free to contact my Supervisor, Dr T.T. Bhengu who can be contacted on 031-2603499 at the faculty of Education and management.

Email; bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za. My contact details; Shezi Noah Jonathan, Tel; 031-9093467(H), Cell; 083 735 7202, Email; shezinj@gmail.com.

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

N J Shezi

.....DETACH AND
RETURN.....

CONSENT FORM

DECLARATION BY A PARTICIPANT

I.....(**full name of participant**) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **Exploring how principals promote parental involvement in secondary schools: Case studies of three school principals.**

I have been received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study.

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

Signature of Participant.....Date.....

Thanking you in advance

Mr Shezi N J.

APPENDIX: 5 LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM THE PARENTS

Prince Mshiyeni Crescent
B B 1639
Umlazi
4031

Attention: The Parent
Sample Secondary school
P.O. Umbumbulu
4015

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Noah Shezi, I am currently a Masters student in Education Leadership and Management Policy at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus. I am required to conduct research as part of my degree fulfilment. I have sought the necessary permission in advance from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (see copy attached). I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in your school. The title of my study is: **How principals promote parental involvement in secondary schools in the Umbumbulu circuit**. I would very much like to conduct research in your school because I believe that you can provide valuable insight in extending the boundaries of our knowledge on this topic.

The study aims to explore how principals promote parental involvement in secondary schools. The planned study will focus on school principals, HODs, educators and parents. Semi-structured open-ended individual interviews will be conducted with the participants. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 30-35 minutes and each interview will be voice-recorded. The interview will be held at the place that the participant is comfortable with. You will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to yourself. However, you will be asked to complete a consent form. In your interest, feedback will be given to you during and at the end of the study.

For further information on this research, please feel free to contact my Supervisor, Dr T.T. Bhengu who can be contacted on 031-2603499 at the faculty of Education and management.

Email; bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za. My contact details; Shezi Noah Jonathan, Tel; 031-9093467(H), Cell; 083 735 7202, Email; shezinj@gmail.com.

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

N J Shezi

.....DETACH AND
RETURN.....

CONSENT FORM

DECLARATION BY A PARTICIPANT

I.....(**full name of participant**) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **Exploring how principals promote parental involvement in secondary schools: Case studies of three school principals.**

I have been received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study.

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

Signature of Participant.....Date.....

Thanking you in advance

Mr Shezi N J.

APPENDIX 6

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

1. Promotion of parental involvement

1.1 Do you believe that there is a need for parent participation in educational activities? If yes How and Why?

1.2 How do you involve parents in education of their children?

1.3 Is there any form of parent participation in the school activities? Elaborate

1.4 In your own opinion, tell me why parental involvement is important in your school?

2. Benefits of parental involvement

2.1 What do you see as benefits of involving parents in your school? Actually who benefit and how?

2.2 What do you think needs to be done to promote parental involvement in the school educational activities?

3. Barriers or obstacles in parental involvement

3.1 What do you see as challenges facing parents with regard to their involvement in the schools educational activities?

3.1 What do you see as challenges that principals face in promoting parental involvement?

3.2 What do you think needs to be done in order to overcome those challenges?

4. Is there anything that i did not ask that you would like me know relating to issues we are discussing?

Thank you very much for your participation in this study.

APPENDIX 7

INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR HODs and EDUCATORS

1. Promoting the involvement of parents in education

1.1. Is there any form of parental participation in this school, if yes how?

1.2. How do you involve parents in the education of their children?

1.3. In what other activities do you promote the participation of parents effectively in this school?

2. Importance or benefits of parental involvement in education

2.1 Do you think the school benefit by involving parent, if so state, how?

2.2 Do you communicate with your learners parents about their progress, if so what is the level of participation?

3. Obstacles or barriers in parental involvement

3.1 What are challenges facing educators with regard to their involvement in school educational activities?

3.2 What do principals do as a manager to overcome those challenges?

Is there anything that I did not ask that you like me to know relating to the issues we are discussing?

Thank you very much for you participation in this study

APPENDIX 8

(INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS)

1. Promoting the involvement of parents in education

1.1 What is your understanding of parental involvement?

1.2 In your own opinion, how the authorities of the school should promote parental involvement?

2. Benefits or the importance of parental involvement

2.1 What are the main benefits of involving parents in education?

2.2 Can you mention few of the benefits in this institution?

3. Obstacles/Barriers in parental involvement

3.1 What are the challenges facing parents with regard to their effective involvement

3.2 How to overcome those challenges?

4. What more do you want to add on the whole issue of how principals of schools should promote parental involvement in secondary schools?

Thank you very much for the positive participation in this study

APPENDIX 8

(ZULU VERSION)

1 Ukugqugquzelwa kokuzibandakanya kwabazali esikoleni

1.1 Ngabe unqondani ngokuzibandakanya kwabazali ezikoleni?

1.2 Ngowakho umbono, ngabe iziphathimandla zezemfundo zikuqguquzela kanjani ukubambisana kubazali nezikole?

1.3 Ngabe iyiphi inzuzo isikole ngokuzibandakanya kwabazaali?

1.4 Ungazibala izinto ezimbalwa kulesisikole ezizuzwe ngenxa yokubambisana?

1.5 Yiziphi ke izinselelo ekumbandakanyeni abazali esikoleni?

1.6 Zingavikeleka kanjani lezinselelo?

1.7 Kukhona yini ongathanda ukukwazi mayelana nalesihloko sokuzibandakanya kwabazali ezikoleni?

APPENDIX 9:
(PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE
INSTITUTIONS



kzn education

Department:
Education
KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar

Tel: 033 341 8610

Ref.:2/4/8/250

Mr Noah Jonathan Shezi
BB 1639 Prince Mshiyeni Crescent
UMLAZI
4031

Dear Mr Shezi

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **Exploring How Principals Promote Parental Involvement in Secondary Schools: a Case Study of Three Secondary Schools in Umbumbulu Circuit**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 July 2012 to 31 December 2013.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Mr. Alwar at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Director-Resources Planning, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to the following Schools and Institutions:
 - 10.1 Sibusisiwe Comprehensive High School
 - 10.2 Folweni High School
 - 10.3 Sobonakhona High School
 - 10.4 Zamakahle High School
 - 10.5 Ligobe High School

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education

2012/07/20
Date

...dedicated to service and performance
beyond the call of duty.

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL : Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa

PHYSICAL: Office G 25, 188 Pietermaritz Street, Metropolitan Building, Pietermaritzburg 3201

TEL: Tel: +27 33 341 8610 | Fax: +27 33 3341 8612 | E-mail: sibusiso.alwar@kzndoe.gov.za |
Web: www.kzneducation.gov.za