PRACTICAL PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION: THE PLIGHT OF EDUCATION AT INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

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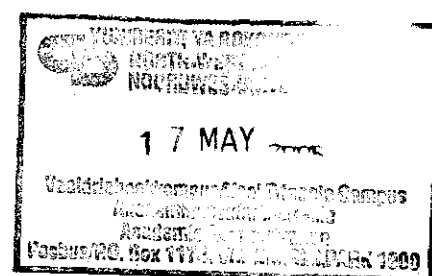## EDUCATION MANAGEMENT IN THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

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SUMMARY

Key concepts: parental involvement, learner, SGB, parent and educator.

A literature and an empirical study disclosed that parental involvement in school activities has too little impact in education at different schools in the D11 area.

The literature study revealed that neither arguments for, nor arguments against parental involvement in school activities should be overemphasized at the expense of the principals and SGB's. The educators are taking no initiative to improve or build up home-school relationships with parents or with the community.

For better results there should be:

- educator-parent involvement, which is essential in promoting and supporting school performance, teaching and learning, and in the general well-being of the citizens of the future; and

- parental involvement, which can make a valuable contribution to the educational process through commitment to and knowledge of their children.

The empirical method, using questionnaires, was successful in obtaining information about parental involvement in school activities. It also established how co-ordination can be successful at school between the principals, SGB's, educators, parents and learners in the promotion of effective education implementation.

The study established that, if practical partnerships succeed, benefits will be reaped from increased parental involvement, in that there could be:

- an improvement of learners' academic achievement, attitudes and inspiration;

- an increased motivation to attend school;

- an involvement by the community in the structures of the school;

- parental assistance in the management of a school within the School Management Team and the School Governing Body;

- an improvement of home-school communication;

- an improvement at schools in all respects; and

- the end-product will not only be the creation of an atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning, but proper, practical partnerships will be established in the educational system in these areas.

A number of recommendations were made with regard to the research findings for the Johannesburg South Mega District (D11).

OPSOMMING

Belangrike sleutelbegrippe: ouerbetrokkenheid, leerder, Skoolbeheerliggaam, ouer en opvoeder.

'n Literatuur- en 'n empiriese studie het onthul dat ouerbetrokkenheid in skoolaktiwiteite te min impak op die onderwys het in verskeie skole in die D11-area.

Die literatuurstudie het aangetoon dat nòg argumente ten gunste van, nòg argumente teen ouerbetrokkenheid in skoolaktiwiteite oorbeklemtoon moet word ten koste van skoolhoofde en Skoolbeheerliggame. Die opvoeders neem nie die inisiatief in die bevordering of opbou van verhoudings met ouers tussen die ouerhuis en die skool of met die gemeenskap nie.

Om beter resultate te verkry, moet daar

- opvoeder-ouer-betrokkenheid wees, wat onmisbaar is in die bevordering en die ondersteuning van skoolprestasie, onderrig en leer, en in die welsyn van die landsburgers van die toekoms; en

- ouerbetrokkenheid wees, wat 'n belangrike bydrae kan lewer in die opvoedingsproses deur toewyding aan en kennis van hul kinders.

Die empiriese metode, waarin vraelyste gebruik is, was suksesvol met die verkryging van inligting oor ouerbetrokkenheid in skoolaktiwiteite. Dit het ook bewys hoe koördinasie op skool suksesvol kan wees tussen skoolhoofde, Skoolbeheerliggame, opvoeders, ouers en leerders in die bevordering van effektiewe onderwys-implementering.

Die studie het bewys dat, indien praktiese vennootskappe slaag, daar voordele gepluk mag word uit verhoogde ouerbetrokkenheid, te wete:

- 'n verbetering van leerders se akademiese prestasie, houdings en inspirasie;

- 'n verhoogde motivering tot skoolbywoning;

- 'n betrokkenhied deur die gemeenskap in die strukture van die skool;

- ouerlike bystand in die bestuur van die skool binne die Skoolbestuurspan en die Skoolbeheerliggaam;

- 'n verbetering in ouerhuis-skool-kommunikasie;

- 'n verbetering op skool in alle opsigte; en

- die eindproduk sal nie net die skepping wees van 'n atmosfeer wat bevorderlik is vir onderrig en leer nie, maar geskikte, praktiese vennootskappe sal in die opvoedingsisteem in hierdie areas gevetig word.

'n Aantal aanbevelings is gedoen betreffende die navorsingsbevindinge in die Johannesburg-Suid Mega-distrikte (D11).

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ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Schools do not exist in isolation. There is a close link between schools and different structures in the community, such as the state, business and the family (Niemann, 1994:388). While the education system interacts with various social structures, so that each retains its identity without losing its own character and freedom, it is at the same time inevitably linked to parents and communities. On the one hand, it is important that parents should be kept informed of their children's education, since communities value education for themselves and for the future of their children. Both parents and communities therefore need to understand what the school is trying to achieve and need to support these goals. On the other hand, schools must respond more strongly to the needs of their communities (Steyn, 2003:24).

While it is true that the parent community is in the prime position in relation to the school (Niemann, 1994:388), it is also true that parental involvement and support have profound influence on the culture of teaching and learning (Kruger, 2003:9-10). Two important facts have been revealed by research on parental involvement in recent years (Hess & Van Schalkwyk, as quoted by Kruger, 2003:9):

- Parental involvement has a significant effect both on the quality of the learners' experience of teaching at school and on their academic results.

- The learner cannot be sufficiently educated without a parent-educator partnership.

Since the family is the basic societal relationship, it is regarded to be primarily responsible for the education of the learner. Based on its lack of professional training in subject knowledge and didactic skills, the family is forced to acknowledge the school as a partner in the education relationship (Grobler, 2003:19).

According to Barnard (1990: 2), parental involvement can only reach its full potential if:

- there is effective communication between the parents, learner and educator;

- parents and educators listen to one another;

- parents and educators grant one another enough space so that they can carry out their unique and distinctive tasks without interference;

- parents and educators express empathy with and understanding of one another; and

- they respect one another's rights.

In addition, successful parental involvement will only be possible when parents and educators have mutual sensitivity and empathy for daily problems, frustrations, challenges and expectations that are all part of teaching and learning situations. There has never been any doubt about the necessity of parental involvement in the school and in education.

Van der Linde (1993:56) feels that the two-way communication between the school and home will guarantee that a meaningful involvement of parents in school activities can be realized. Goldring (1993:16) suggests that parental involvement in schools may be enhanced by socialization, formalization and co-operation.

Van der Linde (1993:39, 93, 95) has also pointed out that little is known about the problems the school principal experiences in optimizing parental involvement in school activities and that this issue must still be investigated. Thus Barnard (1990:1) argues that mature parental involvement carries the stamp of sound judgment in the co-operation between parents and school. It presupposes not only wise decisions about the learner's choice of subjects, course of study and career guidance, but also keeps watch over his/her leisure time activities.

In the final analysis, justice can only be done to sound parental involvement if there is:

- an atmosphere of mutual trust;

- an atmosphere where the different parties accept one another's *bona fides* in a relationship based on trust; and

- accountability, responsibility and commitment, as well as greater involvement with one another.

Therefore the school and the parents have a common responsibility to structure parental involvement in such a way that the co-operation between them will be cordial, frank, sincere and faithful to its norms and standards and also free of prejudice. The atmosphere should be conducive to teaching and learning.

This study will therefore attempt to answer the following questions:

- What is the nature of parental involvement in school activities?

- Which problems can be linked to parental involvement at school?

- Which problems do principals, School Governing Body members and educators experience in optimizing parental involvement in school activities, especially in informal settlement areas?

1.2 AIMS OF RESEARCH

With reference especially to the problems that educators experience in optimizing parental involvement at school, the African National Congress (1994:61) cautions that it is imperative that structures of governance at schools should reflect the interest of all education stakeholders and the community it is serving.

The overall aim of this study is to gain insight into the current state of parental involvement in the informal settlement areas of the Johannesburg South Mega District (D11). Therefore the aims of this research were:

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- To determine the nature of parental involvement in school activities.

- To determine which problems can be linked to parental involvement at school.

- To determine empirically which problems the principals, School Governing Body members and educators experience in optimizing parental involvement, especially at informal settlements.

1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.3.1 Literature study

Primary and secondary sources such as textbooks and journals were used. Information to be gathered will be evaluated with the aim of making sound conclusions. The following key words were used in a dialog search: parent participation, parent-school relation, school climate, SGB, parental involvement and communication.

1.3.2 Empirical research

1.3.2.1 Questionnaire

On the basis of the literature review, a questionnaire was compiled to determine the problems the educators experience in optimizing parental involvement in informal settlements.

1.3.2.2 Population

The study population was n= 364. At the 52 randomly selected primary schools and high schools of the Johannesburg South Mega District (D11), the following respondents were included in the empirical research sample:

- 32 principals

- 25 School Governing Body members

- 115 educators

All these schools fall within the following five informal settlement areas of D11:

- Orange Farms

- Fine Town

- Wiellers Farm

- Sweet Water

- Vlakfontein

1.3.2.3 Statistical technique

The statistical consultancy service of the North-West University: Vaal Triangle Campus was approached for assistance in the analysis and interpretation of the data collected. The SAS- programme was employed to process data by computer.

1.3.2.4 Feasibility of study

- The study was conducted in the Johannesburg South Mega District (D11) which is accessible to the researcher.

- Literature resources used for gathering information were sufficiently available.

- ERIC and EBSCO searches were conducted, using the following keywords: parental involvement, education in informal settlements, parent-educator cooperation, parent-learner relationships, extra-curricular parental involvement at school, problems with parental involvement.

- The study was relevant to the current education scenario concerned with ensuring quality teaching and learning at all schools, including those at informal settlements.

1.3.2.5 Ethical consideration

Permission to conduct the study in D11 was obtained from the Gauteng Education Department. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study and no information was made available to an unauthorized person without the permission of the school in question and the Gauteng Education Department in D11.

1.3.2.6 Demarcation of the field of study

The field of study covered the nature of parental involvement and the methods available to involve parents in the education of children in school activities.

This research was confined to a practical partnership in education: the plight of education in informal settlements in the Johannesburg South Mega District (D11).

1.4 DIVISION OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1:   Orientation

Chapter 2:   The nature of parental involvement in school activities

Chapter 3:   Problems linked to parental involvement in school activities

Chapter 4:   Empirical research

Chapter 5:   Data analysis

Chapter 6:   Summary, findings and recommendations

1.5 SUMMARY

This chapter introduced the reader to the problem statement of this research. In short this dissertation focused on the phenomenon of parental involvement having a profound influence on the culture of teaching and learning at school. The problem that was identified concerned informal settlements being at a disadvantage when it came to establishing practical partnerships in education.

Specific aims were set and these included determining the nature of parental involvement in school activities and the problems that could be linked to parental involvement.

The research methodology was addressed in terms of both the literature study and the empirical research of this dissertation. The latter included reference to the questionnaire as research instrument, study population, statistical technique, ethical consideration and demarcation of the research.

Lastly, the focus fell on the division of the six chapters.

In chapter two an overview of the nature of parental involvement in school activities will be presented.

CHAPTER 2

THE NATURE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with parental involvement as a theoretical framework for the discussion of parental involvement in school activities. Consideration is given specifically to the definition, nature and scope of parental involvement, reasons for parental involvement, advantages of parental involvement, ways in which parents become involved in school activities, reasons for lack of parental involvement, models of parental involvement and an international perspective.

In discussing the topic, the focus will fall firstly on the fundamental grounds for parental involvement in school activities. Fundamental grounds are based on religion. The religion that a community practices determines the extent and characteristics of the involvement of parents in school activities. It is vital to realize that parents act as primary educators according to the instruction of God. For this reason, parents have the obligation to look after the well-being of their children by caring for and loving, educating and disciplining them (Weeto, 1997:4).

Secondly, the educational grounds for parental involvement at school will be addressed. A school is an organized educational institution; therefore parental involvement should occur in an organized fashion. Because of the peculiar characteristics of the institutions home and school, it will be necessary that they acknowledge the operational areas and contribution that each has made in education. This is vital if the education of the child is to be conducted in an atmosphere of peace and stability (Weeto, 1997:4).

Thirdly, various reasons for parental involvement will be given. It will become clear that parental involvement is juridically prescribed.

The study of parental involvement is therefore complex, given the range of activities being undertaken, the differing perspectives held by participants on the desired aims and the *ad hoc* and desperate nature of much of the work (Jewett & Babinski, 1991:4). Mkhwanazi (1994:24) concurs, stating that the involvement of parents in education can be seen as open to definition and redefinition, as identity is created and recreated in interaction among educators, schools, politicians and social forces, such as a changing technology.

2.2 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT: A DEFINITION

Parental involvement is defined as the active and willing participation of parents in a wide range of school-based and home-based activities, which may be educational or non-educational. It extends from supporting and upholding the school ethos to supervising children's homework at home. Parental involvement implies mutual co-operation, sharing and support (Squelch & Lemmer, 1993:93).

The UNISA METROPOLITAN LIFE project (1994:2) for the training of educators in parental involvement defines parental involvement as an active and supportive participation of parents as partners and allies of the educators in the primary aspects of the formal and informal education of the learner. The alliance includes the broad education of their community in an individual and collective way in a structured and orderly manner in order to achieve the objective of education as fully as possible (Unisa, 1994:2).

According to Van Wyk (1991:10), parental involvement refers to the realization of a parent's joint responsibility for education, but in a more undefined manner and taking place in various areas and at various levels, without necessarily sharing in decision-making.

Dekker (1993:155) describes the concept of parental involvement as a process of helping parents to discover their strengths, potentialities and talents and to use them for the benefit of themselves, the family and the school. Parental involvement can take the form of cooperation and participation which leads to partnership.

According to Feuerstein (2000:2), parental involvement encompasses a broad range of parenting behaviour, ranging from a discussion with learners about homework to attendance of parent-organization meetings. Dimmock, O'Donoghue, and Robbs (1996:5-20) identify five basic categories of parental involvement: school choice, decision-making through formal structures or site-based council, teaching and learning, effects on the physical and material environment, and communication.

According to Marcon (1999:395), parental involvement refers to a wide range of parental behaviour, such as communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community. Griffith (2001:4) states that each type of parental involvement can lead to different outcomes for learners, parents and educators.

Edwards and Warin (1998:13) describes parental involvement as the co-responsibility that parents must assume for essential concerns of the education of their children.

According to Lemmer (2000:60-75), parental involvement is a dynamic process whereby educators and parents work together for the ultimate benefit of the learner. The process involves collaboration on educational matters, setting goals, finding solutions, implementing and evaluating shared goals, as well as inspiring and maintaining trust between parents and educators. Parental involvement is intended essentially to promote and support learners' learning, school performance and general well-being (Lemmer, 2000:69).

In support of the definitions given on parental involvement, Blackstone (1999:81-98) states that a greater extent of overlap between educators and parents' roles is desired for its own sake. The degree of overlapping between parents and educators' roles in education is seen as positive for parent- educator partnership and is being recognized on all levels of education.

One is able to deduce from these definitions that parental involvement involves far more than serving on school committees or helping at school functions.

Parental involvement in this research should be understood to mean that parents, as partners, participate with educators in the interests of the education of the learners for the purpose of assisting the learners in their educational endeavours, by improving the learning conditions of the learners (Nojaja, 2003:18-19).

2.3 FUNDAMENTAL GROUNDS FOR PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parental involvement in school activities, according to Van Schalkwyk (1990:1), is important because parents have fundamental rights and interests in the education of their children. A family as a primary institution has an obligation to support a child so that he can do well at school. Barnard (1990:20) supports the above notion by stating that education starts at home. This implies that the education that is conducted at school is a continuation of the aspirations of parents at home, namely to make the children self-sufficient.

Van Wyk (1991:110) argues that parents are involved in school activities because they are intimately attached to their children. It is this relation that compels parents to ensure that their children receive only the best education; that parents' educational task with regard to their children is to make sure that they are fully equipped for life. It is therefore on these grounds that, even if children are later referred to school, parents fail to divorce themselves completely from their educative task (Lynch, 1992:304).

Parental involvement not only has great advantages, but there are also several reasons why it is vital for parents to be involved in the education of their children. By combining the forces of the home, the school and the community, the quality of the education can be much improved. However, education is the task that no school can undertake on its own.

Van Schalkwyk (1990:19-24) refers to a number of compelling reasons for parental involvement: that will be discussed in the next few paragraphs.

2.3.1 A matter of principle: parents as primary educators

A family is a primary educational institution. In a home, children receive their very first teaching from their parents. It is here that children are given birth to, brought up and developed. Cheung, Chen and Tam (1996:3) affirm this notion by stating that parents as primary educators have the obligation of helping a child to develop into a whole person. They further maintain that parents' influence on a child's cognitive, affective, and social development greatly determines his/her performance at school. It is therefore vital that the needs of children be met firstly within a family before they are exposed to the outside actual agencies such as schools. However, a secondary educator cannot be held accountable for the tasks that are family-orientated (Postma, 1998:93; Kinger, 1987:186). A child wishes to feel wanted and loved within a family (Nojaja, 2003:22).

If parents can be helped to challenge deficient views of the culture of their homes and communities, a small step has been taken in enabling their voices to be heard in the learning of their children and in their own educational development (Tett, 2001).

According to Cooper and Maloof (1999:176), parental involvement usually implies parents volunteering their time to participate in school activities and taking an active part in their children's learning. The Conrad Public School System in Montana, for example, created a model in which parents and educators were trained to work as collaborators with complementary sets of responsibilities. The California State Department of Education has developed parent training programmes to help immigrant parents understand the school system and participate in their children's learning (Cooper & Maloof, 1999:176).

It is clear that the parent as the primary educator of the learner and the educator as the learner's secondary educator should collaborate in all possible ways as allies or partners in education (Molepo, 2000:73).

Van Wyk (1991:19) maintains that education within a family takes place within the context of authority, confidence and love. Everything that happens to children within the family/home will greatly influence their attitude towards life later on. A parent has

to shape a child's character and religious inclination. As a result, children will learn to relate with others and learn from their parents to use their intellectual ability so that they can cope well with the expectations at school and with the community of which they are part. In this way, a non-adult is gradually being guided towards adulthood by his/her parents (Gryffenberg, 1991:11).

The family is a primary institution that presumably conducts its educative tasks with love. Van Wyk (1991:11) confirms the idea by stating that parents are the only educators who stay with their children from birth until they reach adulthood. A secondary educator (school educator) is bound by time and as such is unable to meet all the requirements of the learner in full. This does not imply that the educator as a secondary educator should deviate from goal-directed formal education started at home, but rather that he/she should ensure that the *status quo* be maintained. At school, education should not be seen in isolation from home/family education, but a concerted effort should be made to continue with the education started at home. This should be done to ensure that a child is fully equipped morally, intellectually and culturally so that he/she can attach meaning to life (Nojaja, 2003:23).

There appears to be an agreement that parental involvement is a positive idea. In fact, researchers state that the single fastest way to improve a learner's academic performance is to involve the parents. Given this widespread agreement, it is perplexing that there is not more actual parental involvement in schools (Fuller & Olsen, 1998:128).

It is vital to realize that parents act and behave as primary educators on the instruction of God (Good News Bible, 1994). God expects of parents, as given in this text, to ensure that children are well- informed about the realities of life. Gene and Stoneman (as quoted by Heystek and Louw, 1999:21), mention that the participation of parents at school has a positive influence on the academic achievement of children.

From the above it can therefore be concluded that parents are the primary educators of their children and this responsibility cannot be transferred to the school. For this

reason, parents must be involved in the school education of their children to ensure the continuation of home/family education (Good News Bible, 1994).

2.3.2 Juridical prescription

Two of the policy principles of the National Policy for General Education Affairs Act 76 of 1984 (SA, 1984) provide for parental involvement, namely:

- that by virtue of his/her parenthood, the parent is the primary and natural educator of his/her child, and for this reason bears the main responsibility for the child's instruction and education; and

- that the parent is equally responsible for what happens to his/her child in formal education. Parents are also obliged to ensure that their children attend school as the law requires (Kruger, Du Plessis & Maseko, 2002:69-70). According to section 3(1) of the South African Schools Act (SA, 1996; hereafter called Schools Act), parents are also obliged to ensure that their children attend school for as long as the child is required by law to do so.

2.3.3 The learner's cultural heritage

Basson, Van der Westhuizen and Niemann (1996: 628) regard culture as the developmental process taking place over a period of time, exhibiting visible and invisible dimensions. Through time there are norms and values that have come to be accepted and respected by the community concerned. Steyn (1994:81) views culture as the distinctive ideals, aims, activities, interests and behaviour patterns of a particular group under the guidance of a particular view of life. That is why any attempt to change the known behaviour and customs could result in resistance or enmity.

A child is born into a particular home and community where certain norms, assumptions and values apply. The expectations of the community are that children will be brought up according to the behaviour inculcated in them by their parents. This indicates that a child's conduct and attitude towards life are greatly influenced by

the parents. Thus parents as primary educators should give children direction and guidance so that they can grow up as responsible and acceptable individuals within the community (Basson *et al.*, 1996:631-632).

The parental teaching is done on the basis of accepted and recognized norms and values. It is therefore correct to indicate that learners' attitudes towards life and character formation find their origin from parents. Because a child grows up within a home where certain behaviour is being practiced, he/she will readily learn how to behave, get new ideas about life and things that surround him/her as well as religious inclinations. It is also the obligation of parents as primary educators to ensure that the culture their children inherit is acceptable to all who surround them (Oosthuizen & Bondesio, 1988:58).

At school, learners from such different cultural backgrounds come together and in this fashion, influence each other culturally. Moreover, the behaviour of learners will be influenced by the teaching they receive at school. Thus a learner's life will be meaningful as soon as he/she acquires and puts into practice the values, norms and religious convictions he/she has been taught. It is for this reason that it becomes vital that parents must be involved in school activities, so that they may ensure that no deviation occurs from their community values and norms. Thus parents will be in a position to help learners accommodate the conduct and attitudes of those they meet at school (Van Schalkwyk, 1990:117).

2.3.4 Maintenance of community values

By becoming involved, parents can ensure that the values, spirit, direction and character of the community are established and maintained at the school (Kruger *et al.*, 2002:70).

2.3.5 Parental discipline

Van der Westhuizen (1996:223) points out that discipline may be negative or positive. As discipline is an action that is taken against a person in order to correct deviant behaviour, a negative disciplinary measure may imply that one in being

chastised or punished for wrongful behaviour. On the other hand, a positive disciplinary measure has as its goal the correction of behaviour by influencing a person to behave acceptably.

From the above statements, it is evident that discipline is not intended to bring harm to an individual, but to correct the unacceptable behaviour so that order can be created, as explained Proverbs 1:8 (Bible, 1994). Discipline is therefore a necessity for the development of a child.

Van der Westhuizen (1996:13) argues that man is empowered by God to regulate and order His creation. In order to ensure that order be maintained, it may be necessary to apply disciplinary measures. It is therefore expected of parents to instil order by regulating the lives of their children so that educative processes can go unhindered. A Christian parent should accept the fact that he/she has been given authority over a child by God, and a Christian parent should exercise his/her authority over a child with love, tact, loyalty and responsibility (Nojaja, 2003:24)

Section 8 of the Schools Act (SA, 1996) states that the ultimate responsibility for learners' behaviour rests with their parents or guardians, and it is expected that parents will support the school and teach learners to observe all school regulations and accept responsibility for any misbehaviour on their part.

Nojaja (2003:25) points that parents as primary educators and educators at school should ensure that discipline will occupy its rightful place within the family or school.

It is abundantly clear that, by administering discipline, it is guaranteed that the learner's activity in his/her daily process of education will be ordered. For this reason, parents have an obligation to be involved in the education of their children so that they can ensure that reasonable discipline is administered to the learners. This means that their involvement in school education will ensure that the school rules and regulations will meet the requirements for learners to learn in an orderly way (Oosthuizen, 1994:59). In other words: parental involvement at school can ensure the continuation of their disciplinary measures at home.

According to Christie (2001:52), a notable feature of maintaining discipline in a number of schools is personal interaction. In almost all these schools, principals could insist that every student should be personally known to at least some members of staff, even if not to all. This means that if there are problems with an individual student, somebody is able to recognize him/her and to take action. This has been mentioned by principals and staff repeatedly in relation to maintaining discipline at their schools (Christie, 2001:52), and augurs well for continued correction of deviant behaviour in order to influence learners to behave acceptably.

2.3.6 The demands of the twenty-first century

All the demands of providing instruction comprehensively, normatively, relevantly and on a differentiated basis can no longer be met by the school alone. Parents must support and assist formal education in the interest of more comprehensive education (UNISA Metropolitan Life, 1994:4).

2.3.7 High cost of education

At present 4.68% or R422 million of the South African National budget for 2004/05 is devoted to education (Strategy Planning GDE 2004/05). Parents and the private sector also make large financial contributions and parents should, through their involvement, ensure effective teaching and learning (Kruger *et al.,* 2002:70).

2.3.7.1 Raising of funds

This is the main responsibility of parents and should not be left in the hands of learners. Fund-raising can enable a school to acquire the necessary equipment and teaching aids.

2.3.7.2 Care of buildings and grounds

Well-cared-for buildings and school grounds may have a tremendous impact on the education of learners and their attitudes towards life.

Learners learn to appreciate beauty and thus learn to keep themselves and their surroundings in good shape. Section 20(1) of the Schools Act (SA, 1996) empowers parents to manage the property of a school and exercise control over school activities.

2.3.7.3 Care of sports grounds

Parents should be willing to draw up sports programmes and also to be involved in the training of children in various sports. Parents must allow their children to participate in sport as no education is complete without physical development.

The presence of parents at school serves as a stimulant for learners. In view of this statement, parents cannot be left out of extracurricular activities. Edwards and Alldred (2000:20) state that it is the prerogative of parents to determine which sport facilities may be established at school. Parents are therefore duty-bound to care for their facilities so that they can ensure that sport can go on unhindered. It can be concluded that parents' influence on learners is very strong even if parents are not always physically present at all school activities (Nojaja, 2003:31).

2.3.8 Acknowledgement of parents' contribution

Parents and educators operate from different areas, thus they contribute differently. This means that they should both agree that they are helping each other in different ways to develop a child educationally. A parent is a natural educator, while an educator is an appointed educator (Nojaja, 2003:31).

Parents have the right to know what is being taught although they do not have the right to decide how teaching should be conducted. While it is important that they should both plan and determine the direction of the education of a learner, they have to respect each other's area of operation for, by so doing, the education of a learner will not be marred by conflicts (Kruger, 1987:89). Section 20(e), (g) and (h) of the Schools Act (SA, 1996) acknowledges parents' and educators' contribution in education by encouraging parents to offer support to ensure academic achievements

of all learners, render voluntary services to school, administer and control the school buildings and grounds occupied by the school, including school hostels, if applicable.

According to Dekker (1990:29) the following are characteristics of the relationship between home and school:

- The school and home should both try not to override the authority of the other.

- They should encourage a shared commitment to the success of a child.

- They should create an ethos of understanding and openness in home-school relationships.

- Educators should be afforded all the respect that is due to them.

- Mutual respect is a prerequisite for good education. If parents and educators don't accord each other space in which to work, education will be chaotic.

- The school curriculum should be structured in such a manner that it will fulfil all aspirations of the society.

- A learner should be taught according to his ability and interest.

- It is necessary that consensus be reached in all problematic matters so that effective education can be realized.

From the above statements, it can be deduced that both the educator and the parent have rights concerning the education of the learner. However, it is imperative that they should interact in such a way that effective education can be provided (Nojaja, 2003:32).

2.4 EDUCATIONAL GROUNDS FOR PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

For a school to have any meaning to a child there should be purposeful contact between parents and educators. A school should not break the continuity of this contact by going its own way, but must make all efforts possible to enhance it. Van

der Westhuizen and Mentz (1996:25) confirm this notion by stating that the school has to contribute to the intellectual development of the child in an environment of community involvement within which teaching takes place (Weeto, 1997:16).

According to Lemmer and Squelch (1993:96), involvement is a dynamic process in which educators and parents work together for the ultimate benefit of the learner. This process involves collaboration on educational matters, setting goals, finding solutions, implementing and evaluating shared goals, as well as inspiring and maintaining trust between parents and educators. Parental involvement is intended essentially to promote and support a learner's learning, school performance and general well-being. Both parents and educators operate in areas that are drastically different from one another. These peculiar operational areas determine the contribution of parents and educators to education (Nojaja, 2003:27)

Section 3(1) of the Schools Act (SA, 1996) compels parents to participate and cause every learner for whom he/she is responsible to attend school from the first school day of the year in which such a learner reaches the age of six until the last school day of the year in which such learner reaches the age of fifteen or the ninth grade, whichever occurs first. According to Dekker and Lemmer (1993:236), parents' responsibility lies mainly in the care of their children and their obligation to send their children to school. Also to provide for their physical and emotional needs, to bring up and educate their children so that they can adjust to and participate in society.

2.4.1 Parental obligation in education

Parental obligation in education should be seen against the background that parents are the primary educators and this is the basis on which a school should build the education of children (Van der Linde, 1993:21).

Parental involvement improves and promotes positive home- school relations, reduces misunderstandings and conflict, and prevents the school from becoming isolated from the community. In this way, parental involvement ensures that continuity between the home and the school is maintained, which is of paramount importance in multicultural situations (Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:96).

According to the state of Texas (Cooper & Maloof, 1999:1), parents can increase children's academic success through involvement with schools and communities. Thus parental involvement improves learners' morale, attitudes, and academic achievement across all subject areas. By getting involved, parents reduce the risk of the learner's academic failure and dropping out before graduation. Learner's behaviour and social adjustment improve when parents are proactive with schools and neighbourhoods to cultivate an environment that promotes learning. The quality of education depends greatly on the influence parents are able to exercise on the school (Nojaja, 2003:27).

A school is seen by Van Wyk (1991:12) as an institution where educators operate due to their qualifications, and because parents are important stakeholders, schools cannot operate in isolation. It is therefore vital that a school must relate closely with the community as it is charged to impart cognitive knowledge to the learners. Most schools wish to involve parents in organizational matters only. This behaviour is not approved by parents, because they wish to become part of the education that is being offered to their children (Carrim & Sayed, 1990:22).

Meadows (1993:33) is of the opinion that the following are the educational grounds for parents to be involved in school activities:

- Empirical research has shown that home background plays an important prominent role in the child's scholastic performance.

- Children who are aware that their parents are concerned with their education are more stable and perform better than their counterparts.

- Parental involvement in school matters recognizes that self-esteem in parents is integral to the development of the child and should be enhanced by parents' interaction with the school.

- Parental involvement in school activities encourages joint decision- making about the child's development and his career.

- Parental involvement in school activities encourages parents to observe and evaluate education freely.

2.4.2 Intellectual development of the learner

The first seventeen years of the learners' lives are the most important for the development of their minds and parents play an important role in this development. It is therefore essential that a parent should be involved in the formal education of the child (Nojaja, 2003:34).

According to Heystek and Louw (1999:21), principals of South African schools express the desire that parents must participate more actively in school activities and co-operate with the educators, with the aim of improving the standard of education. Gene and Stoneman (1997:569) mention that co-operation of parents with educators in school activities has a positive influence on the academic achievement of learners. Parents and educators must take note of these important reasons why it is vital for parents and educators to cooperate effectively when participating in school activities.

2.4.3 Curricular activities

Curriculum is an important element of parent- educator contact for it has a direct bearing on the enhancement of learners' education. The advantage of parent-educator contact is that parents with specific needs and expectations meet educators. In this setting, parents are free to express their views without fear of being irrelevant. It must be realized that these classroom activities are educator-directed and parents are junior partners. For successful and effective parental involvement in curricular activities, parents must provide input into the work that is being done at school (Hegarty, 1993:122-124).

Parental involvement that boosts learners' learning does not just happen. Thoughtful coordinated planning and systematic actions must integrate with parental involvement in classroom- programmes (Solomon, 1992:360). Dekker (1990:32) maintains that parental involvement would be meaningless unless class committees are established with particular aims and goals which have been jointly identified.

Several authors (Van Schalkwyk & Oosthuizen, 1994:137; Solomon, 1992:361; Cheung *et al.*, 1996; the Schools Act, 1996) list the following possible areas in which parents may be engaged in curricular activities:

- Parents may be trained by educators to assist in classroom activities such as writing and language exercises.

- Parents may cooperate in educational trips, promotion programmes, library work, needlework and woodwork.

- Parents may assist with vocabulary words, numbers and making teaching aids.

- Parents may be members of every committee that is directly linked with school policy or curriculum.

- Parents may help with remedial education, learning enrichment, planning and preparation of lessons.

- Parents may assist in determining the educational content and objectives of lessons.

Munn (1992:1) states that a number of studies of school effectiveness identify parental involvement as one of the keys linked with the effectiveness of child education. Curriculum activities should meet the needs of the community if they are to be effective. It should be borne in mind that not all parents can be expected to perform all the listed tasks, as some of them require extensive training. Only competent and willing parents can be organized to perform these tasks (Van Schalkwyk & Oosthuizen, 1994:138).

2.4.4 Extracurricular activities

According to Van Schalkwyk and Oosthuizen (1994:138), extracurricular activities support education indirectly. They also state that these activities contribute to the creation and the development of a healthy relationship between parents and educators.

2.5 THE ADVANTAGES OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

A review of the literature indicates that parental involvement programmes benefit all role-players, namely learners, parents, educators, the school and the community as a whole (Galvin, Mercer & Costa, 1990:25-30).

2.5.1 Advantages for learners

According to Galvin *et al.* (1990:25-30), the influence of parents on the social and emotional development of their children is very strong. Learners spend more time at home than they do at school, and their parents have the primary responsibility, as well as real concern (usually), for them. Moreover, learners come to school with values, beliefs and knowledge that they have learned informally from their parents. Parents can thus make a valuable contribution to the educational process through their commitment to and knowledge of their children.

There is a widespread understanding of both the crucial and continuing role that parents play as educators in education, welfare and the development of their children (Bastiani, 1993:141). Research underscores that children are more successful learners at all grade levels if their parents participate in school activities and encourage education and learning at home, regardless of the educational background or social class of the parents (Espstein & Dauber, 1991:53; Wanat, 1994:632). Learners' attitudes about themselves and their control over the environment are of critical importance. These attitudes are formed at home and are the product of myriad interactions between parents, learners and the surrounding community. According to Nojaja (2003:36), when parents show an interest in their children's education and have high expectations for their performance, they promote the attitudes that are the key to achievement. Habermann (1992:33) agrees that there is substantial evidence that changing the school climate and involving parents will substantially raise not only the achievement of low-income, at-risk children, but will also change their self- concept and motivation. It is true that motivated learners have better homework habits, higher attendance and lower dropout rates, and this improved behaviour is supported by well-documented research (Hamby, 1992:54;

Swap, 1993:210). Learners whose educators and parents used frequent parental involvement practices reported greater concurrence between the school and family practices, more familiarity between the educator and the parents, and more homework completed on weekends (Epstein, 1990:111). All these factors obviously contribute to improved learner achievement and to an increase in the learner's sense of security and stability. Moreover, Hamby (1992:59) has found that increased achievement is sustained across grade levels for low-income learners, as well as for middle-income ones.

Therefore, parents who are involved in one way or another in school activities for the education of their children create a climate that is conducive to teaching and learning activities.

According to Lemmer and Squelch (1994:93), benefits of parental involvement include improved school performance, reduce dropout rates, a decrease in delinquency and a more positive attitude towards the school.

2.5.2 Advantages for parents

When educators make parental involvement part of their regular teaching practice, parents increase their interaction with their children at home, and feel more positive about their own abilities to help their children (Epstein & Dauber, 1991:290; Hamby, 1992:59).

Parents benefit by being alerted to different and more effective ways of creating or developing learning opportunities and stimulating experiences for their children by parenting programmes (Wolfendale, 1992:9). However, most parents need help in order to know how to be productively involved in their children's education at each grade level (Epstein & Dauber, 1991:290).

Davies (1993:206) also lists many benefits for parents when they become involved in school activities for the education of their children, including greater appreciation of their own important roles, strengthened social networks, access to information and materials, personal efficacy and motivation to continue their own education. The

contact with other parents experiencing comparable problems often has very positive results. Moreover, by understanding their adolescents better, parents are in a position to work with the school in resolving other school-related issues. Most parents report the pleasure of getting to know educators as people and they find a new appreciation for the commitment and skill of educators, as well as an increase in their own parenting abilities.

Collaboration between parents and learners reduces the characteristic isolation of their roles. It is very reassuring for parents to know that educators share their concerns about the learners. In turn, it is comforting for educators to know that a parent recognizes the complexity of their role in the classroom (Swap, 1993: 11).

2.5.3 Advantages for educators and schools

An increase in parent and community involvement can bring multiple benefits to educators and schools. The educators' work can be made more manageable, parents who are involved have more positive views of the educator and the school, and the parents and others who participate are likely to be more supportive of the schools (Davies, 1993:206).

This view is shared by Epstein and Dauber (1991:289) when they remark that parents rate educators higher overall when they are involved with the school in any way. Moreover, educators come to know and understand parents better (Hamby, 1992:59). This obviously increases educators' understanding of the children in the family and provides information which may be of value in the handling of specific learners and improving their conduct. Educators also report more positive feelings about their school when they rate all parents, including less educated and single parents, as helpful (Epstein, 1990:112). Educators are impressed by the mutuality of interests and find that collaboration both broadens their perspective, as well as increases their sensitivity to varied parent circumstances (Swap, 1993:10).

In programmes where parents and educators work together successfully, educators experience support and appreciation from parents and a rekindling of their own enthusiasm for problem-solving (Swap, 1993:10).

Collaboration between the school and parents also increases the resource available to the school. For example, parents may contribute to the school as volunteers or paid aides, thus helping to individualize and enrich learners' work. Parents' expertise may help a school in the development or maintenance of the school buildings and grounds. Parents may also provide linkages to partnerships with business, agencies, cultural institutions or other resources in the community. Moreover, parents can be political assets when they argue for the interests of learners and schools at board meetings or in legislative sessions (Swap, 1993:11).

2.5.4 Advantages to the community

Increased linkages between school and community have been shown to have multiple positive results: increased access to school resources and facilities, cost-saving and improved services through collaboration, increased capacity to solve community problems, and community pride (Davies, 1993:206).

Parents and citizen participation in the schools can also contribute to advancing the prospects of a more democratic and equitable society (Davies, 1993:206). For example, increased opportunities for participation in school decision- making contribute to skills of individual and collective empowerment. There are important ingredients for effective citizen action in all areas of civic life.

2.6 WAYS IN WHICH PARENTS BECOME INVOLVED IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Engelbrecht, Kriegler and Booyens (1996:73), offer the following methods to improve parental involvement in school activities:

- Homework assignments that invite parental participation in clarifying what the learner may not understand.

- Books that the parent has to sign after he/she has gone through the schoolwork of the learner as proof that the parent is aware of the learner's performance at school.

- Parent meetings that provide or inform parents about the skills their children are learning and to show to advantage the school's scholastic progress, equipment and materials. The parent meetings provide parents with an opportunity to experience directly what their children are learning and how instruction is imparted.

- The newsletter is an effective way of periodically communicating information to parents. A large majority of parents read and respond to the newsletter, as it serves as a medium for covering specific, current information to parents.

- The parent- educator organizations are the most familiar non-statutory structures that bring families and the school together. The main purpose of these bodies is to unite the efforts of parents and educators when some service is required.

- Home visits are essential to acquaint the educator with the home environment and provide a relaxed setting for discussing common issues on school matters. Parents can be shown how they can help their children with their studies at home. Both parents and educators benefit from such visits, as they get to know one another better.

- Parents or other members of the community can be invited to give talks to learners and educators on topics in which they have a particular interest or of which they have specialized knowledge.

2.7 SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT FROM A SOUTH AFRICAN, AMERICAN AND NIGERIAN PERSPECTIVE

In this section, a closer look will be taken at parental involvement in South Africa, the United States of America and Nigeria. The reasons for this exercise will be to show that parents are concerned throughout the world with the education of their children. This notion is fully supported by Johnston and Hedemann (1994:195) and Dimmock, Donoghue and Robb (1996:6) who state that the restructuring of education over the past decade in many countries has been characterized by the devolution of power and responsibilities to parents and schools.

2.7.1 South Africa

Parental involvement in South Africa has been receiving attention since 1652 (Van der Linde, 1993:12). So parents have been involved in school activities in the RSA since its colonization (Weeto: 1997:32).

In the RSA, parental involvement has been ensured by Acts of parliament. Parents may be organized into school committees, management councils or governing councils. In these bodies, parents are expected to determine the standard of education, determine the curriculum, recommend appointments or dismiss staff, supervise the spirit and character of education, maintain and manage school buildings and finances or make demands concerning the teaching of their children (Van Schalkwyk, 1991:78).

Parents are further organized in non-statutory bodies that are free and autonomous associations. Most of these parent associations are organized into local branches with specific educational functions to perform.

It is clear from the above that parental involvement in school activities in South Africa has been long acknowledged. Van Deventer (1994:51) pleads that parental involvement in schools should be optimized so that the education of learners can be effective.

Parental involvement in school activities is not only peculiar to the South African education system. It will be necessary to sketch this trend briefly in two other countries. The aim of this exercise is to reveal those parents worldwide are concerned about the education of their children (Weeto, 1997:34-35).

2.7.2 United States of America

Because the USA is the leader of the Western world, it also exercises influence in the field of education (Van der Linde, 1993, 1993:24). In the USA, parents and other interested groups are playing a leading role in the attainment of democratic and equal educational opportunities for all (Davies, 1991:377).

The Parent-Teacher Association plays a prominent role in the development of education. This body is represented in all the states and schools, and has more than six million members. Each PTA, at a local level, manages school matters and has the following general aims, listed by Postma (1986:182):

- To accept that a parent is a primary educator.

- To strive for educational quality.

- To assist with education and teaching.

- To combat immoral conduct at school.

Therefore, in order to integrate school and home, parents visit schools during school hours to observe whether teaching is going on well and to see the shortfalls and achievements of the learners (Weeto, 1997:33). Parents are involved in school activities through effective communication channels (D'Angelo & Adler, 1991:350-354).

The National Committee for Citizens in Education is a parent body that has as its aim the raising of the standard of education at schools. It regards parents as an important component of education. From the above, it is abundantly clear that not only parents, but also other interested parties are involved in education in the USA (Weeto, 1997:34).

2.7.3 Nigeria

In Nigeria, the family makes a large contribution to the provision of education, especially at the pre-primary level which is not financed by the state. When the state lacks the initiative to provide education for learners, parents step in (Niemann, 1995:438).

Parents are involved in education through statutory bodies like school committees. Local school committees serve as a link between the community and the school. In this fashion, parents are therefore able to serve in partnership with the school.

Parents can appoint or dismiss educators, determine the standard of education or decide on the conditions of service of staff (Niemann, 1995:438).

Parent-teacher associations function mainly at the primary education level. Their main function is to complement the school committee and to ensure that links between the parents and the school are maintained. This contact ensures that parents will know what happens at school (Niemann, 1995:438).

Another feature of parental involvement in school activities is on the one hand that schools are involved in the traditional festivals and other communal activities. On the other hand, parents also feature prominently in school activities by being present at sports gatherings and prize givings. The most informal contact between the school and the home is that farmers and artisans come to school to share their skills and expertise with the school (Niemann & Van Tonder, 1989:334).

2.8 REASONS FOR LACK OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

2.8.1 Educator obstacles

Educator-parental involvement can be defined as a dynamic process whereby educators and parents work together for the ultimate benefit of the learner. The process involves:

- Collaboration on educational matters

- Setting goals

- Finding solutions

- Implementing and evaluating shared goals

- Inspiring and maintaining trust between parents and educators

It is therefore intended essentially to promote and support learners' learning, school performance and general well-being (Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:96). Obstacles are the stumbling blocks causing misunderstanding between educators and parents so

that they are unable to work together in harmony. This could lead to parents withdrawing their involvement, which will be to the detriment of the school.

2.8.1.1 Negative expectations about working with parents

Previous non-productive encounters between parents and educators have often left educators with the impression that trying to collaborate with parents is a waste of time and they doubt the support parents can give. They sometimes get the impression that those parents, especially those who for various reasons cannot attend or support school functions on a regular basis, are not interested in the learners' education or the school (Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:98).

2.8.1.2 Lack of training in working with parents

Educators are trained for teaching learners and not for handling parents. Educators therefore need to develop special skills for working effectively with parents and for involving them in the educational process. It is vital that educators should be trained to work with all kinds of parents, including those from diverse cultural backgrounds (Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:99).

2.8.1.3 Feeling threatened by parents

Educators are particularly threatened by parents who might question or challenge their professional competence (Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:99).

2.8.1.4 Interpreting parental involvement as parental interference

Educators often resent parental involvement and regard it as interference, rather than seeing it as a genuine concern for the learner's education (Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:99).

2.8.2 Parent obstacles

Parental involvement in general:

• improves and promotes positive home-school relations;

- reduces misunderstanding and conflict; and

- prevents the school from becoming isolated from the community.

Thus parental involvement ensures continuity between the home and the school (Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:96). Now, with obstacles present, the above cannot be maintained at any school situation. The process of teaching and learning can only take place if there are no obstacles.

2.8.2.1 Feelings of intimidation

Parents can feel overwhelmed and intimidated by educators and the whole school environment, especially if the school does not have an inviting, open-door policy (Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:99).

2.8.2.2 Parents want to help, but do not know how

Many parents would like to participate more freely in the education of their children, but are unsure of their rights and the activities in which they can become involved. They are often afraid of being labeled "interfering parents" and of their child being victimized as a result of this (Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:99).

2.8.2.3 Negative feelings about the school environment

Parents who have had an unpleasant school experience develop negative attitudes which prevent them from taking an interest in the school and in their child's work. A parent's negative attitudes are also easily transferred to the child, which can reduce motivation, as well as have a negative effect on the child's academic and behavioural performance (Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:99).

2.8.2.4 Negative views of educator competence

There are those parents who, for various reasons, doubt and question the educators' ability and professional competence. These feelings towards an educator can be communicated in different ways, from outright aggression to subtle questioning. This

can also affect the child's performance severely and break down home-school relations (Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:99).

2.8.2.5 Difficult work schedules

Many parents simply cannot be involved in their child's education because of the nature of their occupations. Efforts need to be made to find ways of making it possible for involving these parents, especially in home-based activities (Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:99).

2.8.2.6 Cultural barriers

Some parents are excluded from participation in school and home activities because of cultural aspects. For example, parents who do not speak the language of the school are often excluded because they are unable to communicate with the staff (Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:99).

2.8.2.7 Socio-economic barriers

Parents from lower income groups often do not get involved in school activities even though they are generally strong supporters of education. Low-income parents are often restricted in their ability to purchase books and educational games, and to pay for special educational excursions or extra-curricular activities. In these situations, schools, through various community-oriented projects, can assist parents by providing educational material and by assisting with transport to and from school activities (Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:99).

2.8.2.8 Single-parent families

While single parents may share the same interests and aspirations for the education of their children as two-parent families do, circumstances may prevent them from attending and participating in school activities. They are then frequently viewed as unsupportive and uncaring (Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:99-100).

2.9 SUMMARY

In this chapter the literature review focused on the nature of parental involvement in school activities. Starting with a definition, the chapter moved on into discovering the fundamental grounds for parental involvement in school activities. These grounds varied from parents as the primary educators to the high cost of education.

The educational grounds for parental involvement were followed by the advantages and the ways in which parents become involved.

The last part of the chapter gave a brief international perspective on parental involvement and the reasons for a lack thereof.

The next chapter will focus on problems that are linked to parental involvement.

CHAPTER 3

PROBLEMS LINKED TO PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

With reference to chapter 1, Hess and Van Schalkwyk (as quoted by Kruger, 2003:9) state that parental involvement has a significant effect both on the quality of the learners' experience of teaching and learning at school and on their academic results. Therefore, for education at school to be effective, parents must also contribute to the child's education. The school and the educator are merely the secondary educators of the child, while the parent is considered to be the primary educator (Postma, 1990:164; Ooshuizen, 1989:105; Van Schalkwyk, 1990:19). This is because the instruction task, namely education, is indivisible. Thus the education managers and the parents are jointly responsible for assuring that the education is effective (Kruger, Du Plessis & Maseko, 2004:64). The school is set apart from other societal institutions by its task, namely educative teaching.

The parent, as the primary educator of the child, has certain education responsibilities that are attendant upon parenthood.

These responsibilities can be divided into three categories (Kruger *et al.*, 2004:64):

- Physical care

- Emotional and spiritual care

- Education and teaching

According to Kruger *et al.*, (2004:66), the school has gradually begun to take over the tasks from the parents in modern-day Western society. The result is that parents have become less and less involved in the education of their children.

However, the quality of parental involvement in schooling is extremely important in terms of ascertaining the effect of the Schools Act (SA, 1996). Lack of participation by Black parents may be interpreted as a lack of interest in some quarters, while in other circles it may be rightly viewed as lack of cultural and social capital (Zengele & Mosoetsa, 2003:1). Parents need to be empowered so that they become more involved in their children's education.

The above points have been confirmed by Heystek (1998:13) who did a research project and verified that parents are not actively involved in school activities. This occurrence could be due to the type of school and the geographic area of the school. These two aspects may have an influence on the involvement of parents in school activities, as well as on the reasons why the parents are not actively involved in school activities. Weeto (1998:85) mentions the following two problems that cause lack of parental involvement in school activities on two different levels, namely:

- internal problems; and

- external problems.

3.2 PARENTAL SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT: INTERNAL PROBLEMS

These problems refer to aspects that concern the principal, the educator and the learner in the school situation.

3.2.1 Educators' attitude towards parental involvement

When principals adopt a negative attitude towards parents, their contribution to the school becomes trivial (Weeto, 1997:55). As a result of this factor, educators may also contribute towards the negative attitude, thus aggravating the absence of parents from school activities.

Van der Linde (1993:39) states that many schools admit that they fail to inspire parents to be effectively involved in school activities. On the one hand schools are forced to handle issues alone, without the involvement of parents, as parents no longer feature at school. Weeto (1997:55) points out that, schools on the other hand

seem to be too demanding, expecting parents to feature in school issues when they are not afforded the chance for joint decision-making with educators on matters that affect the education of their children.

Schools believe that their policies could be dominated by parents who care only for the interest of their own children. This perception surely discourages parents from contributing to school affairs. Van Schalkwyk (1990:51) and Walde and Baker (1990:320) argue that parents are not knowledgeable about school affairs, since they have become more like spectators regarding concerns about the education of their children. Parents cannot see the importance of involvement without the application of section 2(3)(1) of the Schools Act (SA, 1996) which states that every parent must cause every learner for whom he or she is responsible to attend school from the age of six until the child reaches fifteen of grade 9. This clause is further supplemented by section 6(a) and (b) which states that: a parent who fails to comply will be guilty of an offence and liable to conviction to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not more than six months (SA, 1996).

The main problem is that the enforcement of the legislation has to take place and section 6(b) of the same Act has to apply especially to principals of schools who are guilty of the same offence. In other words, the heads of institutions should take it upon themselves to address community meetings where parents can be informed about the Schools Act before the registration of learners commences.

Parents are the real problem in the provision of education as they are not constructive in dealings with educators. Educators maintain that parents do not know how they conduct their profession because the parents are only keen on featuring in school activities. However, educators seem to fail to realize that parents behave as they do due to a lack of knowledge about the educators' problems. These conflicts in the provision of education make it difficult for school authorities to optimize the involvement of parents in the school activities (Zengele & Mosoetsa, 2003:1).

If parents could be involved in school activities, they would be constructive and supportive in their dealings with the school. Breen, Barratt-Pugh, Rivalland and Rohl

(1994:IV) point out that schools build on the successful learning provided at home by parents, striving to manage a mutual relationship between parents and educators. They work harmoniously in the spirit of a good healthy partnership, thus helping the learner to achieve success.

Furthermore, the educators' attitude is stressed by Weeto (1997:55) when he states that educators usually contribute to the marked absence of parents at school level. Educators may feel inferior when they have to deal with parents who are more influential, richer or more highly educated than they are. Educators then fail to exchange ideas about the progress of the learner when they are faced by such parents. The only way in which they can put aside this burden is by not informing parents about their children's performance or current school activities. If parents are poor and uneducated, educators sometimes ensure that no contact is made with them (Weeto, 1997:55).

3.2.2 The school climate as a deterrent to parental involvement

Both learners and educators are elements of the school climate as they are actively involved in the school as an organization (Van der Westhuizen, 1995:631). School climate consists of two facets, namely organizational climate and educational climate. According to Van der Westhuizen (1995:631) organizational climate is relevant to educators and is the result of certain factors from within the management situation which influence the quality of the working life of educators as well as their perceptions. Educational climate refers to the result from actions between the educator and the learner. These results can have a positive or negative influence on the educational situation. It refers to how learners experience the quality of their working lives as determined by their relationships with their educators. The management style of the principal also determines the quality of mutual relationships with the learner.

Badenhorst, Calitz, Van Schalkwyk, Van Wyk and Kruger (1993:79) refer to the climate of a school as a perceivable influence of all the aspects of the school on the

attitude, motivation and work of all the people at the school. Those aspects of the school are (Badenhorst *et al.*, 1993:81-83):

- The nature of the work

- The people

- The architecture and environment

- The history and culture

- The organizational structure

- The leadership style

- The interpersonal relationships

School climate is mostly conceptualized by four perceptions, namely (Badenhorst *et al.*, 1993:81-83):

- Educator- principal behaviour

- Organizational health of a school

- Learner – control orientation

- The managerial system perception

3.2.2.1 Educator-principal behaviour

Halpin and Croft describe organizational climate in terms of the effect of the behavioural interaction of educators mutually as well as with the principal. These effects are depicted on a continuum ranging from an open to a closed climate.

- **The open climate:** This refers to an attitude of openness prevailing between the principal and members of staff and between educators and learners.

- **The autonomous climate:** This refers to a high degree of autonomy enjoyed by educators and learners. It is an indication of a more human as opposed to a task-oriented management style.

- **The controlled climate:** This displays a high task-orientated management style.

- **The familiar climate:** This refers to the disposition between the principal and staff which is jovial and friendly in job situations.

- **The paternal climate:** This is characterized by closeness as a result of passivity of the principal which leads to lack of cooperation, uninvolvement and low morale being discernible among educators.

- **The closed climate:** This is characterized by a high degree of uninvolvement of educators and learners, with little job satisfaction and a high degree of staff turnover.

3.2.2.2 The organizational health of a school

This type of perspective can be measured and described by looking at ten determinants of a healthy organizational climate at school (Badenhorst *et al.*, 1993:82):

- **Goal focus:** There should be an aim to achieve goal objectives of the school in the maintenance of good discipline.

- **Communication adequacy:** Involvement of the community in the sharing of ideas is of vital importance for building healthy relationships within the community at large.

- **Optimal power equalization:** Power-sharing when dealing with decisions will enhance the quality of education standards.

- **Effective resource utilization:** Utilization of adequate resources by all will boost the morale and discipline of the school at all times.

- **Cohesiveness morale:** All committees of the school as an organization should work as hand and glove to support one another at all times in unity.

- **Innovativeness:** For good quality development of education, the school vision and mission should take the upper hand in developing educational standards, with commitment to the reconstruction and excellence of an effective teaching and learning culture.

- **Autonomy:** Parental involvement should be encouraged for the betterment of the school.

- **Adaptability:** Parental partnerships with educators should be present within the school structure.

- **Problem-solving adequacy:** Sharing of ideas and parental involvement will ease the solving of problems at school level.

3.2.2.3 Pupil-control orientation

Here the School Management Team and the staff approach to controlling learners' behaviour and discipline is the way in which to measure and describe the school climate. This perspective is an important central aspect within the school as it concerns the maintenance of discipline and control of learners' behaviour.

The attitude of the School Management Team and staff towards learners result in various forms of discipline, measurable on a continuum from a custodial form of disciplining to a humanistic form. A democratic climate emanates from schools with a humanistic approach to learner control and discipline, whilst custodial schools have a strict learner-behavioural control characterized by rigid discipline. Learners have little freedom and participation (Heystek, 1998:15-20).

3.2.2.4 The managerial systems perspective

This perspective refers to the important variable between the functions and activities of a manager and the effectiveness of an organization. The manner in which certain

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managerial functions are actualised by management, leads to certain types of organizational climates. Linkert identifies four managerial systems each representing a specific organizational climate:

- **The exploitive-authoritative system**

This system is characterized by a lack of mutual trust and cooperation, and little participation by staff in decision- making.

- **The benevolent-authoritarian system**

This system has a lesser degree of participation by staff in decision-making.

- **The consultative management system**

This is a transitional management system, for example changing an authoritative system to a participative system.

- **The participative system**

There is a high degree of trust and cooperation in this system. There is transparency, supportive leadership and participative management, and interpersonal relationships are closed. At the same time this system has a warm and friendly spirit of "Ubuntu" (Badenhorst et al., 1993: 81-83).

The African National Congress (1994:61) cautions that it is imperative that structures of governance at schools should reflect the interest of all stakeholders and the community it is serving.

3.2.3 Communication channels between home and school

The important role that the home plays in children's school learning has long been recognized, as recent years have seen a surge in the development of programmes designed to increase family involvement in their children's education. A number of reasons can be advanced for this activity. Firstly, there is the cumulative impact of research findings underlining the importance of the home in contributing to children's

school progress. Secondly, there are reform efforts that focus on the schools to improve student retention rates and achievement, by providing new curricula and materials. Thirdly, there is a review of radical changes in the structure and function of families giving rise to concern. Families are under pressures of varying kinds to provide the conditions that foster children's scholastic development (Kellaghan, Sloane, Alvarez & Bloom, 1993:xi).

The above statement proves and shows that the home environment is a powerful factor in determining the academic success of the learners, their level of school achievement, their interest in school learning and the number of years of schooling they will receive. Therefore, parents from a variety of different cultural backgrounds and with different levels of education, income, or occupational status can provide a stimulating home environment that supports and encourages the learning of their children (Kellaghan *et al.*, 1994:145). This shows that there are various ways in which the school can communicate effectively with parents on a regular basis (Barnard, 1996:434):

- Written communication: In the formulation of written communication, be it an examination paper or a circular to parents, simplicity and clarity are of the utmost importance (Badenhorst, 1993:30). It should be beneficial, useful, indispensable and conveying a message.

- Personal notes: This is in the form of a written note to a parent, requesting a meeting with an authority of the school regarding a matter requiring parental involvement.

- Classroom newsletters: The educator writes a note or information regarding the classroom as well as the learners' progress at school, requesting parent input.

- Telephone calls: This is a form of communication whereby there is direct contact with the parent and the matter concerned is resolved through a telephone call.

- Travelling diaries: The learner has a diary to jot down important matters to be dealt with at school and the educator uses it to write information for parental attention.

- Bulletin boards: Important matters are displayed on the board to be read by all.

- The school prospectus: Information of the school regarding the requirements is written for learners' attention, for example: uniform, discipline and general policies to be adhered to.

- Home visits: Timetable of visits by the educator to the homes of the learners for parents' attention.

A lack of communication regarding command structures and poor links with the community give rise to negative attitudes on the part of the educators and the parents. This can inhibit functional parent-educator contact. On the one hand, Weeto (1997:59) argues that the absence of parents in school activities could be caused by inadequate communication between home and school. On the other hand, Kruger *et al.* (2004:67) point out that, without cooperation between the parents and the educator, the learner cannot be sufficiently educated. Both the parent and the educator have special and important roles to play in the education of the learner, thus the communication channel between the two is of vital importance.

If there is only one-way communication between home and school, it creates the problem of a lack of parental involvement. The chances of parents paying visits to the school, is a potentially stimulating thought. If parents are not given the platform to air their views concerning the education of their children, the result will be negative and communication will suffer.

It should be remembered that the parent is the primary educator of the learner and has responsibilities and accountabilities that are attendant upon parenthood. These responsibilities and accountabilities entail three categories given by Van Wyk (as quoted by Weeto, 1997:6):

- Physical care: The parent is the only educator who stays with his/her child until he/she attains adulthood, thus he/she takes care of the physical development of the child more than the educator does.

- Emotional and spiritual development: The parent, as a primary educator, takes care of the emotional and spiritual development of the child. This builds the child's character in respect of honesty, diligence, obedience, dependability and patience.

- Education and teaching: A family is a primary educational institution. In a home, a child receives his/her very first teaching from his/her parent (Cheung *et al.*, 1996:3).

On the one hand, Barnard (1996:430-431) argues that at times complicated technical language is used by educators. Parents then fail to understand communication on policy matters and issues related to learners' behaviour. Parents therefore interpret messages wrongly, and are thus unable to participate in school activities.

On the other hand, Weeto (1997:61) points out that communication based on the spoken word may be time-consuming and uneconomic in terms of money. It should be realized that language carries along with it not only facts, but also emotions. Furthermore the content of the message is exposed to filtration on its way from the encoder to the receiver. Thus parents can react in a negative way due to the incorrect messages delivered by their children from the educators. Gryffenberg (1991:46) stresses that these factors contribute to a lack of parental involvement at school.

Jowett and Baginsky (1991:43) feel that communication between home and school is an integral component of the process of parental involvement, whilst Barnard (1996: 411) has a feeling that educators fail to realize the importance of the following factors in establishing a good relationship with parents:

- making positive aspects of school activities known to parents for promotion of pride and support in school promotion;

- interpreting the strengths and weaknesses of the school;

- generating trust and interest in parents, ensuring their involvement in school activities; and

- communicating effectively, because communication can be a hindrance in parental involvement in the sense that, if parents view the principal and staff in different ways, some will view them with fright while others may view them as threats.

Therefore Barnard (1996:429) laments this state of affairs, because parents have to be trained and advised so that they should have a say and be an asset to the school structure.

Communication becomes a distorted factor, due to children reporting subjectively because of their fear that their parents may discover how they are performing at school (Badenhorst *et al.*, 1993:37). They might not hand over written notices or circulars, or they might not give oral messages to their parents. Breakdown of communication channels between home and school could result. This may even contribute seriously to the lack of parental involvement. Educators contribute to the non-involvement of parents through the wrong attitude they display. They perceive that their task requires only educated people, thus fail to accommodate parents in school activities. Communicating well with parents and making them feel welcome, are proud assets of any good school (Barnard, 1996:429).

According to Kellaghan *et al.* (1993:151), a parental involvement programme can often provide a basis for penetration into a community, leading action in areas such as health. These programmes might also be combined with more general efforts to improve communication between home and school concerning learners' learning activities. Piek (1991:148) maintains that communication is the key to positive parental involvement for parents and educators; they should talk to one another. By doing so, parents will become involved in the formal education of their children. Problems that may occur can be intercepted and resolved timely as communication

can take place mainly in two ways: by formal parent bodies and by informal parental involvement (Piek, 1991:148).

3.2.3.1 Formal parent bodies

These are all committees of the school, including the School Governing Body and the School Management Team. Parents should be encouraged to become involved, as they have an effect on the daily functioning and management of the school. Registration class committees can be formed as well. Parents of a specific register class can meet on a regular basis and find ways to co-operate with educators in order to improve the classroom environment. In this regard it is important that parents support educators (Piek, 1993:118).

3.2.3.2 Informal parental involvement

This refers to parents who feel that they are not qualified to be considered for election to formal parent bodies such as the School Governing Body. They might lack the time, the experience or the inclination to participate on this level. However, such parents might still be concerned about the education of their children. They might wish to create a successful learning environment at home, yet might feel excluded from their children's actual schooling. There are a number of ways in which parents may become involved at the school (Piek, 1993:118):

• **Regular contact with educators**

Parents should make use of invitations to parents' meetings and open-day classroom meetings. They should attend fund-raising activities like concerts, stokvels, sports activities, exhibitions and social events. These form part of the diary of all schools and provide opportunities for valuable informal contact with educators (Piek, 1993:118).

• **Parent-educator interviews**

Interviews are usually organized by the school on a regular basis. They provide the opportunity for information sharing that may have an effect on the education of the learners.

Research suggests that parents' involvement in the school positively influences educators' attitudes towards parents and builds up a healthy communication relationship (Piek, 1993:118-119).

3.2.4 Educators' perception of their profession

Educators play a major role in the development of their learners, and research shows that both learners and parents regard educators as the most important factor in students' success (Masutha & Ackermann, 1999:243).

At school, educators make sure that all children experience success by providing the following (Masutha & Ackermann, 1999:243):

- a learning programme that takes into account learners' developing knowledge, skills and strategies;

- an understanding that each learner is different and will need to be supported in different ways in the classroom programme; and

- a response to the needs of all learners in the class. They should guide children in their efforts, offering praise, help and support when it is needed.

In addition to the above, Lehmanowsky (1991:107), Thomson (1991:145) and Edmonds (1992:241) point out that educators play a major role in the development of the learners. Those learners even perceive the school as a more caring agent than their family or their peers.

The educators' perceived behaviour significantly influences learners' behaviour in various ways, for example: their self- concepts, level of aspirations, self-expectations, achievement motivation and actual achievement, school attendance,

classroom behaviour, discipline, as well as their attitude towards their school and educators (Masutha & Ackermann, 1999:243).

In our troubled world, educators should not only teach. They also have to be social workers, doctors and nurses, priests, even mothers and fathers to many children who are suffering (Masutha & Ackermann, 1999:243).

Educators' expectations stem mainly from their evaluation of their learners and these are often unintentionally reflected in their behaviour and in the message that they communicate to their learners (Masutha & Ackermann, 1999:243).

3.2.5 Educators' lack of experiencing parental involvement

As professional people, educators are currently acquiring increasing knowledge and skills as higher requirements are set for educator training. Moreover, the professional organizations acquire recognition and increasing demands are made in respect of educator autonomy.

As mentioned before, Gryffenberg (1991:45) states that educators are trained to handle only learners and not parents. This seems to be one reason why educators fail to accommodate parents in school activities and why, as a result , they are facing serious problems in trying to involve parents in school activities. Weeto (1997:59) and Oosthuizen (1992:61) maintain that principals believe that their "ill-defined parents meetings" are the only ways in which they can optimize parental involvement in school activities. However, usually these meetings do not address the problems of parents as individuals.

According to Weeto (1997:59), the biggest mistake in the education system is that educators have not been appointed on the basis of whether they have the knowledge or experience to handle and work with parents at school. Those educators are being appointed on the basis of the qualifications they have acquired. As long as only these criteria are being followed, it will be difficult to assess the success of co-operation between the parents and the school (Weeto, 1998:59).

Badenhorst *et al.* (1993:110) argue that the problem is that educators and schools tend to operate in isolation from the culture of teaching and learning. There is a break between parents and educators, as well as a lack of mutual respect between home and school. As mentioned in "Educators' perception of their profession" (Badenhorst *et al.*, 1993:110), educators assume that they are not supposed to inform parents about what they are to do.

Educators are therefore of the opinion that they have or want to exclude parents, instead of deciding together with parents on issues of mutual interest and learners progress. The outcome of this is coded by Breen *et al.*, (1994:4):

- Parents

    i. do not want to get involved;

    ii. do not know how to get involved and what is expected of them; and

    iii. do not have time to get involved in school matters.

- Educators

    i. regard themselves as superior and think that they know better;

    ii. do not want to work with parents;

    iii. do not know how to involve parents and how to utilize them;

    iv. are negative towards parents and regard them as inferior, intruding and troublesome;

    v. are often afraid of parental challenges and therefore keep them at a distance; and

    vi. do not see a role and function for the parent in the teaching "factory".

According to Badenhorst *et al.* (1993:110-111), the solution to this problem lies with the principal as he:

- possesses the authority and influence to affect the attitude of the educator positively;

- has the power to create an inviting climate in his school that can motivate parents to get involved;

- can train his staff and parents bodies (SGB) to implement parental involvement effectively;

- should, by virtue of his position, status and authority, initiate parental involvement, develop and control it;

- can, with a changed attitude, realize that the school of the future will accommodate only parents who participate and have formed a partnership with the school diligently; and

- has a role, and a very crucial role, in the creation and establishment of opportunities for optimal and harmonious parental involvement that is independent on the relationship between the parent and the educator.

In addition to the above, Piek (1991:81) stresses that educators must treat parents as welcome guests and not as intruders to be evicted as quickly as possible. They should remember that the process of successful classroom teaching depends on effective contact between parents and educators.

According to Kruger *et al.*, (2004:64), most educators view parental involvement as generally beneficial to the learners with whom they are working and welcome a close relationship with parents.

Dekker (1993:155) describes parental involvement as an aspect that helps parents to discover their strengths, potentialities and talents to be used for the benefit of themselves, the learner and the school. These concepts of parental involvement take the form of (Dekker, 1993:155):

- Cooperation: Working together to the same end by mutual understanding between the parents and the educators.

- Participation: Active initiative by the parents together with the educator for achieving common goals and objectives of the school as an organization.

- Partnership: Involving parents in a working relationship with the educators, characterized by a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and the willingness to negotiate. Sharing of information, responsibility, skills, decision-making and accountability.

Parents support and uphold the school ethos in supervising learners' homework at home. Thus learners will be encouraged to have confidence in themselves and in their own abilities. At the same time the foundations of successful learning will be established (Breen et al., 1994:iv).

Lemmer and Squelch (1994:93) state that there should be mutual cooperation, sharing and support from the parents at every school. Then the educators will not experience a lack of parental involvement. The school will inculcate an atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning which will be promoted harmoniously.

Educators are therefore in a position to establish very direct and close links with learners and hence have a great influence on effecting changes in individual behaviour. They can support the ethos of the school by means of (Badenhorst & Scheepers, 1995:25):

- Example

- Direct inculcation through discussion

- Encouraging learners to comply with the value system of education

- Punishment of non-compliance in a form of detention (Badenhorst & Scheepers, 1995:25)

3.3 PARENTAL SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT: EXTERNAL PROBLEMS

The focus here is on the external factors such as the communities, structures, the School Governing Body and HIV/AIDS. These factors all have an effect on parental involvement.

The State of Texas Education (1999:1-2 Web.) states clearly that many parents encounter obstacles in participating in their children's education. Barriers to involvement reported by parents and educators (1999. Web._ http://www.cppp.org/kidscount/education/parental-involvement) include:

- Different ideas among parents and educators on what constitutes involvement

- A less than welcoming atmosphere towards visitors in schools and classrooms

- Negative or neutral communication from schools

- Insufficient training for educators on how to reach out to both mothers and fathers

- Lack of parental education and parental skills

- Time and job pressure

- Language barriers

3.3.1 Parents' ignorance and fear of exposure

The National Centre for Education Statistics (NCES, 2002-03:1) stresses that cultural or socio- economic differences and parent attitudes about the school are some of the barriers that cause ignorance and fear of exposure among parents. Ignorance has therefore, destroyed the morale of many a parent in that parents often consider themselves to be uneducated, poor, unemployed and destitute. They have similar reasons for not attending meetings. They fear to be elected to the School Governing Body, to take responsibility and be held accountable.

If parents can be helped to challenge their views of the culture of their homes and communities, then a small step will be taken in enabling their voices to be heard in the learning of their children and in their own educational development (EBSCO-host, 2004:1). Most parents desire to be part of their child's education, as well as collaborators in decision-making at school. This culture of fear that is pervasive in so many schools is a barrier both to collaboration and to working across differences in race and culture. The companion to this fear is a culture of blame as found in the USA, in which low-income African American and Latino children are often perceived as limited by their socio- economic status (EBSCO-host, 2004:1).

According to parents, education is the educators' responsibility and they care very much about the progress of their children at school (Sondlane, 2000:13).

Kruger *et al.* (as quoted by Vanclegrift and Green, 1992: 58-59), list the following types of parents according to their involvement:

Type 1: Parents who support their children at home and are actively involved in school activities.

Type 2: Parents who support their children at home, but are not actively involved in school activities.

Type 3: Parents who are difficult to identify. They may attend meetings and may even participate actively in some school activities, but they do not give their children any support at home.

Type 4: Parents who do not support their children nor do they participate actively in school activities. They are uninvolved and difficult to reach.

Some parents become dormant, because they expect to discuss issues like school curricula at school meetings, but are asked instead how to get other parents to ensure that their children come to school rested and fed so that they can do better in tests. Parents often feel frustrated in this kind of meeting, especially when discussions centre around the budget. They complain that the facts tell them what they already know: that few learners can read well, are proficient in maths and can

do science, and when they try to move discussions to topics like the high rate of suspensions, how learner assignments are done, principals and others react angrily and often blame the parents for the poor test results.

On the whole, there are parents who are ignorant whilst at times the manner in which meetings are conducted result in parents no longer attending meetings.

The State of Texas Education (1999:2) states clearly that mothers and fathers can become directly involved in children's education by:

- overseeing the child's homework;

- setting a time each day for homework to be done;

- checking the child's work for completeness and understanding;

- limiting time spent with friends and watching television;

- providing support for educators; and

- taking advantage of opportunities to become involved with school administration and policy development.

3.3.2 Parents' emphasis on the *in loco parentis* principle

The doctrine of *in loco parentis* was imported from English law as a responsibility tantamount to no education at all, and then the right to choose or manage would be a subspecies of educational right.

If parents are to be regarded as the appropriate educational decision-makers, then the demand should be, not for each parent individually to select each child's school, but for parents to determine collectively what characteristics should be common to all schools; thus eliminating the differences in quality which could underpin this right to choose in education.

Van der Linde (1993:40) states that some parents do not wish to get involved in school activities because they are afraid that by so doing, they will expose the weakness of their children to their educators.

On the other hand, younger parents who are literate will in most cases be actively involved. They will at all times challenge educators' ability and competence.

Parents get frustrated by the fact that educators relinquish their role *in loco parentis* - they are regarded as spectators in educators in the education of their children. They will not see the benefit of featuring in school activities.

3.3.3 Parents' safe-guarding of their own interests

This type of parent will be seen at school only if:

* the child fails at the end of the year;

* the child's report is not issued at the end of the term; or

* when death strikes within the family.

In the case of secondary school, it occurs when grade 12 results have been published.

Munn (1993:66) points out that parental involvement has been essentially the activity of private citizens seeking family advantage. Those parents relate to the school as private persons attempting to secure the best for their own children in a value system which is taken for granted on both sides.

3.3.4 HIV/AIDS and education

This epidemic has swept across the world in an alarming way. Educators die in great numbers and as a result, education suffers and learners are without a helper. Parents also die, leaving the children poor and destitute with no-one to take care of them. The Department of Social Welfare is addressing this problem. There is evidence of this in countries like Zambia and Swaziland (UNAIDS 2000).

Unfortunately at the same time, AIDS is also threatening the extent and quality of education systems. HIV is reducing the numbers of children at school. HIV positive women have fewer babies, who may not survive for long, while simultaneously, up to a third of their babies are themselves infected with the virus and may not survive school age. An example is the case of Nkosi Johnson who was adopted by the Johnson family, but who died after addressing the world first AIDS conference in South Africa.

3.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter the literature review focused on the problems that are linked to parental involvement in school activities.

The first part of the chapter was devoted to internal problems concerning parental school involvement. Five specific problems were identified, namely educators' attitude towards parental involvement, the school climate as a deterrent, communication channels between home and school, educators' perception of their profession and their lack of experiencing parental involvement.

The second part of the chapter looked at external problems concerning parental school involvement. These problems ranged from parents' ignorance and fear of exposure to HIV/AIDS and education.

The next chapter will focus on the empirical research.

CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapters form a background to the investigation contained in this research.

- Chapter 2 provides a theoretical background to the nature of parental involvement in school activities.

- Chapter 3 focuses on the problems linked to parental involvement.

These chapters clearly illustrate that lack of parental involvement in the education of the child should be investigated. In this chapter, discussion is based on the empirical research and attention will be focused on the research design and the construction of the questionnaire as a measuring instrument through which presentation and analysis of the responses to the questionnaires will be explained. The pilot study, target population, sampling method and data analysis will also be dealt with.

The aim of the empirical research is:

- to test the validity of the revelations from the literature study;

- to determine the degree of parental involvement; and

- to explore the reasons for non-involvement of parents in the education of their children especially those in the informal settlements next to the township in the Johannesburg South Mega District (D11).

The substantive literature study, together with the preliminary research, serves to identify some of the crucial issues pertaining to the topic and indicate the gaps in the existing knowledge concerning parental involvement.

According to Fuller and Olsen (1998:30), evidence from the literature has proved that parental involvement plays a significant role in the education of the child.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

This is a blueprint for conducting a study to maximise control over factors that could interfere with the study's desired outcome (Burns & Grove, 1997:50).

4.2.1 The quantitative survey

It is a major focus in the study and involves generating numerical data to address the research objectives or questions and to generalise the outcomes. Vermeulen (1998:14) points out that quantitative research assumes an objective social reality, as it studies the behaviour and other observable phenomena. It analyses social reality into variables. It also uses preconceived concepts and theories to determine data to be collected. An exploratory, descriptive, quantitative survey was used in this study in an attempt to explore and describe the phenomena in real life: to identify possible reasons for non-parental involvement in education.

According to Neuman (1994:30), the quantitative method is a data collection technique in the form of numbers. It uses experiments and surveys. Experiments are used in laboratories or in real life, while quantitative research methods ask people questions by means of written questionnaires that are mailed or handed directly to people (Neuman, 1994:31).

Babbie (1998:36) describes the quantitative method as the method used in social research to provide the researcher with numerical data. According to Babbie (1998:37), quantification makes the researcher's observation more explicit and easier to aggregate, and it summarises data. Creswell (1994:17) supports this by saying that a quantitative survey is a data collection method that provides a quantitative or numerical description of some fraction of the population, namely the sample, through the process of asking questions. According to this method, the researcher counts or measures behaviour in some way, and assigns scores as a result of the data

collection process. The scores are used as the basics for making comparisons and drawing conclusions (Vockel, 1993:230).

In addition to what has been said by scholars in the previous paragraphs, Scott (1996:59) states that this research paradigm is used in experimental, *ex post facto*, factor analysis, correlation studies and surveys. It is an indirect measure of actual behaviour, since it asks people to recall what they were doing or characterizes these beliefs and actions in accordance with predetermined options designed by the researcher (De Marrais, 1994:20).

As in most instances, however, there are advantages and disadvantages to this method of research.

4.2.1.1 Advantages of quantitative surveys

Nojaja (2003:92-93) lists the following advantages of a quantitative survey:

- It provides a basis of comparing one result with another.

- It provides ways to deal with large bodies of data.

- Statistical techniques allow hypotheses to be severely tested.

4.2.1.2 Disadvantages of quantitative surveys

The following disadvantages have been identified (Nojaja, 2003:92-93):

- Complex psychological phenomena are difficult to quantify and may restrict the researcher's attention to simple and superficial aspects of human nature.

- Data converted to numbers are removed from actual behaviour.

- Experiences of the participant often fail to show the true nature of the data quantified.

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4.3 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

For the purpose of this research, a structured questionnaire was selected as the research tool. The rationale for the use of a questionnaire will now be presented.

4.3.1 The questionnaire as a research tool

A questionnaire is a self-reporting instrument used for gathering data about variables of interest to the researcher and consists of a number of questions that a respondent reads and answers (Best & Kahn, 1993:230).

4.3.1.1 Introduction

A questionnaire refers to a set of questions on a form that is completed by the respondent in respect of a research project designed to collect statistics as part of a survey. According to Best and Kahn (1993:230), the questionnaire is a self-report instrument used for gathering data about variables of interest to the researcher to convert the information directly given by people into data. In this sense the questionnaire became appropriate to gather data for this research in that it would elicit factual data about practices prevailing in Johannesburg South Mega District (D11) schools regarding parental involvement in school activities.

For the collection of data regarding parental involvement in school activities from D11 schools, the researcher used a self-administered questionnaire.

According to Bourque (1995:3), a self-administered questionnaire is completed by a respondent without the presence of the researcher. It is either sent by mail or delivered and the administration of its completion is unsupervised. A survey is one of the tools used in the collection of research data and is ultimately dependent on the purpose of the study (Tuckman, 1994:216).

Data for this study as stated before were collected through the use of the structured questionnaire survey technique in the light of the literature study. The structured questionnaire for this study contained close-ended questions. These questions were designed in a clear, unambiguous and uniform way. This minimised potential errors

from respondents and coders. Participation of the respondents in this survey was voluntary, and questionnaires were designed so as to engage their interest and encourage their cooperation.

According to Burns and Grove (1997:358), structured questionnaires are used for quantification and analysing results more efficiently. Therefore the aim of this questionnaire was to determine practical partnerships in education at the informal settlement as regard parental involvement in school activities within the D11 schools. The questionnaires were addressed to principals, SGB chairpersons and educators.

Questionnaires were also seen as being cost-effective in this research (Franenkel & Wallen, 1990:336). The reason is that they were easy to administer, since the principals were used as contact persons to distribute and collect the questionnaires.

The use of questionnaires in this research was also based on the following assumptions (Wolf, 1997:422):

● The respondents could read and understand the questions.

● The respondents were willing to answer the questions.

● The respondents were in the position to supply the information to answer the questions, and especially in view of the presumed willingness, to find a suitable approach to encourage parental involvement in school activities.

4.3.2 Types of questionnaires

There are five types of questionnaires as listed by De Vos and Grinnell (2000:52-56) which differ from each other:

4.3.2.1 Mailed questionnaires

This is a questionnaire which is sent off by mail in the hope that the respondent will complete and return it (Grinnell, 1993:216-217). It is designed in such a way that it is not threatening and must create an interesting impression. In addition, it must encourage the respondent to complete it.

4.3.2.2 Telephonic questionnaires

The researcher and the respondent are physically removed from each other, but able to communicate telephonically and the questionnaire contains comprehensive instructions because the field worker does not have the opportunity to consult separate manuals while asking questions (De Vos, 2000:54).

4.3.2.3 Personal questionnaires

The questionnaire is handed to the respondent who completes it on his/her own. The researcher avails himself/herself in case of problems experienced by the respondent (De Vos, 2000:55).

4.3.2.4 Questionnaires delivered by hand

The questionnaires are delivered by hand so that the respondents can complete it in their own time and the questionnaires are collected at a later stage (De Vos, 2000:56).

4.3.2.5 Group administered questionnaires

Respondents in a group complete the questionnaire on their own. Preferably each respondent should receive the same stimulus and complete his/her questionnaire without discussion with other members of the group (De Vos, 2000:152-156). The completed questionnaires will be placed into a specific container and collected by the researcher on a specific predetermined date.

4.3.3 Principles of questionnaire construction

According to De Vos (2000:56-186) a number of basic principles must be taken into consideration when a questionnaire is developed. Some of these are discussed below.

4.3.3.1 Information needed

Before the researcher can decide on the nature of the questionnaire, there must be clarity on precisely what information is to be obtained. The questionnaire must be brief, including only those questions which are absolutely necessary to collect all the relevant information. On the other hand, it must be long enough to incorporate all the questions so that a situation does not arise later where information is missing.

4.3.3.2 The format of the questionnaire

The questionnaire will be influenced by whether it will be a mailed, telephonic, group administered or other type of questionnaire, as well as where, under what circumstances and by whom it will be completed. All questionnaires should have a covering letter stating the person or organization undertaking the research and must be identified. The purpose of the study must be given in order to motivate the respondents. It must indicate the importance of the study (Nojaja, 2003:96).

4.3.3.3 Formulating the questionnaire

A well planned questionnaire complies with the following requirements (Nojaja, 2003:97):

- Sentences must be brief and clear.

- Vocabulary and style must be understandable to the respondents.

- Questions should not be biased and should contain one thought.

- Every question must be relevant to the purpose of the questionnaire.

- The sequence must be from general non-threatening to more sensitive questions (Nojaja, 2003:97).

According to Tuckman (1994:225), questionnaire items must be developed carefully so that they measure a specific aspect of the study's objectives or hypotheses.

4.3.3.3.1 Advantages

Burns and Grove (1997:358-359) list the following advantages of questionnaires:

- As a measuring instrument, a questionnaire is more effective than an interview.

- Many people can be easily contacted.

- It is more economical than an interview.

- Responses can be easily analysed. It is very useful and gathers a large amount of data.

- The respondents remain anonymous and personal contact is minimized.

- Great objectivity can be obtained.

4.3.3.3.2 Disadvantages

The following disadvantages can be distinguished (Burns & Grove, 1997:358-359):

- It is difficult to determine the reliability of a postal questionnaire.

- Correctness of the answers is difficult to determine.

- No provision is made for the independent opinion of the respondent.

- The questionnaire can be completed by someone other than the respondent.

- Questions can be interpreted wrongly by the respondent.

- Because of the anonymity, the respondent is protected, the non-responding individuals cannot be traced and this can lead to poor feedback from the respondent.

For this specific survey, the questionnaire was deemed suitable because all the principals, SGB chairpersons and educators can read and write, and could be

reached easily. Thus the respondents could complete the questionnaire in their own time, and responses could be analysed easily.

Ary and Razavieh (1990:429) found that the questionnaire and the covering letter are the main sources of information that the respondent will refer to in deciding whether or not to complete the questionnaire.

4.4 PILOT STUDY

Ary et al. (1990:428) and Tuckman (1994:235) assert that, in addition to the preliminary check on the questions in order to locate ambiguities, it is desirable to carry out a thorough pre-test of the questionnaire before using it in research. For this pre-test, a sample of individuals from a population similar to that of the research subject should be selected. According to Creswell (1994:17), a pilot study assists the researcher to detect the validity of the instrument. Babbie (1998:159) says no matter how carefully the questionnaire is designed, there is always the possibility of errors. Therefore the surest protection against such errors is to pre-test the questionnaire in full or in part.

According to Burns and Grove (1997:52), a pilot study is frequently defined as a smaller version of a proposed study conducted to refine the methodology. It is developed similarly to the purpose study, using similar objects, the same setting, same treatment and the same data collection and analysis technique. In this investigation, the pilot study found the questionnaire to be appropriate to the study, clear and with a high quality of measurement.

4.5 SELECTION OF STUDY POPULATION

This research handles theories, problems, advantages and solutions concerning parental involvement in the education of the child. Therefore the education of the child implies:

- the involvement of parents as primary educators; and

- educators as secondary educators.

The questionnaires used in this research were aimed at gathering information from both principals and SGB chairpersons, as well as from educators. They also focused on the degree of involvement of parents in school activities for the education of the child, with special references to informal settlements in the Johannesburg South Mega District (D11).

Thus the study population for this survey comprised of principals, SGB members and educators from 52 schools: 35 primary and 17 secondary schools from informal settlement areas. In each of these schools, the principals were approached and requested to assist the researcher in distributing the questionnaires to SGB members and educators.

4.6 PERMISSION

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from Gauteng Education Department.

4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The questionnaires were completed anonymously and respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their individual responses.

4.8 DATA ANALYSIS

This research was conducted as a descriptive, quantitative survey and no hypotheses were formulated. The responses from the usable questionnaires were tallied, percentages calculated and frequencies displayed in various tables in chapter 5. Data were processed and analyzed by means of statistical programmes selected in consultation with the Statistical Consultation Service of the Vaal Triangle Faculty of the North-West University. In this way the raw data were summarized and communicated to the reader of the report (Polit & Hungler, 1997:260).

4.9 RESEARCH RESULTS

The research results obtained from the schools were presented together with brief interpretations and discussions from groups of respondents in an effort to enhance the meaningfulness of the research results.

The following obstacles occurred:

- The response from secondary schools was poor due to negative attitudes of principals.

- There was much incompetence in general at the schools in the township area.

- Cooperation did not prevail, as some claims were made of misplacement of questionnaires and fresh ones had to be issued.

- In some instances not all the respondents completed the questionnaire.

4.10 SUMMARY

This chapter briefly outlined the aims of the empirical research, the research design, the selection of the target population and the principles of questionnaire construction. Results demonstrate that certain school-level factors can influence the amount and character of parental involvement.

The next chapter will present the data analysis and interpretation thereof.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this empirical survey was to determine the following aspects, by means of a questionnaire:

- The nature of parental involvement in school activities.

- Problems that can be linked to parental involvement at school, with special reference to schools in informal settlement areas.

- Problems that educators experience in optimizing parental involvement in school activities, especially in informal settlement areas.

This chapter presents and interprets the research data. Perceptions of respondents (principals, School Governing Bodies and educators) concerning parental involvement in school activities regarding the education of their children are presented and analyzed. As background to aid the interpretation of these responses, personal details with regard to respondents are given. This involves, in the final analysis, a comparison of the respondents' perceptions on parental involvement.

A total number of 364 questionnaires were distributed, of which 112 (30,76%) were returned.

5.2 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was divided into three sections:

Section A contained the questions aimed at determining the principals' perspective:

1.   Biographical information (question A1-A9).

2.   Parental involvement in school activities (question D1-D21).

Section B contained the questions aimed at determining members of the School Governing Bodies' perspective:

1.   Biographical information (question B1-B3).

2.   Parental involvement (question E1-E15).

Section C contained the questions aimed at determining the educators' perspective:

1.   Biographical information (question C1-C8).

2.   Parental involvement in school activities (question F1-F16).

The responses to the various questions will be analyzed below.

5.3 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Biographical data concerning the respondents are shown in tables 5.1-5.7

5.3.1 Age groups

5.3.1.1 Principals

Table 5.1:   Principals per age group

	Frequency	Percentage
21-30 years	0	0
31-40 years	6	19
41-50 years	18	56
50+ years	8	25
Sample size	32	

Graph 5.1: Principals per age group
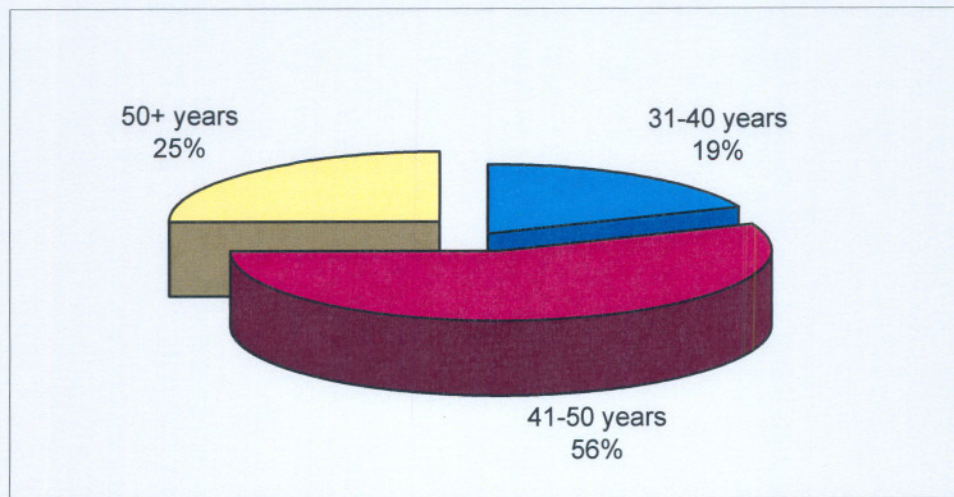
The table above indicates that most principals fall within the ages between 41 – 50 years (56%). They are followed by those in the category of 50+ years (25%), while fewer are 31 - 40 years. There are no principals in the age category between 21 – 30 years (0%).

This implies that maturity has backed up the perceptions of the principals, ensuring valuable insight into the need for parental involvement in educational affairs.

5.3.1.2 Educators

Table 5.2: Educators per age group

	Frequency	Percentage
21-30 years	14	12
31-40 years	57	49
41-50 years	34	30
50+ years	10	9
Sample size	115	

Graph 5.2: Educators per age group
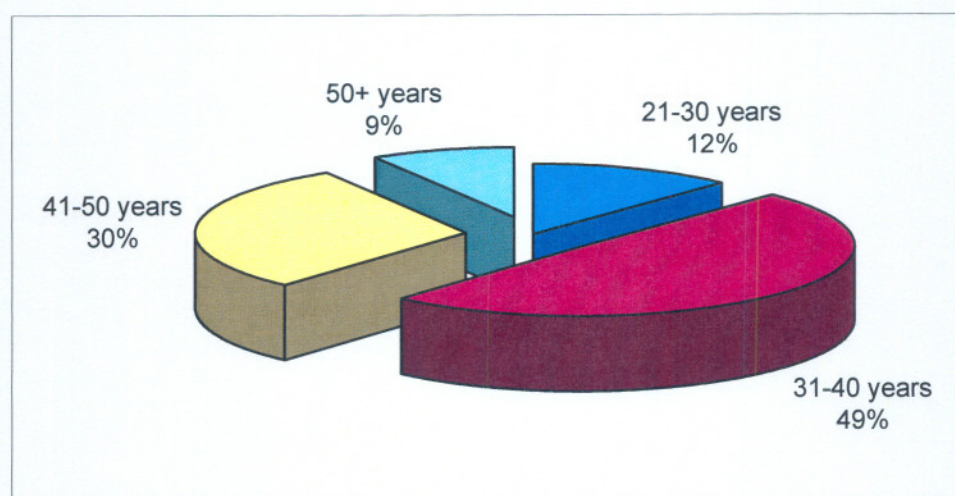
In this table most of the educators are 31 – 40 years of age (49%), followed by those of 41 – 50 years (30%) and then those of 21 – 30 years (12%). Only 9% are in the age category of 50+ years.

There are fewer educators in the age category of 50+ years. This could imply that a number of educators are opting for early retirement, or taking packages in search of greener pastures. The data imply that most perceptions regarding parental involvement come from more mature educators.

5.3.2 Experience

5.3.2.1 Principals

Table 5.3: Experience of principals

	Frequency	Percentage
1-3 years	9	28
4-5 years	3	9
6-8 years	7	22
8+ years	12	38

Sample size	32	

One principal did not indicate years of experience.

Graph 5.3: Experience of principals
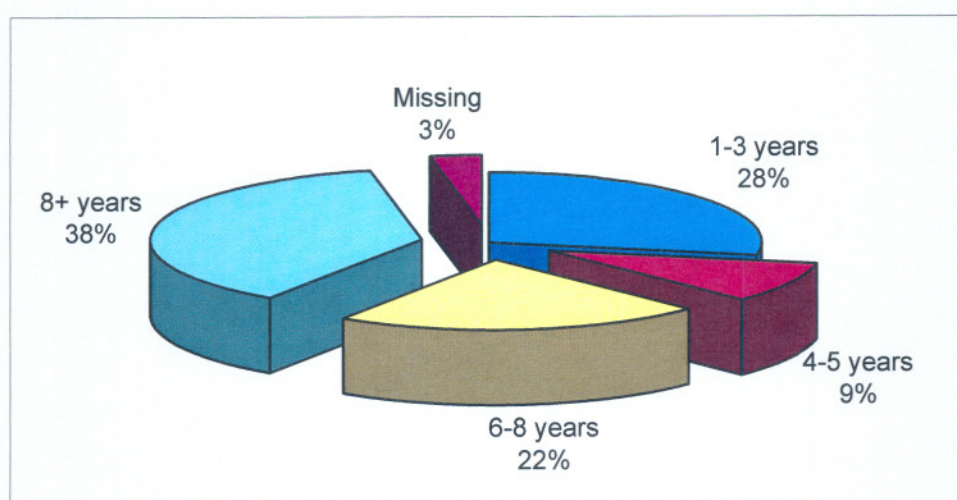
According to the above table most principals in district D11 have more than 8 years experience (38%). The second highest percentage (28%), however, refers to those principals with the least years of experience.

Although the Johannesburg South Mega District can proud itself on a good number of experienced principals, findings of this study also point that many inexperienced principals hold positions in the same district. Their perceptions concerning parental involvement might therefore be thought to be superficial.

5.3.2.2 School Governing Bodies

Table 5.4: Experience of School Governing Bodies

	Frequency	Percentage
1 term	8	32
2 terms	8	32
2+ terms	7	28

Population	25	

Two respondents failed to indicate experience.

Graph 5.4: Experience of School Governing Bodies
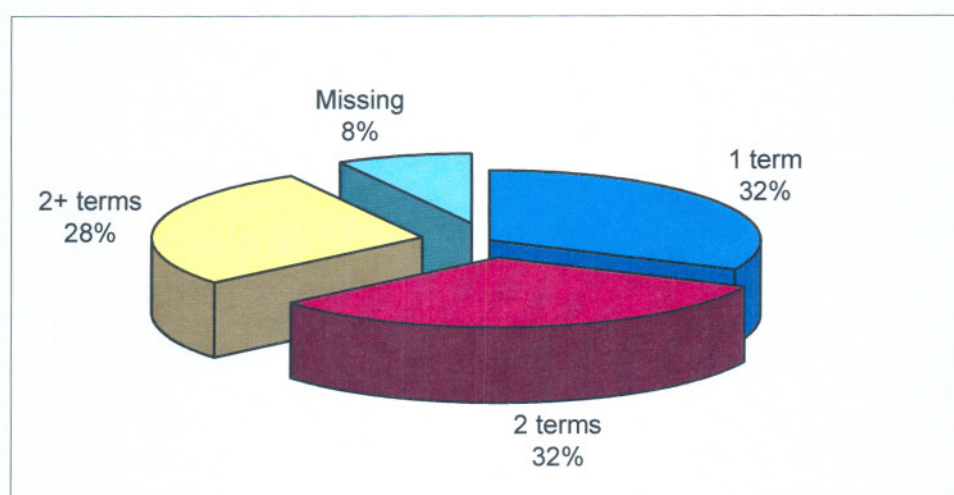
The table points to a more or less equal distribution of respondents' experience.

The data in table 5.4 imply that members of School Governing Bodies are willing to serve for more than one term of office. This would equip them with valuable insight into the degree and quality of involvement at their schools.

5.3.2.3 Educators

Table 5.5:   Experience of educators

	Frequency	Percentage
1-3 years	16	14
4-8 years	27	23
9-15 years	35	30
15+ years	36	32
Sample size	115	

One educator did not indicate years of experience.

Graph 5.5: Experience of educators
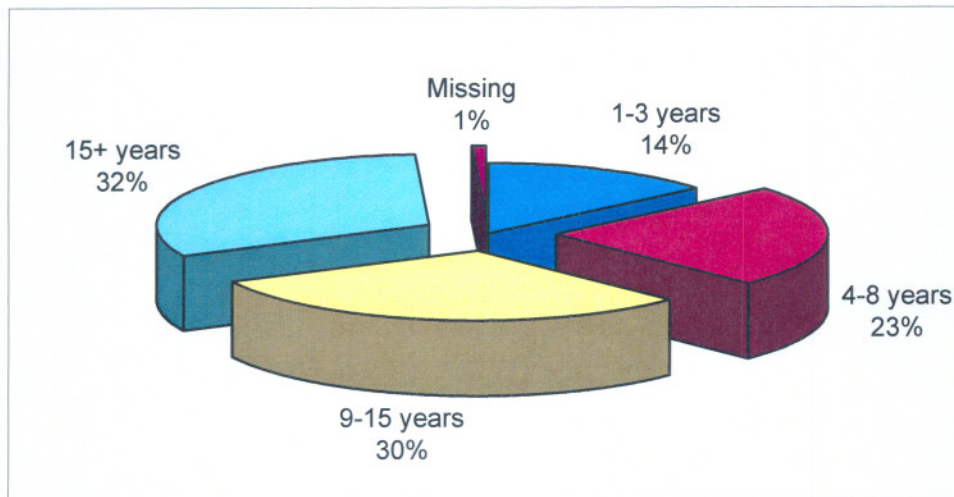
According to the data in table 5.5, most of the educators (62%) have more than 9 years teaching experience.

This could imply that 62% of the respondents who are educators are well versed concerning the need of parental involvement.

5.3.3 Academic qualifications

5.3.3.1 Principals

Table 5.6:   Academic qualifications of principals

	Frequency	Percentage
Matric	3	9
Bachelor's degree	11	35
Hons / B.Ed	11	34
Mater's degree	7	22
Sample size	32	

Graph 5.6: Academic qualifications of principals
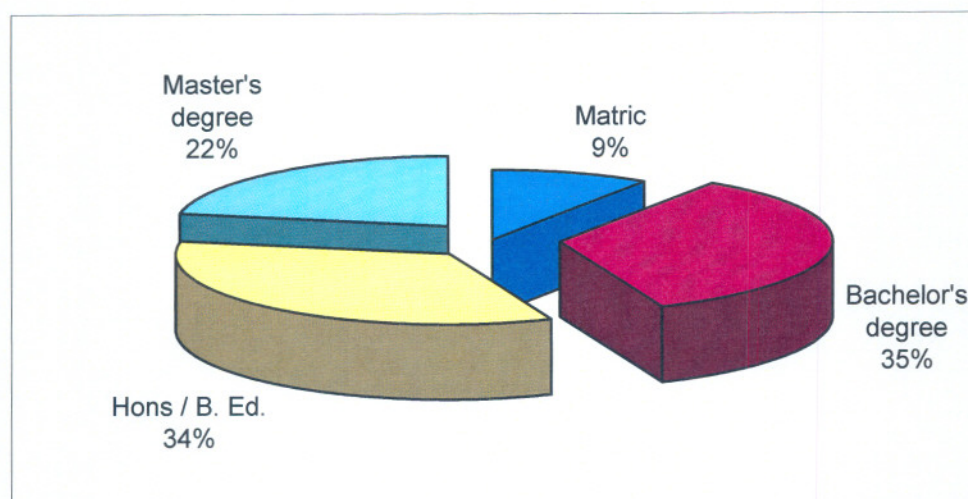
According to the data in table 5.6, three principals (9%) have only a matric certificate. On the other hand, 56% have completed an honours or master's qualification.

This data could imply that persons have been appointed in teaching positions without proper qualifications, but this need not influence their perceptions of parental involvement detrimentally.

5.3.3.2 Educators

Table 5.7: Academic qualifications of educators

	Frequency	Percentage
Matric	60	52
Bachelor's degree	19	17
Hons / B.Ed	16	14
Mater's degree	2	2
Sample size	115	

Eighteen (16%) of the respondents failed to indicate their academic qualifications.

Graph 5.7: Academic qualifications of educators
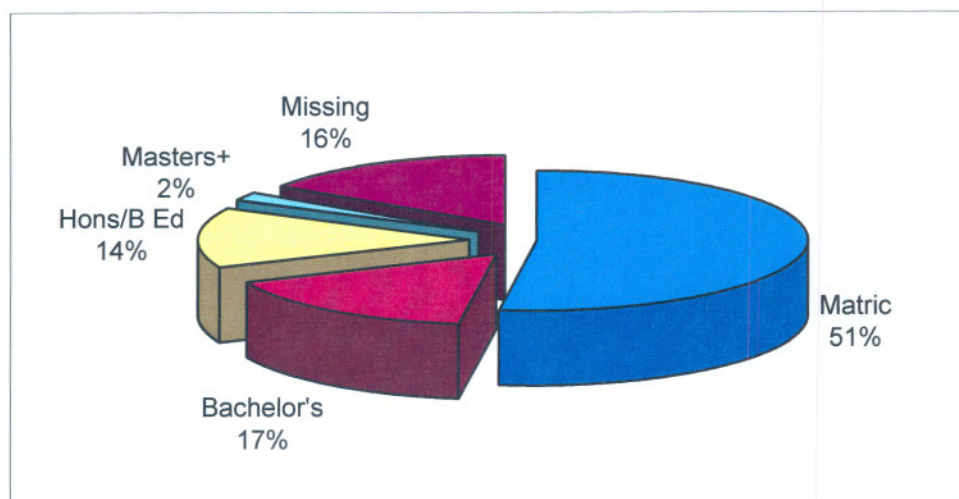
Most educators (62%) hold only a matric certificate. Only 32% of the respondents hold Bachelor's or further degrees.

This is viewed as a matter of concern especially in this district. It seems to imply that unqualified educators hold teaching positions, but this need not jeopardize the findings concerning their perceptions on parental involvement.

5.4 DEMOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Data concerning school types, school grading, principal/educator-learner ratio and economic position regarding respondents are shown in table and graphs 5.1 - 5.6.

5.4.1 Type of school

5.4.1.1 Principals

Table and graph 5.1:   Type of school per principal

	Frequency
State school	28
Private school	2
Sample size	32
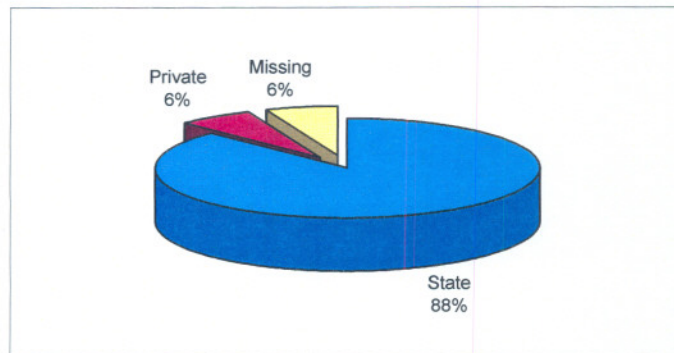
Two respondents failed to indicate their school type.

5.4.2 School grading

5.4.2.1 Principals

Table and graph 5.2:   School grading per principal

	Frequency
P1	1
P2	1
P3	6
P4	21
Sample size	32
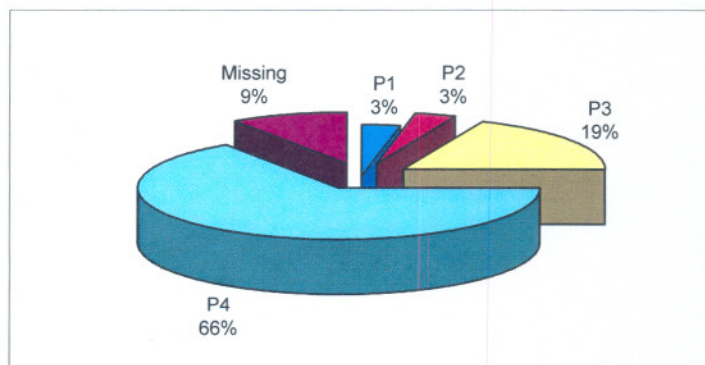
Three respondents (9%) failed to indicate their school grading.

5.4.2.2 Educators

Table and graph 5.3:   School grading per educator

	Frequency
P1	11
P2	2
P3	15
P4	46
Sample size	115
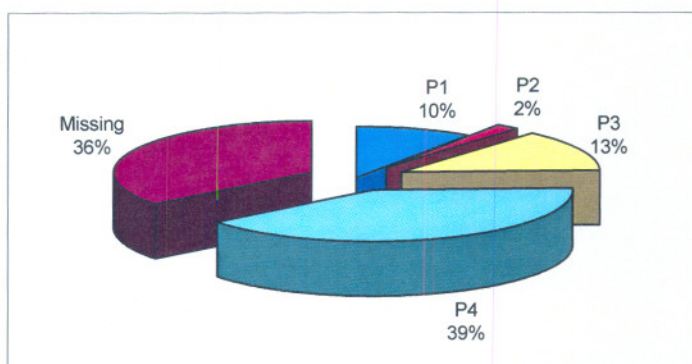
Forty one respondents (36%) failed to indicate their school grading.

5.4.3 Principal/Educator – learner ratio

5.4.3.1 Principals

Table and graph 5.4:   Principal – learner ratio

	Frequency
<500 learners	11
501-700 learners	2
701-1000 learners	15
1000+ learners	46
Sample size	32
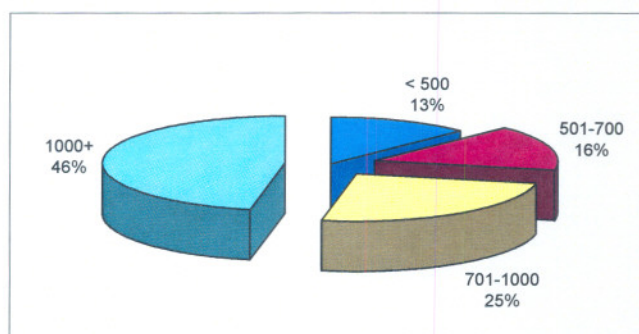
The largest number of principals (46%) is in charge of schools in district D11 with more than 1000 learners. This is followed by 25% who are responsible for 701-1000 learners, 16% for 501-700 learners, while the lowest percentage (13%) is responsible for less than 500 learners.

At least 71% of the respondents would have clear insight into the degree to which and the manner in which parental involvement would make an appreciable difference in the plight of learners.

5.4.3.2 Educators

Table and graph 5.5:   Educator – learner ratio

	Frequency
<500 learners	7
501-700 learners	21
701-1000 learners	32
1000+ learners	52
Sample size	115
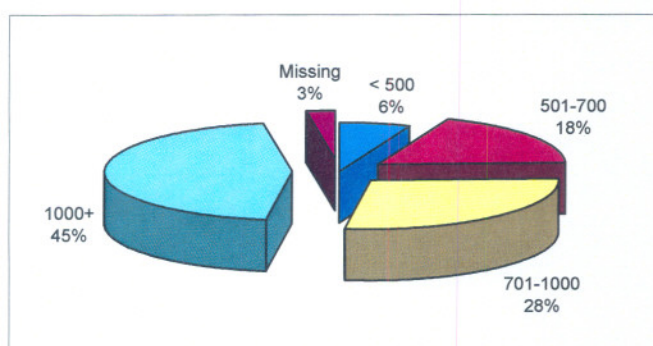
Three respondents failed to indicate the number of learners in their schools.

5.4.4 Socio-economic status of school

Table and graph 5.6:   Principal's perception on socio-economic status of
**   school**

	Frequency
Lower income	27
Middle class	5
Higher income	0
Sample size	32
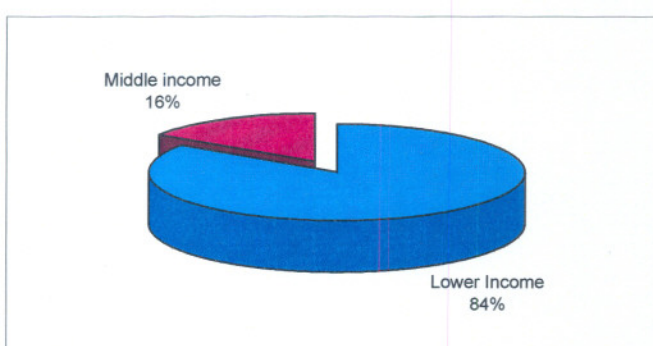
It is disturbingly clear that all these schools in the five informal settlement areas illustrate the plight of the learners concerning the total lack of income to sustain education.

It is glaringly obvious that these principals' perceptions of the need for parental involvement would be decisive. Experience has exposed the fact that parents with lower incomes are inclined to withhold their involvement at school.

5.5 NEGATIVE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

5.5.1 Principal perspective

The following table gives a summary of the responses of the principals on the following seven negative factors.

1.	Statement 1: Schools and parents do not determine school policy.

2.	Statement 3: Education meets the needs of political parties and not of parents.

3.	Statement 8: The 1994 promise of free education encourages parents not to pay school fees.

4.	Statement 16: Parents are not adequately qualified to make contributions to the education of their children.

5.	Statement 17: Parents do not want to intrude in education.

6.	Statement 20: Parents do not assist their children in schoolwork.

7.	Statement 21: Parents do not want to serve on the School Governing Body.

Table 5.8	**Negative factors that influence parental involvement – a principal perspective**

Statement No	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Partly disagree		Partly agree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	10	33	13	43	1	3	4	13	0	0	2	7
3	7	23	8	26	3	10	9	29	3	10	1	3
8	0	0	1	3	1	3	5	16	11	34	14	44
16	5	16	5	16	4	13	9	29	6	19	2	7
17	2	7	3	9	6	19	9	28	10	31	2	7
20	0	0	3	9	3	9	9	28	14	44	3	9

21	1	3	6	19	3	9	11	34	9	28	2	7

F indicates the frequency

5.5.1.1 Statement 1: Schools and parents do not determine school policy

Most respondents (43%) disagree. An additional 33% strongly disagree with this statement. This implies that most principals are aware of the role played by schools and parents concerning school policies.

5.5.1.2 Statement 3: Education meets the needs of political parties and not of parents

The highest response is 29% for partially agreeing with this statement, while 26% disagreed with the statement.

This implies that principals are not in agreement with the issue and might not be objective in their evaluation of it.

5.5.1.3 Statement 8: The 1994 promise of free education encourages parents not to pay school fees

Principals in this district strongly agree with this statement (44%) and 34% agree with it. This factor has caused great concern in the management of many schools in the district.

5.5.1.4 Statement 16: Parents are not adequately qualified to make contributions to the education of their children

The table shows that most principals (29%) partially agree with this statement. This implies that principals see this as influencing parental involvement negatively.

5.5.1.5 Statement 17: Parents do not want to intrude in education

It is clear, from the highest response (31%) and the second highest response (28%) that principals believe that parents do not want to intrude in education.

This seems to imply that parents are ignorant concerning the necessity for their involvement.

5.5.1.6 Statement 20: Parents do not assist their children in schoolwork

According to the highest response 44%, most principals agree with this statement. This could imply that parents are ignorant about the importance of their involvement in this aspect of their children's education.

5.5.1.7 Statement 21: Parents do not want to serve on the School Governing Body

According to the highest response (34%), most principals partially agree with this statement. The second highest response rate (28%) indicates agreement. The literature offers many reasons for this, such as fear of exposing lack of proper educational qualification, illiteracy, fear of victimization and poor working conditions because of working and living far away from school.

This response is in contrast with that of the School Governing Body members' responses to the same question (Statement 14; see graph 5.10).

5.5.2 School Governing Body perspective

The following table gives a summary of the responses of the School Governing Body members on the following five negative factors.

1.   Statement 2: Parents who are elected to the School Governing Body are incompetent.

2.   Statement 3: Status prohibits parents from being actively involved in school activities.

3.   Statement 5: Parents do not receive feedback on their input.

4.   Statement 9: Parents should be trained by the school concerning school matters.

5.   Statement 14: Parents do not want to serve on the School Governing Body.

Table 5.9   Negative factors that influence parental involvement – a School Governing Body perspective

Statement No	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Partly disagree		Partly agree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
2	8	32	9	36	2	8	2	8	2	8	2	8
3	7	28	9	36	3	12	3	12	1	4	2	8
5	8	32	13	52	1	4	1	4	1	4	1	4
9	0	0	3	12	0	0	3	12	12	48	7	28
14	5	20	6	24	5	20	6	24	3	12	0	0

F indicates the frequency

5.5.2.1 Statement 2: Parents who are elected to the School Governing Body are incompetent

The highest response (36%) is that for disagreeing and the second highest (32%) is for strongly disagreeing with the statement. It can therefore be deduced that most members of D11 School Governing Bodies feel capable of fulfilling their involvement obligations. This implies that these respondents have accomplished success in their term of office since its inception in May 2002.

5.5.2.2 Statement 3: Status prohibits parents from being actively involved in school activities

Most respondents disagree (36%) or strongly disagree (28%) with this statement. They seem to be under the impression that status does not count. The implication is that it is important for them to be devoted and dedicated, showing love and care for their children, and putting much effort into assisting their schools actively.

5.5.2.3 Statement 5: Parents do not receive feedback on their input

The response shows that most School Governing Body members in D11 disagree (52%) or strongly disagree (32%) with the statement. This could imply that they are

confident that School Governing Bodies give adequate feedback to parents, promoting parental involvement.

5.5.2.4 Statement 9:   Parents should be trained by the school concerning school matters

The response of 48% of the respondents who agree, and 28% who strongly agree with the statement, could indicate the amount of trust School Governing Bodies have at D11 schools.   This implies that they are eager to assist in the running of educational matters, especially concerning parental involvement.

5.5.2.5 Statement 14: Parents do not want to serve on the School Governing Body

A total of 64% of the respondents partially disagree (20%), disagree (24%) or strongly disagree (20%) with the statement.   This implies, obliquely, that School Governing Body members view their positions as sought after, but, more importantly, that they believe parents to be in favour of involvement in school activities.   This response is in contrast to the principals' response to the same question (statement 21 – principal perspective; see graph 5.9).

5.5.3 Educator perspective

The following table gives a summary of the responses of the educators on the following four negative factors.

1.   Statement 1: Parents do not fully understand their role at school.

2.   Statement 7: Broken families are the cause of parents not featuring in school activities.

3.   Statement 12: Parents are not a component of the education system.

4.   Statement 13: Educators have not been trained in parental involvement.

Table 5.10 Negative factors that influence parental involvement – an educator perspective

Statement No	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Partly disagree		Partly agree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	9	8	20	17	15	13	28	24	29	25	14	12
7	12	11	26	23	7	6	43	38	22	19	4	4
12	57	50	42	37	7	6	5	4	2	2	2	2
13	26	23	36	31	15	13	18	16	14	12	6	5

F indicates the frequency

5.5.3.1 Statement 1: Parents do not fully understand their role at school

A response of 49% of the educators agree (25%) or partially agree (24%) with this statement. This links up with the School Governing Body members' response to their statement 9 (see graph 5.10).

5.5.3.2 Statement 7: Broken families are the cause of parents not featuring in school activities

A total of 57% of the educator respondents either partially agree (38%) or agree (19%) with the statement. This response links up with 2.8.2.8 where it is mentioned that single parents are sometimes prevented from involvement and implies that there are other factors than lack of commitment/interest in their children's education withholding parental involvement in educational activities.

5.5.3.3 Statement 12: Parents are not a component of the education system

Fifty percent of the respondents strongly disagree and 37% disagree with this statement. This links up with 2.3.1, 2.3.2 and 2.3.6 that indicate literature as supporting parents as an important component and implies that educators are eager to see more parental involvement in the learners' education.

5.5.3.4 Statement 13: Educators have not been trained in parental involvement

The highest response (31%) disagrees and 23% strongly disagree with the statement. This implies that the school situation is favourable for more intense and effective parental involvement.

5.6 PARENTAL ATTITUDE

5.6.1 Principal perspective

The following table gives a summary of the responses of the principals on the following three factors concerning parental attitude:

1.   Statement 13: Parents are generally insensitive to information sent out by schools.

2.   Statement 18: Parents bring their children to school a week after the schools reopen.

3.   Statement 19: Parents remove their children from school without proper consultation with school authorities.

Table 5.11   Parental attitude – a principal perspective

Statement No	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Partly disagree		Partly agree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
13	0	0	4	13	5	16	7	23	11	36	4	13
18	1	3	12	38	1	3	11	34	3	9	4	13
19	3	9	7	22	4	13	8	25	7	22	3	9

F indicates the frequency.

5.6.1.1 Statement 13: Parents are generally insensitive to information sent out by schools

Most principals either agree (36%) or partially agree (23%) with this statement. Those who strongly agree (13%) contribute to the 72% who hold this view. This

could imply that principals believe that parents over-emphasize the educators' role of *in loco* parents, neglecting their own important involvement in school activities.

5.6.1.2 Statement 18: Parents bring their children to school a week after the schools reopen

The highest response (38%) disagrees with the statement, but 34% partially agree and 22% either strongly agree or agree with it. Therefore a total of 56% hold the perception that parents do not adhere to the arrangement concerning the first day of school. This links up with the data of statement 18 (see 1.6.1.1), that parents are not sensitive to school information, and can impact negatively on parental involvement.

5.6.1.3 Statement 19: Parents remove their children from school without proper consultation with school authorities

It is noteworthy that the response rates of strongly disagree/disagree and strongly agree/agree with the statement are exactly the same (31%). This implies that not all schools in the five informal settlement areas have identical experiences in this regard. However, 56% of the respondents either partially agree, agree or strongly agree that this occurs at their schools. These results link up with those in the previous two statements (13 and 18) as illustrated in Graph 5.8.

Graph 5.8: Comparison of statements on parental attitude – a principal perspective
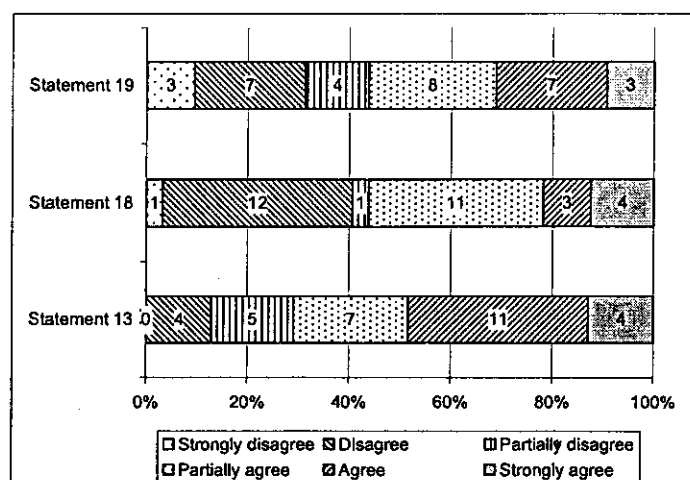
This implies that parents of learners in these five informal settlement areas show lack of sensitivity to school information and therefore to involvement in school activities.

5.6.2 School Governing Body

The following table gives a summary of the responses of the School Governing Body members on the following three factors concerning parental attitude:

1. Statement 10: Parents are generally insensitive to information they receive from school.

2. Statement 12: Parents bring their children to school a week after the schools have re-opened.

3. Statement 13: Parents remove their children from school without proper consultation with school authorities.

Table 5.12   Parental attitude – a School Governing Body perspective

Statement No	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Partly disagree		Partly agree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
10	3	12	8	32	1	4	5	20	6	24	2	8
12	2	8	5	20	0	0	5	20	10	40	3	12
13	3	12	10	40	2	8	4	16	3	12	3	12

F indicates the frequency.

5.6.2.1 Statement 10: Parents are generally insensitive to information they receive from school

Most of the respondents (49%) either partially agree or agree with the statement that parents are generally insensitive to information they receive from their schools. This implies that the School Governing Body members realize that much more must be done to involve parents in school activities.

5.6.2.2 Statement 12: Parents bring their children to school a week after the schools have re-opened

The response rate of 77% is an overwhelming indication that School Governing Body members in the five informal settlement areas partially agree or strongly agree with the statement that parents bring their children to school a week after schools have reopened. This links up with the principals' response to the same statement (statement 18), and implies that parental involvement in their children's education is lacking.

5.6.2.3 Statement 13: Parents remove their children from school without proper consultation with the school authorities

Most of the School Governing Body members in D11 (40%) disagree with the statement that parents remove their children from school without proper consultation with school authorities. A further 20% either strongly disagree or partially disagree with this statement. This response contradicts that of principals for the same statement (statement 19). It could be ascribed to the fact that members of the School Governing Bodies are not aware of this phenomenon.

Graph 5.9: Comparison of statements on parental attitude – a School Governing Body perspective
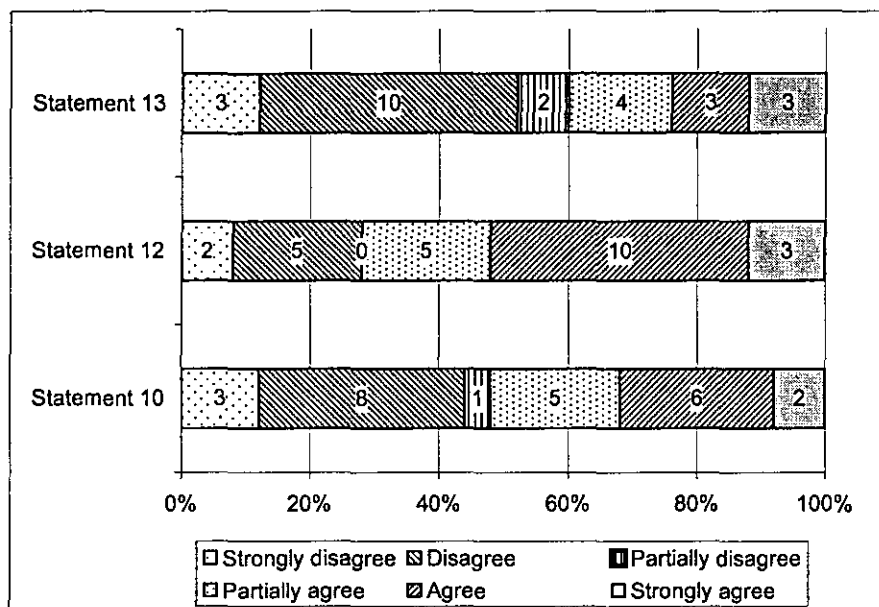
5.6.3 Educators

The following table gives a summary of the responses of the educators on the following four factors concerning parental attitude:

1. Statement 5: Poor parents are scared of being despised by educators.

2. Statement 6: Poor parents fear that the school may require them to contribute financially

3. Statement 15: Parents do not react to the school's written messages.

4. Statement 16: Parents remove their children from school without proper consultation with school authorities.

Table 5.13   Parental attitude – an educator perspective

Statement No	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Partly disagree		Partly agree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%

5	19	17	39	34	14	12	20	17	17	15	6	5
6	13	11	24	21	13	11	22	19	29	25	13	11
15	7	6	19	17	17	15	36	31	23	20	13	11
16	7	6	9	8	11	10	25	22	42	37	20	18

F indicates the frequency.

One respondent did not answer statement 6 and statement 16.

5.6.3.1 Statement 5: Poor parents are scared of being despised by educators

Most educators (34%) disagree with the statement that poor parents are scared of being despised by educators. A further 29% either strongly disagree or partially disagree with the statement. These responses link up with the educators' disagreement of not being trained in parental involvement (statement 13).

This could imply that educators at these schools in the five informal settlement areas are not influenced by the socio-economic status of the parents. This augurs well for improved parental involvement.

5.6.3.2 Statement 6: Poor parents fear that the school may require them to contribute financially

Most educators (45%) either agree or partially agree with the statement that poor parents fear that the school may require them to contribute financially. As it is common knowledge that the unemployment rate is generally high in the informal settlements, this implies that this factor contributes largely to the lack of parental involvement.

5.6.3.3 Statement 15: Parents do not react to the school's written messages

The responses indicate that 63% of the respondents partially agree, agree or strongly agree with the statement that parents do not react to the school's written messages. This links up with the 71% of the principals holding the perception that parents are generally insensitive to the information they receive from their schools. This could

imply a disconcerting level of ignorance or a feeling of incompetence on the parents' side. Both situations are not favourable for effective parental involvement.

5.6.3.4 Statement 16: Parents feature in school activities when their interests are at stake

The majority of the educators (76%) partially agree, agree or strongly agree with the statement that parents feature in school activities when their interests are at stake. This implies that parents at these schools are known to show involvement when confronted with negative consequences. It should be relatively easy to influence them to become involved at all times.

Graph 5.10: Comparison of statements on parental attitude – an educator perspective
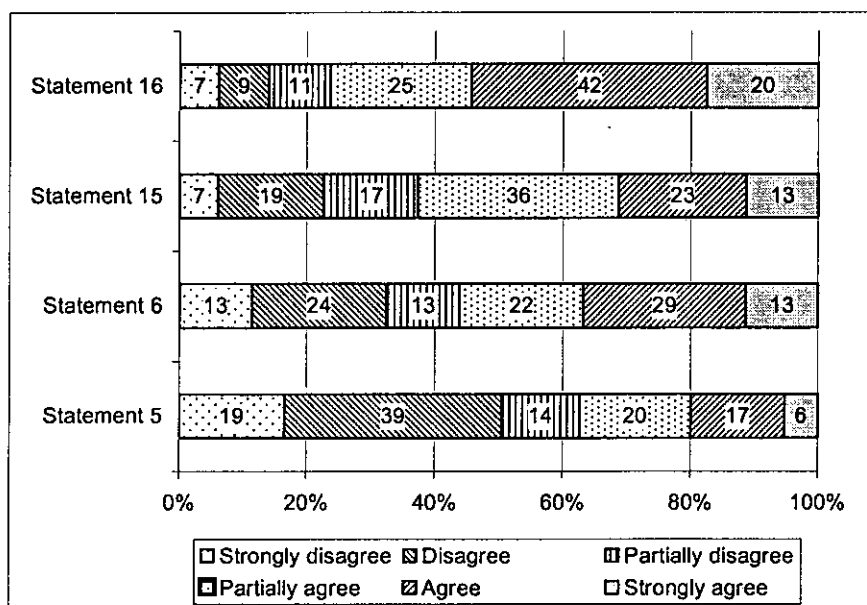
5.7 ROLE OF PRINCIPALS

Two questions that relate specifically to the role that principals play in parental involvement were included in section C (Educators) of the questionnaire.

The following table gives a summary of the responses of the educators on the two factors concerning the principal's role:

1. Statement 8: Principals do not encourage parental involvement.

2. Statement 11: Principals cannot satisfy parents' and educators' aspirations simultaneously.

Table 5.14   Principal's role – an educator perspective

Statement No	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Partly disagree		Partly agree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
8	62	54	43	38	4	4	3	3	1	1	1	1
11	23	20	41	36	13	11	16	14	18	16	4	4

F indicates the frequency.

One respondent did not answer statement 8.

5.7.1 Statement 8: Principals do not encourage parental involvement

The data indicates that the largest proportion of the educators (92%) either strongly disagree or disagree with the statement that principals do not encourage parental involvement. It can therefore be deduced that the principals at these schools in the five informal settlement areas do their bit to encourage parental involvement.

5.7.2 Statement 11:   Principals cannot satisfy parents' and educators' aspirations simultaneously

The majority (58%) of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that principals cannot satisfy parents' and educators' aspirations simultaneously. It can be deduced that the principals at these schools in the five informal settlement areas are not jeopardized by aspects such as youth, lack of academic qualifications or lack of experience.

5.8 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the analysis and interpretation of the research results. Most respondents offer a well-balanced response concerning their perceptions on a broader view of parental involvement at their schools.

Having discussed the analysis and the interpretation of this research, the next chapter will present the summary, findings and recommendations.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

A brief summary of the study is presented in this chapter. As is vital, a reflection on the major findings of the study is provided, as well as the recommendations in order to improve the current situation regarding parental involvement in the education of the child. This is for promotion of practical partnerships in school activities as an instrument for obtaining a better quality of education.

6.2 SUMMARY

Chapter one served as a blueprint of the research project. It set out an introductory motivation why the research was carried out, defined the aims of the research, explained how the data was collected, which population was involved and stipulated the headings of the chapters. In this way, the chapter guided the readers concerning what is contained in the research report.

In chapter two, a theoretical basis of the field of investigation was laid. A theoretical background on the nature of parental involvement in school activities was explained. Various reasons, such as advantages and disadvantages of parental involvement in the education of the learner were advanced. It was unequivocally indicated by the literature study that parents as the main stakeholders have both the obligation and the right to determine the direction of their children's education.

Firstly, it was shown that parental involvement in the affairs of their children was initiated by God. Secondly, parents have to be involved in school activities so that they can ensure that the education that was initiated at home is continued at school.

Chapter three focused on problems that are linked to parental involvement. The role of the parents in the education of the learner was explained.

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Chapter four presented an orientation to the empirical research. This covered the aspect of instrumentation which included the search for appropriate measuring instruments. The relevant measuring instrument for this research project was shown to be the construction of a questionnaire. The pros and cons of the questionnaire as a research instrument were also indicated.

The population involved in the investigation was also described in this chapter. Parents and educators in Johannesburg South Mega District (D11) of the Gauteng Province formed the population from which the sample was selected. Descriptive statistics was used to describe the responses of the three groups, namely principals, School Governing Body members and educators. Frequency analysis and graphs were used to make comparisons between the three groups of respondents. As explained in the chapter, comparisons were necessary due to the differing views of principals, School Governing Body members and educators concerning the extent of parental involvement. Lastly, the method of presenting and analyzing results was explained.

Chapter five presented the results of the empirical investigation. The first to be indicated were responses pertaining to personal and school details of the respondents. This formed a well of information from which findings could be made. Using a frequency analysis, a comparison was made between the principals, the School Governing Body members and the educators with regard to the perception on the extent of parental involvement in school activities concerning the education of the learner.

6.3 FINDINGS

This section deals with the findings of the research aims in order to indicate how each was achieved. With regard to the literature study and the empirical survey on the practical partnership of parental involvement in school activities for the sake of the education of the learner, the following findings were made:

6.3.1 Finding 1

The literature study indicates that parental involvement stems from the process during which principals and educators help parents to discover their strengths, potential and talents (see 2.2).

6.3.2 Finding 2

The juridical prescriptions are clear concerning compulsory school attendance and parental obligations regarding their children's education (see 2.3.2, 2.3.8 and 3.2.1). However, the empirical survey points to parents disregarding these legal stipulations (see statement 18; 5.6.1).

6.3.3 Finding 3

According to the literature study educators are trained for teaching learners and not to handle parents (see 2.8.1.2). The educators in the empirical survey seem to hold a false perception in this regard (see statement 13; 5.5.3).

6.3.4 Finding 4

Although the literature indicates the socio-economic status of parents as an obstacle regarding parental involvement in school activities (see 2.8.2.1), educators disagree (see 5.6.3). Educators and principals thus seem to be motivated to inspire all parents to become involved.

6.3.5 Finding 5

South African families are under constant pressure especially regarding the education of their children (see 3.2.3). This results in parents with lower income often withholding involvement at school or being ignorant concerning the necessity of their involvement in the education of their children (see statement 1 and 7; 5.5.3; see statement 17; 5.5.1).

6.3.6 Finding 6

Principals feel that parents over-emphasize the role of *in loco parentis* as they neglect their own important involvement in school activities (see statement 13; 5.6.1).

6.3.7 Finding 7

Parents are not sensitive to school information and this can impact negatively on parental involvement (see statement 15; 5.6.3).

School Governing Body members seem not to be aware of the fact that parents remove their children from school without proper consultation with the school authorities (see statement 13; 5.6.2; see statement 19; 5.6.1).

Educators in the five informal settlement areas are not influenced by the socio-economic status of the parents (see statement 16; 5.6.3).

6.3.8 Finding 8

Parents only show involvement at the schools in the informal settlement areas when confronted with negative consequences (see statement 16; 5.6.3).

6.3.9 Finding 9

Although the literature indicates that part of parental involvement is supervising the learner's homework (see 2.2), the empirical survey indicates the opposite (see statement 20; 5.5.1).

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations constitute an important aspect of this research. It is hoped that the recommendations in this research will appeal to those who are concerned about the lack of parental involvement in school activities concerning the education of the learner.

6.4.1 Recommendation 1

Copies of the school policy should be made available to parents in promotion of parental involvement in school activities.

6.4.2 Recommendation 2

Legislation regarding compulsory education and parental obligations must be enforced so that parental involvement becomes a practical reality.

6.4.3 Recommendation 3

Educators should be trained to handle all kinds of parents, including those from diverse cultural backgrounds.

6.4.4 Recommendation 4

Parents should form an active partnership with the school in fostering a disciplined and safe learning and teaching environment.

6.4.5 Recommendation 5

Parents should take co-responsibility for maintaining the discipline of the learner and accept ultimate responsibility for the learner's behaviour, thus promoting the best interests of the school.

6.4.6 Recommendation 6

The example of Nigeria should be considered: parents become involved in traditional school festivals and other communal activities. Those with special talents, such as farmers and artisans, come to school to share their skills and expertise.

6.4.7 Recommendation 7

Parents must be trained and advised regarding their role. A parental training programme should be devised and implemented.

6.4.8 Recommendation 8

Promotion of healthy communication between the school and home should prevail.

6.4.9 Recommendation 9

Educators should be trained in promoting parental involvement.

6.5 POSSIBLE FURTHER RESEARCH

A possible field for further research could be a comparison between the perceptions of stakeholders at ex-Model C schools and those at informal settlement areas.

6.6 FINAL REMARKS

The research was conducted to determine the extent and scope of parental involvement for practical partnerships at schools in the five informal settlement areas in the Johannesburg South Mega District (D11). At the same time, it explored the perceptions of principals, School Governing Body members and educators concerning parental involvement.

An attempt has been made in this chapter to summarise all the relevant issues that have been discussed in the previous chapters. Specific recommendations flowing from the findings of the investigation have been suggested.

It is hoped that the recommendations made in this research will contribute to a more sound and scientific method of parental involvement in school activities, sustaining the education of children as learners.

Finally, a field for further research has been recommended.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A

ANNEXURE B
Questionnaire

2004-05-08

Dear respondent

I am currently conducting research on the plight of education concerning parental involvement at school level. This questionnaire invites you to be part of the research with regard to principals, School Governing Body Chair persons and educators' perspectives on certain statements that are relevant to the study.

It is vital that I obtain your valued opinion in this regard. I would therefore be most grateful if you could assist me by completing this questionnaire.

This questionnaire survey is conducted as part of my M.Ed. studies at the North-West University (Vaal Triangle Faculty). A questionnaire is one of the most effective ways of eliciting opinions and I am committed to the fact that without your responses the study will not be credible.

Please bear the following in mind when you complete the questionnaire:

- There are no right or wrong answers with respect to opinion-related questions. Only your *opinion* is required.

- Please answer the sections relevant to your position fully and honestly. Principals answer Sections A and D; School Governing Body Chair persons Sections B and D; and Educators Sections c and D.

- Do not write your surname on the questionnaire, so that it remains anonymous.

- Please return the questionnaire to the person from whom you received it before the 15th of September 2004 or mail it to PA Manye, PO Box 417, Grasmere, 1828.

Thank you for your cooperation with my academic research project.

Yours faithfully

PA MANYE

Student

E DE WAAL

Study Leader

PA MANYE

Student

E DE WAAL

Study Leader

Questionnaire

Section A: Principal perspective

This section must be completed by school principals only.

Kindly answer these questions by making a cross in the appropriate block.

A1	Age	20 - 30 years	31 – 40 years	41 – 50 years	50 years and older

A2	Experience as principal	1- 3 years	4 – 5 years	6 – 8 years	8 years and more

A3	Academic qualifications	Matric	Bachelor's Degree	Hons B Ed	Master's Doctorate

A4	Professional qualifications: Education Diploma	Yes	No

A5	Demographical information: School population	Fewer than 500 learners	501 – 700 learners	701 – 1000 learners	More than 1000 learners

A6	Grading of school	P1	P2	P3	P4

A7	Predominant socio-economic status of area	Lower income group	Middle income group	Higher income group

A8	School type	State	Private

Parental involvement in school activities

Read each of the following statements and indicate your opinion by encircling the appropriate number.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Partially disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Strongly agree

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Partially disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	School and parents do not determine school policy.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	Status prohibits parents from being actively involved in school activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	Education meets the needs of political parties and not that of parents.	1	2	3	4	5	6

4.	The bureaucratic structures in education discourage parents from involvement.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	Decisions concerning education are made only at the highest level.	1	2	3	4	5	6

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Partially disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Strongly agree
6.	Parents who live too far from the school fail to become involved in school activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	The breakdown of traditional religion causes the absence of parental involvement at school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	The 1994 promise of "free education" encourages parents not to pay school fees.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	Parents view a school as a dumping ground for children.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	Parents and school programmes usually clash.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	Parents are usually only concerned with their personal obligations.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	Parents leave education completely in the hands of the educators.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13.	Parents are generally insensitive to information they receive from school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	Parents do not want to discuss their children's problems with the school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	Parents fail to accept the responsibility of their children's education.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16.	Parents are not adequately qualified to make valid contributions to the education of their children.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17.	Parents do not want to intrude in education matters.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18.	Parents bring their children to school a week after the schools have re-opened.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19.	Parents remove their children from school without proper consultation with the school authorities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20.	Parents do not assist their children in schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5	6

21.	Parents do not want to serve on the School Governing Body.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Section B: School Governing Body perspective

This section must be completed by the School Governing Body only.

Biographical information

Kindly answer these questions by making a cross in the appropriate block.

B1	Experience as a member of SGB	1 term of office	2 terms of office	More than 2 terms of office

B2	Predominant socio-economic status of area	Lower income group	Middle income group	Higher income group

B3	School type		State	Private

Parental involvement in school activities

Read each of the following statements and indicate your opinion by encircling the appropriate number.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Partially disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Strongly agree

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Partially disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	Principals are not aware of different family types they are dealing with at school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	Parents who are elected to the School Governing Body are incompetent.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	Status prohibits parents from being actively involved in school activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	The bureaucratic structures in education discourage parents from involvement.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	Parents do not receive feedback on their inputs.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	Parents who live too far from the school fail to become involved in school activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	Parents feel that educators seek information to belittle them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	The breakdown of traditional religion causes the absence of parental involvement at school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	Parents should be trained by the school concerning school matters.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	Parents are generally insensitive to information they receive from school.	1	2	3	4	5	6

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Partially disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Strongly agree
11.	Parents wish to be invited to school activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	Parents fear that critical statements about the school may harm their children's performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	Parents do not want to contribute to fund-raising activities at school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	Parents bring their children to school a week after the schools have re-opened.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13.	Parents remove their children from school without proper consultation with the school authorities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	Parents do not want to serve on the School Governing Body.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	Because parents are working they cannot find the time to get involved in school activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Section C: Educator perspective

This section must be completed by educators only.

Biographical information

Kindly answer these questions by making a cross in the appropriate block.

C1	Age	20 - 30 years	31 – 40 years	41 – 50 years	50 years and older

C2	Experience as educator	1- 3 years	4 – 8 years	9 – 15 years	16 years and more

C3	Academic qualifications	Matric	Bachelor's Degree	Hons B Ed	Master's Doctorate

C4	Professional qualifications: Education Diploma		Yes	No

C5	Demographical information: School population	Fewer than 500 learners	501 – 700 learners	701 – 1000 learners	More than 1000 learners

C6	Grading of school	P1	P2	P3	P4

C7	Predominant socio-economic status of area	Lower income group	Middle income group	Higher income group

C8	School type		State	Private

Parental involvement in school activities

Read each of the following statements and indicate your opinion by encircling the appropriate number.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Partially disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Strongly agree

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Partially disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	Parents do not fully understand their roles at schools.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	Parents have nothing to contribute towards educational development.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	Unhealthy socio-economic issues drive parents away from schools.	1	2	3	4	5	6

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Partially disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Strongly agree
4.	Illiterate parents are scared of being seen at school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	Poor parents are scared of being despised by educators.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	Poor parents fear that the school may require them to contribute financially.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	Parents do not feature in school activities due to broken families.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	Principals do not encourage parental involvement.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	A negative school climate discourages parental involvement.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	Schools do not have adequate time to involve parents in their activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	Principals cannot satisfy parents' and educators' aspirations simultaneously.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	Parents are not a component of the education system.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13.	Educators have not been trained in parental involvement.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	Parents do not assist in the disciplinary problems of their children.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	Parents do not react to the school's written messages.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16.	Parents feature in school activities when their interests are at stake.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Section D: General

This section must be completed by the principals, the School Governing Body Chair persons and the educators.

List any other problems concerning parental involvement at school that have not been identified above:

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Thank you for your co-operation.