AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL-PARENT RELATIONSHIPS AT A PRIMARY SCHOOL IN THE CHATSWORTH DISTRICT OF THE KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that "An Investigation into the Management of School-Parent

Relationships at a Primary School in the Chatsworth District of the KwaZulu-Natal

Department of Education and Culture" is my own work and has not been submitted to

any other university.

All the sources consulted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete

references.

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JANUARY 2004

STATEMENT BY THE SUPERVISOR

THIS DISSERTATION HAS BEEN SUBMITTED WITH/~~WITHOUT~~ MY APPROVAL.

SIGNED: _____

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ABSTRACT

This research project attempted to investigate the Management of the School-Parent Relationships in a Primary School .The aims of this study were to determine to what extent parents participate in school activities and whether parental participation in school activities is being optimised. An important pre- condition in developing a positive relationship between schools and parents is the need to persuade school-based personnel that their professionalism includes recognising the integral role of parents in the educational enterprise.

The key focus of this study was to determine the perceptions of school based personnel and parents of the learners of the school regarding the current state of the relationship between the school and the parents. The subjects of this study were the principal, two heads of department, the school-clerk, thirteen level one educators and a sample of eighty parents of the learners of the school. The study was conducted at a Primary School in the Chatsworth District. The overall aim was enhance the relationship between the school and the parents at the researched site. This study employed the quantitative approach in its methodology. Data were gathered from interviews and questionnaires

The results of the study have revealed that there is potential to enhance the relationships with parents at the school. Efforts to improve the relationship includes, encouraging parents to identify with the aims of the school, providing some form of education, training and guidance for parents who do not fully understand their role in education, adopting a participative and consultative style management when interacting with the parents, identifying skills and competencies of parents,

encouraging effective two – way communication with parents, accommodating

parents with busy work schedules and acknowledging parents for their assistance.

This research project has also proposed possible recommendations to assist the

school based personnel and the School Governing Body to develop and sustain

stronger and positive relationships with the parents. The study concludes with

recommendations for further research.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1. Introduction

The overall importance of managing a positive relationship with parents has been endorsed by many research studies. The reason for this considerable interest is the recognition that parents are the primary stakeholders in the South African education system and in many other countries.

"School-Parent Relationships take on different forms and are at different levels. To individual parents, the most important level is that at which parents and teachers have a direct relationship and are working together to improve their child or children's learning capacities and achievements. Most parents do become initially involved in school activities to improve the progress of their own child. This has been identified as one of the main findings of this study. A second level is parental involvement at the whole class level and the third level in which fewer parents participate is that of influencing school policies and school management." [Tomlinson, 1991,p.5].

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 schools should recognise parents as equal educators of their children. Only when this level of understanding occurs between the school and the home, then a genuine partnership is created which then paves the way for a constructive relationship.

This study will attempt to investigate the Management of the School-Parent Relationships at a Primary School. The focus of this chapter is to provide details on the context and focus of the study. A discussion on the research methods, limitations and the structure of the study are provided.

1.2. Context of the Study

The topic for this dissertation, namely, "An investigation into the Management of School-Parent Relationships at a Primary School in the Chatsworth District of the Kwa Zulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture" is located in the field of Educational Management. The motivation for this study originates from discussions held with the management of schools and educators who have expressed their concerns about the inadequate level of participation of parents in school activities.

It must be noted that the South African Schools Act [84 of 1996] envisaged a partnership between the parents and the school in school governance. Furthermore the introduction of Outcomes Based Education [OBE] was also intended to encourage greater parental involvement in education. The system requires that parents share the responsibility of education with the state. The present situation at many schools, however, indicates that school based personnel do not fully understand the role that parents should play in education. Parents too, do not fully understand their role and have to be empowered to play a greater role in their children's education and to be more involved in school activities. An applicable comment made in the "Teacher", a newspaper for educators, explains, "If we want to be a successful nation, our parents have to be at the forefront of education in dialogue with the teachers and learners." [Mbokodi, Singh, Msila, Oct. 2003, p.17].

It is anticipated that the outcome of this research will prove valuable in developing and sustaining effective relationships with parents at schools.

1.3. Focus of the Study

This study is set out to investigate the Management of School-Parent Relationships at a Primary School. This will be achieved by eliciting the perceptions of the school based personnel and a selected group of parents of the learners at the researched site. The following research questions will be focussed on.

1. What is currently perceived to be the potentiality of school-parent relationships and what are the main identified tensions and challenges that confront the management of these?

2. What is the current South African legislative and policy framework for the management of school-parent relationships?

3. What is the current position/policy of the school in respect of the school-parent relationships and their management?

4. What are the perceptions of key personnel in the school regarding the current state of the management of school-parent relationships?

5. What are the perceptions of parents regarding the current state of school-parent relationships and their management?

6. How could the management of school-parent relationships be improved in the school?

1.4. Research Methods

The following research methods are related to the research questions listed above.

Question 1: This question will be addressed through a review of contemporary literature on the management of external relations, with specific reference to school-parent relationships.

Question 2: This question will be answered by reference to relevant local, official publications.

Question 3: The current position of the school vis-a-vis school-parent relationships will be determined largely through consultation with the principal of the school, two heads of department and the school-clerk. These personnel will be 'interviewed' to this end.

Question 4: This question will be addressed by means of questionnaires, which will be administered to the level one educators.

Question 5: Data for this question will be obtained from questionnaires that will be distributed to the parents via the learners of the school.

Question 6: This question will be answered on the basis of findings derived questions 3-5, which will be analysed with reference to products of question 1 and 2. Practical recommendations will be made.

1.5. Ethical Issues

Cohen and Manion [2000,p.50] maintain that, "each stage in the research sequence may be a potential source of ethical problems. They may arise from the nature of the research project itself, the context of the research, methods of data collection, the nature of the participants, the type of data collected and what is being done with the data." The following ethical issues are relevant to this study.

1.5.1. The identity and background of the researcher was known to all participants.

1.5.2. The purpose of the research and the procedures to be followed were fully explained to all participants.

1.5.3. The outcome of the final study will be made available to the principal and the School governing Body. The school will be the beneficiary of this study.

1.5.4. The possible controversial findings were handled with great sensitivity.

1.5.5. The research was as objective as possible.

1.5.6. Informed consent was obtained from the school principal and the School Governing Body. [see Annexure A].

1.5.7. Participants had the right to terminate their involvement at any time.

1.5.8. The dignity, privacy and interests of all participants were respected through the promise of confidentiality and anonymity.

1.5.9. A letter of thanks has been forwarded to the principal of the school and the School Governing Body for allowing the researcher to conduct the studies at the school.

1.6. Limitations of the Study

The present study has been subjected to the following limitations:

1.6.1. The exact number of families within the school population could not be established due to a lack of data. For this study the number of families being four hundred is an estimation.

1.6.2. This research study was limited to one primary school. It would have been ideal to broaden the scope of this research study to other primary schools in order to facilitate a comparative study of the responses. The information would have had a bearing on the main findings and the subsequent recommendations. The enormity of the task and the time constraints made this difficult to accomplish. Hence the findings cannot be generalised to other primary schools.

1.7.Structure of the Study

The present study is divided into five chapters:

Chapter 1 commences with a brief introduction on the notion of the management of school-parent relationships in a primary school. Thereafter, a discussion on the context of the study, focus of the study, research methods and the limitations of the study are presented.

Chapter 2 focuses on the Related Literature. This chapter focuses on the understandings of school-parent relationships in general; it examines the current position of the same in South Africa and abroad. The tensions and challenges that confront principals in the management of the relationships with parents are explained. This chapter also explores the potentiality of using a strategic approach, with special reference that marketing has for the effective management of school-parent relationships.

Chapter 3 provides the specific direction of this study and focuses on the research goals, research questions, research methods, research participants research instruments and the limitations of the design and methodology.

Chapter 4 has the intention of analysing and interpreting the data obtained from structured interviews and semi-structured questionnaires.

Chapter 5 presents a summary of the main findings of the research and recommendations to improve the current state of the school-parent relationship at the researched site.

CHAPTER 2

RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

The trend of managing school-parent relationships to enhance school effectiveness is a worldwide phenomenon. It remains a crucial topic as schools continue to motivate parents to participate actively in school activities and to develop a partnership with them. "Involving parents successfully as partners in education is the key to so many of the other problems. We have the beginning of mutual accountability or at the least the climate for it in that parents have naturally accepted that something is expected of them". [Coleman in Bush & West-Burnham, 1994,p.372.] Currently schools are more aware of the significance of the role parent's play in the education of their children. The importance of developing and sustaining a positive relationship with parents, however, remains a challenge to many school principals.

Parents and teachers working together to ensure the best possible educational opportunities and experiences for children is reiterated in the Plowden Report, quoted in Little & Meighan [1995,p.20]:

> "Teachers are linked to parents by their children for whom they are both responsible. The triangle should be completed and a more direct relationship established between teachers and parents. They should be partners in more than name, their responsibility become joint..."

It is acknowledged that principals are aware that parents are the main stakeholders in education and have a significant role to play in the realization and fulfilment of education of their children.

Throughout this document, reference is made to the term parent. All such references may be interpreted broadly to include adults who play an important role in a child's family life since other adults – grandparents, aunts, step-parents, guardians may carry the responsibility for a child's educational development and well-being.

The first part of this chapter focuses on an understanding of school-parent relationships in general. Thereafter it examines the current position of school-parent relationships abroad and in South Africa. The characteristics of school-parent relationships are explained which is followed by a discussion of the tensions and challenges that confront school principals in managing the relationship with parents.

The second part of the chapter focuses on the theoretical aspects of strategic management and examines the potential that a strategic approach, with a specific focus on marketing, has in the effective management of school-parent relationship in schools.

2.2. An Understanding from Emerging Literature about School-Parent Relationships in General.

School-parent relationships or home-school relationships are terms that have become popular since the 1990's. These terms are related to parental involvement but are broader and more inclusive. Parental involvement focuses on the role of parents in their child's education. School-parent relationships focus on the relationship between the home and the school and how educators and parents can work together to promote the social and academic development of learners. Relationships between schools and parents imply that there should be a partnership between the two systems working towards a common goal. According to Swap [1993,p.57 – 58] this relationship is built on 4 elements, namely:

> 2.2.1.The creation of two-way communication
>
> 2.2.2.The enhancement of learning at home and at school.
>
> 2.2.3.The provision of mutual support.
>
> 2.2.4.Joint decision –making.

Whilst it is known that a positive relationship between the school and the home will have a positive impact on the child's development and learning achievements, Middlewood, in Lumby & Foskett [1999,pp.111-112] states that "the parent's role in the relationship may depend on the country's legislation, culture and social traditions in which the school operates". He explains that the term parent includes the biological parent, foster parent, grandparents and guardians of pupils and may be seen as co-educator in one country and consumer in another country. Notwithstanding the varied meanings of the term parent, managing the school-parent relationship is according to Bastiani [1993,p.94] as quoted by Middlewood in Lumby et al. [1999,p.113]:

"A major task that calls for imagination and commitment, initiative and direction. It also needs management, understanding and support."

The rationale for establishing this kind of relationship is the desire to make schools more efficient and effective and to improve the quality of education. Buys [1986,pp.119-120] and Dekker [1990,pp.29] quoted by Weeto [1997,pp.23-24] tabulate the following characteristics of the relationship between the school and the home:

1. *the school and home should try not to over-ride the authority of the other*
2. *encourage a shared commitment to the success of a child*
3. *create an ethos of understanding and openness in home-school relationships*
4. *co-operation between a school and home can be realised only if there are link structures between parents and teachers*
5. *teachers, like parents, have the authority over children and because they act in loco parentis at school, they should be afforded all the respect that is due to them*
6. *mutual respect is a prerequisite for good education. If parents and teachers don't accord each other space to work, education will be chaotic*
7. *the school curriculum should be structured in such a manner that it will answer all the aspirations of the society*
8. *a child should be taught according to his ability and interest*
9. *it is necessary that consensus be reached in all problematic matters so that effective education can be realised*

The above characteristics indicate that it is vital for the school and the home to interact to play a meaningful role in the education of children.

The importance of an effective relationship between schools and parents is not only peculiar to the South African education system, but has been recognised in many other countries.

In the United States, the school-parent relationship is strengthened by scheduling regular parent/teacher conferences as well as welcoming parents into the school at all times and respecting cultural and family differences. The Parent-Teacher Association plays a prominent role in the development of education. In order to integrate school and home and to enhance the relationship, regular parent/teacher conferences or interviews are arranged, parents visit school during school hours to observe whether teaching is going on well and to see the shortfalls and achievement of the children. [Johnstone and Slotnik, 1985,p.430, cited in Weeto, 1997,p.33-34].

In Canada, communication between home and school is considered to be the important link. Parents are involved in an advisory capacity with respect to decision making related to policy development, programme implementation and evaluation.

According to Tomlinson [1991,p.10] the Danish school system is founded upon the notion that community education gives more legal recognition and informed support to partnership between the family and the school than any other country. Danish parents are recognised by law and in practice as sharing partnership rights and responsibilities at all levels of society.

Attempts to formalize the partnership between schools and parents is evident in the United Kingdom. Since 1988, there has been an enhanced interest in developing the home-school relationship and in formalising parental participation in schooling.

The family makes a large contribution to the provision of education in Nigeria. Parents are involved in education through statutory bodies like school communities and take an active part in traditional festivals, sports gatherings, prize giving [Niemann, 1995, p.380, quoted by Weeto 1997,p.34).

In South Africa the importance of an effective relationship between schools and parents is emphasised by the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996. The Act compels parents to participate actively in the government [public] schools with a view to providing a better teaching and learning environment. According to the Act, the governance of every public school is vested in its Governing Body [G.B.] and the school principal has the formal legal authority in terms of the management of the school. As statutory bodies, the G.B.of schools ensures the participation of parents, the principal, educators, other staff members learners and co-opted members in the governance of public schools in South Africa. Activities such as fund raising, assisting educators with academic or extra-mural activities are voluntary and parents must be motivated and trained to participate actively. It was hoped that involving parents in education would provide them with insight into their children's progress and encourage them to participate in decision-making in schools and to make them critical of information on educational issues. It was further hoped that parental involvement would influence communities to support schools. In this

connection the Report of the Task Team on Education Management Development [1996, pp.28, 32] suggests that schools in South Africa, "working within a context of increased autonomy and a turbulent environment need to develop the capacity to manage themselves and to manage change effectively".

From the above, it is clear that whilst there is clearly an expectation upon school principals to establish positive relationships with parents to play a meaningful role in education, there is also a need for principals to be aware of the tensions and challenges which they may be faced with when managing the relationship with parents.

2.3. The Tensions and Challenges that Confront Principals in the Management of School-Parent Relationships.

Great strides have been made towards redefining and enhancing the relationship between the school and parents and linking it to school reforms in a number of countries. Statutory requirements have been amended to facilitate parental involvement through Parent Councils, Parental Advisory Committees and School Governing Bodies. In this connection, Thurlow [1997,p.49] has suggested:

> "As the move to a new schooling dispensation continues to gather momentum in South Africa, problems related to management are compounded...it would seem to be an unavoidable certainty that schools themselves have to assume a major responsibility as agents of their own change and development if they are to make real progress in becoming effective, affordable and a rewarding place for their students and teachers" [Bush, Coleman & Thurlow, 2002, pp.1-2]

Researchers, however, have found that principals and educators are sometimes reluctant to interact with parents because they still maintain their role as professionals and subject specialists, therefore in practice, the majority of parents are not consulted. Research conducted by Basson [1992,p.78] has revealed that 69% of principals determine school policies without considering the involvement of parents while Van der Linde [1993,p.370] points out that one of the biggest problems that school principals face is that parents are not consulted as to whether they can manage the tasks they are given by schools because their areas of interest are not considered by principals. [Weeto 1997,pp.97-98]. This indicates that principals need to realise that parents are unique and they have peculiar interests.

Failure to recognise parents as individuals may lead to difficulties in managing the relationship with parents. Principals need to focus upon how parents can contribute to their child's education by recognising the skills and talents that parents have. Coldwell and Millikan [1989,p.199] point out that:

> "The parent body of any school constitutes a rich fund of skills and expertise, knowledge and experience, which goes well beyond the capacities of its teaching staff." [Middlewood, quoted in Lumby et al. 1999,p.116].

Van der Westhuizen and Mosage [2001,p.190] indicate that whilst principals are often baffled by the apathetic and apparent indifferent attitude of parents when it comes to involvement in school activities, parents feel it is unfair that they should help the school with its commitments but are denied planning and deciding jointly with educators on matters that affect the education of their children. In their research, it was found that principals and teachers view parental involvement an intrusion in their sphere of influence. Principals and teachers are of the view that they are adequately qualified to handle school activities without the interference of parents. The attitude of principals and teachers creates an uninviting atmosphere, which discourages parents from taking an active role in school activities. Research by Swick [1991] has indicated that "when teachers and parents possess certain attributes, they are more able to establish meaningful partnerships. Some of these, such as warmth, a positive self-image sensitivity are to found to be positive influences in both parents and teachers. Teacher's attitudes, such as flexibility, reliability and accessibility together with effective teaching and management skills, appear to positively influence relationships with parents. When parents need help in developing partnership skills, teachers need to set a positive example by being supportive, dependable and responsive". [Little and Meighan, 1996,p.27].

For parents to be treated as complimentary partners in education, it is imperative for school managers to ensure that all parents, irrespective of their social and economic status to have equal accessibility and opportunities in schools. The socio-economic position of parents, according to Kitavi [1995, p.134] in Van der Westhuizen et al. has the greatest impact on the lack of preparedness of parents to be involved in school activities. The question of disadvantaged communities is especially relevant to South Africa. It is evident that this group of parents are unable to provide either

the resources or pay the school fund of their children. Demographic factors such, as the increase in the number of single parent families is challenge to many principals. This according to Middlewood "raises the question of the extent to which schools should work in the absence of fathers". He states, "the critical issue for school managers is that their responsibility is to the child". [Lumby et al. 1999,p.121].

Communication between the school and home is the foundation of a solid relationship. The challenge to many principals is that messages may be interpreted wrongly, parents may not understand the aim of the school principal or parents may be illiterate. Weeto believes that communication can be a hindrance in the sense that parents view the position of a school principal in different ways. The fact that a principal has to work with a number of parents with different views about his/her position indicates that principals need to be explicit in what they require of parents. [1997,p.62].

Effective communication between schools and parents also depends to a large extent on amenities at school. Schools that do not have telephones or duplicating machines may experience problems in conveying messages to parents. Principals have to rely on verbal communication which is subject to filtration, distortion and snowballing. This affects the image of the school and undermines the efforts to involve parents. [Van der Westhuizen and Mosage, 2001,p.190].

It is acknowledged that since schools are operating in a climate of constant change and uncertainty, they can no longer work in isolation. They are accountable not only to the central government but also the community they serve. To meet the new challenges, principals need to change their style of management in order to develop management programmes for effective and positive relationships with parents. The Task Team reiterates that in order to build relationships and to ensure efficient and effective delivery, school managers have to work in democratic and participative ways. [Department of Education & Culture, 1996,p.25].

In quoting West-Burnham [1994,p.79] who has asserted that, "strategy is central to effective management" and Kaufman [1992,p.11] who says that, "being strategic is knowing what to achieve, being able to justify the direction and then finding the

best ways to get there," Thurlow also advises that schools need to adopt a strategic approach to management. [Bush et al. 2002,p.2].

An exciting new challenge for principals in South African schools is the trend of schools being regarded as open organisations, being self-managed and with a greater degree of accountability to all stakeholders. This has highlighted the importance of the need to build a partnership and a positive relationship with parents of the learners of the school. This partnership, which is an important element of a strategic approach to external relations, is essential for the well-being and progress of a child's learning. Middlewood states, "a relationship has certain elements which make it a partnership". He states further that "for effective management, there needs to be a clear definition and understanding of what partnership entails". He quotes Pugh's (1989,p.80) definition of partnership as:

> "A working relationship that is characterised by a shares sense of purpose, mutual respect and the willingness to negotiate. This implies a sharing of information, responsibilities, skills, decision-making and accountability."
> [Lumby et al.1999, p.113].

Currently it is expected that parents must be partners, which indicates that parents are part of the decision-making process and its implementation in schools. They have equal strengths and equal expertise; they contribute and receive services on an equal footing and share responsibility and accountability with the professional staff in schools [Khan 1996]. Both researchers have also suggested that the relationship between parents and schools be changed from a client type of relationship to a partnership relationship. They explain that previously parents were perceived as clients, and did not have any influence in the decision-making or management of the school but now parents are now playing a crucial role in education. [Heystek & Louw, 1999,p.21].

Principals are obligated to form a positive partnership with members of the school governing body. This is necessary because the governing body has been elected by parents to oversee the activities of the school.

An essential aspect of managing good relationships with parents is to get parents identify with the aims and vision of the school. Principals need to interact with parents individually and collectively.

Schools are also obligated to respond to the needs of parents, who may also be referred to as customers/consumers. The term customer is derived from the business world, and has become relevant in education because schools are operating in a competitive environment. For schools to survive, and be effective, principals need to be aware that parents are free to choose schools best fitted to their children 's needs. This freedom of choice implies that schools will have to compete for learners. Consequently, principals are faced with the challenge to develop loyalty from parents. In effect this means that schools are operating in a market environment. Marketing has been identified as crucial in the way relationships with parents are managed. Coleman [1994,p.363] in quoting Styan states that schools are encouraged to consider marketing as an integral part of their development plan, to see all who work there as having an important part to play in marketing the school.

2.4.Marketing and its Relationship to Strategic Planning

The pivotal role of marketing in the strategic planning and management of schools is encapsulated in the following quote by Gray [1991,p.175]:

> "Where marketing becomes integrated as a central aspect of the school management, the other elements of management are improved."
>
> [Anderson, Briggs & Burton, 2001, p.77].

The marketing concept is derived from business and industry and is new to managers of educational institutions In order to evaluate whether the needs of the market are being met, the following marketing strategies are offered by Mugatroyd and Morgan [1993]:

2.5.1.Broad Open Strategy: the objective of the school is to satisfy the needs of all the pupils in its locality.

2.5.2.Enhanced Open Strategy: the school offers a broad education to its pupils, which is enhanced by extra and co-curricular activities.

2.5.3.Basic Niche Strategy: the focus is on a particular curriculum expertise such as excellence in sport or religion.

2.5.4.Enhanced Niche Strategy: the niche is the primary focus of the institution. Special expertise is developed in a curriculum area and the pupils are carefully selected.   [Anderson et al.2001, p.66].

The above strategies assist schools to identify their overall direction. Thereafter, schools need to be involved their promotion campaigns. The marketing mix strategy, a concept from the business world, offers a useful framework for promotional planning and marketing of schools. It can be used to enhance the image of the school by communicating the vision and goals of the school to parents and the wider community. Anderson et al. [2001,p.77-78] state that there are three stages in the process of strategically managing and enhancing the reputation of the school through proactive marketing namely:

> *Intent*: refers to the direction in which the school leader wishes to take his school. This is usually expressed in the vision or mission statement of the school.
>
> *Analysis*: is a prerequisite for the vision of the school. An analysis of the current situation and the aspirations of parents needs to be known.
>
> *Implementation stage*: this stage involves consideration of the actual process of managing strategic changes. It is the point at which strategies and policies are translated into specific commitments, action plans and individual targets.

The above information would assist principals to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the school. This in turn can be used as a basis for strategic development and a vision for the school. This is emphasised by Gray who states that:

> "If marketing is embraced as a key element of strategic management, it will be closely linked with the statement of aims and vision of the school. Marketing will be a part of a series of activities dedicated to the continuous improvement of the organisation."   [Gray, 1991,p.43]

The specific relationship of parents to the school both in terms of their being customers in the market and in terms of their having mutual accountability either as stakeholders or as partners is one that requires careful consideration to ensure that

both the provision and the marketing of that provision are managed effectively and efficiently.

In developing a management programme for effective school- parent relationship, schools should be aware that parents usually are linked with a school for the duration of the time that the child spends at that school. Managers therefore have to develop a strategic approach to manage the relationship with parents. Middlewood, in Lumby et al. [1999,p.124] offers the following steps to assists managers in developing a strategic approach to manage the relationship with parents:

1. *Arriving at an unequivocal definition of partnership*
   ❖ common aims, purpose, objectives
   ❖ complimentary roles of the parents
   ❖ commitment to continuing improvement

2. *Clarifying the long term aim for the role of parent in the home-school relationship.*

The role of the parent could be co-educator, consumer or consultant. The role needs to be explicitly defined so that steps can be taken towards achieving this, although this process can take several years.

3. *Being explicit about the reason for the role.*

If the aim is for the parent to be seen as co-educator, the partnership will assume learning at home being acknowledged in school learning and parents being closely involved in decisions affecting behaviour at home and at school. If the role of the parent is to raise the levels of achievement at school then parents will participate in decisions affecting levels of performance at schools.

4.Developing indicators for monitoring the effectiveness of home-school links.
Macbeth [1996] has developed indicators in a number of areas in which schools could self-evaluate their own progress using both qualitative and quantitative evidence. Some of the indicators are relevant to parents in monitoring the effectiveness of the home school links.

2.5. Conclusion

It is clear from the related literature that schools cannot operate in isolation. School principals need to be proactive in determining the needs of parents who have become the key role players in education in South Africa and other countries. In effect this means that successful schools are those that create opportunities for educators and parents to work towards a partnership.

It should also be noted that forcing schools to function as autonomous institutions and in a competitive environment, use should be made of marketing strategies in education as part of strategic management to manage the relationships with parents. Marketing has been identified as being crucial to the way in which relations with parents are managed. It is the role of the school principal to establish effective channels of communication and to develop positive relationships with parents that would be meaningful and valuable for both the parents and the school. It is clear that the principal plays a pivotal role in making the relationship between the school and the parents a reality. If principals collaborate with parents, educators will be more likely to follow suit.

This chapter has attempted to evaluate the literature focussing on the management of school-parent relationship and the importance of marketing as the strategic approach to the management of this relationship.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1.Introduction

This chapter explains the research method employed in this empirical study. A quantitative approach was chosen for this particular study. According to Bell [1987,pp.5-6] "a quantitative paradigm allows the researcher to collect facts and study the relationship of one set of facts to another. They measure, using scientific techniques that are likely to produce quantified and if possible generalised conclusions".

An analysis of research methods used in this study will be explained with specific reference to the research goals. Research questions, research methods, research participants, the technique displayed in the analysis of the data the limitations of the study and the research instruments used.

3.2. Research Goals

The aim of this study was to assess the Management of the School-Parent Relationships in a Primary School. The main goals of the research were:

3.2.1. To examine to what extent do parents participate in the activities of the school.

3.2.2. To determine whether parental participation in school activities is being optimised.

3.3. Research Questions

The following questions were researched for this study.

3.3.1 To explain what is currently perceived to be the potentiality of school-parent relationships and to identify the main tensions and challenges confront the management of the school.

3.3.2. To find out what the current South African legislative and policy framework for the management of school- parent relationships is.

3.3.3 To determine the current position/policy of the school in respect of the school-parent relationships and their management.

3.3.4 To elicit the perceptions of educators in the school regarding the current state of the management of school-parent relationships.

3.3.5. To establish the perceptions of parents regarding the current state of school-parent relationships and their management.

3.3.6. To determine how the management of the school-parent relationship may be improved in the school.

3.4. Research Methods

The following research methods are directly related to the above questions:

Question 1: This question will be addressed through the review of contemporary literature on the management of external relations, with special reference to school-parent relationships.

Question 2: This question will be answered by reference to relevant local and official publications.

Question 3: The current position of the school vis- a-vis school-parent relationships will be determined largely through consultations with the principal of the school, two heads of department and the school – clerk. These personnel will be interviewed to this end.

Question 4: This question will be addressed by means of a semi-structured questionnaire, which will be administered to the level one educators.

Question 5: This question examines the perceptions of parents. Data for this question will be obtained via semi-structured questionnaires.

Question 6: This question will be answered on the basis of findings derived from question 3-5, which will be analysed with reference to products of questions 1 and 2. Practical recommendations will be made.

3.5. The Research Approach

Data for the present study was gathered in three ways:

3.5.1. Structured interviews were conducted with the principal, two heads of department and the school-clerk.

3.5.2. Semi-structured questionnaires were administered thirteen level one educators of the school.

3.5.3. Semi-structured questionnaires were sent to eighty randomly selected parents with the learners of the school.

3.6 The Structure of the Research Instruments

3.6.1 School Based Staff

3.6.1.1. The Interview Schedule

The structured interview was chosen for the present study. This type of interview, according to Cohen and Manion [2000,p .273] "is one in which procedures are organised in advance. This means that the sequence and wording of the questions are determined by means of schedules and the interviewer is left little freedom to make modification. It is characterized by being a closed situation". "The structured format is also easier to use if the researcher is a first-time interviewer". [Bell 1993, p.93].

The intention of conducting interviews with the principal, two heads of department and the school-clerk, was to gain their perceptions on the current position of the school on the management of the school-parent relationship. It was convenient for the researcher to arrange mutual times for the interviews during the school day and to adapt the duration of the time for each interview.

In designing the interview schedule, due consideration was paid to the sequencing and framing of the questions. Questions that required in depth answers were addressed later in the interview schedule.

Construction of the interview schedule

In building up the interview schedule for the present study, more than one question format was used. The interview schedule was divided into three sections [see Annexure B]. The interview was conducted by the researcher and the responses were written down immediately. The sections have been compiled in the following manner:

Section A

This section was made up of three questions [questionsA1 to A3] and dealt with the biographical information which covered the rank or position, the teaching

experience, the number of learners taught in one school day and the number of teaching hours for the week. Questions A1-A2 required the respondents to choose from more than two alternatives. This kind of question is known as "fixed alternative items". Kerlinger [1970] cited by Cohen and Manion [2000,p.275] has identified the following advantages of this kind of question:

- they can achieve greater uniformity of measurement and therefore greater reliability
- they allow the respondents to answer in a manner fitting the response category.
- they are easy to code.

Question A3 required the respondents to supply rather than choose a response. This question was not applicable to the school-clerk.

Section B

This section was made up of four questions [questions B1 to B4]. The respondents were required to indicate their preference to three alternatives that were provided for each question on the schedule. This kind of question is known as the 'scale'. Cohen and Manion [2000 p.275] explain the scale as a set of verbal items to which each the interviewee responds by indicating degrees of agreement or disagreement. The individual response is located on a scale of fixed alternatives. Questions on the South African School's Act, bureaucratic structures, parents' rights and obligations and parents participation in school activities were included in this section.

Section C

This section consisted of 13 questions [questions C1 to C13]. Questions C1 to C5 were applicable only to the principal. This method of exempting respondents from answering certain questions or sections is accommodated through the use of filters. [Oppenheim, cited by Cohen and Manion, 2000,p.258].

Questions C1 and C5 required information on school population, percentage of parents who attend parents' meetings, school functions and the annual general meetings, workshops for parents, information on volunteer parents and parent consultations.

Questions C6 to C13 were applicable to all interviewees. Question C6 to C8 and question C10 to C13 were made up of seven open-ended questions. This kind of question has been defined by Kerlinger [1970] as those that supply a frame of

reference for respondents answers but put a minimum restraint on the answers and their expression. This research has included open-ended items in the interview schedule for the following reasons:

- They are flexible
- They allow the interviewer to probe so that he/ she may go into more depths if he/ she chooses or to clear up any misunderstanding.
- They enable the interviewer to test the limits of the respondent's knowledge.
- They encourage co-operation and help establish rapport.
- They allow the interviewer to make an assessment of what the respondent really believes.
- Open-ended situations can also result in unexpected or unanticipated answers, which may not have been thought of.

[Cohen and Manion, 2000, p.275].

The following areas were covered in this section: suggestions to strengthen the relationship with parents, support and training received, communication, areas where parents are sufficiently involved, obstacles to effective co-operation, areas of parents involvement to develop and improve and the role of the school governing body in promoting a positive relationship with parents.

Question C9 was a dichotomous item with a fixed alternative. This question dealt with the means of communication with the parents.

Response Modes

In terms of the different question format that were discussed in detail in section A, B and C of the interview schedule, the following response modes were used:

- <u>Unstructured Modes</u>

The unstructured mode according to Tuckman [1972] allows the respondent to give his/her answer in whatever way he/she chooses. The respondent has the freedom to give his/her own answers as fully as he/she chooses rather than being constrained in some way by the nature of the question. The chief disadvantage, however is that data yielded in the unstructured response is more difficult to code and quantify than data in a structured response.

- <u>Fill in Responses</u>

This mode requires the respondent to supply rather than choose a response. The response was limited to a number question A3.1, A3.2 and question C1 to

C2.Questions that required words, as responses were C3, C5, and C9. The chief advantage of this type of mode is that it is less biasing and allows for greater response flexibility. The disadvantage is that these types of responses are more difficult to score.

- <u>Scaled Response</u>

A scaled response is one structured by means of a series of gradations. The respondent is required to record his/her response to a given statement by selecting from a number of alternatives. [Cohen and Manion, 2000,p.276-277].

A. Interviews

Since the researcher initiated this empirical study, it was decided to limit the interview to the principal, two heads of department and the school-clerk for the following reasons:

- ❖ The limited time and the busy work schedules of the staff did not permit the interviews to be conducted with every member of the staff.
- ❖ It was convenient to set up and conduct the interview with the members of the management and the school-clerk during the school day when these personnel were not engaged in classroom teaching.

3.6.1.2. Questionnaires

The questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher and often being comparatively straightforward to analyse. [Wilson and Maclean, 1994] cited in [Cohen and Manion, 2000,p.245].

The semi-structured questionnaire was used to gather the data from thirteen level one educators. This approach according to Cohen and Manion [2000,p.248] has the following advantages:

- ❖ The present study is a small-scale research project and the population of fourteen level one educators motivated the choice of this instrument.
- ❖ The semi-structured questionnaire has a clear structure, sequence, focus but the format is open ended, enabling the respondent to respond in his/her own terms.
- ❖ Semi-structured questionnaires set the agenda and do not presuppose the nature of the response.
- ❖ The researcher opted for the semi-structured questionnaires for the following reasons:

- ❖ The respondents could complete the questionnaires at their own convenience.
- ❖ The researcher, being a member of the staff was available to clarify any aspects of the questions that may not have been clear to the respondents.
- ❖ It was convenient to administer the self-completion questionnaire to the respondents.
- ❖ It was less time consuming to administer.

Construction of the Questionnaire

It must be noted here that the research tool that was used to interview the principal, the two heads of department and the school-clerk was also used as a self-completion questionnaire. This was done due to insufficient time to interview all thirteen level one educators. The intention of administering the questionnaire to these participants was to obtain their perceptions on the management of the school-parent relationships at the researched site.

This semi-structured questionnaire was divided into three sections [see Annexure C]. A short clear instruction accompanied each section of the questionnaire to guide the respondents in completing this instrument.

Since the explanations that were offered above in respect of each of the three sections of the interview schedule is applicable to the self-completion questionnaire, the details shall not be repeated in this section. The following information, however, is relevant to the self-completion questionnaire.

Section A

"The closed questions in this section prescribe a range of responses from which respondents may choose. They are quick to complete and straightforward to code [e.g. for computer analysis] and do not discriminate unduly on the basis of how articulate the respondents are. The disadvantage, however, is that respondents are unable to add any remarks, qualifications and explanations to the categories".
[Wilson and McLean, 1994, cited by Cohen and Manion, 2000,p.248].

Section B

In this section, respondents had to indicate their responses by selecting one of the alternatives. This was done by placing a tick in the appropriate block.

Section C

This section comprised of thirteen questions [questions C1 to C13]. The respondents had to complete their responses for questions C6 to C13 .The questions were largely open ended questions which enabled the respondents to write free responses in their own terms. "Open-ended questions also contain gems of information that otherwise might not have been caught in the questionnaire. A further advantage is that it puts the responsibility for and the ownership of the data much more firmly in the hands of the respondents. The disadvantages of the open-ended questionnaire are that it is difficult to code and to classify and it takes longer to complete". [Cohen and Manion, [2000,p.255- 256].

3.6.2. Parents

3.6.2.1. Questionnaires

The semi-structured questionnaire was used as a research tool. [See Annexure D]. The self-completion questionnaire was sent to 80 parents of learners from the school. The respondents were required to record their responses to set questions.

Construction of the Questionnaire

The semi-structure comprised of four sections. A short clear instruction preceded each section to guide the respondents in completing the questionnaire.

Section A

This section was made up of seven questions [questionsA1to A7]. Respondents were required to indicate their biographical and demographic data. The questions required answers in respect of the parent responsible for completing the questionnaire, number of children at school, marital status, home language, occupation and number of days worked in the week. Question A1 to A6 required the respondent to choose from two or more alternatives. Question 7 was a fill in response question requiring information on the number of days worked per week.

Section B

The aim of this section was to elicit the perceptions of respondents on communication and information .The section was made up of five closed questions [questions B1 to B2]. In order to ascertain the degree of intensity of the responses,

the Likert scale was used. A Likert scale provides a range of responses to a given question or statement. Respondents are required to indicate their preference by selecting one of the three alternatives that were provided by means of a tick. Since it would have been exhaustive to include every question on communication in this section, provision was made for the respondents to add on any further comments. The literature review did indicate communication as being the foundation of a sound relationship between the school and the home.

Section C

In this section, data was gathered from ten rating scale type questions [questions C1 toC10]. Respondents were required to select one of three response categories. Information required from the respondents in this section covered areas such as monitoring of learner's progress, the school code of conduct, fundraising, excursions, attendance to school functions, school curriculum, parent meetings voluntary services of parents and extra-curricular activities of the school. Provision was made for further comments from the respondents in respect of parents and the school.

Section D

This section consisted of four open-ended questions [questions D1 to D4]. The aim of this section was to:

❖ allow the respondents to express their views as freely as possible.

❖ to gain information from a parent perspective so that appropriate strategies will be developed to strengthen their relationship with the principal, staff and the school governing body of the school.

Respondents were required to provide responses to the following questions: What encouraged them to visit the school, if there was anything they would like to know about the school and any activities they would like to participate in? The respondents were also invited to write in suggestions or add comments that would assist the management, educators and school governing body to manage the school-parent relationship effectively.

3.7. Population and Sample

3.7.1. School Based Staff

The participants for the empirical study at the researched site consisted of all staff members. While structured interviews were conducted with school principal, head of the senior primary department, head of the junior primary department and the school-clerk. Self-completion questionnaires were administered to the level one educators. The following reasons are advanced for the choice of each of the above named respondents who were interviewed at the school:

The Principal

The principal in her capacity as manager of the school plays a pivotal role in promoting a strong and positive relationship with the parents. The leadership style has a profound influence on maintaining a positive relationship with parents.

The Heads of Department

Both the heads of department interact with a substantial number of parents on a daily basis. All concerns and issues concerning learners are referred to the heads of department for attention. Communicating skilfully with parents is essential to strengthen the relationship.

The School-Clerk

The clerk is a full time employee at the school. Her interaction and communication with the parents verbally and through written correspondence occurs on a daily basis. The school clerk is a vital link between the school and the home and her reception and approach plays a major role in determining the attitudes of parents.

3.7.2. Parents

Sample Size: The present study, being a small-scale research project was limited to 80 parents (n=80). This figure represents 20% of the number of families of the school. The learner population of the school is 638.

Sampling Strategy: The researcher used the probability method of sampling. This method is also known as the random sample. The reasons are:

- ❖ In a probability sample, the chances of members of the wider population being selected for the sample are known.
- ❖ Every member of the wider population has an equal chance of being included in the sample.
- ❖ The probability sample is useful to the researcher who wishes to make generalizations from the wider population.
- ❖ This method has less risk of bias.
- ❖ After reviewing the range of probability samples, it was decided to use the simple random sample for the following reasons:
- ❖ Each of the four hundred respondents identified for this study had an equal chance of being selected.
- ❖ The probability of a member of the population being selected is unaffected by the selection of other members of the population. This method involves selecting at random from a list of the population, the required number of subjects for the sample.

The self-completion questionnaires were sent to the selected participants. Permission was granted by the school principal and the school governing body to distribute the questionnaires to parents via the learners. An explanation of the aim of the study, the assurance of confidentiality, the procedure to return the completed questionnaires and the due date was embodied in a covering letter that was attached to the questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent in a sealed envelope and provision to return the questionnaire in a sealed envelope was taken care of by the researcher. Parents were assured that the outcome of the study would be made available to them

3.8. Limitations of Design and Methodology

The limitations of the various data collection methods may have possible consequences on the interpretation of the results. In this connection, the validity and reliability of the research instruments needs to be considered. In explaining validity, Cohen et al. [2000,p.105] states, "it is an important key to effective research and is a requirement for both quantitative and qualitative research. It is impossible for research to be 100 percent valid. Quantitative research possesses a measure of standard error which is inbuilt and which has to be acknowledged". It is the intention at this point to state the limitations of this study, which needs to be taken into account when interpreting the evaluating the findings. .

3.8.1. Validity and Reliability in Interviews

Studies by Connel & Khan [1968] cited in Cohen et al. [2000,p.120] indicate, "validity is a persistent problem in interviews. The cause of the invalidity is bias on the part of both the interviewer and interviewee because both alike bring their own often-unconscious experiential and biographical baggage with them into the interview situation". The following limitations are relevant to the interviews for the present study:

- ❖ The interview schedule was not piloted
- ❖ The researcher did not receive training to conduct the interviews.
- ❖ The interview schedule consists of leading questions.
- ❖ The interviews were conducted by the researcher herself so the possibility of bias being consistent may have gone unnoticed.

3.8.2. Validity and Reliability in Questionnaires

The question of whether respondents will complete questionnaires accurately, honestly, correctly and return the completed questionnaire impacts on the validity of the questionnaire as a research instrument. "The advantage of the questionnaire is that it tends to be reliable in that it is anonymous and it is more economical than the interview in terms of money and time. Questionnaires are also filled in hurriedly". [Cohen et al. 2000,p.128-129].

The limitations of the questionnaires that were used in this study are:

- ❖ The questionnaires were not piloted to test the content, wording and length.
- ❖ The questionnaires contained leading questions.
- ❖ Every questionnaire was not returned to the researcher. This has impacted on the research findings especially from the level one educators.
- ❖ The researcher is a staff member at the researched site. The possibility of the respondents being subjective in their responses remains a reality.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the limitations will have an impact on the scope of the research findings and the recommendations, it would not invalidate it in its entirety since the research design was adjusted to accommodate the limitations. This small-scale empirical research project was conducted with the intention of making a positive difference to the management of the relationship with parents at the researcher's school.

3.9. Conclusion

This chapter attempted to explain the main research methods for this study.
Information on the research goals, the research questions, the research instruments
and the participants were explained fully. The limitations of the study were also
outlined.

The intention of the next chapter is to present and interpret the data obtained from
structured interviews and the self-completion questionnaires from both the level one
educators and the parents.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter highlighted the perceptions of key personnel of this study. The responses were obtained through interviews with the principal, two heads of department and the school-clerk. Self-completion questionnaires were given to thirteen level one educators and a selected group of parents of learners from the school. The research questions, research methods and the structure of the research instruments were also explained.

The intention of this chapter is to analyse and interpret the data collected from the interviews and questionnaires. It should be noted however that since the questions on two of the research instruments, namely, the interview schedule and the self-completion questionnaire for the educators are identical, the frequencies from both these instruments will be reflected in one Table.

The capturing of the data and the frequencies and percentages were processed with the help of the STATS Package SPSS.

This chapter is divided into two broad sections.

Section A

Deals with responses from the staff based at the school. The principal, two heads of department and the school-clerk were interviewed .The interview schedule is attached. [see Annexure B]. Thirteen level one educators were given the questionnaires [see Annexure C] and eight questionnaires were duly completed and returned.

Section B

This section deals with the responses received from the parents through the self-completion questionnaires. [see Annexure D]. Of the eighty questionnaires sent with the learners to their parents, seventy-one completed questionnaires were sent back

with the learners to the researcher at school. Special mention must be made of the responses from parents that provided a wealth of information about the relationship between the school and the parents.

The researcher intends to present the findings in the same order that appears in the interview schedule, self- completion questionnaire for educators and the self-completion questionnaires for parents.

4.2. INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.2.1. Frequencies of Staff Based at the School

A2. Teaching Experience * A1. Present rank or position Crosstabulation

		A1. Present rank or position				
		Principal	Head of department	Educator	School clerk	Total
Not applicable	Count	0	0	0	1	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%	8.3%
Less than 5 years	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
6-10 Years	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
11-15 Years	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
16-20 Years	Count	0	0	4	0	4
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	50.0%	.0%	33.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	33.3%	.0%	33.3%
21-25 Years	Count	0	2	1	0	3
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	100.0%	12.5%	.0%	25.0%
	% of Total	.0%	16.7%	8.3%	.0%	25.0%
26-30 Years	Count	1	0	0	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	8.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
Total	Count	1	2	8	1	12
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	100.0%

The previous Table indicates the responses to question A1 and A2 These question required the respondents to indicate their rank or position and the number of years of teaching experience from both the interview schedule and the questionnaires for

the level one educators. Question A2 was not applicable to the school-clerk as the question required the respondents to indicate their teaching experience.

The principal [8.3%] has between 26-30 years of teaching experience

Both the heads of department [16.7%] have between 21-25 years of experience. The teaching experience of the educators range from less than five years to a maximum of twenty-five years.

4[33.3%] educators are teaching for 16- 20 years, 1 [8.3%] educator has between 21-25years of teaching experience. The remaining three educators have teaching experience that range from eleven years to less than five years

A3.1 The average number of learners you teach in one day * A1. Present rank or position Crosstabulation

		A1. Present rank or position				
		Principal	Head of department	Educator	School clerk	Total
Not applicable	Count	0	0	0	1	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%	8.3%
32	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
37	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
38	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
40	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
41	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
45	Count	0	0	2	0	2
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	25.0%	.0%	16.7%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	16.7%	.0%	16.7%
63	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
79	Count	0	1	0	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	50.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	8.3%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
80	Count	1	0	0	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	8.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
120	Count	0	1	0	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	50.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	8.3%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
Total	Count	1	2	8	1	12
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	100.0%

Question A3 was not applicable to the school-clerk. The average number of learners taught in one day is as follows:

120 learners 1 [8.3%] respondent.

80 learners 1 [8.3%] respondent

79 learners 1 [8.3%] respondent

63 learners 1[8.3%] respondent

45 learners 2[16.7%] respondents

41 learners 1[8.3%] respondent —

40 learners   1[8.3%] respondent
38learners   1[8.3%] respondent
37learners   1[8.3%] respondent
32 learners   1[8.3%] respondent

A3.2 The number of teaching hours for the week * A1. Present rank or position Crosstabulation

		A1. Present rank or position				Total
		Principal	Head of department	Educator	School clerk	
Don't know	Count	0	1	0	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	50.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	8.3%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
Not applicable	Count	0	0	0	1	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%	8.3%
5	Count	1	0	0	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	8.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
7	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
22	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
24	Count	0	1	5	0	6
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	50.0%	62.5%	.0%	50.0%
	% of Total	.0%	8.3%	41.7%	.0%	50.0%
25	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
Total	Count	1	2	8	1	12
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	100.0%

Question A3 was not applicable to the school-clerk. The number of teaching hours for the week for the eleven respondents is:

25 hours: 1 [8.3%] respondent
24 hours: 6 [50%] respondents
22 hours: 1 [8.3%] respondent
7 hours: 1 [8.3%] respondent
5 hours: 1 [8.3%] respondent
1[8.3%] respondent did not indicate his/her response

B1. The South African School's Act prohibit parents from being optimally involved in school activities * A1. Present rank or position Crosstabulation

		A1. Present rank or position				
		Principal	Head of department	Educator	School clerk	Total
Disagree	Count	1	2	8	1	12
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	100.0%
Total	Count	1	2	8	1	12
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	100.0%

All 12 [100%] respondents disagreed with question B1 which in effect implies that the parents are not prohibited from being optimally involved in the activities of the school.

B2. The bureaucratic structures in education discourage parents from being optimally involved in school * A1. Present rank or position Crosstabulation

		A1. Present rank or position				
		Principal	Head of department	Educator	School clerk	Total
Agree	Count	0	1	1	1	3
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	50.0%	12.5%	100.0%	25.0%
	% of Total	.0%	8.3%	8.3%	8.3%	25.0%
Disagree	Count	1	1	6	0	8
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	50.0%	75.0%	.0%	66.7%
	% of Total	8.3%	8.3%	50.0%	.0%	66.7%
Not Sure	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
Total	Count	1	2	8	1	12
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	100.0%

Respondents had to select one of the three alternatives provided.
The above Table indicates:
3 respondents agree with the above statement while eight respondents disagree.
1 respondent is not sure whether the bureaucratic structures discourage the parents from being optimally involved.

B3. Parents rights and obligations have not been clearly spelled out by legislations * A1. Present rank or position Crosstabulation

		A1. Present rank or position				
		Principal	Head of department	Educator	School clerk	Total
Agree	Count	0	2	3	1	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	100.0%	37.5%	100.0%	50.
	% of Total	.0%	16.7%	25.0%	8.3%	50.
Disagree	Count	1	0	3	0	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	.0%	37.5%	.0%	33.
	% of Total	8.3%	.0%	25.0%	.0%	33.
Not Sure	Count	0	0	2	0	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	25.0%	.0%	16.
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	16.7%	.0%	16.
Total	Count	1	2	8	1	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	100

Responses in connection with the rights and obligations of parents as spelled out by legislations are:
Agree: 6 respondents
Disagree: 4 respondents
Not Sure: 2 respondents

B4. Parents participate in school activities only when their interests are at stake * A1. Present rank or position Crosstabulation

		A1. Present rank or position				
		Principal	Head of department	Educator	School clerk	Total
Agree	Count	1	2	8	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	.0%	91.7
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	.0%	91.7
Not Sure	Count	0	0	0	1	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%	8.3
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%	8.3
Total	Count	1	2	8	1	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	100.0

11 respondents agree that parents participate in school activities only when their interests are at stake. 1 respondent is not sure of this statement.

Section C.
Information for questions C1 to C6 was obtained from the principal of the school.
This question was not applicable to the rest of the eleven respondents.

C1. The school population is * A1. Present rank or position Crosstabulation

		A1. Present rank or position				
		Principal	Head of department	Educator	School clerk	Total
Not applicable	Count	0	2	8	1	11
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	91.7%
	% of Total	.0%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	91.7%
638	Count	1	0	0	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	8.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
Total	Count	1	2	8	1	12
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	100.0%

There are 638 learners in the school.

C2.1 What % of parents on an average attend school parent meetings * A1. Present rank or position Crosstabulation

		A1. Present rank or position				
		Principal	Head of department	Educator	School clerk	Total
Not applicable	Count	0	2	8	1	11
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	91.7%
	% of Total	.0%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	91.7%
60	Count	1	0	0	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	8.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
Total	Count	1	2	8	1	12
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	100.0%

The response to the percentage of parents who attend parent meetings is indicated as 60.

C2.2 What % of parents on an average attend school functions (concerts, sports, etc.) * A1. Present rank or position Crosstabulation

		A1. Present rank or position				Total
		Principal	Head of department	Educator	School clerk	
Not applicable	Count	0	2	8	1	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	91.7'
	% of Total	.0%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	91.7
90	Count	1	0	0	0	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3'
	% of Total	8.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3'
Total	Count	1	2	8	1	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	100.0

The response to question C2.2. indicates a substantial number of parents – 90%
attend functions at school.

C2.3 What % of parents on an average attend SGB'S Annual General Meetings * A1. Present rank or position Crosstabulation

		A1. Present rank or position				Total
		Principal	Head of department	Educator	School clerk	
Not applicable	Count	0	2	8	1	11
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	91.7%
	% of Total	.0%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	91.7%
50	Count	1	0	0	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	8.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
Total	Count	1	2	8	1	12
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	100.0%

The parent attendance to the annual general meetings of the school governing body
is 50%.

C3. Are specific workshops held for parents to help them develop partnership skills? * A1. Present rank or position Crosstabulation

		A1. Present rank or position				
		Principal	Head of department	Educator	School clerk	Total
Not applicable	Count	0	2	8	1	11
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	91.7%
	% of Total	.0%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	91.7%
No	Count	1	0	0	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	8.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
Total	Count	1	2	8	1	12
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	100.0%

The information from the above Table indicates that no specific workshops
are held for parents to develop their partnership skills.

C4. Do parents volunteer their services at school? * A1. Present rank or position Crosstabulation

		A1. Present rank or position				
		Principal	Head of department	Educator	School clerk	Total
Not applicable	Count	0	2	8	1	11
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	91.7%
	% of Total	.0%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	91.7%
Yes	Count	1	0	0	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	8.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
Total	Count	1	2	8	1	12
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	100.0%

All 12[100%] respondents have responded positively to the above question.

C5. Were parents consulted in drawing up the Code of Conduct of the school? * A1. Present rank or position Crosstabulation

		A1. Present rank or position				
		Principal	Head of department	Educator	School clerk	Total
Not applicable	Count	0	2	8	1	11
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	91.7%
	% of Total	.0%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	91.7%
No	Count	1	0	0	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	8.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
Total	Count	1	2	8	1	12
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	100.0%

Parents were not consulted in drawing up the school's code of conduct.

Questions C6 to C13 were essentially open-ended questions. The labels in all the Tables indicate that the information received from the respondents were grouped into specific categories.

C6. There is a perception that parental involvement in school is limited. What do you think can be done to strengthe relationship between school and the parents? * A1. Present rank or position Crosstabulation

		A1. Present rank or position				T(
		Principal	Head of department	Educator	School clerk	
Don't know	Count	0	0	2	0	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	25.0%	.0%	
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	16.7%	.0%	
Parents need to be more involved in activities	Count	0	2	2	1	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	100.0%	25.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	.0%	16.7%	16.7%	8.3%	
Need for a more cordial relationship with parents	Count	0	0	1	0	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	
Meetings	Count	0	0	1	0	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	
Social gatherings and incentives for involvement	Count	0	0	2	0	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	25.0%	.0%	
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	16.7%	.0%	
Development of partnership skills	Count	1	0	0	0	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	
	% of Total	8.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%	
Total	Count	1	2	8	1	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	1
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	1

Suggestions to strengthen the relationship between the school and the parents include:
- Parents need to be more involved in school activities: 5 respondents.
- Parental involvement must begin in the classroom as that is where the parent's interests lie. Educators should try to involve parents in classroom activities.
- Institute committees comprising parents
- Be willing to assist in drawing up policies so that decisions are jointly made.

Reponses
- *Social gatherings and incentives for involvement: 2 respondents.*
'Social gatherings should take place on a Saturday so that parents can get to know each other and meet the staff of the school.'
- *Acknowledge parents who attend functions and who assist the school.*
- *The need for a cordial relationship with parents: 1 respondent.*
'An open, friendly and receptive environment would also assist'.
- Meetings: 1 respondent.

'Allow parent interviews between 13h30 and 14h30.'
- Development of partnership skills: 1 respondent.

'A full training /educational programme on how parents can be involved in the various facets of school so as to strengthen the relationship.'

C7. What type of support and training did you receive to manage relationships between school and parents? * A1. Present rank or position Crosstabulation

		A1. Present rank or position				Total
		Principal	Head of department	Educator	School clerk	
Not much	Count	0	0	2	0	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	25.0%	.0%	16.7
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	16.7%	.0%	16.7
None	Count	0	1	2	1	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	50.0%	25.0%	100.0%	33.3
	% of Total	.0%	8.3%	16.7%	8.3%	33.3
Academic training	Count	0	0	2	0	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	25.0%	.0%	16.7
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	16.7%	.0%	16.7
Attended a workshop	Count	0	1	2	0	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	50.0%	25.0%	.0%	25.0
	% of Total	.0%	8.3%	16.7%	.0%	25.0
Partnership skills/development through management meetings	Count	1	0	0	0	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.
	% of Total	8.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.
Total	Count	1	2	8	1	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	100.

The responses to question C7 are:

Respondents who did not receive any training: 4

Not much training: 2 respondents

Academic and professional training at the university: 2 respondents

Attended workshops arranged by the education department: 3 respondents

Development through management meetings and literature on school governance: 1 respondent.

C8. How often do you communicate with parents? * A1. Present rank or position Crosstabulation

		A1. Present rank or position				Total
		Principal	Head of department	Educator	School clerk	
Pre set meetings and special events	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
Whenever necessary	Count	0	1	3	0	4
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	50.0%	37.5%	.0%	33.3%
	% of Total	.0%	8.3%	25.0%	.0%	33.3%
Not often	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
Daily	Count	1	0	0	1	2
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%	16.7%
	% of Total	8.3%	.0%	.0%	8.3%	16.7%
Regularly	Count	0	1	2	0	3
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	50.0%	25.0%	.0%	25.0%
	% of Total	.0%	8.3%	16.7%	.0%	25.0%
Twice a week	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
Total	Count	1	2	8	1	12
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	100.0%

Question C8 required the respondents to indicate how often they communication with parents. The respondents had to supply the information.
The responses are:
Whenever necessary: 4 respondents
Regularly: 3 respondents
Daily: 2 respondents
At pre-set meetings and special events: 1 respondent
Not often: 1 respondent
Twice a week: 1 respondent

C9. Is your main means of communication with parents verbal or written? * A1. Present rank or position
Crosstabulation

		A1. Present rank or position				Total
		Principal	Head of department	Educator	School clerk	
Written	Count	0	1	5	0	6
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	50.0%	62.5%	.0%	50.0%
	% of Total	.0%	8.3%	41.7%	.0%	50.0%
Both	Count	1	1	3	1	6
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	50.0%	37.5%	100.0%	50.0%
	% of Total	8.3%	8.3%	25.0%	8.3%	50.0%
Total	Count	1	2	8	1	12
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	100.0%

Main means of communication:
Written: 6 respondents
Both [Written and Verbal]: 6 respondents

C10. List the areas where you believe that parents are sufficiently involved in your school? * A1. Present rank or position
Crosstabulation

		A1. Present rank or position				Total
		Principal	Head of department	Educator	School clerk	
Don't know	Count	1	1	0	0	2
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	50.0%	.0%	.0%	16.7%
	% of Total	8.3%	8.3%	.0%	.0%	16.7%
Fund raising and child progress	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
None	Count	0	0	2	1	3
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	25.0%	100.0%	25.0%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	16.7%	8.3%	25.0%
Extra curricular/co-curricular activities	Count	0	1	4	0	5
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	50.0%	50.0%	.0%	41.7%
	% of Total	.0%	8.3%	33.3%	.0%	41.7%
Relief teaching	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
Total	Count	1	2	8	1	12
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	100.0%

5 Respondents have indicated that parents are involved in extra- curricular activities [sporting activities] and co-curricular activities [school concerts, cultural shows, excursions and market days]
3 respondents have indicated that parents are not sufficiently involved in the activities of the school.
2 respondents do not know
One respondent each indicated fund raising activities and relief teaching

C11. Which obstacles to effective school co-operation can you identify? * A1. Present rank or position Crosstabulation

		A1. Present rank or position				Total
		Principal	Head of department	Educator	School clerk	
Don't know	Count	0	2	0	0	2
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	100.0%	.0%	.0%	16.7%
	% of Total	.0%	16.7%	.0%	.0%	16.7%
Working schedules	Count	0	0	2	0	2
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	25.0%	.0%	16.7%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	16.7%	.0%	16.7%
Communication via children	Count	0	0	2	0	2
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	25.0%	.0%	16.7%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	16.7%	.0%	16.7%
Lack of knowledge as to amount of involvement permitted	Count	0	0	0	1	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%	8.3%
Parent attitudes	Count	1	0	3	0	4
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	.0%	37.5%	.0%	33.3%
	% of Total	8.3%	.0%	25.0%	.0%	33.3%
Discipline of learners	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
Total	Count	1	2	8	1	12
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	100.0%

The following obstacles to effective school co-operation have been identified.
- attitudes of parents: 4 respondents
  total apathy from parents, a culture of non- involvement, complacency, disinterested, parents are on a fault-finding mission, personality differences
- working schedules: 2 respondents
  parents who are working do not have the time to get involved in school activities
- communication via children: 2 respondents
  Messages tend to get misconstrued, letters/notices not given to parents
- Lack of knowledge as to amount of involvement permitted: 1 respondent
- discipline of learners: 1 respondent:
  poor discipline deters the parents from offering to assist in the classroom

C12. Which aspects of parental involvement would you like to develop and improve? * A1. Present rank or position Crosstabulation

		A1. Present rank or position				Total
		Principal	Head of department	Educator	School clerk	
Don't know	Count	0	2	2	0	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	100.0%	25.0%	.0%	33
	% of Total	.0%	16.7%	16.7%	.0%	33
Parental aids in the classroom	Count	0	0	1	0	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8
Attendance to School meetings	Count	0	0	1	0	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8
Parent attitude	Count	0	0	0	1	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%	8
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%	8
Be open to all suggestions	Count	0	0	1	0	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8
Provide services within their capabilities.	Count	0	0	1	0	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8
Parents get involved in extra curricular activities	Count	1	0	2	0	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	.0%	25.0%	.0%	2
	% of Total	8.3%	.0%	16.7%	.0%	2
Total	Count	1	2	8	1	
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	10(
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	10(

Suggestions to develop and improve parental involvement in specific areas include:

- extra-curricular activities: 3 respondents
- parental aides in the classroom: 1 respondent
- attendance to school meetings, school governing body elections, budget meetings: 1 respondent
- parent attitudes: 1 respondent
- be open to suggestions to accommodate each other, to develop a sense of collective responsibility: 1 respondent.
- provide services within their capabilities, motivate parents to volunteer their services: 1 respondent
- 'do not know': 4 respondents

C13.1 How do you think the School Governing Body can help in promoting a positive relationship with parents? * A1. Present rank or position Crosstabulation

		A1. Present rank or position				Total
		Principal	Head of department	Educator	School clerk	
Don't know	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
Empower parents	Count	0	0	0	1	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%	8.3%
SGB - visible & transparent	Count	0	0	3	0	3
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	37.5%	.0%	25.0%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	25.0%	.0%	25.0%
Social get togethers	Count	1	0	1	0	2
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	16.7%
	% of Total	8.3%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	16.7%
Hands on approach	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
Involve parents in school activities	Count	0	1	0	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	50.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	8.3%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
Consult parents regularly	Count	0	1	0	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	50.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	8.3%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
Parents should be acknowledged	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
Maintain balance between learner, parents & school	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within A1. Present rank or position	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	8.3%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	8.3%
Total	Count	1	2	8	1	12
	% within A1. Present rank or position	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	100.0%

For the governing body to promote a positive relationship with parents, the following suggestions were offered by the respondents.

- School governing body should adopt an open door policy, be transparent and easily accessible to all parents: 3 respondents
- social get togethers with parents- grade wise: 2 respondents
- empower parents-'*the SGB need to educate some of the parents in many aspects of school life.' Have workshops, regular meetings: 1 respondent*
- a more 'hands on 'approach to parents will help. Formal meetings do not allow the parents the opportunity to be themselves: 1 respondent
- involve parents in school activities, co-opt parents to serve on committees, invite parents to get involved in projects at school (fetes, fundays, excursions): 1 respondent
- consult with parents regularly on policy matters, liase with parents as often as possible, regular report back meetings: 1 respondent

- Parents should be acknowledged and praised for their assistance on a regular basis: 1 respondent
- The SGB should maintain a sound balance between with the learners, parents and the staff of the school. The SGB is an important link between the parent population and the school: 1 respondent
- Do not know: 1 respondent

4.2.1.1. Summary of the Main Findings

Results gleaned from the data analysis indicates that the parents participate in school activities only when their interest are at stake. It has been indicated in the Related Literature that activities such as fund raising, assisting educators with academic or extra-mural activities are voluntary and parents must be motivated and trained to participate actively. There is need, therefore, to provide opportunities for parents to get involved in the broader issues of school life. Empowering parents, having social get togethers, acknowledging parents for their efforts, having regular feedback meetings and adopting a "hands on approach' are some of the suggestions that have been made in order to strengthen the relationship with parents. The negative attitude of parents has been identified as the major obstacle to effective school co-operation. Evidence indicates that parents are not involved in planning and decision-making at the school. It has also been indicated in the Related Literature that parents; as, co-educators play a crucial role in the activities of the school.

4.2.2. Frequencies of Parents Survey

Section A of the questionnaire [see Appendix 4, Section A, questions 1-7] deals with the personal information of the respondents.

A.1 Parent/respondent answering this questionnaire

	Frequency	Percent
Father	31	43.7
Mother	39	54.9
Guardian	1	1.4
n	71	100.0

The traditional maternal involvement in the schooling of their child both in terms of interaction and visiting and assisting in various invited roles in the school is clear in

the frequencies above.39 respondents [54.9%] are mothers. 31[43.7%] of the respondents are fathers and 1 [2.5%] respondent is a guardian.

A.2 Age of Parent

	Frequency	Percent
25 years - less	1	1.4
26 years - 35 years	25	35.2
36 years - 45 years	40	56.3
Over 45 years	5	7.0
n	71	100.0

The respondents indicated their age by selecting one of the four age groups. From the above table, it is noted that that 40[56.3%] respondents are between the ages of 36 –45 years old, 25[35.2%] between the ages of 26-35 years, 5 [7.0%] over 45 years of age and 1 [1.4%] is younger than 25 years. An interesting finding is that majority of the parents in the sample group are in the 36-45 years age group.

A.3.1 Number of children in Junior Primary dept.

	Frequency	Percent
0	5	7.0
1	59	83.1
2	6	8.5
3	1	1.4
n	71	100.0

The frequency of 59 [83.1%] in the above table indicates a substantial number of parents have children in the junior primary department at school. 6[8.5%] respondents have two children each, 1[1.4%] respondent has three children in the Junior Primary Department while 5[5.0%] respondents do not have any children in this Department.

A.3.2 Number of children in Senior Primary dept.

	Frequency	Percent
0	32	45.1
1	32	45.1
2	7	9.9
n	71	100.0

The response to this question indicates while that 32[45.1%] respondents have one child each in the senior primary department, the same number of respondents also do not have any children in this department. 7[9.9%] respondents on the other hand have two children in the senior primary department.

A.4 Current Marital Status

	Frequency	Percent
Married	59	83.1
Widowed	3	4.2
Divorced	7	9.9
Other	2	2.8
n	71	100.0

The respondents reported that 59 [83.1%] are married, 7 [9.9%] are divorced, 3 [4.2%] are widowed and [2.8%] have indicated other. The high percentage of married parents implies that the school would probably be able to make contact with at least one of the parents at any given time

A.5 Language spoken at home most often

	Frequency	Percent
English	69	97.2
Other	2	2.8
n	71	100.0

The language spoken at home has a bearing on the academic progress of learners and especially with communication between the school and the parents. The frequencies in the above table indicate a favourable response as 69[97.2%] of respondents indicated English as the medium of communication at home. 2[2.8%] respondents do not speak English often at home. It must be noted that the medium of instruction at the researched site is English.

A.6 Present Occupation

	Frequency	Percent
Full time employed	45	63.4
Part time employed	5	7.0
Other	21	29.6
n	71	100.0

The employment patterns of parents were also surveyed. 45 [63.4%] respondents are in full time employment while 5[7.0%] respondents are employed part time. The table also indicates that 21 [29.6%] respondents are neither employed full time nor part time.

A.7 How many days per week do you work?

	Frequency	Percent
0	14	19.7
3	2	2.8
4	3	4.2
5	39	54.9
6	9	12.7
7	4	5.6
n	71	100.0

The number of days worked has a direct bearing on the availability of the parents to volunteer their services at school especially during the school day. The frequency of 39 [54.9%] respondents has indicated that they work five days per week.14 [19.7%] respondents have not indicated their response, 9[12.7%] respondents work six days per week, 4[5.6%] respondents are employed seven days per week, 3 [4.2%] respondents work 4 days per week and 2[2.8%] respondents are employed three days in the week

Section B

Communication and Information

This section of the questionnaire focuses on questions that have a direct bearing on the relationship between the school and the parents. Frequent and clear lines of communication with parents are indicative of a positive relationship. This augurs well for both the school and parents.

B.1 I get regular information about my child's learning progress

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	48	67.6
No	20	28.2
Not sure	3	4.2
n	71	100.0

The above Table indicates that a satisfactory number of respondents 48[67.6%] are informed regularly about their child's progress while 20[28.2%] respondents do not receive regular information about their child's learning progress.3 [4.2%] respondents are not sure.

B.2 I am consulted about the schooling activities of my child

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	54	76.1
No	15	21.1
Not sure	2	2.8
n	71	100.0

Frequencies about consultation with parents in connection with schooling activities of their children are displayed in the above Table. 54 [76.1%] of the respondents are consulted, 15[21.1%] respondents have replied negatively while 2 [2.8%] are not sure.

**B.3 Letters and notices from the school
are easy to read and understand**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	71	100.0

T..e positive response from the all 71 respondents [100.0 %] indicates that correspondence from the school is well written and comprehensible.

**B.4 The newsletters at the end of the school
term are interesting and informative**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	63	88.7
No	2	2.8
Not sure	6	8.5
n	71	100.0

63 (88.7%) respondents are satisfied with the news items presented in the end of term newsletters 2[2.8%] are not satisfied. There are 6[8.5%] respondents who are not sure.

**B.5 I am contacted in good time if my
child has a problem at school**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	53	74.6
No	7	9.9
Not sure	11	15.5
n	71	100.0

For parents to be involved constructively and actively in their child's education, frequent contact with the parent is necessary . The above Table indicates a frequency of 53 [74.6%] respondents who are contacted and informed timeously and that if their child has a problem at school. 11 [15.5%] are not sure and 7[9.9%] respondents have indicated that they are not contacted if their child has a problem at school.

B.6 Other comments on communication with the school that would help to promote a positive relationship

	Frequency	Percent
Nothing to add	50	70.4
More comunication	8	11.3
Satisfied	5	7.0
Continuous reports on student's progress	5	7.0
Newsletter ideas- poems, short stories	1	1.4
Secretary to receive queries	1	1.4
Response based on learning not behavioral	1	1.4
n	71	100.0

The aim of allowing respondents the opportunity of adding on other comments on communication that would help to promote a positive relationship between the respondents and the school is to give them the freedom to express their views or to offer suggestions to any other aspect of communication and information that may have been left out in section B.

The Table indicates that 50[70.4%] respondents did not offer further comments on communication while 8[11.3%] respondents have stated that more communication is required. A respondent has suggested that parents should be notified when educators will be attending workshops or are intending to go on leave. A further suggestion from the same respondent is that parents should be allowed to discuss their child's progress telephonically.

5[7.4%] respondents are satisfied with the present system of communication with the school.

The need to inform parents of the continuous progress of their children was indicated by 5[7.0%] respondents who believe that parents should be notified when there is a decline in the academic progress of their child. Receiving a written report at the end of the term is insufficient according to this group of respondents who requested regular information on academic progress at least once a month. A comment from a respondent is that the homework diary should be regarded as an important communication tool between the school and the parent and should be checked by educators daily.

The suggestion to include poems and short stories in the school newsletter has been suggested by 1 [1.4%] respondent.

1[1.4%] respondent offered the following suggestion in connection with securing appointments with the principal or educators.

"This should be simplified by way of a central communications desk, possibly handled by the secretary, to receive enquiries which the teacher /principal can respond to."

The last respondent 1 [1.4%] in this section indicated that communication from the school is based mainly on the academic performance of learners and that the behavioural aspects should also be included.

C.1 Do you monitor your child's educational progress?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	68	95.8
Sometimes	3	4.2
n	71	100.0

The positive response from 68 [95.8%] respondents indicates that parents are monitoring the educational progress of their children. There are however, 3 [4.2%] respondents who do not carry out this task regularly.

C.2 Is the code of conduct of the school helpful to get to know the school rules and procedures in connection with the dress code and discipline of learners

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	67	94.4
Sometimes	4	5.6
n	71	100.0

The Table indicates a positive response from 67 [94.4%] respondents while 4[5.6%] respondents have stated otherwise.

C.3 Do you assist in fund raising activities?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	41	57.7
No	7	9.9
Sometimes	23	32.4
n	71	100.0

A major challenge to many principals is to secure funding for their schools. The co-operation and assistance of all parents is required to make this possible. The above table, however, indicates that only 41[57.7%] respondents assist regularly while 23 [32.4%] respondents only assists the school at certain times. There are also 7[9.9%] respondents who do not assist the school in fund raising activities. The frequencies in the above Table are valuable to the management, staff and school governing body

to make them aware that there is a need to strengthen the relationship with the parents of learners of the school.

C.4 Do you accompany learners on school trips (excursions)?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	18	25.4
No	38	53.5
Sometimes	15	21.1
n	71	100.0

38[53.5] respondents do not accompany their children on school trips. This response may be expected as 45 of the respondents are employed full time. There are however, 18 [25.4%] respondents who do accompany their children on school trips and 15[21.1%] respondents who only do so sometimes.

C.5 Do you attend school functions (concerts, sports, awards day, etc.)?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	56	78.9
No	2	2.8
Sometimes	13	18.3
n	71	100.0

Table C.5 indicates a positive response from 56[78.9%] respondents. 13[18.3%] respondents attend sometimes while 2[2.8%] respondents do not attend school functions.

C.6 Do you determine the school curriculum with educators?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	9	12.7
No	56	78.9
Sometimes	6	8.5
n	71	100.0

It appears that parents are not allowed to determine the school curriculum with educators. The responses of 56[78.9%] respondents indicate this. Disregarding input from parents may create tensions in the relationship with them. The literature review has confirmed that when parents are denied the opportunity to plan and decide jointly with educators on matters that effect the education of their children, they could adopt an indifferent attitude when it comes to involvement in curricular activities. 9(12.7%] respondents do contribute to curriculum matters while 6[8.5%] respondents do so sometimes.

**C.7 Do you attend parent meetings that are arranged
to discuss the learning progress of your child?**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	64	90.1
Sometimes	7	9.9
n	71	100.0

The above Table indicates that 64[90.1%] respondents attend pre-arranged parent meetings and 7 [9.9%] respondents sometimes do.

**C.8 Do you respond to written notices
that calls for a response/return?**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	70	98.6
No	1	1.4
n	71	100.0

70 [98.6%] respondents have responded positively to question C.8 while a negative response has been indicated by 1 [1.4%] respondent.

**C.9 Have you volunteered your services to the.
school eg. painting, carpentry, plumbing, etc.?**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	11	15.5
No	56	78.9
Sometimes	4	5.6
n	71	100.0

The data in the above Table indicates that only a small number of respondents 11[15.5%] have volunteered their services to the school. Recognising skills and talents in parents have been mentioned in the literature review. It was pointed out that skills, expertise, knowledge and experience of parents might go well beyond the capacities of the educators at the school. It appears that the skills and expertise have not been identified in the parent body of the school as the responses from 56[78.9%] indicate. There are 4[5.6%] respondents do render their services sometimes.

**C.10 Do you assist with extra curricular
activities of the school?**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	13	18.3
No	47	66.2
Sometimes	11	15.5
n	71	100.0

47 [66.2%] respondents do not assist with extra curricular activities while 13[18.3%] do assist. 11 [15.5%] respondents do assist sometimes. Data from Table A.6 indicated that 45 respondents are in full time employment while data in Table 7 indicated that 39 respondents work 5 days per week .One respondent said in her response: "I'm willing but I don't have the time."

C.11 Further comments on Parents and the School

	Frequency	Percent
No problem	51	71.8
Parents willing to assist	8	11.3
Extra curricular activities	5	7.0
More educational tours	1	1.4
School Curriculum	4	5.6
Fund raising	2	2.8
n	71	100.0

The Table indicates that 51[71.8%] do not have any problem with the school and hence do not have any comment to add. 8[11.3%] respondents have indicated their willingness to assist the school but they do not have the time.5 [7.0%] respondents have suggested that the school cricket teams should be coached by parents and the presentation of awards for sports should be looked into. Comments on school curriculum matters from 4[5.6. %] respondents include: parents should be involved, more homework and projects should be set for learners, proper work should be set for learners when educators are away on workshops or are on leave as this would help parents who relieves the absent educator and the need to empower parents on curriculum matters. 2 respondents [2.8%] have stated that there are too many fund raising activities and the school should embark on sponsorships programmes.1 [1.4%] respondent has suggested that more educational tours for learners should be organised.

D.1 What encourages you to visit the school?

	Frequency	Percent
Nothing specific	11	15.5
Check on child's progress	45	63.4
Co-operation of educators	11	15.5
School activites	3	4.2
Children's Enthusiasm	1	1.4
n	71	100.0

The responses of 45 [63.4%] respondents indicate their reason for visiting school is to check on their child's progress. This confirms the notion that most parents visit the school because they have a vested interest and may not be interested in the broader issues of the school. Whilst 11[15.5%] respondents do not have any specific comment, there are 11 [15.5%] respondents who visit because of the positive

attitude of educators. Respondents have indicated that educators are always willing to inform them of their children's progress at any time.3 [4.2%] respondents visit the school because of its activities and 1[1.4%] respondent because of the enthusiastic attitude displayed by the learners of the school.

D.2 Is there anything you would like to know about the school?

	Frequency	Percent
Satisfied	51	71.8
Educators	1	1.4
Pupils not given enough opportunity	2	2.8
Attitude of learners	3	4.2
Finance	6	8.5
Early introduction to following year's syllabus	1	1.4
Venue of annual sports be reviewed	1	1.4
School Policies	3	4.2
Keen on extra-mural activities	1	1.4
State of building - especially toilets	2	2.8
n	71	100.0

The Table indicates that 51 [71.8% respondents are satisfied that ,'*the school is run well and that everything is in order'*. 6 [8.5%] respondents have expressed their concerns in connection with finance. This includes being informed of the financial status of the school, the government and the school policy regarding those parents who cannot afford the school fee and an explanation on the need for the number of fund raisers for the year because according to one of the respondents , '*the school fee should be based on the school's expenditure for the year.* '3[4.2%] respondents are concerned with the bullying problem with the grade seven learners and would like to know what techniques are employed to deal with disciplinary problems at school. The same number of respondents has expressed the need to be consulted when policies on pertinent issues – curriculum, finance are being drawn up. The literature confirmed that 69% of school principals determine school policies without considering the involvement of parents.

2 [2.8%] respondents are concerned that the learners of the school are not using the facilities in the school, namely the computers and the tennis court. The condition of the school buildings requires attention according to 2[2.8%] respondents. While1 [1.4%] respondent would like to know, ' *what is being done with regards to the high absenteeism of educators? another respondent wants to know if the syllabus for the next year is given to learners once the examinations are over?* '

The venue for the annual school sports is of concern to1 [1. 4%] respondent who wants to know why the local sports ground is not used. Lastly in this section, 1[1.4%] respondent would like to know more about the extra-mural activities of the school.

D.3 Are there any school activities you would like to be involved in?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	4	5.6
No	35	49.3
Walks/Runs/Sports	9	12.7
Would like to but limited time	6	8.5
Choosing awardees fairly - no favouritism	1	1.4
More educational competitions/exihibitions	2	2.8
Only excursions	3	4.2
School governing body	2	2.8
Would like to assist	4	5.6
In fundraising	3	4.2
Like to help with first aid at functions	1	1.4
Introduce Debs Ball as an event	1	1.4
n	71	100.0

The intention of this section of the questionnaire was to identify the skills and preferences of the respondents. It was indicated in the Related Literature that schools must initiate the process for parents to be involved in school activities. Schools should identify the needs of parents and then provide the opportunities and structures for parents to be positively involved at different levels according to skills and knowledge.

The above table indicates that 35[49.3 %] respondents would like to be involved but they do not have the time.9 [12.7%] would like to be involved in extra curricular activities while 3[4.2%] respondents have offered to assist in fund raising and a further 3 [4.2%] respondents would like to arrange excursions for the learners. 2 [2.8%] respondents each would like to be involved in educational competitions and exhibitions and in school governance respectively. Introducing Debs Ball, assisting with first aid and the selection of awardees are activities that have been offered by 1 [1.4%] respondent each. It is encouraging to note that 4[5.6%] respondents are willing to assist in any activity of the school while another 4 [5.6%] respondents are pleased to assist.

D.4 Do you have any comments that would assist the management, educators and the members of School Governing Body to effectively manage the relationship between parents and the school?

	Frequency	Percent
Satisfied	12	16.9
None	27	38.0
Supervision of teachers	2	2.8
Parents meetings	5	7.0
Educational activities	2	2.8
School fees	4	5.6
School uniforms	1	1.4
Communication	12	16.9
Parking and waiting facilities - for parents	1	1.4
More exposure to more sporting activities	2	2.8
Check on scholar patrol duty time	1	1.4
Volunteer parents	1	1.4
Fundraising	1	1.4
n	71	100.0

The comments from respondents in this section will provide a useful feedback to the principal, staff and members of the school governing body. To establish and maintain a healthy relationship with parents and to develop a strategy that would focus on relationship building between parents and the school will require interalia, a single, conscious and sustained effort on the part of all those wishing for such a relationship.

27 [38.0%] respondents have not submitted any responses while 12[16.9%] respondents are satisfied with the present situation of the school. The following response was received from one respondent. *'There appears to be a rather cordial and warm relationship between parents and the school and the warm and friendly personality of many of the educators augurs well for a good relationship'.*

Responses in connection with communication from 12[16.9%] respondents include:
- Regular workshops/meetings with all parents to disseminate information
- Good, effective and clear communication and develop a mutual, trusting and respectful relationship
- Homework and message books should be supervised and monitored by educators and parents
- Educators should contact parents immediately to discuss problems and not wait for parent meetings to do this.
- Parents should be informed timeously of all decisions taken at school
- Regular newsletters should be sent home

5 [7.0%] respondents have commented on the timing and frequency of parent meetings and accommodating working parents after school hours.

Comments on school fees from 4[5.6%] respondents concern reducing the fee for parents who have more than one child in the school, allowing parents to render their services if they cannot afford to pay the school fee and discounts should be offered for once off payments.

Responses from 2 [2.8%] respondents each concern the supervision of educators in the classroom, encouraging learners to participate in educational activities of the school and to explore the sporting abilities of learners.

The frequency of 1[1.4%] respondent each commented on:

School ties be made available for learners, car park and seats for parents, the duration of the duty for the scholar patrol team, preference to be given to volunteer parents when filling vacancies, tokens of appreciation to be given to volunteer parents and fundraising activities should be reviewed.

4.2.2.1. Summary of the Main Findings

Evidence shows that most parents visit the school mainly to check on the academic progress of their children. This indicates that parents may not be aware of their roles and responsibilities at school. This is confirmed by the findings that a substantial number of parents have not volunteered their services at school and neither do they assist with extra-curricular activities. It has been pointed in the Related Literature that in order to manage a good relationship with parents, the principal needs to discuss long-term plans and goals with parents. This will allow parents to identify with the aims and vision of the school and thereby interact positively with the personnel at school. However, a large number of parents have expressed the desire to participate in the activities of the school. Evidence further indicates that parents were not consulted on decisions concerning curriculum matters and school policies. The Related Literature has revealed schools cannot work in isolation any longer. Principals, need to change their styles of management and consider the involvement of parents in all decisions taken at school. It is also evident that parents should be compensated with tokens of appreciation for their voluntary service to the school.

4.3. CONCLUSION

The intention of this chapter was to analyse and interpret data collected from the interviews and the questionnaires from both the staff and the parents of the school. The findings from the information obtained from the research participants were also summarised and discussed.

In the following chapter, the main findings regarding the management of the school-parent relationship will be presented. This will be followed by practical recommendations that can be used to strengthen relationships between the school and the parents.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

The main findings from the interviews and questionnaires for each research question is summarised and presented in this chapter. Recommendations to improve the current situation regarding the Management of the School-Parent Relationship will also be included.

5.2. Summary of the Main Findings

This research is illuminative in respect of the Management of the School-Parent Relationship at the Primary School. The perceptions of school based personnel and parents have been investigated. The main findings of the research will be discussed according to the research questions.

Question 1 explored what is currently perceived to be the potentiality of the relationship between the school and the parents. The main tensions and challenges that confront the management of this relationship were also identified. This question was addressed in the Related Literature in Chapter 2.

Question 2 questioned the current South African legislations and policy framework that related directly to the management of the school-parent relationship. Statutory requirements in South Africa have been amended to facilitate parental involvement in schools. The importance of an effective partnership between schools and parents is emphasised by the South African Schools Act [no. 84 of 1996]. This question was answered with reference to the relevant local and official publications.

Question 3 examined the current position of the school in respect of the management of the relationship with parents by means of interviews that were conducted with the principal, heads of department and the school-clerk. Statistics

have indicated that on an average a substantial number of parents attend academic meetings and school functions. Attendance at the annual general meetings that are organised by the school governing body is, however, inadequate. Evidence from the parent questionnaires indicates that a large number of parents have not volunteered their services to the school. Parents have, however, indicated their willingness to assist in raising activities, excursions, school governance and any other activity of the school. The South African Schools Act [no. 84 of 1996] states that activities such as fundraising, assisting with academic and extra- mural activities are voluntary and parents must be motivated and trained to participate actively. It is also clear from the study that parents have not been consulted in drawing up the school's code of conduct and in determining the curriculum and policies of the school.

Question 4 examined the perceptions of the educators in school regarding the current state of the management of the school-parent relationship. This was achieved by means of self-completion questionnaires. It is clear that because of the busy work schedules of parents, they cannot find the time to participate in school activities. Willingness to coach the codes of sport on Saturdays has been indicated by a large number of parents. The study has indicated that a large number of parents are employed full-time and work five days per week. It has been indicated that parents participate in school activities only when their interests are at stake. This has been clarified by a majority of the parents who have stated that the main purpose in visiting the school is to check on their child's progress. To strengthen the relationship with parents, the research participants have suggested that parents be involved in developing policies for the school and be invited to serve on curriculum committees. To develop partnership skills, full training programmes in the different aspects of school life should be organised. Parents also need to be informed of their rights and responsibilities.

It is clear from the studies that a major obstacle to effective school co-operation is the negative attitudes of parents. Sustaining a cordial relationship with parents, providing a waiting room and organising informal get togethers during the weekend on an informal basis will assist the school to strengthen the relationship with parents and provide opportunities for the staff and parents to interact without any constraints. The majority of the educators have not received formal training in

managing relationships with parents although they may be aware of the important role that parents play in education.

Question 5 examined the perceptions of parents regarding the current state of school-parent relationships and their management. This was achieved by means of self-completion questionnaires that were sent to 80 parents. Responses from the questionnaires indicated that a substantial number of respondents are satisfied with the present situation in the school especially with information on their child's progress, information provided in newsletters and notices. As primary stakeholders, the evidence indicates that parents were not consulted on pertinent issues. This includes school policies, curriculum matters and the school code of conduct. Respondents, however, have indicated that they would like to be included in the decision-making at the school.

The suggestion to value their diverse contributions to the school has been forwarded by the respondents who have explained the need to feel appreciated for their participation and assistance.

Question 6 questioned how the management of school-parent relationships could be improved in the school. Findings have suggested that parents need to be more involved in school activities, there is a need to empower parents and develop their skills, and an open door policy and frequent consultation with parents are essential in building positive relationships with parents. It has also been suggested that the school should engage in specific actions to develop and sustain strong partnership programmes. The educators have emphasised that a collaborative relationship should be established with parents where parent's rights and responsibilities and decision-making powers are clarified.

5.3. Recommendations

In the light of the findings and the conclusions inferred thereof, the following recommendations are offered:

Recommendation 1
Encourage parents to identify with the aims and vision of the school.

Motivation

For parents to be treated as complementary partners in education, all parents should have equal access and opportunities in school. To achieve this goal, principals need to interact with parents individually and collectively. The marketing mix strategy offers a useful framework for promotional planning and marketing of the school. It can be used to enhance the image of the school by communicating the vision and goals of the school to the parents. The three stages in strategically managing and enhancing the reputation of the school have been identified by Anderson et al. (2001) in the Related Literature. These stages can be used as a basis for strategic development and the vision of the school.

Recommendation 2

Provide different opportunities for empowering parents. This can be achieved by educating parents on the different aspects of school life. Parental duties and responsibilities also need to be clarified. Parents need to be informed about school policies, practices and both learners and school performance data. Time should be taken to train volunteers also regarding school routines, procedures and volunteer expectations.

Motivation

There is an urgent need for some form of education, training and guidance for parents who do not fully understand their role in education. Being informed would provide parents with the opportunities to learn about issues in school and to express their views. The building of parent's confidence is crucial for parent power. This would impact positively on the school-parent relationship. Perhaps it is worthwhile to note here that, "empowering parents to become continuing active partners in their children's education may instil, in some teachers a fear of the power that they perceive parents may wield. It is therefore essential that teacher's self-esteem and their recognition of the value of working co – operatively for the benefit of the learners enables them to overcome any tendency to adopt a defensive stance."
[Little & Meighan, 1995, pp.27-28].

Recommendation 3

To strengthen the relationship with parents, the management and School Governing Body should adopt a participative and consultative style of management when interacting with parents.

Motivation

The School Governing Body is regarded as the 'voice' of the parents. The greater parent body participates in decision making at the school via their representatives to the School Governing Body. Parents as primary educators want to be involved not only in a representative way but also as individuals. As main role-players in education, parents should have their own views, interest and problems that should be met by the school.

Recommendation 4

Identify skills and competencies of the parents and create structures and opportunities for parents to be actively involved. Proceed with the assumption that all parents have something to offer. This means learning to value and affirm the skills and talents that different parents possess. Developing a survey to gather parent volunteer information including special skills or talents will be useful.

Motivation

Parents have expressed the desire to participate in the activities of the school. Educators are also willing to allow the parents to play a constructive role in school. Inviting parents to share skills or experiences they have with learners may be seen as providing an extra pair of hands for the teaching staff. Frequent interaction with parents would strengthen that relationship.

Recommendation 5

Include parents in all decision-making and advisory committees. Ensure adequate training is provided for in such areas as curriculum planning and evaluation, budgets, school reform initiatives, development of school policies and setting goals.

Motivation

Parents are the main stakeholders and they have the right to determine the direction of their children's education. Planning to involve parents has been cited by researchers as being highly related to successful relations between the school and the home. Heystek [1998,p.21] contends that, "currently it is expected that parents

must be partners in education, which indicates that parents are part of the decision – making process and implementation." [Molepo, 2000,p.70]. Providing opportunities for parents to contribute in drawing up school policies is essential as parents view policies as a commitment that will be fulfilled on the school's part to work for their child's success.

Recommendation 6

Encourage effective two-way communication with parents. This can be achieved by requesting parents to complete a short survey about the their child, writing to parents to respond to school progress reports, conducting periodic telephonic surveys with parents, asking them questions on how well the school is communicating and how satisfied they are with the school and inviting a small group of parents to have tea with the principal once a month.

Motivation

Most school-home communication is one way without the chance to exchange ideas and share perceptions. Parents are contacted only when their child is in trouble or is sick. Communicate with parents regarding positive learner behaviour and achievement not just regarding misbehaviour or failure. A sound relationship emphasises effective school-parent communication. A school that communicates well with parents is not only likely to obtain support for school ventures such as chaperoning field trips and fund-raising but also be able to tap into the special abilities of parents to enrich school programmes in the arts and dance for instance. Disseminating information on school reforms, policies, discipline procedures, assessment tools, school goals are a few ways to build positive relationships with parents.

When parents receive frequent and effective communication from the school, their involvement increases, their overall evaluation of education improves and their attitude towards school is more positive. Communication is the foundation of a solid relationship. "When parents and educators communicate effectively, positive relationships develop, problems are more easily solved and learners make greater progress". [White et al. 1988, pp.7-10].

Recommendation 7

Acknowledge and praise parents for their assistance. Look for creative ways to show appreciation for volunteer support on an on going basis. Provide a consistent place and process for parent volunteers to sign in and list the hours served. Encourage volunteers to offer their suggestions by using anonymous response forms. Develop a system for contacting all parents to assist as the year progresses and devise ways to recognise their efforts.

Motivation

When parents volunteer their services, both the home and the school reap benefits. In order for parents to feel appreciated and welcome, volunteer work must be meaningful and valuable to them. There is a need to monitor and review parental involvement on a regular basis and to devise ways in which to encourage and sustain parental involvement. White et al. [1988,p.12] confirm, " volunteers express greater confidence in schools where they have opportunities to participate regularly".

Recommendation 8

Accommodate parents with busy work schedules by arranging coaching of sporting codes, training for special events like debs ball, awards function, music festivals, competitions and contests during weekends. Provide opportunities for those who are able to volunteer during the day, those who are liable to commit to regular service and those who can participate occasionally. Initiate programmes that would recruit fathers and other role models as research has indicated that children do better at school when their fathers are involved whether or not they live with them.

Motivation

It has become apparent from this study that parents would like to assist but they do not have the time during the school day. In order to sustain meaningful relationships with parents, it is imperative that continuous contact with as many parents as possible be maintained.

Recommendation 9

The Department of Education and Culture to hosts professional development workshops to prepare school management teams and educators in managing relationships with parents. Teacher training colleges should include parental

management as a module/course in curriculum training. Considerations of new initiatives, research and international experiences should be considered.

Motivation

New school principals are unprepared professionally for management roles and lack the necessary leadership skills that are required to meet the new challenges facing education. Principals and educators have been trained to deal with learners and not adults. They have been appointed on the basis of their qualifications and not on their experiences to work with parents.

The new trends in education also require experienced educators to update themselves continually with recent developments in education. The academic programmes at the tertiary institutions do not include parent management as part of their curriculum training. Schools can also play a prominent role by offering training programmes in which the educative role of the parents and the teaching role of the educators be synchronised and made more interrelated. It has been acknowledged in the Related Literature in Chapter 2 that teacher's attitudes, such as flexibility, reliability and accessibility together with effective teaching and management skills appear to positively influence relationships with parents.

Recommendation 10

This research was a small-scale study to investigate the Management of School-Parent Relationships in a Primary School in an urban area. It is recommended that further studies be conducted to:

- ❖ Investigate the ways in which the school management teams in rural schools manage the relationships with parents.
- ❖ Investigate the management of school-parent relationships in the secondary schools.
- ❖ Evaluate how parents can be encouraged to play a meaningful role in the schooling activities of their child/children.

5.4. Conclusion

This chapter has affirmed the significance of the relationship between the school and the parents. It is quite clear from the Related Literature and the main findings from the interviews and questionnaires that there are diverse ways to involve all parents in the activities of the school. It must be acknowledged that neither the

school nor the home can operate in a vacuum, working together will accomplish a great deal. Much depends on the principal to provide the leadership and the school programmes to provide the vision.

Nevertheless, it is hoped that the recommendations together with the motivations will be of assistance to the school management team, educators and the school governing body in building and sustaining a successful relationship with the parents of the learners of the school.

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13 October 2003

The Principal/ School Governing Body
Falcon Park Primary School

Madam/Chairman

I am registered as a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of
Natal-Durban in the current academic year. The programme is a two year degree
which involves course work and a dissertation.

The dissertation would entail undertaking research in the area of Management. My
research topic is:
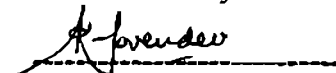
**An Investigation into the Management of School-Parent Relationship at
Falcon Park Primary School. [school governance]**

I request your permission and support to enable me to undertake the study at Falcon
Park Primary School. I would like to conduct the research during the school year
2003. It would be a quantitative study and will involve mainly interviews with the
school based personnel and self-completion questionnaires for a selected group of
parents of the learners of the school.

The importance of an effective partnership between schools and parents is emphasised
by the South African Schools Act [No.84 of 1996].It is anticipated therefore, that the
evaluation of the findings of the research project will be used to assist the school in
motivating parents/guardians to participate more effectively in the activities of the
school.

Thanking you.

Yours faithfully

Ms K.Govender

ANNEXURE B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE PRINCIPAL, TWO HEADS OF DEPARTMENT AND THE SCHOOL-CLERK

Section A: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Present Rank or Position.

        1.1.Principal
        1.2. Head of Department
        1.3. Educator
        1.4.School Clerk

2. Teaching experience

        2.1 Less than 5 years
        2.2. 6-10 years
        2.3. 11-15 years
        2.4. 16-20 years
        2.5. 21-25 years
        2.6. 26-30 years

3.1.The average number of learners you teach in one day. _____

3.2.The number of teaching hours for the week. _____

SECTION B:

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
B1.The South African School's Act prohibit parents from being optimally involved in school activities.			
B2.The bureaucratic structures in education discourage parents from being optimally involved in school.			
B3.Parents rights and obligations have not been clearly spelled out by legislations.			
B4.Parents participate in school activities only when their interests are at stake.			

SECTION C:

Note: *Questions C1 –C11 for the principal.*
Questions C6 – C11 [for both Heads of Departments & the School- Clerk]

C1. The school population is: _____

C2. What % of parents on an average attend:
        2.1.school parent meetings   _____
        2.2.school functions (concerts, sports, award
           presentations etcetera).   _____
        2.3.SGB'S Annual General Meetings

                                                            _____

C3.Are specific workshops held for parents to help them develop   _____
    partnership skills?

C4.Do parents volunteer their services at the school?   _____

C5 Were parents consulted in drawing up the School Code of
    Conduct?   _____

C6.There is a perception that parental involvement in school is limited. What do you
    think can be done to strengthen the relationship between school and the parents?

_____

_____

_____

_____

C7. What type of support and training did you receive to manage relationships
    between school and parents?

_____

_____

C8. How often do you communicate with parents?

_____

C9. Is your main means of communication with parents verbal
or written or both?   _____

C10. List the areas where you believe that parents are sufficiently involved in your school.

_____

_____

_____

C11. Which obstacles to effective school co-operation can you identify?

_____

_____

_____

C12. Which aspects of parental involvement would you like to develop and improve?

_____

_____

_____

C13.How do you think the School Governing Body can help in promoting a positive relationship with parents?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

ANNEXURE C

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LEVEL ONE EDUCATORS

Section A: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Present Rank or Position.

    1.1. Principal
    1.2. Head of Department
    1.3. Educator
    1.4. School Clerk

2. Teaching experience

    2.1 Less than 5 years
    2.2. 6-10 years
    2.3. 11-15 years
    2.4. 16-20 years
    2.5. 21-25 years
    2.6. 26-30 years

3.1. The average number of learners you teach in one day. _____

3.2. The number of teaching hours for the week. _____

SECTION B:

Place a tick (✓) in the relevant block	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
B1. The South African School's Act prohibit parents from being optimally involved in school activities.			
B2. The bureaucratic structures in education discourage parents from being optimally involved in school.			
B3. Parents rights and obligations have not been clearly spelled out by legislations.			
B4. Parents participate in school activities only when their interests are at stake.			

SECTION C:

Note: Please complete questions C6 to C13 only

C1. The school population is: _____

C2. What % of parents on an average attend:
           2.1.school parent meetings   _____
           2.2.school functions (concerts, sports, award
               presentations etcetera).   _____
           2.3.SGB'S Annual General Meetings

                                                             _____

C3.Are specific workshops held for parents to help them develop   _____
    partnership skills?

C4.Do parents volunteer their services at the school?   _____

C5 Were parents consulted in drawing up the School Code of
    Conduct?   _____

C6.There is a perception that parental involvement in school is limited. What do you
    think can be done to strengthen the relationship between school and the parents?

_____

_____

_____

_____

C7. What type of support and training did you receive to manage relationships
    between school and parents?

_____

_____

C8. How often do you communicate with parents?

_____

C9. Is your main means of communication with parents verbal
or written or both?   _____

C10. List the areas where you believe that parents are sufficiently involved in your school.

_____

_____

_____

C11. Which obstacles to effective school co-operation can you identify?

_____

_____

_____

_____

C12. Which aspects of parental involvement would you like to develop and improve?

_____

_____

_____

C13. How do you think the School Governing Body can help in promoting a positive relationship with parents?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

QUESTIONAIRE FOR PARENTS

SECTION A: Personal Information

Place a tick (✓) in the relevant block.

A1. Parent/respondent answering this questionnaire.
    1.1.Father
    1.2.Mother
    1.3.Guardian

A2. Age of Parent
    2.1.25 years – less
    2.2.26 years - 35 years
    2.3.36 years – 45 years
    2.4.over 45 years

A3. I have children in: (number required)
    3.1.Junior Primary Dept.
    3.2.Senior Primary Dept.

A4. My current marital status:
    4.1.Married
    4.2.Widowed
    4.3.Divorced
    4.4.Other

A5. The language you speak at home most often:
    5.1.English
    5.2.Other

A6.Your present occupation?
    6.1.Full Time Employed
    6.2.Part Time Employed
    6.3.Other

A7. How many days per week do you work?

SECTION B

Please indicate below, whether or not you agree or not sure for each statement. Place a (✓) in the block.

Communication and Information	Yes	No	Not Sure
B1.I get regular information about my child's learning progress.			
B2. I am consulted about the schooling activities of my child.			
B3. Letters and notices from the school are easy to read and understand.			
B4.The newsletters at the end of the school term are interesting and informative.			
B5.I am contacted in good time if my child has a problem at school.			

Do you want to add on any other comments on communication with the school that would help to promote a positive relationship between you and the school?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION C

Please indicate below, whether or not you agree or sometimes for each statement. Place a (✓) in the block.

Parents and the School	Yes	No	Sometimes
C1.Do you monitor your child's educational progress?			
C2.Is the Code of Conduct of the school helpful to get to know the school rules and procedures in connection with the dress code and discipline of learners.			
C3.Do you assist in fund raising activities?			
C4.Do you accompany learners on school trips (excursions)?			
C5.Do you attend school functions (concerts, sports, Awards Day etc.)			
C6.Do you determine the school curriculum with educators?			
C7.Do you attend parent meetings that are arranged to discuss the learning progress of your child.			
C8.Do you respond to written notices that calls for a response/return.			
C9.Do you contribute to the development of school policies?			
C10.Do you assist with extra-curricular activities of the school?			

Any further comment on the above?

_____

_____

_____

SECTION D

D1. What encourages you to visit the school?

_____

_____

D2. Is there anything you would like to know about the school?

_____

_____

D3. Are there any school activities you would like to be involved in?

_____

_____

D4. Do you have any suggestions or comments that would assist the management, educators and the members of School Governing Body of the school to effectively manage the relationship between parents and the school.

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